SOUNDING ORIGINAL:
NATURE, INDIGENEITY, AND GLOBALIZATION
IN MONGOLIA (AND SOUTHERN GERMANY)

By

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Sounding Original:

Nature, Indigeneity, and Globalization in Mongolia (and Southern Germany)

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Acknowledgements

"As with every text in existence, no sovereign individual writes it with full control," writes Gayatri Spivak (1996[1979]:36). Indeed, I am indebted to innumerable people and places for their role in realizing this dissertation. For the inspiration, guidance, assistance, encouragement, and influence of everyone and everything entangled through these pages, I am grateful. I pay further tribute to many of them in a prelude to the dissertation called “Exile ~ Beginning.”

My mother Luz Marina Colwell and father William Colwell (1926-2013) gave me their open minds and trust throughout this journey. My sister Grace Quigley was particularly supportive when it counted one summer and Andrea Crane cannot go unmentioned for being an amazing sibling.

Enxjargal Chuluunbaatar, my first teacher, introduced me generously to the world of Mongol xöömei. Ganbold Taravjav (1957-2009), one of the greats, continued this introduction with his remarkable lessons and insights. Gün talarxal ilersil'ye.

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But my life would have likely unfolded in a completely different direction altogether if I had never received an unexpected call one summer's day from my long-lost Colombian cousin Cesar Peralto inviting me to come visit him in southern Germany, where he was studying at the time. Because of his invitation, I was able to wander alone one day in Munich by the Spielzeugmuseum and hear Mongolian music for the first time when Khukh Mongol happened to be busking there. Gracias primo.

Finally, I must acknowledge some of the costs of being away so much over the last years, especially not seeing Jack Abrams (1982-2016) one last time before he took off on his next journey.
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Abstract

This dissertation is about the politics and poetics of worldly recognition through sonic or musical performance, what I refer to as “audibility.” I engage this topic in historical and ethnographic perspective when listening closely to the remarkable voice of Mongol xöömei (throat-singing). I show how a range of actors—talented herders, xöömeich (throat-singers), professional musicians, and researchers, among others—employed xöömei to gain audibility during and after socialism (1924-1992) within and beyond Mongolia. Drawing upon a plural inheritance in pastoralism, socialism, and capitalism, they foreground yazguur, a post-colonial notion that fuses Indigenous values of “origins” and the socialistic onus to sound “original.” The maintenance of yazguur mitigates literal and conceptual distances between the far off past and the modern world, between pastoral and urban places.

While many popular, official, or academic narratives emphasize friction between tradition and modernity or pastoralism and globalization in Mongolia, I observe that it is precisely this friction, following Anna Tsing, that engendered Mongol xöömei as conceptualized and performed today as an original voice. In response, I focus upon the sounds and sources, concepts and practices that my research associates engage in order to realize political or economic agendas to maintain yazguur. I pay careful attention to how Euro-American disciplines like anthropology and ethnomusicology contributed conceptual tools, such as “culture” or “folk music,” to colonial regimes like Soviet-backed socialism in Mongolia.

But I also consider how my research associates, in turn, have leveraged or imbued these tools and their instantiations with Indigenous values, especially an ethics of interrelation with the surrounding world of batgal’ (nature-existence). I suggest that this topic challenges ethnomusicology to hold itself more accountable to other senses of the world alongside the globalized one it tends to foreground when studying circulation, transnationalism, or
globalization. For to study xöömei in Mongolia is to encounter a conflicted, but dynamic relationship between colonial and Indigenous versions of the voice, humanity, and the world itself.
To my parents
Luz Marina and William Colwell (1926-2013)

and my xöömei teachers

Ganbold Taravjav (1957-2011) and Enxjargal Chuluunbaatar
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5 See: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e7B6rNUc3u0. Last accessed: 5/29/2017
6 Image taken from: https://mn.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%A4%D0%B0%D0%B9%D0%BB:Khovd_Chandmani_sum_map.PNG. Last accessed: 03/13/17.
Cartographic perspectives

The boundaries of "Inner" Mongolia (the Chinese province) and "Outer" Mongolia (the independent nation-state) do not align perfectly with historically Mongol lands, contemporary languages, and widely dispersed communities, some of which have migrated far, far afield in recent history. To my research associates, furthermore, regional or local belonging often matter just as much as national or international belonging. I would like to note these tensions and complexities through the following maps to provide the reader with some sense of the geography of my research associates.

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Figure 0.2. The Altai-Sayan Mountain region, the general area from which xöömei originates.  

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Translation, transliteration, and a few notes to the reader

Xalxa Mongolian is a remarkable language that can convey things about the world that are seemingly impossible to say in English. For example, it has several forms of the passive and causative voice that are consistently used in everyday and scholarly discourse (see Tserenpil and Kullman 2008:115-130). Upon asking one of my language teachers about why there were so many ways to speak in passive or causative voice, he surmised that Mongolians emphasize what happens, not who does it. English scholarly style and language ideology, on the other hand, demand that we avoid the passive voice and locate the agency of every action in the responsible individual, per Enlightenment philosophy. There are also ontological phrases that just seem absurd or awkward to English ears, such as burxan bolloo, which literally means "has become a god." This prosaic reference refers to how one becomes a spiritual authority to be revered upon their transition to the afterlife.

I have decided to embrace such translational frictions rather than smooth them over, following what Stolpe refers to as "the translational turn." In her own words, "[t]he translational turn is a plea to go beyond conventional demands of looking for equivalents but instead to uncover what proves itself resistant to translation and may bear potentials for creative and fruitful enrichments of discourses" (2010:2). So, I do not translate burxan bolloo as "has passed away," for example, and allow the reference to one's becoming a god, though I provide explanations for such references. Regarding the passive or causative voice, I similarly try to convey some sense of their usage in the Xalxa, the language of Mongolia’s ethnic majority and the official language of governance, providing additional explanation as needed. Needless to say, there are numerous aspects, notions, and sentiments that are simply untranslatable into English. The majority of translations are my own while some are most indebted to the advice and
corrections of Simon Wickham-Smith, the translator of Mongolian poetry into English, or various friends I have relied upon for assistance. I note their assistance in such cases.

In 2012, the Mongolian Government’s Department of Standardization and Measurements (Standart, semjil ziin gazar) provided an official scheme for transliterating Cyrillic Xalxa Mongolian into English. However, the system has yet to find wide appeal in popular or academic print. Meanwhile, scholars writing in English still tend to use their personally preferred schemes to reflect certain aspects of Xalxa Mongolian over others. There is still implicit disagreement about the utility of the many available transliteration schemes out there, despite attempts to promote consistency amongst scholars writing in English. The literature on xöömei in English (Pegg 2001; Levin 2006; Beahrs 2014) is notable for its own tradition of more often using /x/ instead of /kh/ for the Cyrillic /х/, while scholars of other musical genres tend to use /kh/ or /h/ instead (e.g., Marsh 2009; Plueckhahn 2013). I follow tradition as a scholar of Mongol xöömei. But one notable way in which I diverge from most transliteration schemes is by using /ʼ/ for the soft-signs /ь/, /ы/, and /ъ/ instead of /i/, avoiding the confusion of using the same character for the vowel /и/. To complicate matters, many Mongolian musicians transliterate their names otherwise to scholarly schemes. The renowned xöömeich Hosoo, not "Khosoo" or "Xosoo," and the renowned band Khusugtun, not "Hösögtön" or "Xösögtön," are among the more prominent examples. In such cases where

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the transliteration is widely known in print, I defer and use the popular convention. My scheme
is as so:

а а и І р г ш ш
б б ё І с с щ шч
в в к к т т ъ 
г г л л у у ы 
д д м м ѣ 
е ё н н ф ф э е
ё ё о о х х ю ую
ж ж о о ӧ ц цш я яа
з з п п ч ч

Mongolians use patronyms as surnames. It is common practice to provide the initial of
the patronym before the given name in print. And in spoken introductions, it is common
practice to give one's patronym first in possessive form. For the purposes of this dissertation, I
place patronyms after given names to avoid confusion for English readers. In rare cases where
the patronym is not known but the initial is, I follow Mongolian custom and place the initial
before the given name.

Finally, a companion website (www.andrewcolwell.info/soundingoriginal) provides
many archival documents and media files that are discussed in this dissertation.
It is ‘overtone singing’ that has brought Mongolian music to world attention.
—Terry Miller and Andrew Shahriari, *World Music: A Global Journey*

We are, of course, talking about different definitions of the world—indeed, about different worlds. Sometimes they overlap, sometimes they do not.
—Akira Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism and World Order*
This narrative really begins in 2001 when a Colombian cousin I had not seen in over ten years, and whom I had only met once before, suddenly called. Cesar was in Germany studying engineering and wanted me to come visit. With his contributions to my plane ticket, we were able to do standard touristy things together, drinking beer and visiting old town centers, for a few weeks. But one weekend he was too busy with his studies so I set off for Munich on my own. Meandering down the streets, I came to an underpass where a classical music ensemble was performing. I listened for a few minutes and then wandered in a new direction. The next day, I returned to hear them again. But instead a quite different band was performing. Their dress, instruments, sound, and repertoire were all new to me. However, the inexplicable sound of a flute, without there being a flautist, resounded the most. After some scanning, I realized that “the flute” was emanating from one of the standing musicians, now a vocalist as well. His mouth was slightly open, the sound sharp, piercing, and louder than the human voice ought to be. This aural enigma lodged within a remarkable new music compelled me to buy a CD. The band was called Khukh Mongol. Inside, there was an explanation that the vocal sound was called "khoomii" (pronounced "hoo me" in Xalxa Mongolian or "koo me" in Oirat Mongolian). Images of a green world of steppe, yurts, and Chinggis Khaan preceded a tourist advertisement to "come visit the land of the nomads!" Mongolia mushroomed in the back of my mind for the next several years.
Graduating with an art school degree a few years later predisposed me to uncertainty and mobility. Living overseas seemed like an ideal way to pay off my loans while traveling. But I wrote off Mongolia: there could not be any work there. Instead, I naively conjured that landscape, horses, nomads. The job search ensued. On the brink of moving to Taiwan, a series of sudden personal events caused me to cancel the ticket and I got a job in Washington D.C. instead. As I spoke of Mongolia here and there, colleagues would tell me about the owner, who also happened to own a school in Mongolia. But my personal nomadism (the discourse, not the lifeway),¹² along with the economic pressures of my student loans, convinced me to write Mongolia off. Only when I became severely depressed at my circumstances did I finally ask the

¹² In this dissertation, “nomadism” does not refer to the lifeway of pastoralism, but rather to the discourse of representing Inner Asian herders as “nomads” according to Eurocentric or nationalistic expectations. Chapter Two details the literature on and meaning of this term.
owner about working in Mongolia: "If you want a job, you got it," he said. A month later, I arrived at the train station in Ulaanbaatar.

I could have flown swiftly and directly but decided to take the slower, more scenic train, following a flight over the north pole to Beijing. On the train, I sat next to a man who would look at me curiously every once in a while. We were soon talking through his scant English. His name was Miyegombo, or just "Miye," a Mongolian filmmaker and friend to this day who is now promoting the band Khusugtun. The train creaked past some craggy mountains, then slid over the steppes lying between Beijing and Ulaanbaatar. Those tracks roll across Siberia all the way to Moscow. As another Mongol on the train put it, looking across the steppe with some uncertainty, "I don't know how we are still a country." He was referring to Mongolia's sudden freedom after a long history as a Manchu province (1635-1912) and then as a Soviet satellite state (1924-1992), after which has followed a troubled, free market democracy (1992-present). At the Ulaanbaatar train station thirty hours later a driver was waiting for me. The streets, traffic, and hip-hop on his radio made me laugh at myself for my prior musical expectations. A few weeks later, I ended up at a club with a friend, where a Filipino cover band played rock and roll classics every night. They included "Country Road," a song my friend would play with his own cover band at The Cowboy Inn back in Virginia. Though I had never really loved the song before, it was now profound as I danced in a mob of Russian expats, European tourists, and local Mongolians.

But my chief musical aim was to learn xöömei, which was nowhere to be found. With no leads or language, I asked Miye. He said he had a friend from art college who might have leads. Some weeks later, he called back and said he had found a teacher. We arranged a meeting in front of the Arts and Culture College where eventually a sleek young man came up to us. He was dressed in black leather and black pants, his hair gelled back into a streak of black.
Enxjargal, or "Enxee" for short, was his name. He spoke just enough English for us to communicate one on one. Back at my apartment, where we moved the meeting, he sat down and showed me his membership card to the Mongolian Xöömei Association. In one of my least proud moments, I laughed and said, "Real xöömei." The conversation continued. He asked me to show him what I could do with my voice, which was barely anything, and we agreed to a price and time for the lessons: 5,000 tögröks (about $4 back then) for an hour and one lesson every day. Enxee and I became very close friends and a year later he confided he had nearly rejected me as a student at that meeting because of my sarcasm. Only my lame, yet inspired, attempt to perform for him had swayed him in a kinder direction.

For four months, he carefully pushed my vocal apparatus to what I thought were its limits, only to demonstrate that those limits were merely temporary points of discomfort. My voice was not so fragile, I learned, though he always took care with it. When his English failed, he explained by drawing pictures. Among them were the Altai Mountains, which he had never been to. These mountains, as he said, is where xöömei comes from. In another fond recollection, I played him a recording I had found on the web. It had to be of some old, rural herder in those far off mountains, as I felt from the performance and recording quality. But Enxee recognized the voice of Ashid instead, a young professional in his twenties, who worked in the Horse Fiddle Ensemble, just a short walk from my house. Our discussions unfolded in such ways, as if at the mouth of a cave with many depths and passages.

Four months passed and Enxee announced that he would be leaving for Korea to work in the construction business. But before leaving he wanted to pass me off to a teacher he worshipped, the one and only Ganbold, who has become a god (burxan bolson), as is said of someone who has passed on to a better place. A legend in his fifties, Ganbold epitomized what Mongol xöömei “should” sound like. He spoke no English, so Enxee arranged everything. We
first went to his home in the yurt (ger) districts, Ulaanbaatar’s favelas, and presented him with gifts towards making the formal request. Ganbold agreed. Like Enxee, he would teach me at my house near to the city center. That he was coming to me, instead of me to him, had several reasons: I was the comparatively rich foreigner (but still poor for American standards) with an apartment in which we could have lessons in peace. His far away yurt was also in a neighborhood he felt too dangerous for me. Our lessons were difficult in terms of communication. He would signal with his hands, point to parts of his face, move my head for me or poke my stomach to make a technical point. His Mongolian words were opaque, dense, and meaningless. But I would catch and learn things, here and there. A few months later, he decided to take me to the mountains where xöömei came from.

The occasion was the 800th anniversary of Mongolia’s "founding," a nationalist projection of continuity between the Imperial Mongolia of Chinggis Xaan (13th-14th centuries) and the current democratic state. As an honored attendee, Ganbold flew. His family, an Inner Mongolian student of his called Chuluun, and myself took a jeep with five seats and ten people piled on top of each other. The road immediately outside of Ulaanbaatar was craggy and potholed. For the remainder of the trip, it was a loosened braid of bumpy, dirt threads. After five flat tires, two cold nights, and a short episode of pointing to the stars to figure out the direction to go in, we arrived in Chandman’ district, a hotbed for xöömei and Ganbold’s hometown.

It was March. The nearby Jargalant Mountains, a small branch of the Altai, were white like the teeth of a jaw bone. The landscape contradicted the green steppes of Khukh Mongol’s album cover: it was brown, dusty, almost rusted. Rivers and lakes were deeply frozen and trucks could use them for short cuts unavailable in summer. Our host, a family friend, cut bits of meat into a porridge, resting the slab of ribs on the rim of a metal box full of dry dung for
tinder. The next morning, the journey continued and we took a six-hour van to Xovd City, the provincial center, crossing Black Water Lake, where the van broke down for a couple hours. Ganbold's son ran and slid around in delight, as I warily listened to the tectonic moaning of ice cracks. I did not yet know that some in Chandman' surmised xöömei came from these very sounds. Only a few kilometers from the city did an asphalt road finally appear again, despite the government's failed promises of completing the road much earlier. It is still incomplete to this day.

When we arrived at the hotel, Ganbold was conversing and drinking with the elite of Mongol xöömei. One of them was Tserendavaa, a nationally and internationally recognized resident of Chandman'. After some discussion, Tserendavaa got up and led me upstairs to a room and knocked. Out came a young man who looked more like me than a Mongol. My eyebrows rose. Bennet was an American from Maine passing through on a research grant, also interested in xöömei and Chandman'. For the next few days, during the festival, we laughed and marveled at our encounter. But worrisome was the coming performance Ganbold had requested of me. Backstage in the waiting room, a particular xöömeich seemed to be attracting a lot of attention from younger performers. He introduced himself, with a bright big smile, as Hosoo. Not only did he sound incredible when he went out on the stage, but he also had a successful career in Germany performing in the world music scene and leading cultural tours for Europeans to Mongolia. When my own concert finished, everyone applauded proudly, but not for my bad technique. Rather, I was evidence that the international world was, indeed, listening.

An article by the local newspaper (G. Ganchimeg 2006) celebrated the festival's important cultural feats. Representatives from America, Inner Mongolia, and Japan had come (three altogether). A conference discussed issues of "practice and theory," echoing Marxism, or
issues of "tradition" and "innovation," "origins" and "development," "protection" and "preservation." Undarmaa was the sole female performer. The foreign guests were all interviewed, along with Hosoo and Undarmaa. "Xöömei is astonishing," remarked Fumi, the Japanese participant. "Xöömei is a very difficult art," I said like an amateur. "This festival, which is unfolding in [xöömei's] birth-place (nutag), is wonderful," said Chuluun. As for Hosoo, he clarified: "I believe that my birth-place is my teacher." Undarmaa, finally, said: "I think that we are developing xöömei as we promote it throughout the world (delsii)." These quotes reveal something I could only appreciate much, much later. The world in question for Undarmaa is a far-off, international one of nations and cultures, representatives, and development. But Hosoo seemed to imply an immediate, surrounding world of nature to which he was indebted to as a native son, one that had taught him how to do xöömei.

After the interviews and concerts, the festival's participants all moved to Chandman' for a final concert. We crossed the frozen lake again. Again, a crowd applauded. Once it was all over, we could relax for a bit. Hosoo invited Chuluun and I on a trip into the Jargalant Mountains. In the dark of early morning, we drove off with his uncle and a friend towards one of the southern valleys. We passed by camel rock, which, he said, sounded xöömei when the wind blew over it, another local source. In Xalxa Mongolian, xöömei can be sounded (duugarax), but not sung (duulax), despite its common translation as "throat-singing." We got out and hiked further into the valley. Hosoo's friend took the butt of his rifle to a rivulet so we could drink the icy water. We then climbed up a slope to watch the sunrise in the east. The dark silently erupted into purples, oranges, then yellows. The friend disappeared with the rifle and Hosoo and his uncle began speaking of numerous things I could not grasp as Chuluun and I absorbed the surrounding world. When the friend returned hours later with a bloodied marmot, we got back into the car to make another visit, this time to the foothills that lie between the Jargalant...
and the district. I only found out why when we walked to the top of one of them, where Hosoo pointed to a stone upon which a deer had been depicted by someone many thousands of years ago. Further on was the foothills' center-piece, a large ram a few feet in diameter accompanied by a menagerie of local fauna. With his few words of English, Hosoo explained that the district's ancestors had done these. I did not reply with skepticism that these ancient peoples were also Mongols, so many thousands of years before the rise of Chinggis Xaan, whose grandson established the ethonym. But I also did not think about how and why Hosoo was ascribing ancestry to an ancient creative act because it, too, constitutes his birth-place.

Figure 0.5. Hosoo's uncle Myagmarjav (far right), Chuluun (to his right), friends, and myself at the foothills of the Jargalant-Altai Mountains in 2006.
Hosoo’s silhouette is visible at the bottom of the picture as he holds the camera.

After a few more days in the district, I took another jeep for several days back to Ulaanbaatar and got some rest. I stayed in Mongolia for two years altogether, meeting more people like Ganbold, Hosoo, and Chuluun, but also like Bennet, who were passing through to do research. Two of these friends, in particular, inspired me to go to graduate school and do what they did. Johanni Curtet became a close friend when he would visit to do his dissertation research on xöömei. He had cameras and recorders that out-did my little hand-held camera: its memory card had filled up while in Chandman'. And Rebekah Plueckhahn gave me an influential goodbye gift when it was time for me to go home: an article by Steven Feld about a people called the Kaluli. I decided to become an ethnomusicologist, for better or for worse. But all of the above people, places, ideas, things, and forces are also responsible for "my" decision and the rest of this narrative.
Chapter I

Audibility

This dissertation is about the politics and poetics of worldly recognition through sonic or musical performance, what I refer to as “audibility.” I engage this topic in historical and ethnographic perspective when listening closely to the remarkable voice of Mongol xöömei (throat-singing). I show how a range of actors employed xöömei to gain audibility during and after socialism (1924-1992), within and beyond Mongolia. These actors include talented herders, professionally trained musicians, community leaders, government officials, intellectuals, composers, researchers, ethnomusicologists, culture brokers, foreign aficionados, and many others. Some have lived as pastoralists in rural parts of western or northern Mongolia, using xöömei for everyday ludic, customary, or communal purposes. Others have lived or studied in Ulaanbaatar, the capital, to work at national institutions, performing or teaching xöömei professionally for concert settings to promote cultural heritage, engage cultural tourists, or realize creative projects. Still others live overseas, especially in southern Germany, where they make a living in the world music market while also promoting the Mongolian nation abroad. All of these actors are responsible for the international audibility of xöömei as “a national art,” “ancient nomadic tradition,” or UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage, where once it was a lesser-known way of sounding among certain pastoralists from the Altai-Sayan Mountain region.

I show how the actors in this dissertation have drawn upon a plural inheritance in order to gain audibility. While many popular, official, or academic narratives emphasize a dualistic friction between tradition and modernity or globalization in Mongolia, I observe that it is precisely this friction (per Tsing 2005) that engendered Mongol xöömei as conceptualized and performed today. Furthermore, my Mongolian research associates draw upon this plural
inheritance even as they invoke dualistic narratives themselves (e.g., tradition-versus-modernity, Mongolia-versus-globalization, pastoralism-versus-urbanity, Mongolness-versus-foreignness) to realize their communal, national, or international agendas. Not only aesthetic, cultural, social, or political difference is at stake in these agendas, but also worldly and epistemological difference. On one hand, social sciences and governments in Mongolia have contextualized xöömei and its practitioners within an inevitable cultural, biophysical, and international world of human development. On the other, pastoralists maintain another sense of the world as a moral authority that demands reciprocity through performance, whether at a family’s sacred rock cairn or at the local cultural center. Depending on the performative occasion or aim, my research associates invoke socialistic, colonial, or Indigenous senses of the world to gain recognition from spirited, political, and commercial sources of legitimacy and success.

In response to this plural inheritance, I seek to understand the sounds and sources of the various conceptual tools and performance practices that my research associates have drawn upon to produce originality. Key to this objective is recognizing that socialism in Mongolia employed the analytical constructs of social science, such as “culture,” as predominant categories with which to understand and re-organize social and expressive life. Disciplines like anthropology and ethnomusicology contributed conceptual tools, such as “culture,” “the folk” and “authenticity,” to colonial regimes. Socialists, nationalists, and pastoralists later adopted, adapted, and leveraged these tools for their own agendas of political dominance, cultural sovereignty, or communal resilience. But I suggest that my research associates, in turn, have also imbued certain socialistic notions, forms, and practices with aesthetic propriety (Empson 2011:94), an ethics of interrelation with the surrounding world. For example, professionalizing xöömei for “the world stage” (delxiin tartsan), or rather European concert halls, also entailed
that the stage itself, along with music adapted for this colonial structure, could function as a site for reciprocity with the surrounding world of baigal’ (nature-existence) (cf. Plueckhahn 2013).

The implication is that these actors pluralize the world, challenging ethnomusicology to hold itself accountable to other senses of the world alongside the globalized one it tends to espouse. Ethnomusicology typically structures debates about musical globalization around issues of tradition, loss, and change within a globe, well after the disciplinary heyday of globalization theories in the 1990s. The persistent question is still how one may refine theory to account for rapid change, movement, friction, and translation within “the global order” (e.g., Stokes 2004). While this approach is productive for its attention to the politics of identity on a macroscopic scale, ethnomusicology has yet to respond in depth to how the act of contextualizing humanity within the globe is itself an epistemological element of colonialism and globalism, the neoliberal project to naturalize capitalist development (see Turino 2003). The discipline then fails to account for how Indigenous actors understand globalization as a process unfolding within, alongside, or beyond their own senses of the world. Indigenous actors, in fact, are in political competition with social scientific as much as colonial contextualizations of humankind and the world itself when seeking recognition (see Tuhiwai Smith 1999).

In response, I use conceptual history (Kosselleck 2002) to trace the operationalization of social scientific keywords in Mongolian social life alongside ethnographic methods to understand how my Mongolian research associates live with, leverage, and vocalize various senses of the world through xöömei in times of global change. As a heuristic for these worldly issues, I deploy the idea of entanglement, following various precedents in anthropology, ethnomusicology, and science studies, as I elaborate below. Entanglement is a reminder of the contingency and pluralism that pervades social and expressive life in Mongolia and throughout
the world. It reminds me of the dynamic and polyvalent relationship between Indigenous and imported or imposed, yet adopted and adapted, ways of belonging, expressing, and becoming.

Anthropologist Ines Stolpe refers precisely to this plural inheritance as a "residuum," meaning a "dynamic repertoire of interpenetration patterns responsible for the transformation and Mongolization of imported models as they are incorporated" (2006:24). Scholars of post-Soviet Eurasia also address ways in which Indigenous actors draw upon inherited and imposed discourses (e.g., King 2011). In great part, Indigenous actors can pursue audibility before national and international publics in the first place by virtue of their familiarity with internationally legitimated forms and frames that peoples in much of the post-socialist world are now familiar with in light of colonialism and globalization in the 20th century. As sociologist Laura Adams writes of Uzbeki cultural producers, this familiarity provided them with "readymade links to the global community," following the end of the Soviet Union (2005:335). These links have provided post-socialist actors with a means of promoting and legitimating Indigenous practices and values in novel settings, but while having to alter their performances to suit Eurocentric aesthetics and concepts of "music," "culture," and "heritage." To this degree, the Mongolian actors in this dissertation have both played into and with hegemonic notions about difference and expression in order gain audibility and its double-edged social, political, or economic benefits.

I understand audibility as a specifically sonic or musical form of such recognition, literally the capacity to be heard and become intelligible and legitimate within predominant discourses about expression and belonging. Audibility concerns a "distribution of the sensible," in philosopher Jacques Ranciere's words, an aesthetic matter of "what is seen and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to see and the talent to speak, around the properties of spaces and the possibilities of time" (2004:13). It concerns how one is heard as well as what
discursive, social, political, or worldly circumstances allow one to be heard at all. I ask, how do regimes, communities, or publics become cognizant of a sonic or musical practice's value to their Indigenous, colonial, or post-colonial agendas? What is at stake in gaining recognition from others at home or beyond? How do Indigenous values, notions, or understandings interact with or inter-animate colonial ones within the often asymmetric and transnational circumstances of audibility? And what does audibility tell us about the global circumstances of the present, well after the disciplinary heyday of globalization studies in the 1990s?

I argue that to study music in Mongolia is not simply to encounter "musical culture," "nomadism," "post-socialism," or "modernity." It is also to encounter an evolving and conflicted relationship between colonial and Indigenous versions of the voice, humanity, and the world and a partly-shared conceptual vocabulary of “culture,” a socialist import that is now adopted and adapted for purposes of audibility. The poetics and politics of audibility register on all scales of performance and discourse. Even Mongolian verbs for the act of sounding (duugarax) xöömei register a tension with English verbs for the act of "throat-singing," the term with which international audiences mostly refer to the vocal practice. As I elaborate in Chapter Two, I employ the English verb “to sound” in ways that reflect the Mongolian verb duugarax, meaning “to (make the) sound (of something).” It is the predominant verb after xöömeildöx (the verbal form of the noun) to refer to the act of performing xöömei. To this extent sounding becomes a heuristic for a conflicted audibility in global circumstances.

Yazguur ~ originality

Parcel to projects to gain audibility is the promotion of desired notions, values, and outcomes. In the case of Mongol xöömeich, echoing other cultural producers in Mongolia, yazguur or "originality," is one such desire. This notion arose from a post-colonial politics and poetics akin to that which Indigenous studies addresses mostly in North and South American
(e.g., Warren & Jackson, eds. 2002; Krystal 2011). As anthropologists Theresa Nichols (2015:218-270) and historian Ken Coates (2004:3) note, Mongolia, a former Soviet satellite state (1924-1992) and Manchu colony (1635-1912), resembles other post-colonies while also challenging the international definition of the term “Indigenous.” Post-socialist Inner Eurasia has many parallels to other post-colonial places in which imperial modes of knowledge production and institutionalization interfaced with local or Indigenous ones (Kandiyoti 2002). One research associate (or “informant”) even recommended “indigeneity” as the most suitable translation in a conversation on the topic, as I detail in Chapter Five (Dashnyam, Personal communication, September 22, 2014).

However, yazguur reflects "originality" more so in a variety of ways. It conjures Mongolian respect for "origins," especially one's spirited birth-place, or nutag; ancestral genealogy; the Soviet onus to be, appear, or sound "original, distinct from others" (Rus. samobytnost') as an ethno-national entity; as well as “authenticity” in a folklorstic sense. It can refer to what has characterized Mongolness since before “modernity” or “foreign” intervention and is considered to register today as yazguur chanar, or "original quality," in talented performers of xöömei and other genres of pastoral origin. Despite its semantic links to "authenticity" in internationalized folkloristic discourses (see Chapter Five) many also associate yazguur with Indigenous values of aesthetic propriety (Empson 2011:94) with baigal’, or "nature-existence" (per Chapter Seven). To this degree, yazguur concerns what music does in the world, what it means to be Mongol,¹ and how listeners and performers, regardless of their origins, are to hold themselves accountable to international or natural worlds.

¹ As I detail in Chapter Two, “Mongol,” “Mongolian,” and “Mongolic” have distinct meanings in this dissertation. “Mongol” refers to how ethnic Mongolians understand Mongolness. “Mongolian” refers to one’s affiliation with the Mongolian nation-state, regardless of one’s ethnicity. For example, there are Mongolian citizens of Mongolia, like
Yazguur is the object of audibility due to its promises of continuity and resilience across spatial, temporal, and conceptual distances in times of uncertainty under dayaarshil, or “globalizaton.” For example, the far off past (deer üye) resonates prominently here as the original domain of the Mongols (Humphrey 1992). I translate deer üye as “far off” past and not “deep past,” as Caroline Humphrey does, because the Mongolian preposition deer connotes senses of being “high,” “best,” or “over there.” It does not imply a buried, archaeological past, as does the English adjective “deep.” However, I follow her influential discussion of the pre-socialist past’s moral authority in the post-socialist present. Xöömei often becomes a voice for this moral authority in cultural discourses. The countryside is also "far off," both temporally and geographically, while the “urban” present is "here" and "close," per modernist tropes throughout the post-colonial world (Fabian 2002). Yazguur, in this light, is effectively a coeval project to render Indigenous values and aesthetics audible across these distanciations of the modern world.

These distances are vexing, positioning Mongolian cultural producers within an oft-invoked divide between Indigeneity and modernity on a daily basis. For example, Hosoo, the famed xöömeich from Chandman’ district, made a point that many Mongolians refer to in various guises when discussing the tensions between yazguur and globalization: "Ulaanbaatar is not Mongolia. Mongolia exists beyond Ulaanbaatar. Look around you. Do you see national culture here?" (Interview, July 31, 2013). He pointed to our metropolitan surroundings. Not far from us were the National Drama Theater, where the National Song and Dance Ensemble performs at 6pm everyday only in the summer months mainly for tourists, as well as Tsuki House, a Japanese restaurant where the Moonstone Song and Dance Ensemble does the same.

the Kazakhs, who are not ethnically Mongolian. Finally, “Mongolic” becomes useful in a few instances where neither Mongol or Mongolian is appropriate.
Post-socialist professionals in “the age of globalization,” accordingly, have been accused of commercializing original practices like xöömei when seeking success within the world music economy. Another global conflict of originality arose with the registration of xöömei in 2009 as an Intangible Cultural Heritage by China, via its province of Inner Mongolia, producing a public outcry. These were not the “original owners,” as the general argument went. Many Mongolians noted how Outer Mongolian teachers had introduced the vocal practice to Xöx Xot’s conservatory students in the first place, before which there were no Indigenous practices referred to as xöömei. Ethnomusicologist Tsentsentsolmon quotes Prof. Odsüren, who was among these first teachers: "we could learn from each other, but the most important thing is üüsen gazar (original place), üüsel garal (the origin)” (Tsetsentsolmon 2012). Following Outer Mongolia’s own registration in 2010, things simmered down slightly but tensions over originality remain.

My aim with this dissertation is not to resolve these debates of originality. Rather, it is to address the tensions, frictions, and dialogues that, rather than simply threatening originality, have also helped engender it. After all, friction, “the awkward unequal, unstable, and creative qualities of interconnection across difference,” as anthropologist Anna Tsing writes (2005:4), is another constitutive and less-acknowledged dimension of globalization. Narratives of xöömei’s “cultural development” (sögil), for example, valorize the achievements of professional stage performance by the first professional xöömeich during socialism. These protagonists of socialistic stage performance are now hailed as exemplars of “original quality,” the more Mongol aesthetic that is associated with pre-socialist, pastoral life. Where once Euro-American scholars opposed socialism to pastoralism, now scholars note a range of destructive and constructive

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2 In Xinjiang province, Urianxai peoples refer to xöömei as xoolin tuur, meaning “voice echo.” But they were not included or mentioned in the Inner Mongolian registration bid.
relationships, depending on the genre, practice, or community. Caution is needed when making generalizations about socialism and indigeneity in Mongolia, as is the case with globalization. Here, I recall what one research associate also said about dayaashil or “globalizaton.” In contrast to an immanent and totalizing process, Tserendavaa referred to it as "the question of a common world" (delxin niitiin asuult) (Interview, August 24, 2013). In his yurt (ger) before the Jargalant-Altai Mountains, he echoed the caution of theorist James Clifford, who describes this transnational process as an “evolving world of connections we know, but can’t adequately represent” (Clifford 2013:6).

Senses of the world

The stakes of originality and audibility, in other words, are not only cultural or political, but also epistemological and worldly. Predominant discourses do more than impose hegemonic notions upon their publics. They constitute particular ways of representing and thus shaping the world, as linguist Norman Fairclough discusses in depth (2006). By extension, I add, a discourse implies its own sense of the world in which certain kinds of beings, relations, categories are audible, and thus legitimate, and others not. For philosopher Isabelle Stengers, it is precisely the practice of encompassing or contextualizing all others under a rationalistic, good faith assumption regarding the world’s constitution that colonial thinking hinges upon (2005). In response to Stengers, sociologist Bruno Latour states that researchers must consider "dissents not only about the identity of humans but also about the cosmos they live in" (2004:451). He poses a question to how disciplines contextualize others and themselves within a biophysical or sociocultural world in which spirited moral authorities, say of one birth-place (nutag), become imagined cultural or sociological phenomena. I aspire to respond theoretically and methodologically to these critiques because they help me refer to the worldly aspirations of my research associates to legitimate indigeneity, pastoralism, and spirited moral authorities in
global circumstances. I want to attune myself not only to performances and discourses of Mongol xöömei, but also to the worlds they conjure, leverage, or legitimate over others to interrogate the common perception that pastoralism, Mongolness, or their expressive forms are indeed somehow opposed to the modern world of globalization, which they need not be.

So, in whose world does the research narrative “really” take place? What kinds of beings, topics, or relations are audible, and thus legitimate, within this ethnography, or not? And how does one’s research become accountable to other worlds when attempting to write meaningfully about them? A number of anthropologists, social scientists, and a few ethnomusicologists have addressed such questions by focusing on explicit and implicit articulations of the world that have powerful effects in public or academic discourse. Rather than taking worlds for granted, they trace the histories, presences, and politics of worldly terms and notions.

Ethnomusicologist Thomas Turino, most prominently, observes how ethnomusicology has helped naturalize globalism (the neoliberal discourse) and its version of globalization (the unrepresentable process) and the globe, not least in world music text books and numerous publications that take for granted that the world is now decidedly "globalized" with little qualification as to what this characterization means (2003). Social scientist Jo-Anne Pemberton traces how the "one world" rhetoric of political classes in the 20th century stems from their co-option of technological and scientific innovations to cement particular political, economic, and cultural interests as universal goods under the rubric of "global unity" (2001). The European social sciences similarly helped reify particular senses of the world in many Euro-American nation-states and their colonies, as sociologists John Law and John Urry note (2011). These

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3 I take up James Clifford’s point that globalization is a process of which no single discourse can take full and authoritative account (2013).
disciplines took Euclidean categories and relations as the basis for their theoretical projections on to vast swaths of humanity that (still) think, live, or sound otherwise. Most pivotally, the individual became the "atom" of society and culture, and whatever they did or said now revealed their ethnicity or nationality. As the authors write, "[t]his was a world that performed itself into somewhat discrete nation-states containing market-oriented individuals, at least within ‘Euro-America’ (bearing in mind that most such nation-states ‘owned’ vast empires)” (44).

These performances continue into the present, well after the disciplinary heyday of globalization studies in the 1990s. Political elites and ethnomusicologists today equally conjure their own senses of the world and help perform them into existence, especially when espousing discourses like globalism. Regarding political elites in Mongolia, they tend to emphasize how we live in “a globalized world,” a world "entirely different from the one of the 20th century,” as one Mongolian intellectual put it somewhat extremely (Byambasuren 2000:118; quoted in Campi 2005:n.p.; italics added). Either one adapts by re-understanding not only "the entire world,” but also one's collectivity and personhood, or they succumb and disappear within the (social evolutionary) flow of globalization. As for pastoralism, the original lifeway of the Mongols, it has no future in a global world that, implicitly, is "western" and "modern." The most renown exponent of this view is former Mongolian president Enxbayar Nyambar. As he is famously quoted, “It is not my desire to destroy the original Mongolian identity but in order to survive we have to stop being nomads…” (Murphy 2001:30). Over a decade later, he still echoes the sentiments of much of the Mongolian political or business establishment: “modernity,” “technology,” and “the global economy” are inherently at odds with “nomadism,” “tradition,” and the “origins of Mongolian identity” itself. The future is sedentary, capitalistic, and thus “western,” although indigenous pastoral forms and practices may persist as "cultural
heritage" in an otherwise "modern society." Expanding efforts to preserve cultural heritage today and "return to the countryside" do not rethink this basic narrative for "the future of the past" (Levin 2016:ix) in which pastoralism is still denied a viable future as a way of life. Its future effectively seems to lie only in being a performance of "culture."

In this neoliberal world, the capitalistic market pushes "local" actors to engage "global" (mainly Euro-American) actors with “culture,” the results of which are presumably commercial, reductive, or fundamentally transformative. By "neoliberalism," I refer to a "socioeconomic philosophy embedded to varying degrees in Euro-American life," which "expresses inordinate confidence in the unique, self-regulating power of markets as it links the freedom of the individual to markets" (Connolly 2012:20) and "solicits an active state to promote, protect and expand market processes" (21). Accordingly, "[n]eoliberal globalization discourse portrays nationalism in decline, state efforts to control national economies and distribute welfare on the wane, and borders increasingly irrelevant" (Stokes 2003:62). In the wake of colonialism, Euro-Americans tend to "imagine" this global world in relation to the cultural or musical "local responses" of Others. Scholars like Fairclough (2010) refer to this particular discourse as globalism, which has its witting and unwitting promulgators in ethnomusicology, too (Turino 2003). Globalism fundamentally presumes the world to be "a globe" rather than another sense of the world. As Gayatri Spivak writes,

The globe is on our computers. No one lives there. It allows us to think that we can aim to control it. The planet is in the species of alterity, belonging to another system; and yet we inhabit it, on loan. It is not really amenable to a neat contrast with the globe... (2003:72)

On this globe, "nations," "ethnicities," and "cultures" categorically circumscribe human belonging and becoming. “The planet” is then another sense of the world with other germane relations, beings, and categories. To this day, “the globe” implies a theoretical, immanent, and
given world order and “the local” conjures this world’s empirical, fluctuating, and increasingly fleeting "cultures."

Many Euro-American music scholars have espoused a similar view of globalization as a euphemism for Eurocentric westernization and late capitalism. As but one example, ethnomusicologist Theodore Levin characterizes the relationship between internationally touring Tuvan xöömeizi to their novel audiences as follows:

Increasingly distant from its origins as a spontaneous, expressive response to the sound world of the steppe and taiga, throat-singing as concert art is motivated by more practical concerns. What kind of singing will rouse the audience? What kind of singing works well with musical instruments, percussion, and other kinds of vocal music in the various hybrid and fusion forms that have become popular among musicians and audiences alike? (2006:66)

He is referring to the vocal practice's transformation into a homogenized and "globalized cultural commodity" that is no longer "rooted in its original inspiration" (67). Such statements about the original inspiration of xöömei do reflect many Mongolian perspectives about the precarious situation of Indigenous expressivity. “Real” (jinxe} or "original" (yuzguur) xöömei, as many associates have specified, lies primarily in the countryside, amidst the natural world of pastoralists, as opposed to (by implication) the international or global world of cultural representation, professional performance, the world stage, foreign audiences, and economic necessity. But it is also more complicated, as Levin later writes of Central Asian efforts to preserve musical heritage in "the age of globalization" in yet another seminal monograph of his. Echoing more recent discussions of the global picture, he characterizes musical heritage as "the continually evolving product of dynamic cultural processes driven by innovative creators, trends in taste and fashion, the exigencies of politics, and forces of social change emanating from near and far" (2016:ix). These processes, exigencies, and relations extend between peoples and states as much as between disciplines and subjects.
For such reasons, Patrick Dillon, et al, caution that European sociocultural theory cannot account for Indigenous relationships to the world in Mongolia as an intra-active and co-constituted entity within pastoral custom because it portrays the world otherwise as a static biophysical "backdrop" or "context" against which human actions or "texts" gain their sociological significance (2009). For many pastoralists, the world is instead a "super interrelation" (23) that co-arises with one's own actions. These social relations across special and ontological boundaries presume that "both meaning and context emerge from people’s interactions with their environment" (22). For example, living and sounding with baigal’ necessitates an accountability in terms of what anthropologist Rebecca Empson refers to as aesthetic propriety, "a wider sensibility about the right way to conduct one’s social relations (with various people, objects, and the invisible land masters)” (2011:95). This sense of relationality is equally musical in scope, especially when swaying fortune in favorable directions (Plueckhahn 2013; 2014). Within aesthetic propriety, subjectivity (along with talent) becomes "impersonal" and imputed to the cosmos itself (Humphrey & Hürelbaatar 2012), raising profound questions for those in Euro-America and its social sciences who take the individual for granted as the seat of agency and musical performance.

Socialism, on the other hand, evinced its own "wider sensibility" about the right way to conduct one’s social relations to a prioritized international world of development. It silenced master-spirits in public discourse or policy and resoursified nature, posing ethical problems and aesthetic confusion regarding how to engage these authorities after the socialism’s collapse (Højjer 2009). In lieu, socialism promulgated the idea that to perform music (as long as it resembles "music") is to become "cultured" (soyoltoi), a term derived from the translation for "culture" (soyol) (Stolpe 2006; Tsetsentsolmon 2014; Chapters Four & Five). And rather than address the spirited cosmos, musical performance was to constitute a political act of ethno-
national representation in the form of "culture" to address the international world and merge, via development, with universal (but really European) "humanity" (xün törlöxtön) or "world classical art" (delxin songodog art). Hence, one might contrast "impersonal subjectivity," a sense of self and belonging permeated by the cosmos, with a "cultured subjectivity," a sense that assumes the individual to operate within the universal categories of "the nation," "the homeland," or "the people."

These worldly issues arise through particular words, an important focus for this dissertation. For example, Baigal' is often translated as "nature" in most sociological or ecological research. But it does not refer only to an environmental, non-human "nature," and can imply "the way things are" or "existence" (Humphrey & Sneath 1999:3). Because of these expansive meanings, I employ the Mongolian word in this dissertation instead of using the English term "nature." As for delxii, it simply means "the world," although it arises, over other terms for the world, in discourses about internationalism, globalization, and development. It tends to operate as a euphemism for a world of nationally and internationally legitimated categories of belonging (such as "nationality" or "ethnicity") and their expression (such as "culture" or "heritage"). There are exceptions to these semantics, but they otherwise pervade discussions of cultural development (xögjil) and the natural origins (garal üüsel) of the Mongol people in pastoralism. There are also many other world terms in Mongolian that are too myriad to discuss within the limited scope of this dissertation.

For example, in an article published in the socialist journal Culture (Shatar 1971:46) the worldly terms yörtöönts and delxii imply respective relations and beings that are audible within them. It is a translation by a certain M.Shatar of an article by the Georgian composer Aram Kachaturian. It reveals the decision-making of the Mongolian translator when choosing which Xalxa term is suitable for the worldly subject at hand.
If a person has no music, then they have no eyes, no ears, and it is as if they did not know the world nor themselves.

The democratic quality of music is the form of song and dance that are spread amongst the world's many nations…

In English, both italicized terms can make equal sense as alternate references to "the world."

But in the first, the Xalxa term is yörtöönts, which effectively implies spiritual or cosmic senses of the world, or perhaps a phenomenological world of one's experiences. Hence, "the universe of music" is a possible translation here, as Mongolian dictionaries note by giving both meanings in their definitions. But in the second sentence, the world in question is delxii, which consistently appears whenever national, international, or cultural matters or genres such as "song and dance" (especially these genres) are at hand, following socialistic discourse.

When the world in question concerns baigal’, however, other beings, expressions, and relations tend to resound instead. In an edited collection of interviews with prominent cultural figures, based around the theme of musical cultural heritage, Prof. Odsüren, a preeminent xöömei pedagogue, is quoted:

Xöömei’s origins lie in the relationship between humans and baigal’. When people first began to speak and sound, they would mimic baigal’’s sounds, using their throats when hunting. Xöömei is euphonious as it comes from one’s own body. The world swells, baigal’ and mountain-spirits [lus savdag] become happy, it is said. When doing xöömei among the sounds of rapids, no instrumental sound is needed, as one imitates the sound of the flowing water through xöömei’s sounding. Whistle-xöömei sounds wondrous sounded against the wind in the heights of mountains. As the clouds one is tracing with xöömei disperse, your breathe tires, but eventually increases in strength. In this way, it is an art always connected to the world of baigal’.

(Odsüren 2000: 96)
More than the description of an "amateur" or "pastoral" xöömei, Odsüren is describing a constellation of moral values, worldly relations, and expressive practices that originate in a particular time ("when people first began to speak") and place ("among the sounds of rapids," "against the wind in the heights of mountains"). Despite these ancient origins, xöömei still sounds in the present ("an art always connected to the world of baigal"), producing a vocal index between the far off past, baigal', and the present. "Always" signifies the need to emphasize that this linkage to baigal' is still significant in the face of a qualitatively different present beset by "the modern world." While the world of baigal' persists today, it conjures an older, less "modern" chronotope in which Mongols and their sounds or musics "really" originated through pastoralism and animism. Note that it is common to refer to "the natural world" with phrases like baigal' delxii, as Odsüren does, although baigal' can stand alone without modifying delxii. There is no hard boundary between baigal' and delxii in common parlance, but senses of the world like baigal' and delxii still imply distinguished, if entangled, ways in which one is to engage others in these worlds through musical performance. These ways can be radically different in terms of how they conceive of basic notions like who or what can listen to a performance or where talent “really” comes from, as I show in Chapter Seven, in particular.

These different senses of the world, I am suggesting, are performative. As I discuss in Chapter Three, for example, socialism not only sought to introduce the notion of "culture" to render Mongolian behavior and sociality more amenable to its national development project. It
also sought to shift understandings of the surrounding world from being a moral authority and object of veneration, referred to as *baigal*, or "nature-existence" (Humphrey & Sneath 1999:3), to being a “national territory” and “natural resource.” It prompted Mongolians to aspire to cultural development by prioritizing audibility before the international world of other listening nations when performing nationalized musical genres, instead of prioritizing spirited or communal moral authorities. This worldly focus entailed dramatic shifts in technique and performance to suit the acoustics and aesthetics of "the world stage" (*delxiin tavtsan*).

These observations do not mean that Mongolians subscribe solely to one sense of the world over another. Anthropologist Alexander King provides a relevant discussion in his work on Koryak song and dance on the Kamchatka peninsula in Russia. On one hand, Koryaks talk about "culture" in ways that derive directly from Soviet anthropology as "a reified model of a culture, as a bounded social group speaking a single variant of unique language holding to a stable set of 'traditions' and 'customs'" (2011:18). On the other hand, Koryaks also speak of "culture" in ways more akin to "current theoretical approaches that understand culture as separate from groups, not having clear boundaries, and being more of a process than an object" (18). He is referring to discourses and practices that espouse relational senses of collectivity with human and nonhuman constituents of the landscape. Regardless of provenance, both "models of culture…have political and social power in Siberia" (34-35). Notably, King refers to *both* of his modalities as "culture concepts." He does not forsake the culture concept itself, while still tracing its colonial history, and retains its theoretical use. In my own case, however, I treat the culture concept primarily as a word in motion, not as a theoretical framework, in light of this history, as detailed in Chapters Three and Four. Yet both of his models, and the discourses they refer to, imply respective, overlapping senses of the world, one in which animals, spirits,
and humans speak, and another in which other socialistic authorities, notions, and practices speak instead.

The English-language literature on Mongolian music has approached senses of the world through other frames and foci that deal less explicitly with the epistemological and worldly stakes of audibility, excepting the literature on xöömei wherein it becomes somewhat more explicit. In all of the following cases, respective senses of the world are implicitly at stake as cultural producers or musicians invoke things like “tradition” or “modernity” and the particular beings, relations, and categories they legitimate, over others. For example, anthropologist Carole Pegg's seminal survey of Mongolian music, dance, and oral narrative in 2001 inaugurated a new era of English language research with the following introductory statement:

"Whether the performances are on Western stages in concert halls or within traditional nair in the round, felt tent, the processes are the same. Through participation of performers and audiences, individuals (re)create connections and relations with other individuals, as well as different kinds of ethnic, religious, social, and political groupings, terrestrial and cosmic landscapes, spirits, and gods. (2001:6; italics in original)"

Later scholars took note when writing in more depth about specific genres and communities. As ethnomusicologist Peter Marsh writes of the horse fiddle's (morin xuur) role in the cosmopolitan re-imaginations of belonging, "it is precisely this unique conception of modern culture—simultaneously claiming to be of the ancient Mongolian past and the modern international present—that makes contemporary Mongolian music so fascinating" (2009:ix).

Anthropologist Laurent Legrain demonstrates how for many Darxad people, singing a Darxad folk song is not only to sing "ethnicity," "identity," or demonstrate "culture," per either socialistic, sociological, or ethnomusicological frameworks. It is equally a means of facilitating attachments to the local landscape, per a logic of aesthetic propriety with the surrounding
world (2011). This engagement is not simply about marking collectivity, but also ensuring an existential sociality. At the same time, some Darxad actors are expressly invested in the revival of Darxad song, focusing specifically on what makes these songs theirs in an identificatory sense whose logic hinges upon the socialistic culture concept itself. A cultural center in Duut district, similarly, is not only a socialist-imposed structure for performing "culture" and "being Urianxai," as its original purpose was. It is also a stage for esoteric performances to influence the community's fortune (xishig) in positive directions. As anthropologist Rebekah Plueckhahn writes, “in contemporary practice, people blur different musical influences and genres for social and spiritual reasons” (2013:36).

There are parallels throughout post-socialist Inner Asia. For example, Harris notes how Sibe people in Xinjiang do not only live with the uncontrollable secularizing forces of the Chinese state, but also with the spirited forces of the surrounding world (2004:15). Other scholars of Central Asia note how Soviet-imposed disciplinary words, such as "the folk," transformed or informed Indigenous expressivity during socialism and still inform contemporary cultural discourses today (Rancier 2009:6). This colonial history produces tensions that post-socialist Inner Asians are now negotiating. As Merchant writes of Uzbekistan, "[p]eople are using cultural products, especially music, to demarcate an identity that is both modern and traditional" (2006:8) in a bid to resist deeply ingrained Soviet narratives and practices and revive traditional or Indigenous ones that are considered to be more "true."

Nevertheless, these colonial impositions have also provided post-Soviet peoples with "readymade links" in the form of internationally legitimated cultural forms and thus modes of address to the global community. As Laura Adams writes, "[t]hese links have played an important role in defining post-Soviet identities by giving culture producers a frame of reference for what their national culture should look like" (Adams 2005:335).
As for the literature on xöömei, Carole Pegg was first to articulate a conflicted relationship between Indigenous and colonial versions of the voice, humanity, and the world when she compared and contrasted "Mongolian conceptualizations" with New Agey, socialist, or social scientific conceptualizations (1992). This work is particularly important because it notes how xöömei was first performed as a cultural instantiation in the 1930s in Chandman' district, before which it primarily evinced significant links to baigal' (versus "nature") instead. For implied in the socialistic performance of "culture" was a substitution of Indigenous moral authorities for international and national ones, as discussed in Chapters Four and Five.

Ethnomusicologists Theodore Levin and Valentina Süzükei's exceptional monograph on Tuvan xöömei and sound mimesis in Inner Eurasia (2006), by contrast, focuses primarily on nomadic aesthetics and practices as direct responses to the natural world. While noting a few instances in which socialism may have played a more direct role in shaping these aesthetics and practices (71), the book otherwise characterizes globalization and modernity primarily as external and destructive forces upon nomadism (66), although Levin portrays globalization in more nuanced light in a later monograph (2016:ix), as discussed above. To focus on nomadism in this way, however, is inseparable from his own efforts to perform nomadism, as Robbie Beahrs notes of Levin's "aesthetic agenda" (2014:58), and as Levin himself openly discusses. For example, the latter writes of how he worked with the xöömeizhi Tolya Kuular and the band Huun Huur Tu to document a style of water imitation called borbangnadyr as an example of sound mimesis, after their agreement to "re-emplace Tuvan music and sound-making in the natural acoustical environments that had inspired it" (61). However, Tolya had not practiced these "sing-alongs" until the 1990s after a career working with Soviet folkloric ensembles. Sound mimesis,

Note that Levin does not make the distinction between nomadism (the discourse) and pastoralism (the lifeway) that I take up in this dissertation.
nevertheless, is now a theory with much currency in academic and popular discourses about xöömei and nomadism thanks to the significant efforts of Levin and Huun Huur Tu to promote Tuvan music.

This kind of entanglement between representation and performance, research and associate, disciplines and lifeways is also a formative aspect of Mongol xöömei. For example, Ethnomusicologist Johanni Curtet notes how the vocal practice stems precisely from connections and relations across far-flung distances: "[f]rom the local to the global, xöömei encompasses the specificities of individuals, families, and ethnicities, and became Mongol during its national and international representation" (2013:358). I include folklorists and ethnomusicologists in these acts of national or international representation. His compendium of Mongol xöömei is an in-depth history based in Mongolia of professionalization for the national stage, what he calls its "spectacularization," heritage-making, as well as an exploration of xöömei’s "verticality," an Indigenous cosmology, in dialogue with the work of various anthropologists (2013:67-70). To this degree, his work demonstrates one way of discussing an Indigenous sense of the world. I add that there is even more to be said about the transnational and formative relations between Indigenous and colonial versions of the voice, belonging, and the world by considering extant terms for the world, such as baigal’ and delxii, as discussed above, and the transnational movements of persons, ideas, and practices discussed in these pages.

Robbie Beahrs’ dissertation on Tuvan xöömei takes up transnational connectivity more explicitly, providing another key precedent in the literature for this dissertation. In particular, he explores how ethnographic knowledge, following the work of anthropologist Francine Hirsch (2005), not only represented, but also shaped the performances of Tuvan khoömeizhi (throat-singers) under socialism, creating a precedent for post-socialist performances of
nomadism at home and abroad. He thus explores how authorized aesthetics have interacted with Indigenous aesthetics, forming what he calls "nomadic sensibility." As he writes,

Nomadic sensibility is, in part, an invention by outsiders, whose expectations, desires, and reification of nomads are reflected onto Tuva and, in some cases, reproduced by local Tuvian musicians and cultural producers. But nomadic sensibility is also organically Tuvian—a post-Soviet reinterpretation of indigenous history, a re-sacralization of natural landscapes, and a recuperation of Tuvian peoples’ ancestors as nomads in cultural memory. (2014:115)

His work is particularly important for how it traces changing attitudes and understandings of xöömei during and after socialism, as is also the case for Mongol xöömei, going back to Pegg’s article. I similarly give attention to the interaction of Indigenous, scholarly, and colonial perspectives in Mongolia to address the epistemological and worldly stakes of audibility.

**Entanglement**

As a heuristic for the obstacles to theoretical contextualization that the above observations pose and as a reminder of the conceptual vocabulary I already share with my associates, I refer to "entanglement." I follow the term’s various usages in anthropology (e.g., Trouillot 2003; Kirksey 2012), ethnomusicology (e.g., Guilbault 2005), political theory (e.g., Connolly 2012), and science studies (e.g., Barad 2007). This term conjures circumstances of research in which no single representation is adequate to its own epistemological ideals in light of socio-political, ecological, and economic uncertainty and in which all ways of representing the world are contingent upon their relations to each other. Entanglement is rife with frictions (Tsing 2005) and slippages as much as the interplay of radical alterities. In contrast to the neoliberal presumptions of global discourse (per Turino 2003) and global metaphors of "integration," "encounter," or "imagination" well within the structurations and territoriality of "the globe" or "the globalized world" (see Spivak 2003:72), this heuristic highlights the
unrepresentability of the world itself and acknowledges that representations of the world also shape the realities of both researchers and research associates.

With entanglement in mind, I conduct modest amounts of conceptual history (Kosselleck 2002), critical discourse analysis (Fairclough 2005), and etymology to account for words in motion (Gluck & Tsing 2009), in concert with standard ethnomusicological methods of ethnography, musical analysis, and performance study (Barz & Cooley 2008). Conceptual history provides a means of exploring genealogies that have long linked "the field" with "the theory" in light of colonial projects like socialism in Mongolia, as discussed above. Critical discourse analysis provides a means of exploring how aesthetics acts of address, whether speech or music, do not only "reflect," but also shape their domains of expression, especially in cases of global or colonial discourse. Aesthetic acts of address are constitutive, not simply representative, of their domains of expression. They are not simply sociological acts of "cultural imagination" or "identity." Like discourse, musical performance plays a role not only in shaping the conditions of social life, but also in shaping how people understand and engage the constitution of social life and the world itself.

Addressing words in motion is more than another way to take cultural difference into more comprehensive account, as the discipline of ethnomusicology generally aspires to do. It is also to account for the implications of how seminal theoretical ideas in the discipline may also have transformative lives "in the field." For anthropologists Carol Gluck and Anna Tsing (2009), words do not only refer to things, but also do work in the world as they move from one place to another. As performative speech acts (per Austin 1975; Butler 2013[1997]), they shape how people understand themselves, others, and their world. Gluck and Tsing, in short, bring an ethnographic attention to the performative relationship between words and worlds. When a word like "indigeneity" becomes adat in Indonesian, for example, it transforms in meaning
while shaping political discourses, policies, and social movements, a point for which the authors urge scholars to "consider multiple linguistic and cultural legacies in dialogue" (Tsing 2009:40). It is the same with "culture," which became *soyal*, in Mongolian (see Stolpe 2008; Tsetsentsolmon 2014; see Chapter Three), along with many other words in motion like "authenticity," which became *yazguur* (see Chapter Five) or "to concertize," which became *toglox* (see Chapter Four).

The Mongolian terms, as I show, are not only translations of their English counterparts. Rather, they also evince Indigenous semantics in conceptual dialogue with internationally legitimated frameworks for difference. Chapter Two, in particular, demonstrates how "music" or "culture" are not only the analytical constructs of a Euro-American social science like ethnomusicology (cf. Sakakeeny 2015), but were also a political implement that Mongolian socialism employed to make social and political life more amenable to its Soviet agenda (cf. Stolpe 2008; Tsetsentsolmon 2014). The socialist notion of “culture” even shares a conceptual genealogy with the analytical construct of ethnomusicology. Both ethnomusicology and socialism drew upon European folkloristics when devising their linked definitions of "culture" as referring to the shared values, languages, traits, and practices that constitute a people's identity or ethnicity. Socialism's primordial culture concept is indebted to the same romantic nationalism of late 19th century Europe, from which ethnomusicology first later derived its own understanding of "musical culture" (Bohlman 1988; Slobin 2011). In particular, Johann Gottfried Herder’s conceptualization of "the folk song" played a pivotal role in cementing the socialistic and ethnomusicological perception that art or music are expressions of "the people" or "an ethnic group" (Rouland 2004:184). But while ethnomusicology generally diverted its

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8 I discuss this genealogy below and especially in Chapters Three and Four.
focus away from essence-like cultural identity to discursive relations that produce cultural difference (see Barz & Cooley 2008), my research associates in post-socialist Mongolia still espouse socialistic understandings of "culture" that are now entangled with Indigenous values of belonging, such as origins on one's birth-place (nutag). In a word, "theory" can also be "out there" in "the field," requiring attunement.

I aspire to listen to how my associates play into and with words in motion as demonstrated in performances and discourses of Mongol xöömei. When I refer to cultural discourses in this dissertation, I am referring to discourses about a salient concept that has prescriptive power because of its descriptive power. While still valuable as an analytical heuristic, this value does not avoid its transformative, political, and historical relationship to "the field," contributing to a shared, yet polyvalent conceptual vocabulary between research and associate. ¹ Following Marilyn Strathern (1995), I am skeptical of speaking through "culture" as an experimental or contingent analytical or interpretive framework, as much anthropology or ethnomusicology employs the adjectival form of the concept today (see Fischer 2007). There is also need in ethnomusicology to rethink the culture concept. As Timothy Rice writes, "[e]thnomusicologists, who rely on the culture concept to a great extent, have not troubled themselves very much with its definition, but they typically claim that music is culture" (2013:65). Similar issues arise in ethnomusicology's use of the identity concept, which has great currency but little specificity in the discipline (Rice 2010), while international regimes continue to re-define the concept for their own political or economic agendas (Leve 2011). As discussed above, "culture," has effectively operated as a politically amenable re-contextualization of social relations, beings, and expressivity in Mongolia and other post-colonial places. Anthropologists, colonial regimes, and international organization are all responsible for legitimating the notion as a framework for discourse across political boundaries
(see Strathern 1991:164-166). For such reasons, Strathern has argued that anthropologists, and by extension ethnomusicologists, "have lost a heuristic, that is, one way of creating knowledge though endorsing/transcending incommensurables" (1995:11). Conversely, Indigenous or local peoples, organizations, and regimes have appropriated the concept for their anti-colonial, national, or international agendas. As Strathern further writes, these agents "out-contextualised the anthropologist. By the same token, anthropology’s culture comes to seem not so different from everyone else’s," in the sense that locals engage "culture" in explicit acts of representation across difference in light of the concept’s national and international currency. Chapters Three and Four, in particular, speak to this point. Within ethnomusicology, this concern is most similar to Nicholas Tochka's discussion of musical identity. He explores "how music discourse and practice shaped the very project of identity itself in one early twentieth-century context" (2014:400) of Albanian popular music. "Culture" in Mongolia similarly unfolded as "a local project within transnational debates about the relationship between territorial integrity, population, and subjectivity in the early twentieth century," transforming "the nature of subjectivity itself" in the process (399-400).

Entanglement implies relations and practices that conflict even as they intertwine. Throughout the chapter discussions, I focus upon particular relations and practices as modes of entanglement. I discuss these modes explicitly below and implicitly throughout the chapters in historical and ethnographic detail. But I dedicate a chapter to genrification, so I briefly state here that it refers to the role of scholars, performers, intellectuals, listeners, and institutional actors in co-defining and co-shaping the genre-ness of xöömei, especially as a species of "throat-singing," in order to render it audible within international discourses about Mongolia, world music, and nomadism.
I take strategic collaboration mostly from anthropologist Debra Klein's sense of the term, although she is closely following Tsing's usage of the word (2005). It refers to "the art of occupying and performing one's status position so as to facilitate a common project" (Klein 2007:xxv). These collaborations are not about equal relations or "harmony," but about the potential to create something while not repeating past inequalities in the midst of transnational connectivity. Her work concerns Yorùbá Bátá drummers who have worked closely with culture brokers, artists, and fans to secure livelihoods and realize creative projects, a history that has shaped perceptions of "traditional culture" in Nigeria and beyond. Through strategic collaborations, actors include others in their attempts to realize their visions of what should be and how it should be known or heard. The history of Mongol xöömei is similar: various herder-performers, music researchers, ethnomusicologists, officials, and aficionados have sought to "present" the vocal practice "as is," while nevertheless re-presenting it "as it should be" to suit their needs, desires, or goals of audibility across difference and distance.

I am particularly interested in conceptual dialogues, meaning links across far-flung discourses, histories, generations, national boundaries, and languages that consist of a shared, yet altered concept. For example, as discussed above ethnomusicology and my associates, thanks to socialism, share many key concepts, such as "culture" (soyol). Both socialism and ethnomusicology, after all, took this concept from 19th century romantic nationalism and folklorism, which the former imposed upon Mongol peoples, who then adapted and adapted it, and which the latter has projected onto its research associates when indexing difference with collectivity. It is the same for many other political or musicological concepts, such as "heritage" (soyolyyn öv) and "timbre, tone" (öngö). I refer to these links as "dialogues" because, as shared

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9 See Chapter Three.
points of reference, they help engender transnational discourse between pastoralists, officials, researchers, and aficionados, among others. I am interested in, not critical of, conceptual dialogues. But the story of a "musical culture" is not simply what it sounds or says of its own accord. It is also how indigenous actors and practices interact with international frameworks and regimes that deploy, project, and privilege “musical culture” for their respective aims. And so I maintain an attention to the formations, regimes, communities, and individuals that have demanded "musical culture," "development," "authenticity," or "originality" from the voice of xöömei.

As for performative strategies, this term refers to the use of musical performance to realize social, political, or economic agendas in everyday, communal, or public places. Aesthetics acts (e.g., musical performance on a stage) are always strategic, whether a musical offering to a master-spirit or an overseas concert for foreign audiences. They work for, within, or against regimes that proscribe certain kinds of aesthetic expression over others in the pursuit of audibility. If aesthetic acts are "configurations of experience that create new modes of sense perception and induce novel forms of political subjectivity" (Rancière 2004:9), then performative strategies are configurations of these aesthetic acts. For example, the influential music researcher Badraa organized a festival and took up xöömei as a voice of "authentic folk art" (ardyn yazguur urlag), organizing a range of xöömei performances into a general presentation of this novel category of "culture." His political aim was to legitimate this novel category. His performative strategy consisted of indexing the idea of "authentic folk art" with performances of xöömei in concerts at the festival, the most explicit example being the term itself emblazoned above the stage (see Chapter Five). I refer to performative strategies because it is more accurate a reference to the purpose of musical performance than the ethnomusicological presumption that musicians are instead seeking "to perform their identity,"
as if the latter where their avowed intention. Legrain is also suspicious of this assertion (2011:2-3), putting aside the ambiguity of the identity concept in ethnomusicological discourse (Rice 2010). Rather, it is more often the case that performative markings of "social identity" are more commonly about ethical, economic, existential, or political aims. Legrain shows how Darxad peoples sing to realize their attachments to the surrounding world of baigal’ as an interactive whole, in contrast to singing to express their identity within the conditions of Mongolian identity politics (2011). I add to Legrain’s argument by emphasizing how performative strategies like these tend to uphold a particular sense of the world, too. The Darxad are explicit about their sung performances for and with baigal’, a kind of performance that is site-specific, communal, and ethical in relation to the surrounding world firstly.

Finally, there are evolving discourses. I take up Fairclough to note how performative strategies "have an inherently discursive character: they include discourses, which represent and narrate what has happened in the past and is happening in the present, including why previous systems have failed, and imagine and advocate possible alternatives for the future, possible economic (social, political, cultural) orders which might overcome existing problems and offer better futures" (2006:28). More succinctly, a discourse is "a way of representing some part or aspect of the world" (3), though I would add that they imply a particular sense of the world, too, per the theme of this dissertation. Ideological formations like neoliberalism and globalism, among others, may suggest particular "conditions" under which people live and perform. But they are also discourses that adjust to those who re-deploy or live under them. They "evolve" in the sense that they change relationally, not "improve" or "progress" uniformly, as they struggle to control others and as others leverage or re-signify them in their own interests.

It bears mentioning as well that I observe frictions and conceptual slippages between discourse and "reality" as much as between social scientific, colonial, and Indigenous
understandings of the world. While I aspire to work with my research associates, I also acknowledge that my findings may not always correlate exactly with their perspectives. For example, some research associates claim the origins of xöömei itself to lie specifically in Chandman’ district, where I conducted considerable research. Rather than play into these heritage politics, I have sought to understand their formation, which lies in the entanglement of socialism and indigeneity, as well as their implications in contemporary social and creative life in pastoral, urban, or foreign places. I do not conceive of this project as a challenge to Mongolian narratives of development or history, even as some of my research associates may differ in how I have interpreted the findings. Rather, I conceive of it as an account of sounds and sources that matter to the audibility and originality of Mongol xöömei but that have yet to be addressed in research or public discourse.

As a final word, this research stems from my own entanglement with Mongolia, following two years of expatriate residence in Ulaanbaatar, and then two years of multi-sited fieldwork in Mongolia and Germany. My research associates are herders who do xöömei, professional xöömeich, music researchers, officials, ethnomusicologists, culture brokers, and foreign aficionados, all of whom who have contributed to the originality of Mongol xöömei. Most of these persons I met between 2005 and 2007, during my expatriate years living and working in Ulaanbaatar as well as studying xöömei in private lessons. My first xöömei teacher was Enxjargal Chuluunbaatar, the talented flautist and xöömeich for the ensemble Tumbash. He taught me almost everyday for four months in my living room while also schooling me on Mongolian sociality. When he had to leave for work overseas, he presented me to the legendary Ganbold Taravjav, one of the heroes of Mongol xöömei, second only to Sundui in honorary status. Ganbold taught me for several months and introduced me to Chandman’ district, where Hosoo, the renowned xöömeich, also took me under his wing for several weeks the following
Throughout my expatriate period I also performed and composed music with various local and expatriate bands, including Altan Urag, Steve Tromans, and Xiimor, a briefly lived group with Rebekah Plueckhahn on cello and Dave Lipson on didgeridoo that performed at the Roaring Hooves Festival in 2007.

These experiences were marred by my lack of adequate Mongolian at the time, but were nevertheless critical to my later research experiences. After commencing the PhD program at Wesleyan University in 2009, I began doing more formal research in Mongolia, along with language study, and interviewing many of the people I had met before. This research unfolded in the summers of 2010, 2012, and, on a Research Fellowship from the American Center for Mongolian Studies (ACMS) in 2013 and a following year in 2014 thanks to a Fulbright Institute for International Education Fellowship. A Portable Title VIII Fellowship allowed me to take a summer language course at the ACMS in 2013. Finally, in the winter of 2016 I traveled to Germany to interview members of expatriate Mongolian bands and their cohorts.

Chapter summary

I detail the audibility of Mongol xöömei in seven chapters, beginning with the present introduction, which presents my framework in relation to the musical literature on Mongolian and globalization studies. Chapter Two elaborates on this framework in the form of an extended literature review that explores how scholars and performers have collaborated to describe and prescribe the genre-ness of Mongol xöömei in folkloric or ethnomusicological research encounters. This literature has participated in the legitimation and conceptualization of xöömei as a distinctive musical genre of its own, shaping its performance and reception within and beyond Mongolia. This dissertation is not excluded from such entanglement. I refer to three themes that both performers and scholars focus upon in light of their shared involvement in
genrification: originality, the ascription of distinction onto expressive practices that demonstrate technical or aesthetic uniqueness relative to other such practices, following the comparative logic of “culture”; source, the attribution of Eurocentric or Indigenous forms of propriety or property onto expressive practices with this distinctive currency; and sound, an implicit ontology of acoustic expression that privileges biophysical or spirited senses of acoustic production. The literature on xöömei constitutes an attempt to explain Indigenous understandings of sound, source, and originality through sociological frameworks of cultural representation, but not without linking Indigenous performers to globalizing discourses of “culture” and “heritage” under asymmetric circumstances. The chapter also reviews several key topics. Firstly, the poetics and politics of xöömei’s unsungness and instrumentality is a matter that Inner Asian scholars latch upon to characterize the originality of the vocal practice and which could use more in-depth discussion in the Euro-American literature. Secondly, none of these issues can be discussed without also situating Mongolness alongside the Eurocentric discourse of nomadism and the lifeway of pastoralism, a key distinction for the purposes of this dissertation.

The following two chapters show how socialism performed the novel idea of “culture” on national and international stages as a key component of its national development project in the 1940s and 50s, while some pastoral actors proactively participated in this project to gain the economic and political benefits of audibility. Chapter Three focuses on what socialism called “cultural development” in Chandman’ district, a small pastoral community that is now renown as a hotbed for xöömei performance. This project hinged upon reifying a recently translated and prescriptive notion of "culture" as a musical instantiation of "the people" in order to consolidate public sentiment. Though audible as a way of sounding amidst the surrounding world of nature in a few western Mongolian communities before the 1950s, xöömei was not
yet audible before the nation or the far-flung international world as "a national art." Only when socialism operationalized "culture" in the mid-20th century in Chandman' district did a number of elder "volunteer artists" begin heavily promoting the vocal practice to younger generations with no apparent awareness of it. There are still some elders in Chandman' who recall the days when they sat in school "getting cultured," as one put it. As I propose, later characterizations of Mongol xöömei's originality hinged upon this initial, novel, and foundational re-framing of the vocal practice as "culture."

The affirmation of development was international audibility, cultural proof of the Mongolian nation before other listening nations within the Soviet sphere of influence. Chapter Four explores the stakes of international audibility under the socialist development project when detailing the immediate exportation of xöömei throughout the Soviet-aligned world under the pretext of internationalism. Xöömei performances had to fit the formats, aesthetics, and genres of socialistic concert performance and evince the requisite markings of "culture"--all novel prospects for xöömeich (throat-singers). Accordingly, the notion of "concertizing" for the stage was itself translated into Xalxa Mongolian as the first professional xöömeich engendered a general aesthetic shift away from informal ways of sounding the voice to the formal performance of recognized folk melodies. Whereas elders speak of "just" sounding in their youth, they clearly describe moments where they began striving to sound a small number of well-known "folk songs" whose themes and aesthetics suited the socialist agenda. As I surmise, without these "new steps of development," as the famed music researcher Badraa retrospectively described this aesthetic shift (1998:47), xöömei may not have achieved its profound national and international reception amongst audiences, officials, and music researchers in later decades. At the same time, other senses of xöömei fell beyond the edges of cultural development for reasons both logistical and ideological. The chapter ends with an
extended meditation on the persistent audibility of these voices in the recollections of one elder and a forgotten river-melody whose currents still figure deeply into narratives of xöömei’s natural origins.

The next two chapters detail two pivotal events that have fundamentally shaped contemporary discourses and performances of sound, source, and originality in Mongol xöömei. Chapter Five details how xöömeich, music researchers, and officials co-constructed the novel cultural category of yazguur, or “originality,” and how xöömei became a crucial voice for this politically important category in the 1970s and 80s. During this period, the music researcher Badraa proposed and promoted the highly influential idea of ardyn yazguur urlag, which he translated himself into English as “authentic folk art,” following European and Soviet folkloristics. In a bid to increase Mongolian cultural sovereignty, he sought to specify the most ancient of Mongol expressive practices that originated in a far-off, pre-socialist, and thus more Mongol past, with xöömei and long song, another prominent genre, as his prime instantiations. Yazguur sounded in public life in the form of two landmark cultural festivals and competitions in 1983 and 1988 that would heavily shape performances and discourses of Indigenous genres until the post-socialist present. Primordialist and essentialist as the novel official category was, yazguur was still a matter of debate, construction, and performativity amongst performers, intellectuals, and officials as actors re-worked the notion in idiosyncratic or strategic ways. These transformations of Badraa’s original concept resulted in ascriptions exceeding "authenticity," and encompassing intertwined sentiments and values of natural origins, genealogy, birth-place, and sounding original. I argue that “originality” is also a word in motion that Mongolians have circulated in response to colonial, yet adapted words like "culture."

Chapter Six follows this discussion by relating how xöömeich and their bands secured livelihoods after the fall of socialism by versing themselves in the expectations and economics of
the world music market in Europe, while employing “originality” as an aesthetic foundation towards these aims. In particular, the pioneering band Egschiglen carved out a place for Mongolian music in Europe, exposing many Euro-American aficionados (such as myself) to Mongolian music in concerts or street performances (a critical way to make ends meet). Egschiglen and its expatriate offshoots, such as Khukh Mongol and TransMongolia, among others, set a standard for what would become a key format for post-socialist performances of Mongol xöömei: “the band” (samtalg), versus “the quartet” (dörvöl) or “the ensemble” (chuulga) derived from European classical music. But while re-working “originality” commercially for their novel audiences, these bands have maintained conceptual dialogues with cultural nationalism at home, acknowledging how their activities interrelate with Mongolian aspirations for greater international audibility. These performative strategies have nevertheless engendered an ongoing debate over the post-socialist meaning of "culture" and “originality” in the age of the free market. Dayaarshil, a translation for "globalization," figures prominently in these debates. The global world, in contrast to the international world that performers once "reached for" during Soviet internationalism, now "encroaches" upon Mongol lands, producing great uncertainty and an existential crisis over the loss of "original quality" and, by extension, Mongolness, pastoralism, and nature.

Chapter Seven finishes the dissertation while keeping the prior chapter discussions in mind. It surveys expressive life in Chandman' district, a place that many in Mongolia now refer to as "the birth-place of Mongol xöömei." It traces how residents--some of whom are professionals, others of whom are herders who can do xöömei--live and sound with differentiated, yet imbricated communal, socialistic, and nationalistic senses of vocality, belonging, and worldliness discussed in prior chapters. Residents themselves invoke practices of sound mimesis (Levin 2006), meaning representational imitation in sonic or musical
performance, when referring to how ancestors must have imitated (*duuriax*) the sonorous mountain waters of the Altai Mountains. But they also espouse more general audible relations to the surrounding world that revolve around aesthetic propriety (Empson 2011:95), the ethical imperative to speak, sound, and behave appropriately amongst the natural world's spirited forces. Sound mimesis may constitute an act of aesthetic propriety, but aesthetic propriety encompasses any "wonderful" (*saixan*) act of musical performance (Plueckhahn 2014). This includes socialist-inflected or "constructed" genres and songs that xöömei predominantly maintain for their repertoires. Similar entanglements of socialist and pastoral aesthetics are evident in persisting structures of socialism (e.g., the local cultural center), as posters of state-recognized artists super-imposed over their birth-places (*nutag*) suggest. In sum, the logics of socialism, nationalism, and pastoralism are intimately imbricated in daily life in Chandman’ district, posing questions to the primordialism and essentialism of contemporary Mongolian debates over "the future of the past," as Levin puts it (2016:ix), and originality. The chapter wraps things up with a discussion of how two sets of contemporary actors are creating futures for originality in performance and pedagogy at home and abroad.
Chapter II

Sound, Source, and Originality

So what is xöömei? And how is it Mongol? These questions are easy to answer for many of the actors in this dissertation. But Euro-American and Mongolian scholarship, historical evidence, and various other counterpoints complicate the Mongolness of xöömei, the genre-ness of the vocal practice, and Mongolness itself. They require some preliminary discussion before delving into the case studies. As Theodore Levin notes, the templates of national boundaries are either too large or too small to encompass the Inner Asian region's intermingling and migrations (2006:x). Xöömei, to this degree, is but the particularly audible voice of a broader regional aesthetic that highlights sound mimesis and what Tuvan ethnomusicologist Süzükei refers to as the drone-overtone form (45-124; Süzükei 2010), formal elements that many Inner Asian peoples seem to hold in common despite national boundaries. On the other hand, my Mongol associates also use xöömei to voice national difference by playing into and with the terms and conditions of "culture," a socialistic concept (Chapters Two & Three) that prioritizes national and international belonging (Chapters Four). Additionally, Tuvan and Mongolian scholars have sought to frame the above regional commonalities to project the nationality or ethnicity of xöömei into pan-Turkic versus pan-Mongolic pasts and presences. As for Euro-American scholars, they consistently discuss xöömei in terms of its generic relationship to other "similar" vocal practices and kinds of pastoral or Inner Asian musical practices, prompting this focus on genrification as an aspect of originality and audibility.

In response, this chapter provides an overview of these matters as they register in scholarly projects to genrify Mongol xöömei, giving the reader a general introduction to the vocal practice in the process. The following chapters then investigate the historical and
contemporary particulars of significant case studies that inform the discursive, performative, and conceptual formation of Mongol xöömei. But this chapter is also an extended literature review that meditates on genrification, the process by which actors, institutions, publics, and nations imbue an expressive practice with stylistic and social markers, more often with a political or nationalistic agenda in mind (per Matsue 2016). I only add that scholarship (this dissertation included) and scholars (whether Soviet or not) participate in this process, as ethnomusicologist Robbie Beahrs’ work (2014) demonstrates in the case of Tuvan xöömei.

Genrification is itself a mode of entanglement that has long shaped the audibility and originality of Mongol xöömei across far-flung distances, with implications for practice and perception in Mongolia. Our publications do not merely describe the genre-ness of Mongol xöömei: they help *genrify* it in dialogue with the poetics and politics of our respective publics and collaborators.

I refer to three themes that both performers and scholars focus upon in light of their shared involvement in genrification: *originality*, the ascription of distinction onto expressive practices that demonstrate technical or aesthetic uniqueness relative to other such practices, following the comparative logic of “culture”; *source*, the attribution of belonging, propriety, or property onto expressive practices with this distinctive currency; and *sound*, an implicit ontology of acoustic production (cf. Bohlman 1999) that may privilege biophysical, spirited, or other categories of being. Whether Euro-American ethnomusicology, Mongolian music research (*xögjim sudlal*), or the statements of my research associates, all share a concern with explaining the *originality* of xöömei in terms of figured distances between *sound* and *source*, revealing respective assumptions about the voice, belonging, and the world.

The voice of xöömei (e.g., sound) is variously re-associated, through an ontologically diverse array of logics, with human and non-human elsewheres (e.g., sources), resulting in and
effecting profound receptions or distinct characterizations (e.g., originality). Among pastoralists, the sound mimesis of a water rivulet using xöömei constitutes an offering to its master-spirit (ezen) (see Levin 2006:23; cf. Pegg 2001:97). As I elaborate in Chapter Two, this conception of sounding partly attributes the sound itself to the natural source, partly implying that human community members reciprocally "take," rather than independently "create," xöömei. By extension, originality (öörmöts, cf., ontslog), in this case, stems from the uniqueness of the surrounding world as much as from the people living and sounding with it. As for many experimental or New Age Euro-American vocalists, they state how supra-linguistic, cosmic, and non-human realms constitute the sound of xöömei: the vocalist need only harmonize themselves to a greater reality (see van T ongeren 2002; cf. Glenfield 2007; cf. Chapter Six).

According to this logic, the sound of xöömei but reveals the immanently audible constitution of its universal source in original ways that "normal" singing does not. And among many novel listeners, xöömei's sound at first seems literally to emanate from instrumental sources: in my own case (as discussed in the prelude to this dissertation), a flute that was nowhere to be found amongst Khukh Mongol's members, and in the case of an incredulous New York journalist (see below), a metallic object lodged somehow in the throat of the xöömeich Tserendavaa. The inhuman sound of xöömei could not have had a human source, in these first Euro-American encounters, producing a profound disbelief and perceptual disorientation (Fales 2002) that is interpreted in terms of originality. Sound, source, and originality could be constitutive tropes in any ethnomusicological study, although they come to the fore in the literature specifically on Mongol xöömei.

Conceptual divergences of the kind described above are most audible in one of the least discussed, yet highly significant gaps between Euro-American scholarship on "throat-singing" and Mongolian academic or communal discourses about the genre-ness of xöömei. Namely,
Mongol and Tuvan xöömeich, e.g., "throat-singers," do not consider xöömei a form of "singing" at all. Rather, it is an example of vocal instrumentality, which is underscored by the widespread usage of the Xalxa Mongolian verb "to sound" (duugarax), not "to sing" (duulax), or the usage of verbal forms of the noun (e.g., xöömeildöx or xöömeilöx) in both Tuvan and Xalxa Mongolian, to refer to the act of doing xöömei. "Throat-singing" maintains its currency amongst Euro-American publics and scholars, unlike other musical practices, such as the sitar (not "Indian guitar"), mbira (not the derogative "thumb piano"), or charango (not "mandolin"). The reasons are partly logistical: these publics simply have little or no sustained exposure to xöömei that might result in a general familiarity with the Mongolian term. But the English term and its cognates also seem recalcitrant because of their resonance with nomadism, which in this dissertation refers to an Inner Asian variant of Orientalism (Said 1978) that focuses upon pastoral peoples as "wanderers," "barbarians," or "peaceful wild-people" (Humphrey & Sneath 1999; Orhon 2007; 2011). In contrast, I use "pastoralism" to refer to the lifeway of Inner Asian herders who practice transhumance and are highly mobile. Genrification has directly facilitated nomadist discourses and frictions by emphasizing the relations of xöömei to comparative examples of "throat-singing" across the globe (note the worldly term here) that otherwise may have little or nothing to do with each other. However, research associates also play into or with genrification, nomadism, and comparativism to facilitate their own agendas, as Chapters Five and Six especially illustrate. For these reasons, I maintain and explore a strong distinction between xöömei and "throat-singing," as much as "nomadism" and "pastoralism" throughout.

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10 As I elaborate below, Mongolian music researcher Badraa (1998:46), Tuvan ethnomusicologist Valentina Süzükei (2010:190) emphasize this distinction, while only French ethnomusicologist Desjacques (1992:9; quoted in Curtet 2013:64-65) has given it explicit, if brief, attention.
this dissertation for the purpose of analytical clarity. This chapter details these distinctions as well.

**Genrification**

As a vocal practice, can Mongol xöömei be discussed in terms of "genre"? I point out that scholars recurrently link xöömei to Indigenous and comparative frameworks in ways that parallel ethnomusicologist Jennifer Matsue's discussion of genrification. She means the "active process through which individual performers, the music industry, and national institutions act in a way that leads to a group of musical elements (style) and related practices (social) to be perceived as a genre" (2016:27). I include scholars, such as myself, among the actors listed in this definition, though it is the very task of socialist-inflected Mongolian scholarship to define, categorize, and articulate expressive forms like xöömei within the requisite characteristics of nationalistic development ideology. I find Matsue's definition of the term *genrification* useful as a shorthand reference to such entanglement between scholars and their subjects. As for Euro-American scholarship, it generally espouses a primary concern to relate and prioritize the terms of research associates themselves. As Wallach and Luvaas state,

> music genres . . . are never simply sets of formal conventions, but result from a complex interplay of economic strategies, power relations, and authoritative discourses on musical purity, imagined audiences, and underlying ethical principles. These genre ideologies in turn shape decisively judgments of aesthetic value and authenticity. (2008; quoted in Matsue 2016:23)

Accordingly, the "friction" (Tsing 2005) of misunderstandings or cultural diversity is a pervasive dimension of genrification as divergent ideas, practices, and persons inter-animate each other across far-flung distances. But I contrast genrification with "folklorization," which concerns the processes of ascribing folk-ness to Indigenous or popular forms of expression, often with the intent of fomenting nationalist movements (see Bendix 1998; cf. Chapter Four).
As a brief example for illustrating what genrification consists of, there is the seminal article on Mongol xöömei by the British anthropologist Carole Pegg. She inaugurated the critical literature on Mongol xöömei in response to Euro-American misconceptions in circulating recordings, acoustic studies of vocal technique, and alternative or New Age appropriations. Hence, the relevant literature on Mongol xöömei itself evinces a tradition of contrasting Mongolian and Euro-American perspectives in an attempt to distinguish (and implicitly genrify) the vocal practice, while nationalist projects in Mongolia have done the same. For example, Pegg notes the collaboration between influential Mongolian music researcher Badraa and herder-performer Tserendavaa to classify the styles of Mongol xöömei, which they then promoted nationally and internationally (1992:44). Other xöömeich, however, evince their own idiosyncratic takes on the classification of styles precisely to distinguish themselves before national and international listeners, as Curtet demonstrates (2006; 2013). Nevertheless, it is now common in popular and scholarly publications to read that Mongol xöömei indeed consists of the styles in Badraa and Tserendavaa's scheme (e.g., Tseden-Ish 2003), helping to fuse the generic contours of Mongol xöömei itself with their particular categorization and aesthetic politics.

Scholars following Pegg's pivotal work have effectively continued a literary tradition of refining and reflecting upon the relationship between Euro-American and Inner Asian ways of understanding xöömei, vocality in general, and belonging among pastoral peoples, the nation-states they reside amongst, and their relationships to far-flung publics. As ethnomusicologist Robbie Beahrs points out, whether Soviet ethnographers or American ethnomusicologists, they have helped shape performances and perceptions of Tuvan xöömei, whether to consolidate colonial Soviet agendas of nation-building or to promote more responsive or reflective representations of the vocal practice (2014:13-38). The same has happened in Mongolia,
inevitably resulting in strategic acts of transnational representation that streamline the
idiosyncrasies, slippages, and frictions of performance and discourse into collectivizing
generalties about the Mongols, nomadism, or Mongolia. My own dissertation is not excluded
by noting this polyvalent relationship. But as I was warned by a research associate, the trouble
with researching Mongol xöömei is that everyone has their own opinions, an issue I hope to
highlight throughout this dissertation as a counterpoint to (not a refutation of) genrification.

The same gaps, slippages, and frictions unfold between scholars and research associates.
The former define the vocal practice’s significance in relation to other musical genres in
comparative fashion. They also re-work that significance in the process when attempting to
define broad regional aesthetics (often in friction with colonial or nationalistic aesthetics) while
making universalist technical or acoustic links, which in turn can contrast greatly with
Indigenous aesthetics. The relevant literature has proposed various theories on vocal
instrumentality (Badraa 1998), sound mimesis (Levin 2006), timbre-centered drone-overtone
forms (Süzükei 2010; Curtet 2013), and nomadic sensibility (Beahrs 2014) in Tuvan or Mongol
xöömei. All of these projects take up musicological or sociological notions with roots in
European social sciences as a basis to describe Indigenous conceptions of xöömei that may
revolve around radically different senses of vocality, belonging, and relationality. As a brief
example, Levin quotes Süzükei as she describes her experiences with a Tuvan spike-fiddler
(byzaanchi), from whom she extrapolated her drone-overtone concept: “Idamchap used to say
that you can’t make sounds on a Jew’s harp whose tongue is broken. What he meant was that in
order to produce the overtones, you first have to be able to produce the fundamental drone”
(2006:47). Idamchap did not use the terms “drone” or “overtone,” as Süzükei implies. Süzükei,
in turn, did not employ Idamchap’s metaphor—“a jew’s harp whose tongue is broken”—as a
theoretical concept. Like most scholars, she emphasizes analytical terms that are amenable
firstly to her discipline in order to discuss Indigenous terms that are amenable to her research associates' social worlds. All scholarship, including this dissertation, hinges upon similar gaps, slippages, and frictions in order to succeed in their endeavor to render a subject audible to internationalized disciplinary discourses. These generic linkages and slippages are constitutive of entanglement on paper as much as in the field, a less discussed topic in the relevant literature, excepting Robbie Beahrs' discussion of scholarly interventions in Tuva (2014). The very notion of Mongol xöömei elicits these tensions to the degree that a pastoral vocal practice becomes Mongol. For these reasons, the following two sections detail the discursive contours of Mongolness, nomadism, and pastoralism, which are not synonymous notions in this dissertation, and how xöömei elicits these contours. Afterwards, I return in depth to the poetics and politics of sound, source, and originality in the literature on xöömei.

**Mongol, Mongolian, Mongolic**

Mongolness is a diffusely articulated notion, despite nationalistic narratives of primordial ethnicity. As Bruun and Odgaard write, “Mongolia, the Mongolians and the Mongols are separate overlapping concepts” (1996:1). Furthermore, how Euro-American scholars and Mongol peoples themselves understand these concepts can differ greatly, with respect to how they suggest "ethnicity" or "nationality." Sneath, for example, details how ethnicity (iindesten) is a socialist-derived notion in Mongolia that intersects and contrasts with (rather than simply replaces) indigenous senses of belonging. The primordialist notion of ethnicity arose out of the socialist revolution in 1924 in and the project of the Soviet Union to translate fundamental Marxist notions of "the people," "culture," and "the nation" into Mongolian. Historical evidence amply demonstrates how many of today's "ethnic" groups are, in fact, political groupings that socialism reframed as "nationalities" for its own purposes (Sneath 2010). For
example, the Zaxchin, now a Mongolian "ethnicity," formed out of political circumstances when various clan or tribal affiliates of the Oirats, a term for western Mongol groups who once formed a confederacy, were ordered to protect what were then the borderlands between them and the Xalxa Mongol groups they were in conflict with (see Ladamjav, ed. 2014).

Before the initial formation of the current Mongolian nation-state (1924-1992), during hundreds of years colonial rule under the Manchu (1635-1912), scholars agree that Mongol peoples understood belonging in non-nationalistic terms not akin to those of the socialist project. As anthropologist David Sneath writes, "during that era it is difficult to identify a clear sense of Mongol ethnic identity distinct from the tracing of noble or elite ancestry" (2010:152). Historian Christopher Atwood (1994:43) proposes that Mongol peoples understood belonging more in terms of what anthropologist Dru Gladney calls "country-consciousness." For Gladney, country is

a more simple and basic concept by which many people understand their nationality. Most people think of themselves as living in a certain locality within natural boundaries rather than as members of "nation-states," "nationalities" or other political entities. Nations rise and fall, but countries usually stay much the same, though the people in them may be under one administration or another. (1991:94)

Atwood argues that Qing-era Mongols, in both "Outer" and "Inner" provinces, also understood their belonging in such terms, not socialistic nationality (Slezkine 1994) or sociological ethnicity (Fenton 2010). For example,

In Mongolian chronicles of the seventeenth century, the world described appears divided into realms or countries (ulus), each with its own customs, languages, and traditions of rule. Neither political disunity within a realm nor a realm’s incorporation into a larger empire disrupted this sense of a historically continuous domain. (Slezkine 1994:44)

11 See Chapter Four for a detailed discussion of Mongolian conceptualizations of "ethnicity."
12 Also known as the Qing Dynasty. Mongolians primarily refer to the Manchu (Manj).
This sense of country extends far beyond the national boundaries of "Mongolia." Notably the term here is ulus, not ündesten, a term whose historical usages to reference nationalistic belonging scholars debate, though today it translates similarly to the English notion of "country" as one's nation and territory (Sneath 2012:151, footnote). It also suggests relationships to the surrounding world via the Mongol notion of nutag, literally "birth-place," but also "homeland" in nationalistic discourse, as I discuss in Chapter Seven.

In light of these observations, I have found it useful throughout this dissertation to distinguish between three terms: Mongol, Mongolian, and Mongolic. "Mongol" implies Mongolness in the terms of those who self-associate as Mongol through kinship or ethnic ties. These meanings can overlap with the other two adjectives, but not always. The adjective "Mongolian," by contrast, can refer to any agency, institution, or matter that is involved (willingly or not) with the nation-state of (Outer) Mongolia. For example, the Kazakh minority in Bayan-Ölgii province are Mongolian citizens, but they are not Mongol. "Mongolic," finally, is a Euro-American linguistic term that refers to languages with grammatically demonstrable links to each other, despite significant social or religious divergences. I use the term for those rare cases where neither "Mongol" or "Mongolian" does justice to the way in which the subject at hand is associative with Mongolness. For example, Hazara peoples in Afghanistan have historical and ethnic links to Mongols but speak a dialect of Persian and practice Islam, hence aspects of their identity are not precisely Mongol or Mongolian, but rather Mongolic.

These overlapping, yet differentiable sense of Mongolness come to the fore in narratives about Mongol xöömei. For example, in a conference paper the Mongolian music researcher Enebish relates one predominant narrative concerning the vocal practice's origins. To summarize his discussion, xöömei is a nomadic art (nüüdelchdiin urlag) that the Mongols...
developed (xöjjix) into a professional art during socialism, sounded harmoniously (egshiglex) on the world stage (delsin tartsan), and thereby contributed to world humanity (xün törlöxtön) (2012a). This narrative employs a range of socialist-inflected, Mongolian conceptions of ethnicity, nomadism, artfulness, development, sound, and worldliness, as the following chapters explore in further depth. But to this degree, it conflicts with other regional narratives, particularly in Tuva, concerning the history, nature, ethnicity, and development of xöömei. Enebish, for example, explains the practice of xöömei among the Tuvans to the fact that they are Turkified Mongols (160). He echoes a common argument in Mongolia that Soviet nationalities policy is responsible for the self-perception among Tuvans that they are a Turkic, not Mongolic, people. A certain amount of chauvinism informs such narratives, but also a Mongolian critique of Soviet ethnogenesis. This take on colonial ethnogenesis, not the origins of xöömei, does have scholarly support in the work of Forsythe (1992; cited in Beahrs 2014), who details how the Russian and Soviet colonial administrations sought to re-orient local peoples in the area away from the Mongols towards Turkic Siberia. However, Enebish hijacks this history in order to co-opt the origins of xöömei exclusively for the Mongols, where the available literature on Tuvan xöömei suggests otherwise.

Mongol narratives of xöömei, nevertheless, become unstable as they attempt to include regional commonalities and affinities. Continuing with Enebish, he also states in the same conference paper that xöömei is the art of "mountain people," meaning residents of the Altai Mountain region, which spans beyond (Outer) Mongolia proper's western provinces, across southern Tuva (Russia), eastern Kazakhstan, and northern Xinjiang (China). At the same time, Mongolian scholars describe xöömei's origins amongst tuurgatan, meaning "people of the felt-tent" (I.e., yurt or ger). The Mongolian music researcher Xerlen, for example, refers to the Mongols, Tuvans, Buriats, mountain Altaï (uul Altai), and Inner Mongolians all as Mongol "felt-
tent dwellers" (*Mongol tuurgatan*) (2010:5). This term implies an extended sense of collectivity, under the privileged rubric of Mongolness, especially to the degree that these groups participated in the imperial projects of Chinggis Xaan. But where this sense of belonging is "ethnic" versus historical or political in orientation depends on the discourse and person’s positionality.

In short, xöömei vocalizes a tension between nationalism and regional belonging that requires sustained address in scholarly debates in Mongolia (but also Tuva) about the vocal practice’s origins. Enebish is himself one of these agencies, as are many of the research associates I describe in the following chapters. Without their discursive and performative work, xöömei may not have become a national Mongolian art and may have remained a pastoral way of sounding. Mongolian narratives imply this very point when they celebrate the history of socialistic cultural development through which xöömei became professional or obtained "classical status," a notion I discuss in Chapters Four and Five. They valorize the small number of herders, professionals, and intellectuals who proactively re-worked xöömei for the stage when "reaching" (*xürex*) towards an "international level" (*olon ulsyn xemjee*) of performance. It is this same history that Curtet describes as a process of "spectacularization" through which xöömei "transitioned" from "the steppe" to "the stage" (2013: 219). I only add that this process did not consist of a one-way shift "away from" the steppe to the stage. What happened on the steppe unfolded in tandem with what happened on the stage, entangling a range of pastoral and nationalist aesthetics and logics of musical performance.

**Nomadism, pastoralism ~ nüüdelchdiin irgenshil, mal axui**

The English terms "nomadism" and "pastoralism" are often used interchangeably by Euro-American scholars to reference the lifeways of peoples who maintain multiple home-locations or encampments and transition between them throughout the year according to
environmental conditions. At other times, these scholars use a combination of the two, creating terms like "nomadic pastoralism." But in light of anthropologists Caroline Humphrey and David Sneath's (1999) as well as anthropologist Myadar Orhon’s (2007;2011) discussions, I maintain a clear distinction in this dissertation between the two terms to facilitate my analytical aims of sifting through the modes of global entanglement. As Sneath and Humphrey write, "[n]omadism is a category imagined by outsiders and it brings with it many suppositions about pastoral life" (1999:1). Over the centuries numerous Euro-American scholars have invoked "nomadism" to portray the people concerned as being "egalitarian," "backward," "wanderers," "fierce," "warlike," "tribal," "simple," "peaceful," "non-technological," or dependent on the "outside" sedentary world. In turn, the world that "nomads" live in is idyllic, timeless, and natural. Nomadism, in short, is an Inner Asian variant of Orientalism (Said 1978) and it similarly denies coevalness through recourse to the Eurocentric logic of social evolutionism (cf. Fabian 2002). Towards avoiding these connotations, Humphrey and Sneath reject the term "nomadism" in favor of the analytical construct "mobile pastoralism" to reference "a central pastoral technique" and "economic practice" that hinges upon mobility and adaptability (1999:1). This conceptualization focuses on the compatibility of pastoralism with other forms of economy, a point that they deem critical as governments in Inner Asia continue to implement economic and domestic policies that discourage and impede pastoralism, as I discuss in Chapter One in relation to globalism. In this dissertation, I simply refer to "pastoralism," the lifeway of herders who practice transhumance, not the nomadist discourse of outsiders about pastoralists.

Music, in particular, is a key focal point for nomadism. For example, one of the first musical ethnographers of Mongolia, the Swedish Sven Hedin, relates a majestic “boundless land of grass,” “fascinating beauty and unfathomable mysticism” in which he observed a flautist called
Banche perform (Hedin 1943:9). On one hand, he seems to invoke forms of sound mimesis akin to Levin’s (2006) discussion:

> the murmur of the water round a trunk that had got stuck in the river-bottom, the plashing round the feet of the camels when they found a shallow place and went out into the water, the rustling of the evening breeze in the tree-tops—all these sounds were recorded by the flute. (11)

But on the other, this flautist reminded Hedin of a "snake charmer" akin to the reptilian hypnotists of "the Orient," evokes a "longing for musical harmony" (8), but remains a passive "treasure" at risk of being obliterated by time, lest a researcher like Hedin save them from their own fates via collection and documentation (7). As ethnomusicologist Robbie Beahrs shows, early ethnographies of Tuvan xöömei evinced similarly contradictory attitudes towards pastoralists, at once invoking "national particularity," within the logic of socialism, while stereotyping them as “barbarous,” “backward,” or “child-like” peoples. Xöömei served such nomadism to the degree that sounding “two notes” felt “unnatural,” as one Soviet ethnographer wrote in the mid-20th century when writing on uzlyau, a Bashkir vocal practice with aesthetic links to xöömei (Lebedenskii 1948: 50-51; quoted in and translated by Beahrs 2014:13).

Similar nomadist perceptions continue to inform Euro-American encounters with Mongolian music, especially xöömei, as I detail below when discussing the term “throat-singing.” Writing for the New York Times, for example, one tourist relates how during his vacation in Mongolia he caught several "glimpses of an ancient people, remnants of a culture that by all rights should have vanished along with the earth's wild places" (Barry 2012).

Nomadism, however, is not only a Euro-American discourse. Mongolian actors also play with (or into) nomadism to galvanize Euro-American or Mongolian audiences, policies, or perceptions, as I discuss in Chapter Six in particular. Nomadism can be a powerful discourse that various actors within Mongolia latch upon strategically in order to make sense to far-flung
audiences, governmental institutions, or international heritage organizations (especially UNESCO) (cf. Upton 2011). This sense of nomadism has some parallels in Beahrs' notion of "nomadic sensibility" as an aesthetic that both "outsiders" and "insiders" have shaped in relation to discourses and performances of xöömei and pastoralism during and after Soviet colonialism (2014:115). Yazguur, or “originality,” also depends to a significant extent upon representing herders as “nomads” within internationally legitimated regimes of difference to legitimate indigeneity under the auspices of cultural nationalism, as discussed in Chapter Five.

But Mongolia’s discourse of nomadism likely begins with Soviet anthropology of “nomadic civilization.” I have noticed how my pastoral research associates refer to nüüdelchditin irgenshil, literally meaning "nomadic civilization," in certain circumstances while in others they refer to mal axui, mal aj axui, or mal mallagaa, all of which literally mean "animal herding" or "husbandry." The majority, for example, introduced themselves as malchin, or "herder," not as nüüdelchin (lit., nomad), when I inquired about their occupation. Any reference to nüüdelchin would tend to appear when the conversation moved on to topics of “culture,” which is also a socialistic notion (per Introduction; Chapter Three). Although there is no definitive scholarship on the subject, as far as I am aware, the communications scholar Allison Hahn is similarly inclined as myself to believe that "nomadic civilization" likely originates in Soviet anthropology, while "herder" or "husbandry" are terms that pastoralists self-associate with. She explained how the difference between these terms is critical in that the former reflects the outlook of policy makers (e.g., nomads, nomadism) while the latter reflects that of pastoralists (e.g., herder, husbandry) (personal communication, September 7, 2015). This nomadism can facilitate perceptions amongst sedentary policy makers that nomads do not have a stable "home" and can therefore be moved anywhere without consequences, facilitating sedentarization policies in China aimed at ethnic Mongolians and other minorities (Conte & Tilt 2014; Lu, et
al., 2009; Fan, et al. 2013). Soviet policy had similar implications. Nomadism helped authorities legitimate state seizures of livestock, regulate pasture lands, and "develop" these communities. The first Soviet attempts at these sedentarization initiatives, however, resulted in rebellions and mass slaughtering of herds (see Bredshaw 1972). It is for these reasons that I find it useful to distinguish nomadist discourse from pastoral lifeways. This strategy maintains analytical clarity when discussing the complexities of entanglement in which distinct, but imbricated, discourses conflict with and leverage each other.

_Xöömei ~ throat-singing, overtone singing_

The very term with which actors refer to the vocal practice of xöömei derives from an evolving discourse in the Altai-Sayan Mountain region, where Turkic and Mongolic words have inter-animated each other for centuries, despite ethnic and national projects of distinction in Tuva and Mongolia. As Lattimore states, there are longstanding translational practices in Mongol lands that have forged conceptual links across the Eurasian continent, and beyond, through multiple written and unwritten languages (1962:204-206), not least because of the Mongols' historical management of the Silk Road (see Beckwith 2009). Regional discourses in the Altaic region similarly demonstrate far-flung links to the degree that Mongolian literary practices are indebted to longstanding Inner Asian epic singing (tuul') customs (Pegg 2000:51-57; cf. Reichl, ed. 2000:13-20), historical accounts such as The Secret History of the Mongols (see Waley 2005), and Buddhist translations of Tibetan and Sanskrit texts (see Nixon 1988).

Regionally circulating discourses inform the word xöömei itself. The Russian scholar Tatarintsetev provides the most in depth discussion of the term. As he writes,
By its form, khoömei is indisputably a Mongolism, but in its meaning has undergone considerable changes. Khöömei, as a musical term developed within a mixed Tuvan-Mongolian environment, most likely among bilingual Tuvans who used the Mongolian names for the speech organs for the purposes of naming a phenomenon of musical culture. (1998:65)

He continues on to trace the parallel meanings of cognates in various Turkic languages, all of which generally reference non-melodic vocalizing (e.g., buzzing or humming) and/or a part of the vocal apparatus (e.g., the pharynx or throat). The work of other Russian scholars further suggests that the term only came to have specific musical connotations in the last two centuries, as ethnographic accounts and entries in various Russian, Turkic, and Mongolic dictionaries suggest.

Mongolian dictionaries suggest the same. For example, the Manchu Imperial Polyglot Dictionary from the late 19th century gives the Mongolian term xömii, meaning "the throat of sabels," as a translation for the Manchu noun baltaha (Corff, et al., 2013:720). British scholar Andrea Nixon’s dictionary of Mongolian musical terminology, which she collates from various old sources, lists a similar, but somewhat musically provocative meaning. She cites the Kanjur, a collection of Mongolian translations of Tibetan sutras (which are themselves translations from the Sanskrit) made in the 17th and 18th centuries (see Ellingson 1980). The following phrase appears in the Lankavatara Sutra: *urul kögemei tanglai*, literally meaning "lips, pharynx, soft palate," which is accompanied by the following phrase *üges daŋwu ayaŋu*, literally "the melody of speech" (Nixon 1988:110). For Nixon, “[t]his is a simile of the interdependent cause of production through spoken words arising from tongue, larynx and palate, music arising from instruments and the player.” The phrase itself, in other words, is a simile that likens the interaction of the tongue, larynx, and palate to that between an instrument and its performer, imbuing the physiological terms, through analogy, with musical connotations. But the term
xöömei, in this case, is a translation for the Tibetan term *lkog ma* (ོག་མ་), which apparently can reference the esophagus, throat, or neck in general.\(^{13}\) Remember that the Tibetan term is itself a translation for an original reference in the Sanskrit.\(^{14}\)

Not until Tsevel's socialist-era Mongolian dictionary from 1966 does the term xöömei gain a documented musical meaning related to the vocal practice. However, only the verb form does so, while the noun form still refers to physiological human and non-human animal parts: the non-human "area with a color like that below the breastbone of animals with fine hair"\(^{15}\) and the human "root of the palate" (*tagnain üg*), the soft palate in other words (713). The verb, by contrast, has two forms: *xöömiidöx*, meaning "to sound the pharynx" (*xöömeigöör duugarax*) and *xöömiliöx*, meaning "to melodize songs-sounds with the pharynx" (*xöömiigöör duu ayalax*). In other words, the verb refers to a usage of this part of the vocal apparatus to make sound or melodize. Notably, the verb in Tsevel's first definition is *duugarax*, or "to (make the) sound (of)" (not sing), while in the latter it is *duu ayalax*, a phrasal verb that roughly means means "to hum." The implications of these verbs are critical for how they contrast with the connotations of the most prevalent English term for xöömei, throat-*singing*, and for how Mongol and Tuvan scholars latch upon this distinction in their research and political projects, as I discuss in detail below.

But firstly, it is important to note that "throat," "pharynx," and "soft palate" do not overlap exactly with the physiological meanings of the Mongolian term, while some scholars have suggested it to have other non-physiological connotations. As the film scholar Lucy Rees

\(^{13}\) See the online Tibetan and Himalayan Dictionary: http://www.thlib.org/reference/dictionaries/tibetan-dictionary/translate.php

\(^{14}\) I am indebted to the translator Simon Wickham-Smith for assistance with Tibetan language and script here.

\(^{15}\) нарийн үст амьтны өөхийн дагуу арьсын өнгө төсөөгээ хэсэг хүүв ғазар.
relates Prof. Odsüren, a leading pedagogue of Mongol xöömei, "objects to the term 'throat singing' because the word khoömii refers to the whole space between the jaw and the collarbone, so this translation is inaccurate and gives non-Mongolian speakers a false idea of the techniques involved" (2011:39). On the other hand, the Mongolian music researcher Xerlen relates a range of academic perspectives within Mongolia on the extended semantics of "xöömei" (2010: 12-17). The linguist G.Gantogtox, for example, notes how the term refers to the "hollow organs" (xöndin erxen) of the vocal apparatus involved in the shaping of sound. For Bazarragchaa, another linguist, the term likely has shared etymological roots with a range of verbs that variously reference "expelling" (xööx) or "rising" (xööx). "Melody" (xög), "music" (xögjim) and "cavity" (xöndii), he proposes, share the same roots as these former words, implying that all are conceptually linked through a shared morphology that stems from the morpheme xö.
Figure 2.1. The general physiological areas of the vocal apparatus that the term "xöömei" references, according to Prof. Odsüren.¹⁶

The music research Badraa, as Xerlen continues, takes this view even further by linking this morpheme to a range of common musical utterances or expressions referred to as *uuxai*. Although *uuxai* is an expression that is spoken or shouted during archery events to signal a hit in archery competitions, as Bawden gives (1996), it is also expressed following any number of rituals, offerings, or ceremonies, often while facing one's palms upwards in a receptive gesture and circulating them clockwise. As Xerlen relates Badraa, there are numerous forms of *uuxai* that can mark the end of a song lyric. But all serve to express the peaceful or liberated state of the singer's soul (*amin süns*). For example, in long song the singer commonly ends a lyrical line with the expression "*xöö.*" This expression shares these same morpheme as the derivative *xöömei*, thus linking the latter vocal practice to a more profound set of Mongol beliefs about

propriety with the surrounding world. Xerlen's discussion continues on, but this short survey serves to show how Mongolian scholars have speculated upon the semantics of the Mongol word itself in ways that conflict with or complicate the concept of "throat-singing."

The other prevalent English term is "overtone singing," which emphasizes an acoustic element of periodic sound (the overtone) as the distinguishing marker of xöömei performance, in contrast to a physiological element (e.g., the throat). This emphasis similarly diverges from the Mongolian conception for the same aspect of sounding xöömei. Instead, the "overtone" is referred to as isgeree, an onomatopoeia for the sound of whistling, while whistling is also referred to with the same term. As for the Mongolian term davxar öngö (lit., doubled tone), it is a translation for "overtone" in response to the growing Euro-American literature on xöömei (see Tseden-Ish 2003). Mongolian scholars and pedagogues are now employing the term when conducting their own physiological studies of the voice and xöömei. In Tuva, the implications of emphasizing overtones seem even more profound. As the Tuvan literature consistently discusses, xöömeizhi (the Tuvan equivalent of xöömeich, though it implies the performer to be a "master") conceive of what Euro-Americans call "harmonics" in terms of "voices" (ünner) (e.g., van Tongeren 1995:294). In contrast to acoustic phenomena, these "voices" can be sonic embodiments of non-human beings, whether animals or spirits, that inhabit the landscape (Levin, with Süzükei 2006:77). The Mongolian literature similarly notes how Mongolian concepts of xöömei do not emphasize acoustic elements like “harmonics” and “overtones” but rather qualities like “color” (Curtet 2013:72), “timbre” (Desjacques 1992), or performative links to nature and kinship (Pegg 1992). In Chapter Seven, I discuss how Inner Asian pastoralists tend to understand sound as a means of communication, interrelation, or reciprocation with the surrounding world. The term "overtone singing" foregoes this animate sense of sound for an acoustical one, although New Age vocalists often imbue the latter with secularized esoteric
meanings of cosmic harmony and resonance.\textsuperscript{17} I return to this issue below when discussing the unsungness of originality.

These ontological and conceptual divergences have not hindered the currency of the English terms (and their cognates) over the Mongolian term among Euro-American publics. This currency partly stems from purely logistical reasons of access: Euro-American or other foreign listeners simply have not had sustained exposure to xöömei, not least because of socialism in Russia and Mongolia and certainly due to simple geographic distances. Only in the late 1980s, following the first and rare ethnographic recordings of Tuvan and Mongol xöömei in the 1960s, did Tuvan and Mongolian xöömeich begin performing regularly in North American and European places (see Beahrs 2014; cf. Chapter Six). By contrast, Indian sitar performers have developed large followings and communities of foreign practitioners, while touring regularly throughout Euro-America, perhaps explaining why general publics refer to the instrumental practice with the Indian term \textit{sitar}, and not an inadequate English translation such as "extended lute." However, many novel Euro-American listeners are simply drawn to the “mystery" of "singing two notes at the same time," as the term "overtone singing" particularly implies. Due to a longstanding European association of the voice as consisting of a single line, at least in how it is notated in classical music notation, "splitting" this "line" into multiple tones or "notes" resembles a radical conceptual shift away from a "traditional" European understanding of the voice towards alternative ones. Indeed, Russian scholars distinguish xöömei as a form of

\textsuperscript{17} See the numerous examples that Mark van Tongeren provides (2002). The often universalist, inclusive, and spiritualist nature of New Age creative projects still espouse Eurocentric notions of the cosmos and its constituent forces and beings, as Glenfield surveys in the setting of two New Age sects that employ Tuvan xöömei for their own religious purposes (2007).
"split-tone singing" in early studies. Numerous vocalists and listeners have latched onto this trope as an act of accessing cosmic realms (per the New Age literature mentioned above) or politically radical aesthetic interventions, per the vocal project of Demetrios Stratos.

I suggest that the English term "throat-singing" also maintains its currency in popular discourse because of its nomadist undertones (pun intended). While the concept of "overtone singing" enmeshes acoustical and New Agey senses of sound, "throat-singing" can enmesh "gutturality" and "barbarism." While "guttural" is merely a reference to sounds or matters relating to the throat in the critical literature on xöömei, or in medical parlance, it can also imply "foreign," "meaningless," and "incomprehensible" sounds in everyday discourse. The OED lists a few examples:

1860 C. M. Yonge Cameos lx, in Monthly Packet Sept. 231 The Portuguese...despise the Spanish gutturals as Moorish abominations.
1888 A. Jessopp Coming of Friars i. 29 The rabble of Cologne...grumbling out their grating gutturals. (Boldface added)

A similar association registers in what, for many Euro-American and Mongolian scholars, may be the earliest known written reference to xöömei. Well before the first ethnographic Russo-European publications on xöömei from the 19th and 20th centuries, it is possible that a Chinese official called Xiao Daheng (蕭大亨) had done the same during the Ming era in an account called Customs of the Northerly Cowards (1594). With "northerly cowards, slaves" (北虏), he is

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18 For an example see Ihtisamov (1984). For further information on this topic, see Tran Quang Hai’s brief survey of English terms for xöömei (2003) and Beahrs’ overview of the Soviet literature on Tuvan xöömei (2014:29-38).
19 See van Tongeren (2002) for a brief discussion of this remarkable vocalist as well as www.demetriostratos.org.
20 I am indebted to the historian Sam Bass for his assistance with Chinese script, language, and historical sources.
21 The Chinese title is: 其言语喉舌音，而不清輕。其歌唱亦多喉唇音，而不響音。
referring to Mongol peoples residing to the north of his readership, a growing class of Chinese elites (see Robinson 2004). He further notes the "lack of sonority or flow" in their language and song: "Their speech has many sounds that come from the throat and the tongue; they are not clear and flowing. In their songs are many sounds from the throat and the lips; they are neither sonorant nor clear" (Atwood, trans. 2008:40). While the Chinese term 似 or "sound" is not pejorative in itself, Daheng' describes these "sounds from the throat and lips" in a negative light, for they are "neither sonorant nor clear." His description is compelling to contemporary scholars of xöömei for its reference to "sounds from the throat" in the context of song. But it is also possible that Daheng' is describing the guttural phonemes of the Mongolian language in song lyrics. In any case, Daheng' evinces a Sinocentric nomadism.

Whether or not Daheng' is referring to xöömei, he evinces a longstanding association of gutturality with barbarism, which is often projected onto vocalizations like xöömei via the term "throat-singing." An example from Public Radio International, a non-profit media company that claims to reach almost 19 million listeners a month, is illustrative. In this podcast, the American journalist Elizabeth Schwing describes the "throat-singing" of the Chukchi vocalist Olga Letykai by contrasting it with "normal" singing. As the former writes, "[p]erhaps it's a stretch to call throat singing singing. It's not melodious, sweet or lovely. It's deep, earthy, guttural. And then there are ear-piercing bird calls." She is referencing a vocal practice called pic-eine'kin, meaning "to sing with the throat" (Nattiez 1999:409, italics in

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22 Pegg (1992:39), Curtet (2013:55), Nixon (1988:77), and Xerlen (2010:35) have all discussed it as one of the earliest potential references to xöömei.
23 See: https://www.pri.org/stories/2014-12-09/beyonce-no-her-throat-singing-soars. Last accessed: 02/24/17. The podcast was also aired on Al-Jazeera online: http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/9/14/a-voice-that-fascinateshumansandlurescreaturesfromthesea.html. Last accessed: 2/2/17
original) or "to call with the throat" (Bogoras 1904-09:268; quoted in Amman 1993: 65).

While Nattiez writes that some of the songs comprise "a game" in which two face-to-face performers attempt to make each other laugh, Letykai also describes how Chukchi women would perform it while the men went out hunting "so that nature would bless them, so that they would not be hungry, so their soul would be warm." Letykai, furthermore, implies a permeable humanness when discussing the mimetic aspects of her vocal practice, during a section of the podcast. As Schwing writes, eventually quoting Letykai, "when she makes these sounds, she’s not just imitating a bird. 'No, I am a bird!' she laughed."

Schwing’s example is but one of many in which the poetics of "throat-singing" facilitates the politics and aesthetics of nomadism. In another example from the BBC's Radio 4, Kirsty Young interviews the British actor Simon McBurney regarding the eight recordings he would take with him if ever a castaway on a deserted island. For the last track, he chooses a recording of Veronika Ouchilon, a twelve-year-old Chukchi girl whose "throat-singing" was included in an ethnographic anthology he once heard called The Russian Far North: The Chukchi (1997). His rational was as so:

On the edges of this world I think we can still hear something of our deep past. I understood through my father that in Neolithic times human beings felt that they were part of the world of animals and the echoes of that time, the vestiges, can still be heard today which is why I’ve chosen this piece [by Ouchilon] from the Chukchi people…something of the past and of nature is present in the voice of this 12-year-old girl.

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25 It seems that the physiological references and sungness of this vocal practice parallel that of "throat-singing." However, the connotations of the latter still seem to diverge in line with this discussion.


27 See: http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01kr7q1. Last accessed: 02/24/17.

28 McBurney erroneously states that the Chukchi reside "in the far north-eastern part of Mongolia in the Arctic."
This throat-singing resounds with "pre-modern," "peripheral," "primitive," "natural" and "timeless" alterity, despite the contemporaneity of Ouchilon, who lived and grew up in the same 20th century as McBurney. McBurney deploys a Eurocentric chronotope that banishes alterity to "the edges of the (modern) world" only to return it to the center as a mere "vestige," simultaneously praising while denying it coevalness, a prevalent trope in European narratives of "non-modern" or non-European peoples (see Fabian 2002).

Nomadism also has its comedic variants that latch upon the absurd (English) connotations of "throat-singing," not least because all singing takes place in the throat regardless. For example, the British comedian Karl Pilkington ran a show called An Idiot Abroad (2010-13) in which he would travel overseas in the vein of a travel guide, but with the intention of creating situations amenable to sarcastic humor. In one episode, he travels to Mongolia and attempts to do xöömei in the yurt (ger) of a pastoralist during a lesson.29 His attempt, despite its tongue-in-cheek character, is met with applause by the family watching on. A performance of "Altai Praise-song"30 ensues, during which Pilkington inserts rhythmic, guttural phrases in the vein of his tongue-in-cheek throat-singing imitation. Inserted into this scene are brief cuts to the Mongolian onlookers' expressions of laughter, appreciation, or amazement. But the editing also implies them to be naive: the joke is on them for taking Pilkington's sarcastic sounds seriously. The comments for the online video of this scene demonstrate how sarcasm regarding the audible alterity of Others can quickly devolve into pejorative perceptions. As one commentator put it, "Stupid Mongorians" (sic).

Myriad examples abound of throat-singing facilitating similar responses (not least from my own experience). But the term's gutturalness also presents a fascinating enigma for novel

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29 See: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tfhVijGm8zY. Last accessed: 02/24/17.
30 See Chapters Three and Six for an in-depth discussion of this piece.
listeners. As one travel website states, "throat-singing" is one of "the top five awesome skills" you can learn in Mongolia:

If there is any completely unique skill which you can learn mostly from Mongolia, it is their traditional throat singing. Better known as the Tuvan music in the Siberian borders, throat singing emphasizes 'overtones' a monotonous guttural drone simultaneously pulsating with a high-pitched flute-like whistle. Just like any New Age music, Tuvan provides relaxing entertainment without poetic lyrics or musical instruments.\(^{31}\)

Although riddled with inaccuracies, the post is significant in demonstrating how the notion of "throat-singing" also facilitates the curiosity of novel listeners. Mongolian actors have latched upon this interest in a variety of cultural tours and workshops\(^ {32} \) that cater to foreign tourists, as I detail in Chapter Six.

**Sounding (duugarax), not singing**

The English terms, to this regard, have also served scholars well when pursuing intelligibility amongst their readerships. Nevertheless, they continually face tensions between Euro-American and Inner Asian conceptions of xöömei. For example, a small number of Euro-American scholars have made a critical point that could still use more in-depth discussion:

Tuvin and Mongol practitioners do not consider xöömei to be a form of "singing" at all. Rather, it is a way of sounding the vocal apparatus in ways akin to instrumental music. For these reasons, many Mongolian xöömeich state that the verb “sounding” (duugarax) is therefore more appropriate than “singing” (duulax), even if both terms share the same root in “sound” (duu), which also means “song” (duu), as I detail below.

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\(^{32}\) For one example, see: https://www.facebook.com/throatsingingcoursemongolia/?fref=nf. Last accessed: 02/19/2018.
Curtet acknowledges this basic point when relating the seminal, if brief, discussion of ethnomusicologist Alain Desjacques (1992). As the latter writes, Mongolians regard xöömei "not as a song, but as a laryngeal whistle" (1992:9). However, Desjacques does not elaborate further on the significance of this distinction in everyday or intellectual discourses in Mongolia. Later scholars have yet to survey many of the implications and roots of this distinction. Instead, they have suggested more appropriate translations for the Mongolian concept of xöömei in response to particular aspects or elements of the vocal practice. For example, Curtet coins a novel French term diphoner, or "to overtone" (2013:66), to reflect the ability of the Mongolian noun (xöömei) to become a verb (xöömeildöx). Beahrs follows another strategy by proposing "timbral singing" as a more accurate and less problematic term than "throat-" or "overtone singing" because it reflects the orientation of Tuvan xöömeizhi upon “timbre” over “pitch” (2014:5), in musicological parlance. He follows Süzükei’s proposal that Tuvan xöömei is timbre-oriented in the sense that discrimination of pitch height (a critical element of composition in European classical music, at least) does not play a significant role in the musical perception of sound (Levin, with Süzükei 2006: 47). But for the sake of convention, he refers to "throat-singing" as his main translation. In both of these cases the terminological decision is explicitly strategic and cognizant of translational difference. The following discussion is not a critique of these strategies, but rather a survey of the poetics and politics of audibility under global circumstances as they apply to the word xöömei itself. In response, I imply the Mongolian sense of duugarax with the English verb "to sound" when using the latter in ways that reflect the former and throughout this dissertation I speak of sounding, not singing, xöömei, and avoid the most prevalent English term "throat-singing."

This discussion is inspired by the distinction between sounding (duugarax) and singing (duulax) in everyday and intellectual parlance among Mongolian xöömeich, a critical element of
the genre-ness of xöömei among scholars and practitioners in Tuva as well. Mongolian scholarly projects to articulate the originality of xöömei, in fact, hinge upon the vocal instrumentality of xöömei and invoke a vernacular logic of xöömei's unsungness. It is generally a given that any person, xöömeich or not, who is referring to the act of doing xöömei must use either a verbal form of the noun (xöömeilöx, xöömeildöx) or the verb duugarax, meaning "to (make the) sound (of something)." As for Tuvan xöömezhi, they do not use a word comparable to sounding and only use the verbal form of the noun (Süzükei, personal communication, June 14, 2015). But all of these discussions imply xöömei to be a conceptually distinct form of vocalization to that of “singing.”

Important to note here is that duugarax consists of two elements: duu (meaning "sound," "voice," or "song") and garax (meaning "to emit," "to make," or "to exit"). The English notion of “sound” is a weak substitute for the polysemous duu, which has subtle distinctions from other Mongolian terms for sound such as egshig (explicitly a musical sound) and chimee (roughly a noisey sound). These most common terms distinguish musical or non-musical sound and perhaps human versus non-human or mobile versus motionless sources, a topic that requires more formal discourse analysis. My research associates do not easily find explanations for their differences, although they use them consistently in certain domains over others. Mongolian dictionaries define duu as "sound," "song," or "voice," when conjoined with soooloi (throat); egshig specifically means a musical sound, though not implying musicological "timbre" or "tone"; and chimee implies any non-musical sound, but seems to be a consistent verb for sound sources in motion, such as river currents or the wind. The association of xöömei

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33 See Legrain (2011) for an extensive discussion of this term.
34 I am investigating these terms for another research project.
with sounding perhaps has much to do with the mimetic or pastoral applications of Mongolian terms for sound.

However, it is also important to note is that these discussions are debated in some rare cases. Only one associate contends that the only proper verb is xöömeilöx or “to (do) xöömei,” but their view is a personal conviction, not a widespread view. And only in one instance did an established xöömeich contend that "to sound" xöömei is an imprecise usage that only became widespread relevantly recently. Hosoo recalled how most xöömeich in Chandman' district, his birth-place (nutag), spoke of “singing” (duulax) xöömei when he was a child in the 1970s and 80s (Personal communication, June 13, 2015). Resonantly, the conductor Xayanxyarvaa recalled how the renowned xöömeich Chimeddorj was introduced at a concert in the late 1950s as "a singer" who, nevertheless, would "xöömei" (note the verbal usage) several folk songs (duuchin Chimeddorj ardyn duu xöömeilnö) (Interview November 21, 2014). Furthermore, the term xöömeich or “throat-singer” itself became a widespread term in general musical discourse sometime after the 1960s, following the advent of the first professional xöömeich (see Curtet 2013:226-233; cf. Chapters Three and Four), while formal technical or stylistic terminology for Mongol xöömei arose through the intervention of music researcher Badraa and his collaborations with numerous xöömeich in the 1980s. These observations lend some credence to Hosoo's shortened timeline for sounding (formerly singing) xōōmei. But his main point was that from a physiological perspective, "to sound" xōōmei is imprecise: namely, the vocal chords are still resounding, just as in singing.

From a purely physiological and acoustic perspective, he is on the right track. Both xōōmei and singing operate by phonating the vocal chords and shaping the resulting timbre by

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35 Curtet’s master thesis (2006) is dedicated to this topic. See Chapter Five for more on the influence of Badraa and the literature on or by him.
altering the resonant cavities and musculature of the vocal apparatus. Hence, the distinction of 
xöömei revolves around the usage of a common physiological and acoustic process in 
aesthetically and technically differentiated ways. For example, whenever vocalizing in speech or 
song we necessarily contract the vocal folds. In xöömei, this contraction (Mon. *shaxaa*, 
effectively "pressed phonation") is dramatically increased in order to produce a sound that is 
"richer" in terms of timbral density. But when “just” singing one still contracts the voice, 
although to a lesser degree, resulting in a less dense and quieter timbre. As for *isgeree* (Tuvan, 
*sygyt*), the flute-like "whistle" or "overtone," acousticians and their ethnomusicological 
collaborators state that it results from amplifying a particular set of harmonics that are already 
present in the sung (or sounded) voice. 36 A single harmonic does seem to resound in dramatic 
relief from, and even without, the other naturally present harmonics that constitute the timbre 
of the human voice. But this is a perceptual effect: the tip of the tongue is pressed against the 
hard palate, the root of the tongue is elevated, and the entire tongue is shaped into a resonant 
cavity so that a particular overtone perceptually *occludes*, not mutes, the others, which are still 
resounding. In short, xöömei employs the same basic vocal processes that occur when speaking 
or singing to a degree that is aesthetically and conceptually (not acoustically or physiologically) 
distinct from the latter practices. To the degree that the dramatic alteration of these processes 
results in aesthetic and conceptual distinctions it makes sense to refer to them as "techniques" 
that are not done in other vocal practices. These observations do not challenge the soundedness 
of xöömei. Rather, they highlight how aesthetic or technical distinctions are equally social, 
political, or cultural distinctions, not only scientific or acoustic issues.

36 See Levin and Edgerton (1999), Fales (2001), and van Tongeren (2002), among many 
others.
**Vocal instrumentality**

Many Tuvan and Mongolian academics latch upon the soundedness and unsungness of xöömei when attempting to theorize and politicize its originality through a range of intellectual concepts, all of which invoke a kind of vocal instrumentality. With this last term, I refer to their common focus on the soundedness and unsungness of xöömei. Although vocal instrumentality is not an explicit vernacular notion amongst Mongol xöömeich or pastoralists, various pastoral practices and discourses suggest a distinction for vocal practices associated with instrumentality. For example, the ludic mimesis (Levin 2006:82-87) of instrumental sounds is a widespread practice amongst many pastoralists, which the notion of sounding, not singing, xöömei seems to evoke. The following discussion of this topic is mostly limited to the Mongolian literature for practical reasons (I do not have Tuvan or Russian) when exploring the politics and poetics of vocal instrumentality as a nationalistic and pastoral distinction.

The available literature on vocal instrumentality likely begins with Badraa. He first published his views in an article, called "The Art of Whistling amongst the Mongols," in the official journal *Culture and Art* in 1986. Therein, he refers to whistling as an "art relating to the speech organs" (ögüülexiin ektentei shüteltsex urlag). His examples consist primarily of whistling, but he finishes with a statement that there are reasons to believe that xöömei developed out of whistling. He then elaborates on these common aesthetic, conceptual, and technical elements in an anthology of his musical writings from 1998 (see pages 41-50), though his death in 1993 implies that he drew out this connection at least by the late 1980s. Notably, he helped organize a number of festivals of "authentic art" in the 1980s wherein he highlighted this same range of rare and unsung vocal practices, as I detail in Chapter Five.

Badraa's notion of vocal instrumentality includes the arts of melodic whistling (ayalan isgeres); mouth percussion (amaar tashix deldex); tsuur, an open-ended flute that incorporates a
vocal drone; and mouth harp (*aman xuur*). His logic behind this category resides in how

Mongolians refer to a variety of ways of "making instrumental music" (*xöjim üüsgex*) (41) using the vocal apparatus. Importantly, the Mongolian term *xöjim* refers specifically to instrumental, not vocal music like song, for which the term *duu* is reserved (see below). As he continues, Mongolians employ these "methods" (*arga züi*) in order to make sounds (*egshig duur'sax*) like that of instruments, perform "the functions of instruments" (*xöjmiin zemsgitn üüreg güitsetgex*), or combine the speech organs with an instrument during performance (e.g., the mouth harp's usage of the oral cavity as a resonator and the harp itself as an oscillator). He further speculates that the first musical instruments ever belonged to this category, as its contemporary usage by herders to imitate nature when hunting animal or praising *baigal* (nature-existence) suggests. Regarding *xöömei* specifically, he notes how it consists of a "background tone" (*devsger egshig*) in combination with "melodic whistling" (*aya isgerex*). Through this aesthetic structure, Badraa continues, the *xöömeich* can perform as if a musician, simultaneously producing a structured drone (*siitstei gishgüür*) and a "doubled" or "layered" melody (*davxar ayalguu*). And like whistling or other vocal practices, this aural structure has especially served the sound mimesis (see Levin 2006) of environmental sounds. Badraa's categorization is now widespread among other Mongolian scholars. Pürevsüren's history of Mongolian music education, for example, places *xöömei* in a category of "people's song and instrumental [duu xuur] styles of the speech organ," which includes the same genres (2007:11).

This argument is comparable to that of Süzükei, which the latter first developed in the early 90s. As she states, writing in English, much of Tuvan music is organized around a drone-overtone form of sorts (2010:190; cf. 1993; cf. Levin 2006). She means that many instrumental

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37 өгүүлэхийн эрхтэний ардун дуу хуурын төрөл зүйл
genres evince an aesthetic that hinges upon the play between a typically unchanging drone and a melodic upper line, regardless of the genre or instrument. This form may result from a fundamental that naturally produces harmonics (e.g., as in mouth harp performance), an intentionally produced vocal drone to accompany the sound of an instrument (e.g., phonating while performing the *tsuur* flute), or instrumental practices in which one string drones while the other produces a melodic line (e.g., *ikel* or horse fiddling). In some of these cases, the drone or the overtone is intentionally added or manipulated in order to create a particular aesthetic, as in the case of *tsuur* performance. In others, it is an inherent acoustic phenomenon, as in mouth harp performance. Regardless, these commonalities lead Süzükei to clearly stipulate that xöömei is not a vocal genre in the sense of being “singing.” As she writes, "That is why the determination of this kind of art as 'singing' is highly arguable and one can agree with such a term as 'guttural singing' solely by force of habit and because of its wide use" (2010:190). As discussed above, the guttural connotations of “throat-singing” are generally problematic and nomadist. As an instrumental art, xöömei, more specifically, is “an art of making music with the throat,” she continues, resonating with Badraa’s concept of “an art of the speech organs.” The human or non-human location of a genre’s sound source, by implication, does not determine whether it is “instrumental” or “vocal.” Rather, its aesthetic and technical qualities do so.

The implications of vocal instrumentality are not only organological, but also political. Prof. Odsüren, the now-retired founder and teacher of the professional xöömei program at the Arts and Culture College in Ulaanbaatar, is an example. He is generally considered the originator of a now pervasive expression, *xün xögjim* or “human instrumentality,” that hinges upon the same basic logics of Badraa and Süzükei. He takes the Mongolian word *xün* or “person” and links it to the word *xögjim*, meaning instrumental, not vocal, music. Hence, *xün xögjim* is a play on words that intentionally leverages the technical and aesthetic originality of xöömei to
mark it as different from other vocalizations. He promotes this sense of originality in a nationally televised biopic called *Mongol Xöömei Teacher (Mongol xöömein bagsh)* (2014) that celebrates his career as Mongolia’s preeminent xöömei pedagogue. The biopic interviews a range of famous Mongolian intellectuals, all of whom laud the significance of his career or the notion of human instrumentality. Among them is the famous composer Jantsannorov, a hugely influential proponent of national culture and towering figure in Mongolian intellectual life. In his words, “[With xöömei,] one expresses doubled sounds (*davxar öngö*) through one’s voice, and by cultivating the development of one’s body to the level of technology for the sake of artistic expression, one inevitably takes musical art to its most interesting levels.” In other words, xöömei suggests to him a way of manipulating the voice in ways similar to how one manipulates materials into instruments. The technological developedness of instruments thus lends itself to xöömei as well, another connotation of Odsüren’s signature concept.

Jantsannorov’s remark is also a coded reference to a theme that pervades the biopic: the project to promote Indigenous expression as being as developed and legitimate as other internationally renowned genres, such as European classical music. A similar motive seems to inspire Süzükei’s argument for the uniqueness of Tuvan music in the midst of globalization and commercialization. For example, she contends that the staggering popularity and influence of Tuvan music in world music scenes reflects the system’s distinct integrity as a musical system (2010:187). As I discuss in Chapter Five, a similar fear of cultural loss informed the efforts of Jantsannorov and Badraa to promote “authentic art” (*yazguur urlag*), along with cultural

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38 Хүний хоолойгоор давхар эгшиг илэрхийлэх, тэгээд хүний бие махбодийн хожжил орчуултний технологийн түвшинд боловсруулж гаргаж байгаагаар уран илэрхийллийн хувьд гарцаа байхгүй хожжмийн урлагийн хамгийн сонирхолтой хээргүү аваачиж болно.
sovereignty, when promoting a range of Indigenous practices, especially xöömeei, by presenting and reframing them within predominant discourses of "culture," "authenticity," and "development." The characterization of xöömeei as a form of vocal instrumentality is inherently entangled with these politics and poetics of audibility.

The originality of unsungness

So why exactly is the unsungness of xöömeei so compelling? Why haven't other mimetic practices, such as "voice-flute" (xooloi limbe) received comparably profound receptions? In this last section, I review the literature and perspectives on these questions towards illustrating how the relationship between sound, source, and originality is perceptual in many regards, but not without having immediate political and aesthetic implications. The profound reception of xöömeei as a unique or original vocal practice within and without Mongolia has much to do with its unsungness, which can often lead into nomadist interpretations of its significance.

Towards an answer, Fales (2002) and van Tongeren (2002) stepped in with primarily perceptual explanations. As Fales suggests, techniques like overtone singing…

 disrupt perceptual complacency, presenting anomalous sounds that subvert a listener’s instinctive knowledge of source behavior, creating instead a profound if momentary disorientation. Whether, for example, the absolute certainty that a human vocal tract produces only one pitched sound at a time is innate or learned early in life, the disruption of that certainty with first exposure to overtone singing must constitute a brief violence to a listener's faith in perceptual constancy. (2002:71)

This "disruption" occurs because “the acoustic world,” where sounds consist of their full frequency profile, suddenly impinges upon “the perceptual world,” where the auditory system perceives a select range of a sound’s frequencies in order to identify them quickly. Listening usually consists of identifying “sources according to [the auditory system’s] own expectations, sources that are consistent with similar sources identified in the past, or that have characteristics
typical to an environment” (59). But in the case of overtone singing or the didjeridoo, techniques are employed in which overtones, or formants in the latter case, “break free from the perceptual fusion of timbre” and “lose a degree of perceptualization” (68). The perceptual process is reversed. Instead of overtones fading into the timbre of a perceived sound, they are emphasized:

Released from the effects of perceptualization and untempered by the refining influence of the listener's mind, these elements must stand on their own, their singular character in the perceptual world nearly identical to—or at least, directly dictated by—their character in the acoustic world. (68)

Fales' basic point is that the resulting disorientation is perceptual in origin, not cultural: the auditory system must suddenly shift its usual perceptual habits to encompass a timbrel anomaly, producing "a brief violence" to one's perceptual "faith." Van Tongeren puts it in comparable terms. Acoustic disorientation arises from a scrambling of sonic categories that one has developed over the course of a lifetime, starting in childhood (2002:20). For example, the pure tones of harmonics are always present in the voice. But with xöömei, one emphasizes harmonics to a point that the voice no longer sounds as it should within these accumulated perceptual categories, although the disorienting effect of acoustic shock decreases the more familiar the listener becomes with them.

Both of these explanations of xöömei's acoustic shock emphasize perceptual ruptures in acoustic perception. However, listeners also respond to these ruptures as social, cultural, and political beings, as van Tongeren elaborates:

A listener that is baffled by the first experience of overtone singing is confronted with the fact that his or her cultural background never put any emphasis on vocal harmonics. Apparently, by focusing our attention on certain aspects of the sensory input, we already interpret the surrounding world according to pre-conceived ideas that are culturally determined. (42)
In other words, while psychoacoustic shock in itself stems from "perceptualization," Fales' neologism (2002:63), its effects upon the listener register in forms that immediately lend themselves to the poetics and politics of difference. The originality of xöömei may initially stem from perceptual disorientation, but it unfolds in powerful ways because its sounding is remarkably amenable to various ideologies, aesthetic regimes, scholarly, and political agendas.

Indeed, it is primarily Euro-American listeners who seem to respond in terms comparable to Fales' characterization of xöömei's "brief violence" to perceptual constancy. Take a musical encounter from 1987, when Mongolia formally established diplomatic relations with the U.S. Tserendavaa, a Mongolian xöömei performer, had the honor of first demonstrating the vocal art to a New York audience, as part of a group of soloists invited to perform for the occasion at the Asia Society. As a journalist for the Washington Post put it, the performance was "mind-boggling" and Tserendavaa "sounded just like a synthesizer" (Sommers, 1987). But after the concert, as Tserendavaa recalled in an interview (Interview, May 9, 2014), the incredulity magnified when another journalist approached him with a strange request. This journalist believed that Tserendavaa might have a metallic apparatus of some sort lodged in his throat, producing the unfamiliar acousmatic sound of xöömei. In response, he asked Tserendavaa to eat a banana, an apple, drink some water, and only then perform. Tserendavaa kindly obliged and wowed the journalist even more. For this journalist, only the presence of a musical object could explain the vocal transgression of xöömei. In contrast, Xayanxyarvaa, a renowned conductor, retrospectively described his own first encounter with xöömei at the Xovd Tend Days of Art Festival first stage in 1954, not as a transgression, but as an astonishing marker of instrumentality, pastoralism, nature, and thus Mongolness. As he stated, “although song, it was not sung; although instrumental, it was not an instrument” (Interview, November 21, 2014).

Equally shocked in psychoacoustic terms like the Euro-American listeners discussed below, he
nevertheless described his presumption that this unfamiliar vocalization must be "a natural thing" (*naturalny yum*) because of its origins in pastoralism.

In a very different Euro-American case, the ethnomusicologist Alex Glenfield also does not experience a transgression, but rather a transcendence. Instead, he loses faith in his assumptions about the voice, belonging, and the world when describing his perceptual shock as a re-enchantment of and novel engagement with the world.\(^{39}\) He describes his own first encounter in his dissertation:

In 1998, having heard the multiphonic singing of Tuvan *khöömeichi* Oorzhak Khunashtar-Ool, I was profoundly moved, and nearly to tears. This emotional reaction marked my first hearing of Tuvan *khöömei*, and to my lay ears, the sustained, guttural drone beneath a distinctly articulated pentatonic melody on apparently disembodied, whistle-like tones, was a kind of real magic to me. (2007:13)

He continues by couching his "emotional response" in terms of a "transformation" of his way of perceiving sound and the musical potentials of "the solo human voice" because "something new and previously concealed (harmonic overtones)" was now audible to him. To take up music theorist Brian Kane's work (2014), Glenfield encountered a conceptual distance between acousmatic sound ("apparently disembodied, whistle-like tones") and a suddenly defamiliarized vocal source ("the singing of Khunashtar-Ool"), provoking an imaginative supplementation ("a kind of real magic"). However, it is Glenfield's language *itself* that "disembodies" and mystifies the sounds of xöömei, revealing his own way of accounting for the originality of xöömei.

Pegg's article (1992), the first to engage Indigenous conceptions of Mongol xöömei in depth, demonstrates other ways in which Euro-Americans have projected their assumptions

\(^{39}\) His esoteric practice of xöömei for meditation and healing reinforces this observation. On his personal site, Glenfield offers "wisdom old and new" onto the esoteric, spiritual, and healing capacities of overtone singing, broadly defined. See www.alexanderglenfield.blogspot.com. Last accessed: 12/15/2016.
Her publication was in great part a response to increasing Euro-American interest among two groups "in the West" who, at the time, were framing the vocal practice in terms that radically differ from those of pastoral actors in western Mongolia. On one hand, acousticians and ethnomusicologists had been concerning themselves primarily with "explaining" xöömei as a physiological and acoustic phenomenon. On the other, "the New Age movement" was associating xöömei with spiritual or magical healing and meditation. To the degree that a sound practice "reveals" harmonics, according to a common logic in this movement, it also facilitates cosmic connectivity. Historian Wouter Hanegraaf argues that New Ageism constitutes a kind of "secularized esotericism" (Hanegraaf 1996:409; quoted in Glenfield 2007:46), a movement to re-enchant a world that has been thoroughly disenchanted (per Weber 1971) by secularism, modernism, and natural science. Resonantly, Pegg summarily attributes Euro-American interest in overtone singing and xöömei to a general ideological shift in England and the U.S. away from the "Thatcherite materialistic 1980s" towards the "caring 1990s." In particular, she writes how "the New Age movement" was "becoming increasingly popular as people [sought] to re-inject a spiritual aspect into their lives" (48). As van Tonderen generally discusses, harmonic singing has figured deeply into these spiritualist projects of science, sound, and self "in the West" (2002).

Social media reveals a host of other receptions of xöömei in which persisting Eurocentric, Orientalist, nomadist, or misogynistic evaluations of xöömei's originality resound. These characterizations obviously do not behold themselves to the above conceptual and aesthetic distinctions between xöömei and throat-singing, soundedness and unsungness. Instead, they engender novel associations between vastly unrelated perceptions and social subjects when seeking to account for the unsungness of xöömei. For example, Tunala, an Inner Mongolian
xöömeich, transgressed some viewers’ perceptions of what a woman should sound like when she posted a video of herself sounding xöömei.

Commenter 1 (male): That voice should not becoming out of that woman!
Commenter 2 (male): Why not?
Commenter 1: It’s not logical, man!!! [emoticon of face with tongue hanging]
Commenter 2: Sure it is! Women can throatsing [sic], too. And this is how it sounds.
Commenter 1: (Yeah, I know…apparently I need ‘not serious’ typeface!) But from a limited westerner’s perspective [sic], it IS incongruous…
Commenter 3 (female): Incongruous is believing a man or a woman should be limited to sounding, looking, smelling, or feeling a specific way. All things are possible.
Commenter 4 (female): WOMEN CAN DO ANYTHING [emoticon of winking face]

While aware of his own “western perspective,” the first commenter emphasizes the ontological transgression at hand, engendering a debate over the poetics and politics of sounding female.

According to this “western perspective,” however unserious, a female vocalist is incongruous with the sound of xöömei, a perception that is not shared by the majority of Mongolian pedagogues. The same happened to German overtone singer Anna-Maria Hefele, when her video went viral in 2014, reaching an unprecedented 9,346,093 views. Notably, videos of Mongolian or Tuvan xöömei have only more recently reached a similar amount of views. In one blogger’s words,

[Mongolian throat singing, or ‘overtone singing,’] can be as captivatingly amazing as it is incredibly creepy. It’s unsettling enough when you see a Mongolian in full tribal regalia doing it, but when a pretty young German woman starts emitting what sounds like mating calls from the Rigel Nebula from her face you start to wonder if you’ve just inadvertently stumbled onto a tear in the dimensional

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fabric and should perhaps start preparing for the coming of the Squidlords.  

Intentionally sensationalist in tone, the blogger associates psychoacoustic shock with the ontological transgression of what "a pretty young German woman" should sound like. These two cases illustrate how viewers associate vastly different vocal practices together through terms like "throat-singing." They also illustrate how they pose radically different aesthetics and politics of the voice to that of many Euro-Americans. And through such terms, a particularly Euro-American sense of global comparativity is invoked through recourse to technical commonalities (e.g., emphasizing overtones), while disregarding aesthetic or conceptual divergences.

By emphasizing such commonalities, Euro-American listeners or practitioners can then prioritize their own ontological assumptions of vocality, the world it resounds within, along with other voices that reside in it. As Beahrs, among others, notes of Tuvan xöömei discourses, the discussions of foreign aficionados tend to revolve around technical characterizations of xöömei, especially to the degree that the emphasis of harmonics enables the production of melodies (2014:119-124). However, as is well documented in the literature, Mongol or Tuvan actors do not distinguish xöömei from "just" singing by virtue of the audibility of harmonics or gutturrality alone. Glenfield elaborates on one of Süzükei’s key observations (1993) in this regard: “Tuvans tend to think about throat singing as layers of sound, and no particular layer is more important than another; but many western overtone singers concentrate on the harmonics rather than the gestalt of the vocal sound” (2007:5). Levin and Süzükei elsewhere note how, for Tuvan xöömeizhi, “harmonics represent not harmony, either cosmic or human, but, metaphorized as ‘voices’ [ünner], they are the sonic embodiment of landscapes, birds, and

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42 See: http://mancave.cbslocal.com/2015/05/13/4-singers-who-screech-like-lunatics/. This page is no longer publically accessible.
animals along with the spirits that inhabit them" (2006:77). These "voices" imply an order of things whose common denominators are not fundamentally psychoacoustic or cosmic harmonics, but embodied "master-spirits" (Mong., ezen; Tuvan, term) or "deities" (Mong., lus savdag) that play a constituent role in the inspiration and production of xöömei in ways that exceed sound mimesis. In Chapter Six, I explore how a similar relationship plays out between baigal’ and pastoralists, though socialistic musicality (e.g., "songs of the people") is not excluded as a means of aesthetic propriety with the surrounding world. Here I primarily wish to note that to emphasize harmonics is also to de-emphasize other senses of vocality, and vice versa.

Such are the generic poetics and politics of sound, source, and originality within the evolving terms of global entanglement. The following chapters now turn to how similar issues register in the formation of Mongol xöömei.
Chapter III

“Culture” Comes to Mongolia

Before xöömei could become Mongol, or any other marker of collectivity or alterity, it had to become cultural in the first place. Though audible as a way of sounding amidst the surrounding world of baigal’ (nature-existence) in a few western Mongolian communities before the 1950s, it was not yet audible before the nation or the far-flung international world as a voice of "culture" (soyol). Taken for granted today, these associations took a significant amount of aesthetic, political, and ideological work in everyday and public settings to achieve (cf. Stolpe 2008; Tsetsentsolmon 2014), beginning with socialism’s "cultural development" (soyolyn sögöl) project. The strategic collaborations and performative strategies detailed below first provided later musical scholars, publics, and officials in Mongolia and beyond with a conceptual and performative foundation for understanding xöömei in terms of “culture,” “heritage,” “music,” and Mongolness.

This chapter contributes to the existing literature on the "cosmopolitan re-imagination" (Marsh 2009), "professionalization" (Yoon 2013) and "spectacularization" (Curtet 2013) of indigenous musical genres in Mongolia by focusing on how socialism operationalized (Fairclough 2006) the discourse of "culture" in the mid-20th century as a number of "volunteer artists" (sain duryn uran saixanch) in Chandman’ district began heavily promoting xöömei to younger generations. This agenda would result in the district’s strong, but partly contested, association with the vocal practice as "the birth-place of Mongol xöömei" illustrate, a topic I return to in Chapter Seven. In response, I explore "culture" as a naturalized political concept (not an ontological or analytical given) that actors in Mongolia have played into and with in order to realize their entangled agendas during times of cultural development and international connectivity. I also emphasize that the incorporation of xöömei into the aesthetic regime of
socialism—the array of structures, practices, and discourses that authorities employed to regulate and "develop" creative life—initiated the entanglements that I trace throughout this dissertation.

In musicological terms, the testimonies of elders, early film documents, and socialist publications reveal how xöömei performance consisted of a kind of motivic sounding, in the words of the conductor Xayanxyarvaa, who heard the earliest stage performances of xöömei. In the 1950s, the vocal practice was not yet a "developed" form of melodic sounding, the performance of recognized song melodies and genres, as the music scholar Badraa would imply in retrospect (1998:47). Nevertheless, the composer Luvsansharav was drawn to the sound of xöömei and its potential to conjure the nationalized landscape as much as the originality of the nation. As is widely recounted in the literature, Tsedee, a Chandman' youth who participated in the district's study movement, demonstrated his xöömei to the composer Luvsansharav, who then incorporated the vocal practice into a choral arrangement of "Altai Praise-song" (Altai magtaal) for the Xovd Ten Days of Art Festival (Mon. Arvan xonoq urlagiin naadam; Rus., Dekada) in Ulaanbaatar in 1954, a type of socialist festival that functioned to survey the cultural development of the provinces. The professional singer Chimeddorj, from Zavxan province, heard Tsedee at this festival and then imitated him, eventually becoming a proficient xöömeich (throat-singer) himself and performing in other choral arrangements by other conductors of the praise-song. As is usually retold in the literature, he was also first to introduce xöömei to "the world" (delxii) in narratives that refer to cultural delegation tours in Europe and East Asia.

Through these first encounters and seminal concerts, xöömei first registered under socialism's cultural radar for intellectuals, elites, and music researchers to interpret its remarkable sound.

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43 Chapter Two discusses the literature specifically on Mongol xöömei in detail. I detail the literature on Luvsansharav below.
through recourse to socialistic sources (e.g., "the people") and notions of originality (e.g., "national culture").

Chandman’ elders’ testimonies, like those of my associates in general, do not suggest a political conflict with the imperatives of socialistic "culture." To the contrary, they positively regard "cultural development," which was not the case for many other political or economic aspects of Soviet colonialism. However, they do imply a strong awareness of the socialistic culture concept when speaking of "getting cultured" (soyolt suuj baixad), as one elder put it, at the local elementary school, as I discuss below. At this same location, a number of “volunteer artists” were heavily promoting xöömei to re-associate it as a district-level "art" (urlag). The implications of this strong conceptualization of "culture" are considerable for how ethnomusicology today and Mongolian publics during and after socialism have come to understand xöömei as a voice of "culture." Less discussed in the relevant literature is how the work of "cultural development" or "enlightenment" (gegeerel) was a necessary preamble to understanding the vocal practice in terms of “culture” at all. The conflicting semantics of projects to translate the novel notion (Rus., kul’tura; Mon. soyol) into Xalxa Mongolian (see Stolpe 2008; Tsetsentsolmon 2014), alongside the practice of concertizing (t oglxel see below), is evidence towards this point. These transnational debates, nevertheless, were subject to conflict, slippage, and friction throughout Mongolian attempts to render novel concepts and practices intelligible within Xalxa Mongolian and in line with Indigenous values. And they resulted not only in the incorporation of Indigenous practices like xöömei into the aesthetic regime of

44 Chapter Two discusses how these italicized terms are constitutive tropes in performances and discourses (including the literature) of Mongol xöömei.

45 Consider the rebellions of the 1930s, where herders slaughtered their livestock rather than allow the state to appropriate them (see Bredshaw 1972).
socialism, but also in the incorporation of socialistic "culture" into Indigenous value orientations and senses of belonging, as Chapter Seven details in particular.

The resulting question for ethnomusicology concerns how it is to frame, constitute, and study its predisposed subject of "musical culture" in light of the culture concept's poetic, political, and historical political life. On the one hand, the discipline cannot suddenly ignore how research associates have taken up the culture concept themselves, especially in its musical variations (e.g., registrations of musical practices like xöömei as Intangible Cultural Heritage). On the other, it cannot assume the givenness of culture as an ontological or essence-like aspect of peoples, practices, and places because of the concept's political origins and recurring implementation. As detailed in Chapter One, I have argued that the descriptive power of "culture" is inseparable from its prescriptive power for political organizations, making it difficult to ignore either aspect whenever discussing matters of "musical culture." Anthropologist Alexander King approaches this very issue by tracing the semantics of various "cultural models" in Koryak song and dance. One of these models derives from Soviet anthropology, the other from communal discourses about being Koryak and relationality with the non-human world (2011). But because of the culture concept's (e.g., soyol) persisting political life in Mongolia, I avoid treating it as an analytical given. I hope to maintain analytical clarity by focusing, instead, on "culture" as a keyword in motion that does transformative work in the world (Gluck & Tsing 2009) and whose mobilizations require ethnography, etymology, and conceptual history (Kosselleck 2002) to understand. Following theorist Gayatri Spivak (1996:36), the implication is that whenever audible difference becomes cultural, a politics of representation is immediately
Conflicting semantics: a national lexicon

In 1921, Mongolia became the second nation ever to experience a socialist revolution, following Russia's in 1917. But it soon became a satellite state to the Soviet Union that heeded the calls and dictates of Moscow until the democratic revolution of 1992. Soviet colonialism was not only a force for modernist destruction, but also cultural construction. In addition to attacking Indigenous moral authorities (e.g., tearing down almost every Buddhist monastery, or purging lamas and shamans), socialism also promised development, education, literacy, food security, and “culture,” which it did indeed provide eventually in Mongolia. The Soviet Union positively portrayed such “national development” to distinguish itself from other European or American imperialisms and to help justify its dominion over Central or Inner Asian and Siberian peoples. Critical proof that national development was, indeed, underway lay fundamentally in the performance of "culture" by "the people" themselves before the nation and the international world. The critical question, then, was how to get resident communities to behave, think, and sound in cultural ways.

Firstly, the development of a "national culture" could only proceed once "the nation" was identified. As Hirsch notes, the Soviet regime relied upon ethnographic knowledge to identify resident peoples within a "definitional grid of official nationalities" (2005:5). These

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46 As Spivak writes, “[i]f, as I have argued, the concept and self-concept of culture as systems of habit are constituted by the production of explanations even as they make these explanations possible, our role is to produce and be produced by the official explanations in terms of the powers that police the entire society, emphasizing a continuity or a discontinuity with past explanations, depending on a seemingly judicious choice permitted by the play of this power” (1996:36).

47 See Rupprecht (2015) for an in-depth discussion of the Soviet Union’s approach to imperialism and internationalism.
policies were conceptualized as an intervention into the "logic" of history, an attempt to "get on the 'right side' of the historical process by carefully interpreting its inner dynamics and figuring out where one stood on the timeline of development" (6). The aim was to fast-forward the "development" of "tribes" (Rus., plemen) into "nationalities" (Rus., narodnost') and "nationalities" eventually into socialist-era "nations" (Rus., natsii), only after which might they become truly communist. These various entities were generally considered to be ontologically, territorially, linguistically, and culturally "in tact" groupings of "peoples" (Rus., narod) who evinced varying levels of developedness, although these collective terms evolved and changed over time during socialism (see Slezkine 1994). For Joseph Stalin, whose definition became the ideological standard, "a nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture" (1931:307; quoted and translated by Rouland 2003:183). As Rouland elaborates, "a 'legitimate' nation possessed all of these elements, [and so] early nationality policy focused on identifying national groups, developing their national languages, demarcating their territories, and then establishing the culture and cultural institutions that support these constructs." These nations were then to practice sanctified Russo-European values in private and public life (e.g., "socialist in content"), but using Indigenous expressive practices (e.g., "national in form"), and thereby evincing a requisite national originality (Rus., samobytnost') in terms of "culture." Accordingly, it was the task of professional Soviet ethnographers, anthropologists, geographers, and other experts to collect and compile this academic, but practical information on the languages, cultures, and histories of resident peoples towards generating appropriate official categories for their respective trajectories within state-induced development. In short, the Soviet Union did not simply colonize extant "nations"; in most cases, there was none. Rather, it effectively created "nationalities" out of resident communities,
tribes, clans, or peoples by re-identifying them within an official set of national, linguistic, and cultural categories of belonging and developedness.

Mongolian music researchers and Soviet folklorists charged with facilitating cultural development in Mongolia evinced this same understanding of ethnographic knowledge as an academic, but practical collection of information in order to realize similar official categories, promulgate them in public life, and thus facilitate the socialist agenda, at least in appearance. For example, a certain D. Magvan, likely a music researcher, published an article called "Regarding the Problem of Mongolian National (ändesni) Music" in 1960, wherein he summarized Mongolian musical history and recounted the cultural achievements of the renown fiddler Luvsan and his value to the socialist agenda as an exemplar of national music. As he recommended, "our scientific institutions and scholars need to assist the increased development of art that is national in form, socialist in content by researching such things in depth" (39).

Not only describing a cultural subject for academic study, he also identifies source material for the socialist project. As for the Soviet folklorist Boris Smirnov, who conducted folkloristic research in the 1940s and 50s, he describes the challenges he faced when developing “national culture”:

The very task of putting on a play in the Mongolian government music and drama theater, required that, as the musical director and composer of the theater, I was thoroughly familiar with traditional Mongolian folk music. Of course, the mere fact that the creative collective of the theater was mastering new genres and forms, and the fact that citations of new genres gave way to their development, a deeper knowledge of tradition of folk art became increasingly necessary. (Smirnov 1971:3)  

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48 Иймээс манай эрдэм шинжээлэгийн байгууллага ба эрдэмтэн мэрэд тадгаерийг орган судалж үндэсний хэлбэртэй, социалист агуулагатай урлагаа улам хөгжүүлэхэд тус нэгэр болох хэрэгтэй.
49 Translation from the Russian by Anna Bisikalo.
“The old” was not always a target for destruction, but sometimes, mostly in the domain of culture, a foundation for development. But as Hirsch also details, local leaders in the Soviet Union participated in the construction of ethnographic knowledge to serve their own communal interests (2005:10). In Mongolia, it was the same. Following historians Tom Ginsburg (1999) and echoing Chatterjee (1989), ethnomusicologist Peter Marsh discusses how Mongolian elites “cultivated close relationships with their Soviet counterparts as a calculated political strategy, like those among other colonized peoples in history, i.e., learning to use the tools of power colonialists held in order to claim a degree of control over themselves” (2009:99). Similarly, Badraa deployed Soviet ethnography and folkloristic concepts towards his cultural nationalist agenda, as discussed in Chapter Five.

Formulating, let alone translating, the official categories of nationality, like those of musical culture, was a fraught task. As ethnomusicologist Theodore Levin discusses, the key Russian words relating to "nationality" all stem from the root-word narod, literally meaning "people," but potentially meaning "common people," "folk," "ethnic group," or "ethnic nation" (Levin 1996:30). But as he further notes, the root-word and its derivatives have implied different senses of collective belonging before, during, and after the Soviet Union (1922-1991). For example, "populism" (Rus., narodnichestvo), which shares the same root-word as "nationalism" (narodnost', also the word for "nationality") could connote different ideological stances, depending on which semantic genealogy the speaker is invoking. The translation of these national categories into Xalxa Mongolian only exacerbated the complexity as officials and academics imbued them with Indigenous meanings in order to render them comprehensible to resident Mongolic peoples or to further Xalxa-centric agendas under the auspices of "cultural development." Inner Mongolian anthropologist Uradyn Bulag (1998:31) surveys how these
national categories evolved as the Mongolian government sought to officially establish their meanings. The general translations he gives were as so:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>Mongolian</th>
<th>English</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>rod</td>
<td>ovog</td>
<td>clan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plemya</td>
<td>aimag</td>
<td>tribe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>narodnost</td>
<td>yastan</td>
<td>nationality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>natsiya</td>
<td>ündesten</td>
<td>nation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, Mongolian intellectuals differed in their takes on these words, proffering various theories on their developmental distinctions in a Mongolian setting. For example, as Bulag elaborates, one such intellectual called Sambuu proposed that clan affiliation was the predominant form of social organization. Its dismantling at the hands of the commodity's arrival then allowed for the formation of tribes. The dismantling of tribes, in turn, allowed for nationalities, after which came the most developed nation (1983:6; quoted in Bulag 1998:32). However, the primary model for a "nation" (ündesten) happened to be the Xalxa majority, despite some writers using the term interchangeably with "nationality" (yastan). After socialism, many ethnic groups are now seeking to gain "nation" status because of the term’s associations with developedness.

As Bulag discusses, these Xalxa Mongolian words have particularly Mongol (not only Soviet) subtleties, connotations, and genealogies. Literally meaning "bone-group," yastan is comprised of the root-word "bone" (yas) and the suffix -tan, which turns a common noun into a noun for a group of people. The Buriat Marxist and nationalist Jamtsarano first coined this term ([1934]1979; quoted in Bulag 1998:32) and then introduced it to Xalxa intellectuals in the early 20th century. Ündesten is similar in construction in that the common noun "root" (ündes) becomes the key marker of a social group by virtue of the same suffix, hence Bulag’s tact in suggesting a specialized translation as "root-group." Another such term is "origin-groups"
(uğsaatan), which came to prominence in the 1960s when authorities and intellectuals became particularly concerned with "ethnic origins" (qaral ugsaa), following the contemporaneous Soviet interest in "ethnos" (Rus., ethnos). This concern with how ethnicities were developing within Mongolia at the same time then spawned a correspondent increase in "ethnographies" (uğsaatny züi). Notably, the Xalxa-dominated socialist government primarily employed "ethnography" to study the various cultural, linguistic, or historical features of "lesser developed" "bone-group" minorities, more so "more developed" Xalxa "root-groups."

Accordingly, it is common to see the omission of the Xalxa majority in representations of ethnic groupings in Mongolia, while semantic debates, contentions, and slippages over this ethno-national hierarchy persist today—particularly in the domains of "culture." As a brief example, one online article on the customary dress of various ethnic groupings translates, using Bulag's terms, as "The Meaning of Root-group and Bone-group Dress." But within the text are general references to "national dress" (iündesni xuvtsas) as well. And although Xalxa peoples are mentioned throughout the text, the main sections of the article are dedicated to non-Xalxa minorities. This omission (even as the article's title includes "root-groups," which the Xalxa constitute) engendered a debate in the comments section. Whereas numerous readers criticized the omission, a sole reader countered that the Xalxa did not constitute a "root-" nor "origin-group" and that their name could be used synonymously, just like "Mongol." Only one commenter implored the others to clarify how they were using their terms. In short, socialist terms for nationality are riddled with conflicting semantics and ethnic polemics, while Mongolian actors have used these terms inconsistently when negotiating their conflicted Indigenous, Xalxa-centric, and socialistic connotations. These conflicting semantics are also

evident in musical terminology, as discussed below. Nevertheless, the "culture development" project operated on the assumption that these nations did, indeed, pre-exist the intervention of socialist authorities.

As anthropologist Ines Stolpe details, "culture" (soyol; Rus., kul'tura) was also a novel concept in Mongolia, requiring sustained translational, representational, and ideological work in official and everyday settings, following the revolution (2005; cf. Tsetsentsolmon 2014). Not simply a descriptive, analytical concept akin to its contemporary usage as an adjective in anthropology, this "culture" was explicitly nominal and prescriptive in purpose. It contained within itself a moral imperative that "the people" (ard tümen) become "cultured" (soyoltöi) by looking, sounding, and acting within the norms of socialism's aesthetic regime. Authorities first had to translate the Russo-European concept of kul'tura into a language with no emic equivalent (Stolpe 2008:59). They chose the extant term soyol, which seems to have meant "doctrine, ethics, or nurturing" in pre-socialist Manchu documents (Tsetsentsolmon 2014: 427) and was closely associated with the Buddhist term gegeen, meaning "light," "wise," or "illuminated" (Stolpe 2005:12). But following the socialist revolution, soyol came to have several meanings: "education" in a wider sense, including art and entertainment; being "cultured," "civilized," or "cultivated"; and finally, hygienic cleanliness. As a normative and ideological implement, authorities conceived of soyol to be an immanent outcome of development policy and, following the Soviet Union, it was the state's duty to select, edit, and alter it for the collective good. Indeed, "Culture was the preferred means to transmit a new revolutionary ideology, and cultural institutions designed to promote national state formation within the Soviet Union were established in each national territory" (Rouland 2004:183), including within the satellite state

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51 See Lavenda & Schultz (2003), Strathern (1991), and Fischer (2007) for concise surveys and critical discussions of the culture concept in anthropology.
of Mongolia. And as ethnomusicologist Tsetsentsolmon writes, “Labelling performances or
types of music ‘traditional’ and ‘folkloric’ is not just simple description, but part of a process of
developing strategic normative definitions of public culture” (2015:122). Nevertheless, as
Stolpe writes, it was "unavoidable that established terms should still carry their traditional
historical and/or religious connotations," producing a "conflicting semantics" in official as
much as everyday cultural discourses (2008:66) that persists today. For these reasons, "culture"
is not only a hegemonic prescription, but also an evolving discourse, a mode of entanglement
with and means of gaining audibility within internationalized regimes of difference, such as
Soviet internationalism (see Rupprecht 2015; Iriye 1997) or UNESCO Intangible Cultural
Heritage policy (see Nichols 2015).

To concertize ~ toglox

Conflicting semantics are also evident in musical terminology and projects to realize
cultural development through musical edification. And just as soyol became the translation for
the novel concept of "culture," toglot came to reference socialism's most utile and widespread
form with which to implement its aesthetic regime: the concert. Socialism drew upon
Indigenous expressivity as source material for its cultural development project, but in order to
construct oppositions between “the past” and “the present” as much as between “the performer”
and “the audience.” Via socialism’s "strategy of opposition, revolution, and historical rupture,”
many Mongolians came to imagine that “the past—i.e., the enemy—was not the present and the
present was not the past, and, hence, that the past was lacking and lost to the present” (Hojer
2009:578). The concert, both in terminology and performance, helped reify these oppositions
as a novel and “modern” socialist implement. During the Manchu colonial era, for example,
there were formats of performance that were theatrical in a sense, such as the traveling
Buddhist mask-dance (tsam) performances of Danzanravjaa's biographic narrative "Cuckoo
Moon" (Saran xööö), from 1827-1834. And there were plays performed by Chinese actors for Chinese audiences, which other foreigners or Mongol aristocracy may have also attended and which were primarily forms of entertainment (Cheney 1966: 207). Some Mongolian scholars even argue that pre-socialist ensembles performed in court settings, constituting an Indigenous form of classical music (Batchuluun 2009; see Chapter Six). But there were no institutionalized formats that functioned systemically akin to the concert halls, opera houses, drama theaters, and cultural centers that socialism constructed throughout the country in the mid 20th century for purposes exceeding far more than entertainment or religious ceremony.

The challenges of pastoralism to the agenda of cultural development were significant. The population resided mostly in far-flung encampments, not centralized settlements where propaganda efforts could reach more people at once. Intertwined geographic and conceptual distances between socialism and pastoralism required centrifugal and centripetal mobilizations of people. On one hand, the government initiated a range of "cultural campaigns" (soyolyn dovtolgoon) targeted at pastoral encampments in an attempt "to represent the new modernist order in everyday settings" (Stolpe 2008:59). On the other, it built a hierarchical administrative and educational system that required pastoralists to settle in district centers and attend government schools (Orhon 2007: 107-147). Accordingly, musical institutions recruited "people's talents" (ardyyn av'yas) for "courses" (kurs) on professional performance at provincial centers, while cultural campaigns and concert tours sought out pastoralists at their encampments and performed in situ concerts. A hierarchical network of drama theaters, cultural centers, "red corners" and "red yurts" (ulaan ger) also appeared in every district,

province, and urban center in a bid to encourage and monitor cultural production (Marsh 2009: 47-72). Necessarily, socialist cultural development was not only top-down and impositional in modality. It was also incorporative, participatory, and experimental when imposing its novel conditions for incorporating Indigenous sonic or musical practices. As one socialist history states,

> [at] all places where the ideological brigades presented theater, played concerts, opened red corners, and read great books and interesting articles, explaining their contents, or giving talks or lectures on the meaning of the people’s revolution, the Party’s policies and goals, judgements and decisions, on the benefits of veterinary medicine, the national economy [ardyn aj axui], the cultural development of schools, or on the state of foreign nations, the volunteer artists [sain duryn uran saixanch] were helping local homeland [oron nutgii] clubs, establishing red corners, doing all forms of work [ajil töröl]. (Natsagdorj 1981:137)

Concerts within and without these structures were particularly useful in transmitting novel ideas in a non-confrontational, participatory, and economical format. As much as the government created a cultural infrastructure, it also promoted the participation of the public in producing concerts themselves, as an article entitled "How to Perform a Concert?" demonstrates. Published in the cultural ministry's journal *Culture* in 1957, it explains the rationale behind the format:

> The concert (kontsert) is the most widespread form of the volunteer artists' performance (toglolt). The reason is that its requirements of performance (toglox) are very cheap and it is suitable for performing on any stage. Through the concert, all types of talents among participant’s talents can be demonstrated. (Ardov 1957:71)

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55 Суртлын бригад оңсөн өлдөр бүрдээ гээжүүгүү, концерт тоглож, улдан булаг нээж, ард олонд хөөрөөгөө, сонин сэргүүл уншулан, түүний утга учрыг тайлбарлаж, ардын хувьсгалын ач хобогдол нам засгийн ардлагы боодого, тогтол шийдвэр, хүн мэдэл эмнэлэгийн ашиг тус, ардын аж ахуй, сүртчүл эсөлөн хөгжил, улс орны гадаад байдаг зэрэг сэдвэр лекц ярий хийж, орон нутгийн клуб, улдан булагхийн эзэн байгуулалт, ажил төрөл, сүйн дурын уран сэйханчдын ажиллагаанд тусалж байв.
The article then continues on to instruct the reader in the practical details of organizing concerts, such as how the announcer should address the audience or how to keep the program interesting for viewers. The concert was a readily available format for demonstrating the culturedness of one's community by highlighting the talents of its own members.

Figure 3.1. A still from “Culture Distributor” (Soyol tügeegeh) (1986), showing the composer Luvsansharav conducting an outdoor concert. Courtesy of the Mongolian Film Archive.

Where infrastructure was not in place, the earth itself would serve as a concert site. Volunteer artists could mark a place as “a stage” merely by seating the audience before standing performers for a sole cultural moment in everyday life. This format in itself diverged aesthetically and ideologically from pastoral customs of group performance. As Marsh writes, "[o]n stage, the performer received all of the attention, while the audience sat quietly and watched," creating a separation of roles between performer and listener (Marsh 2009:50).
Elevated, amplified, dressed up, and lit up, the performer addressed a passive audience as the primary agency in determining content. In contrast, at celebratory gatherings or "festivals" called nair, the most common type of group performance, participants typically sing a long or short song together, often with a community leader who selects and begins each song in order to garner good fortune (xishig) from the surrounding world (see Plueckhahn 2014). As Enebish writes, “[p]articipants in a traditional festival follow the principle, 'To sit is more important than to drink, to sing is more important than to sit’” (2004:20). The participatory dimension is directly inverted in that everyone is both participant and performer and seated in a circular arrangement according to gender and age. If conducted within a yurt (ger), then the seating arrangement follows the symbolic ordering of the circular layout: elders and the home's owner sit in the northerly section, youngest at the southerly section, with men on the westerly and women on the easterly sections. Also parcel to the musical purpose of nair is the informal transmission of new songs to all participants.

These radical divergences in performance custom behooved socialism to translate the notion of concert itself into Xalxa Mongolian, but not without conflicting semantics similar to those of the national lexicon discussed above. For example, as the verbal form of toglojt (lit., concert; also kontsert), toglox specifically means “to perform a concert,” as Bawden (1997) indicates, regardless of the genre. However, pre-socialist (Kovalejskij 1844-49) and early socialist (Shagj 1994[1937]) dictionaries reveal how toglojt once only meant "to play a game, joke.” For example, the scholar of Mongolian drama Saran indicates that the word never appears once as a reference to performing or concertizing in Danzanravjaa's 19th century biographic narrative “Cuckoo Moon” (Saran xöööö). Instead, the script reveals the author's
reliance upon the verb "to sing" (duulax) to describe any scripted performative act. These anecdotes and entries imply that toglox gained its second meaning, “to concertize,” in the mid 20th century during the cultural development project. During this same time,

Mongolian music schools adopted Soviet educational curriculum, methodologies, and organizational structures. While courses and lessons were taught in the Mongolian language for all students, Russian became a necessary language for all faculty and scholars, as this was the lingua franca of the Soviet world. Russian musical terminology even formed the basis of the musical language in Mongolia until Mongolian musical dictionaries were developed. (Marsh 2009:54)

As a former member of parliament from Xövsgöl province, who was working at the state-run Mongol Radio at the time (Marsh 2009:89), the famed Mongolian music researcher Badraa (1926-1993) was charged with creating a dictionary of translations for Russian musical terms using Cyrillic, which only recently had become the official script for Mongolian. The result was a dictionary of translations of Russian musical terminology that Badraa simply called Musical Terminology (Xögjimiin ner tom’yoo). Printed by the State Publishing House in 1956, the concise dictionary served to facilitate pedagogical activities at the nation's newly founded musical institutions as well to articulate a Soviet musical aesthetic.

Every key musical term needed a Mongolian equivalent. However, many Russian terms had no such emic equivalents, and so Badraa either directly imported them into Mongolian, attached their meanings to extant Mongolian words, or coined new words and phrasal nouns that loosely reflected the Russian term. For example, the Russian gama (scale) remained gama while tembr (timbre) became öngö (lit., color), although the latter Mongolian term previously

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54 I thank the linguist Saruul Erdene Myagmar for consulting Saran on my behalf (Personal communication, April 23, 2015).
55 I thank Badraa’s granddaughter, the ethnomusicologist Tsetsentsolmon, for providing me with a copy of this dictionary.
only meant visual, not tonal or musical color, according to pre-socialist dictionary entries. 

_Muzyka_ (music) became _xögjim_, which refers specifically to instrumental music or musical instruments, excluding vocal performance or singing, unlike the Russian term. But _öngö_ shifted in meaning to include musical "color." Like the national lexicon discussed above, speakers have used this latter term in ways that diverge notably from its first official translation by Badraa. For example, contemporary speakers equally discuss “high” (_deed_) and "low" (_dood_) qualities of pitch as much as "thin" (_narir_) and "thick" (_büdüün_) qualities of timbre with the term _öngö_, suggesting a more accurate translation as "tone," as Bawden gives (1997), a topic I return in Chapter Seven.

Regarding a term with which to translate “to concertize,” Badraa faced a particular problem. He needed an equivalent for the Russian verbs _ispolnit_’ or _igrat_', meaning "to perform, execute, play." It seems that he saw no acceptable emic equivalent for these important musical verbs. The curious absence of the word _taglox_ (to concertize) in his musical dictionary suggests this. As a solution, Badraa decided to list a variety of Mongolian verbs to encompass the Russian term's wider ambit: to sing (_duulax_), to dance (_büjiglex, bujix_), to make music (_xögjimdöx_). According to Badraa's granddaughter, the ethnomusicologist Tsetsentsolmon, the music researcher resisted the idea of using _taglox_ as a translation because the former term originally meant "making jokes or games" in a pejorative sense contrary to the estimable and artful connotations of concertizing (Personal communication, October 15, 2014). In Tsevel's famous dictionary (1966), for example, _taglox_ has the following meanings:
1. to cause pleasure and enjoyment to one's spirit
2. to be amused, rest, to spend time doing anything for the sake of a competition
3. to have any form of art work shown or listened to
4. to make fun of something or to mock

And in the contemporaneous journal article, "How Does One Play a Concert?,” which I discussed above, the author uses the verb *toglox* for "to concertize" (Ardov 1957). These instances suggest that Badraa was likely contesting the prevailing usage of *toglox* at musical institutions when excluding the term in his official dictionary. Badraa also did not propose *toglolt*, the nominalization of *toglox*, as a translation for the Russian word *kontsert* (concert), likely for the same reasons. Instead, he gave the Russian word itself, along with the ambiguous term *todruulalt xögjim*. If translated literally, this neologism means something like "clarification" or "display music." Performers do not use this term in common or academic parlance today. However, Badraa's lament, it seems, went unnoticed. Contemporary dictionaries follow Tsevel’s basic definition. Of course, the performative usage of *toglox* does not connote "mockery" or "deception" for contemporary speakers, despite Badraa's initial criticisms.

Many performers today do not seem invested in these terminological poetics and politics, even as they think explicitly about Indigeneity when discussing *yazguur*. But the distinction between Indigenous and colonial terms can be of importance to those who are invested in *yazguur*, or "originality.” For example, during a conversation with Tserendavaa, the renowned xöömeich, I asked him about the thesis I was exploring in my research at the time:

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56 1. амьтны сэтгэл хороон баяасаа зугаагаа гаргаа. 2. зугаа гаргаа, амарх, уралдаан тэмцээн хийхийн тул ямар нэгэн юмаар оролдож цагийг нөхцөх. 3. урлагийг аливаа зохиолыг учуунаа, сонгог. 4. доог, дааж инхийг хуурах.
57 Curiously, Tsevel’s dictionary (1966) does not include the word *toglolt*, although it does list *kontsert*, wherein there is no reference to the Mongolian term. But journal articles from before 1966 do use the terms *toglox* and *toglolt* regularly in addition to *kontsert*. These two examples suggest that both words had entered everyday cultural discourses by the 1960s.
Socialism’s aesthetic regime had introduced the word *toglax* to elevate staged performing from “normal” sounding, musicking, singing, recital, or dancing. He looked up as if he had not thought of this before. “Maybe…” he quickly said…

It is possible that the word 'to concertize' entered the Mongolian homeland's language during the time of Russian colonization—'to play a concert' [that is]. On the other hand, it can refer to a 'pleasant' or 'nice' evening event, as I am now thinking. So western European words, via Russia, entered the Mongolian vocabulary, entered its real (*jinxene*) vocabulary—the words that were coined, formed, or arose from our original mind-spirit (*setgel oyun*)…These foreign words were translated, thereby neutralizing the Mongolian language, as I also surmise. (Interview, May 9, 2014)

Tserendavaa was quick to note how the poetics of *toglax* as a concept may have "neutralized" an aspect of the Mongolian language and an "original mind-spirit." Konsert and *togloht*, after all, have one important difference, despite referencing the same novel format: the former is a Russian term, while the latter is an Indigenous one. However speculative his thoughts were, *toglax* is not merely a translation for a foreign concept. It constitutes a means of articulating, and privileging, Eurocentric forms of appearing, behaving, and sounding upon the stage, even as Mongolian performers greatly value these forms for their own original purposes in the present. Concertizing, after all, played a critical role in the formation of Mongol xöömei, as Curtet details in his discussion of “spectacularization,” the shaping of xöömei performance for the stage (2013). The following section introduces the reader to this well-studied history while adding some key, yet less-discussed points.

**A study movement: Chandman’ district, 1930s-40s**

Xöömei seems to have first registered on socialism's cultural radar in the 1930s when a man called Chuluun Togooch (1896-1968) performed it as a “folk art” in Chandman' district’s cultural center (Pegg 1992:41). Little is known about him, but he is said to have worked as a postman, as his nephew Dashdavaa (b.1937) recalled (Interview, August 24, 2013), a job that
may have entailed a higher social status or official connection. But like many others in this period, he would also make a living by caravanning for months at a time. As a musician, he played music or sounded xöömei for his hosts as compensation for their hospitality, as Pegg relates the words of Tserendavaa, who first met Chuluun when he stayed at his home for three nights during one such caravan trip (1992:41). She also relates that Chuluun was said to perform "the Melody of the River Eev" on horse fiddle, a significant matter that I return to elsewhere in the dissertation.58 Important to briefly note here is that this melody no longer sounds in Chandman’ district, a Xalxa-majority community, while it has persisting associations with Tuvan, Oirat, and Urianxai peoples, all minority groups in Mongolia. This observation resonates with contentions that Chuluun learned xöömei from elsewhere, as detailed in Chapter Seven’s discussion of maintaining originality. Some scholars and Chandman’ residents have stated that Chuluun learned from outsiders, Urianxai or Tuvan residents or passersby in the far off past. Or, he learned while in the military service, either in Zavxan or Bayan-Ölgii province near to the Tuvan border. Enebish, for example, quotes two Chandman’ elders as saying that Chuluun learned from Urianxai outsiders (2012b:104-5) while Sandagjav claims his own grandfather, from Zavxan province, would caravan to the district, demonstrating xöömei there for the first time (2010:44). However, no Mongolian author, including Enebish and Sandagjav, questions that xöömei’s “cultural development” began in Chandman’ when Chuluun, and other less remembered residents, began promoting the vocal practice in the 1930s. The vast majority of Chandman’ xöömeiich hotly contest such claims. Efforts to promote xöömei in the district, as detailed in Chapter Seven, readily demonstrate this point.

58 See Chapter Six for a discussion on attributing origins and maintaining originality, a discussion of the edges of development in Chapter Three, and the politics of maintaining originality in Chapter Seven.
In any case, xöömei was rare even in Chandman’ district until the influence of Chuluun. As Dashdavaa put it, "I heard early on that xöömei came from elder (ax) Chuluun. Later on, it was no longer his, with the people (ard tümen) coming to know of it.” As for the local scholar Myagmarjav, he describes Chuluun as "the first to cause xöömei to be known" (2015:24) and provides the following image and brief biography in his recent monograph:

Togoo's eighth child, born in Chandman' district's Süljee micro-district (baga). These people would transmit song and fiddling from elders to youngers. Chuluun was a fiddler, xöömeich, and singer. Besides doing xöömei, he worked the fields, built courtyards while teaching youth xöömei and his student Tsede, by doing xöömei and ornaments in "Praise Song for the Altai Mountains," was the first to make xöömei heard on the Mongolian people's artistic stage.

Figure 3.2. Image of Chuluun, "The First Xöömeich," as shown in Myagmarjav’s monograph The Finest of Melodic Tones (2015).

This sole surviving picture also reveals an important detail: Chuluun is wearing a private's uniform, a feature that ties him directly to cultural enlightenment policy. The 1930s
saw an intensification of the revolutionary government’s cultural enlightenment projects, following the initial creation of art brigades to reach rural settlements, the establishment of "red corners," and the dissemination of "red yurts" (ger) to the most isolated mobile encampments. The army not only gave soldiers military, but also musical training, with each military unit founding a music "circle" (dugulan, as in "group") for the performance of national instruments and song (Tserendorj 1981:140; quoted in Pegg 2001:254). After this training, soldiers were then charged with organizing cultural enlightenment in the countryside. Relying upon the testimonies of several native-born elders, Enebish writes that Chuluun transmitted xöömei to the Revolutionary Youth Union (Xur'qalt zaluuchuudyn evlel) in Chandman' district, even giving an exact date:

In this district, the motivation for xöömei's teaching and study happened unexpectedly. The year was 1938. During this time, herder youth and members of the Revolutionary Youth Union working together to build herd pens, water wells, and grazing fields was a common thing they did as an organized activity. During this time of organized work, as chief organizer of the work, T. Chuluun would have the youth listen to his xöömei with the aim of passing their free time joyfully. Through this one fortuitous event, the beginning of Chandman' district's movement to study xöömei was put in place.

(2012a:105)

The testimonies of elders I have interviewed seem to describe this "study movement" and Chuluun's cultural efforts. As Dashdavaa recalled, "when herding, we would make an 'uuuu' sound, moving our hands in front our mouths or with a cup [to reflect the sound back on to themselves], doing what Chuluun said to be the way to do xöömei. Scholars have widely noted this learning technique (Pegg 1992; Curtet 2013). Chuluun was not alone in his promotional efforts, accompanied either by a few contemporaries, like his brother Derem, or

59 Тэр бид хоёр хоинд явахдаа гараар "уууу" гээд а ингэж ёоход а "манай Чулуун ах ингэж хоомийлдог юм" гээд а аныг нь оруулж байсан юм болох уу даа. Тэгэж а байсан.
his first students, like Margad (see Curtet 2013:226-233; Myagmarjav 2015:24-32). Elders I spoke with could not recall the names of these other promoters, but there were a number of them, including the female student Badmaa. All the available evidence and scholarships suggests or states that Chuluun was the most senior promoter. For example, Myagmarjav provides an overview of renowned xöömeich from Chandman': Chuluun is first, as is typical in similar narratives in other Mongolian publications (e.g, Xerlen 2010), following him is Tseren Xuvjaa, who was born in 1927, making him 31 years the former's younger—several generations, that is—and Tsedee, who would become the first xöömeich to perform on the stage, was born the same year (Myagmarjav 2015:27-29). Myagmarjav also relates a testimony from Janchiv, Tsedee's son, stating that Chuluun and Tseren were also promoting xöömei in the 1950s and 60s (22). Pegg’s discussion of Chuluun’s visit to Tserendavaa’s house in the early 1960s seems to support this statement (1992:42).

In sum, from the 1930s and into the 1950s, Chuluun and others were promoting the vocal practice heavily, including at the local school, despite great economic instability and low standards of living. As Törbat Tseren Böö (b.1937) recalled,

My mother and father herded in hard times. There was socialist taxation, a really hard situation had developed. When I was in school getting cultured [soyolt süüj baigaad] this motherland was in a time of war, there was no technological stuff, there was nothing to eat. It was a hard situation when we were at school: some marmot meat, marmot oil, no peace of mind, no flour or bran like today. We got food by caravanning. That kind of life has passed on by. And so, at that time, regarding this thing called xöömei, at Chandman’s elementary school I, on one hand, was trying and imitating it because older persons [e.g., students] were doing xöömei because it was being spread at school. And so many xöömeich were formed from the school. This is the history. 60 (Interview, August 26, 2013)

60 Бага нас болвол одоо нилээн ардын аж ахуйтан байсан, хүнд үед маль аж ахуй аав ээж эрхэдөө [xii], социализмын альбан татвар, хүнд үед нилээн хүндээн байдалд бэл байсан. Намайг сургууль сөөлд сууж байхад энэ эх орны дайны үе байгаад, техник мөхөөгөө гээч юм байхгүй,идэж уух юм байхгүй,хүнд байдалд бид нар бага сургуульд
The promises of "cultural development" seems to have been strong enough to inspire such efforts even in times of little. Other elders referred to these school visitors as "volunteer artists," implicating them more directly with the cultural development project. As the elder Buyantogtox Gavaa (b.1938) recalled,

In any case, this person called Chuluun first [taught us] while we sat at school, which used to stand upon this side of Chandman' hill. And so in those times, volunteer artists first started us sounding xöömei, playing fiddle, saying we had to place our hands like this. That was around 1950, probably, for we finished 4th grade in 1951. We didn't know where in the world the art [urlag] of xöömei existed. But probably xöömei comes from here. It's from here. After that, Tsede and Badmaa followed. We were learning when gathered at the district school. (Interview, August 24, 2013)

Xöömei was novel to these students. Some of them did not even refer to the vocal practices as "xöömei." As Törbat recalled, "They didn't say xöömei in those times. Only in later times was it named xöömei." Rather, they referred to the melody of the River Eev, a significant topic I detail in Chapter Four. Nevertheless, these cultural efforts sparked a sustained communal effort, with a range of leading xöömeich and officials at its helm, to promote the vocal practice nationally and internationally during socialism and continuing into the present, as discussed in [105]

Meaning they had to cup their hands before their mouths in order to redirect and amplify the sound back to their own ears.

Ямар ч гэсэн манай сумын хувьд бол Чулун гэдэг хүн анх бид нартыг сургуульд сүүж байхад одоо энэ Чандмань толгойн доод талаа сургууль байсан. Тэгэхэд тэр үед саян дүрсэн үрийг сайн хайхгийг хараат үгээр үгээсээ жагсаан тэнэндээ нийгэмлэн, бөгөөд тээврийг, хөөмийг дуутаргаж, хуур татаж саян дүрсэн үрийг сайн хайхгийг анх эхэлж байсан. Тэр нь 50 он байх бид нар 51 онд 4-р анги төгсгөж байсан. Тэр үед бид нар 4-р анги төгсгөгүй байсан би тэр унэйг 50-д он байх өөр өөрдөө бодож байна. Хөөмийн уулзаг гэвэл, тэр үед бид нар далхийн хаана байгаагаа мэдрэж байсан биш. Гэхэд тээврийг хөөмий эндээс гаралттай нь бол мадагтуй. Эндээс гаралттай. Түүний дараа Цээдээ гэдэг хүн дагалдаж, дараа нь Бадмаа дагалдаж байлаа. Бид нар сум дээр цуг сургуульд сүрч байсан юм.
Chapter Seven. They succeeded immensely over the generations. As musical anthropologist Carole Pegg wrote in the early 1990s, “Certainly, Chandman’ sum is the source and centre of xöömei revival in Mongolia and of its transformation into a cultural ‘art form’” (1992:34), a "revival" with deep roots in socialism itself. For these reasons, it is hard not to look at the popularization of xöömei as a product of socialist intervention, but it is then also necessary to acknowledge how cultural development was partly a communal and participatory project. If xöömei had had strong ties to religious authority, this history of development might have played out completely differently. As a vocal practice that was audibly original (rather, distinct in a socialistic sense), yet devoid of lyrical content (and thus potentially “feudal” connotations), xöömei seems to have been an ideal candidate for cultural development. In any case, it still took a chance encounter for the vocal practice to register nationally under the cultural radar of socialism.

**Incorporation: The Xovd Province Ten Days of Art Festival in Ulaanbaatar, 1954**

The study movement in Chandman' in the 1930s and 40s was at least a semi-official matter on a district level. But on a provincial or national level, xöömei's incorporation into socialism's aesthetic regime happened later in the early 1950s through an encounter between Tsedee (1924-2004), a Chandman' native, and the composer and conductor Luvsansharav, then stationed at the Xovd province theater in Xovd City as choir director. Myagmarjav (2015: 29-32), relating a conference paper by Janchiv, Tsedee's son, provides biographical details on Tsedee while Sandagjav (2010:40) and especially Curtet (2013:228-230) discuss the specific moment of "incorporation," a rehearsal for "Altai praise-song" (Altai magtaal) at the Xovd drama theater. I add to this history with interviews with the conductor Xayanxyarvaa.

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63 This paper was originally given at the 3rd International Xöömei Festival in 2014.
(November 21, 2014), who witnessed Tsedee's first concert, and the state-honored artist (gar’yat) Zangad, who performed at this concert. I also consider a once lost film reel of this seminal concert, which the Mongol Film Archives, or more specifically head archivist Sugarsuren, re-discovered upon my request for it in the context of this research project.

Tsedee was born in the vicinity of xarchig, the crevice that has recently become a "natural theater," the Chandman' district’s 6th micro district, and worked at the Xovd theater from 1951 until 1966, after which he became a driver. Before this time, he had been a soldier stationed at the western frontiers of Mongolia (1945-48), after which he returned to Chandman'. According to Janchiv, Tsedee learned xöömei from Chuluun at this time, but developed his skills mostly on his own while herding. Janchiv described his father more generally as so:

He was someone who sang a lot and made many interesting sounds. Driving his motorcyle, he would sound whistle xöömei [isgeree], xarxira with his throat [xööloigoor], with me sitting behind him. He would do voice exercises while driving. Standing against the wind, he would make natural melodies [baigaliin ayasaar]. As a child, he was very talented and so he would constantly develop that talent.65 (Interview, July 7, 2014)

This talent got him working at the Xovd theater as an "artist" (jüjigchin). As Janchiv writes in his conference paper, "in 1951 he came to the Xovd theater because of his xöömei as his talent enlisted with the honored duty of turning an original art [yazguur urlag] with few practitioners.

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64 See Chapter Seven for an in-depth discussion of this sacred place.
65 Er нь оорөө их дууллаг хүн. Их сонин авна гаргадаг. Мотоцикл бариад явж байхдаа хүртэл хөөмийний игсэрээ, хархираа хоолойгоор дуу гаргадаг хүн байсан. Би ард нь суутад, орйнх нь мотоцикл унасан зураг тэрг дотор байгаа. Явж байхдаа хоолойны дасгал хийж л явсан юм шиг байгаа юм. Салхи сорвд, байгалийн авсаар явж байсан. Оорөө багын их авъяастай байсан учраас тэрг авъясаа л хөгжүүлж байсан байд.
amongst the people [ardyn dund] into a stage art\textsuperscript{66} [taizny urlag]" (see Myagmarjav 2015:31). Myagmarjav clarifies that he was selected at this festival for his xöömei performance (29). The reference to Tsedee sounding xarxiraa, a guttural style whose term is an onomatopoeia for "waterfall," is also a significant topic that I return to in Chapter Three when discussing the edges of development.

However, the circumstances of Tsedee’s encounter with Luvsansharav make it unclear if he was recognized for his singing or xöömei at the art festival in 1951. For example, interviews with Luvsansharav by Sandagjav and Curtet imply that the composer was unaware until 1954 that Tsedee could do xöömei, three years after joining the Xovd theater. At this time, the resident composer and conductor was preparing a novel arrangement of "Altai praise-song" for the coming Xovd Ten Days of Art Festival (Arvan xonog urlagjin naadam) to be held in Ulaanbaatar in 1954. Pastoralists in the region typically would have an epic singer (tuul’ch) perform the praise-song, accompanying themselves with a lute (tovshuur) or fiddle (ikel), when arriving at an encampment to venerate the local mountain deities (lus sawdag). Importantly, the epic must be “recited” with a special vocal timbre to which the untranslateable verb xailax refers (see Pegg 2001; Levin, with Süzükei 2006). Epic-singers also use the praise-song as a customary preamble for reciting epics\textsuperscript{67} But for the occasion of the festival, Luvsansharav had composed a praise-song suitable to the aesthetic regime of socialism: a choral arrangement for trained singers employing plain voice, no lutes, fiddles, epic-singers, or xailax. Having conducted research on the praise song’s various versions among local minorities, especially the Zaxchin, he employed

\textsuperscript{66} 1951 онд Ховд аймагийн төрөг жүжигч нарж, хөөмэйлэх болж чухамдаа ардын дунд байсан боловч нийтээс нэг их түгээмэл ёлгуурах урлагийг тайшны урлал болгохыг хүндэнгийг хэрэгжүүлэх салгын авыртаа юм.

\textsuperscript{67} See Katuu (2009), Schubert (n.d.), Pegg (2001), and Plueckhahn (2014) for more on this praise-song. In Chapter Five, I detail further its re-working into a short version for small group performance in the 1980s in tandem with cultural nationalism.
key motifs as source material for his own arrangement. Again, musical ethnographic knowledge was not only describing, but also re-working "national" source materials, as discussed above. Regarding xöömei, as Luvsansharav’s recalled, Tsedee came up to him one day with the aim of revealing something to him: "Teacher, I sound this thing called xöömei" (Sandagjav 2010: 45). Without this one meeting, as Curtet notes, the history of xöömei in Mongolia may have been vastly different. Though charged with scouring the masses for candidate talents and expressive practices, and having traveled to seemingly every district in the province, including Chandman’, Luvsansharav had not yet heard xöömei (Sandagjav 2010:38,45; Curtet 2013:229), a surprising outcome in light of the study movement in the district. Luvsansharav's own higher-ups were also unfamiliar with the vocal practice before hearing Tsedee at the arrangement’s rehearsal and inspection at the provincial theater, despite having grown up in western Mongolia, as Curtet further quotes the conductor (2013:230). But this was the very purpose of creating a centralized cultural infrastructure in a land of highly mobile pastoralists widely dispersed across a daunting and unforgiving terrain—to identify talents and practices for cultural development.

It is important to note that Luvsansharav found xöömei, but not other Indigenous genres or practices, suitable for the choral arrangement. Again, xöömei seems to have espoused the requisite features for cultural development: originality (in the senses of being “unique”) alongside a lack of “feudal” connotations.

The first official reception of xöömei occurred soon after the chance encounter with Tsedee at a preview of the choral arrangement for officials in Xovd province, among them the future prime minister Tsedenbal. It was the same year as the piece’s national debut in Ulaanbaatar at the Ten Days of Art Festival in 1954. Curtet quotes Luvsansharav at greater

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68 Багшаа би нэг нийм юм дуугардаг, хөөмий гэдэг.
length, regarding his rationale for the vocal practice's incorporation and how it sounded in this debut performance:

And so, while working at school, a student, the actor called Tsedee, this youth said, "Teacher, I can sound my voice like this." "What are you sounding?" I responded, while working. Indeed, he was sounding xöömei. And I had never heard it anywhere before. "What a wonderful (saixan) great thing," I said and then included it in "Praise Song for the Altai Mountains." [Xöömei] depicted the majestic, wonderful beauty of the Altai, and so at the end [of the piece] there was a xöömei performance over the accordion. Ending with xöömei, the accordion in place, the Altai looming, [the piece] ended. Xöömei was heard [by the audience] as so.⁶⁹ (2013: 229)

The choir was given a certificate of honor by the authorities in attendance for the [public?] performance, as Sandagjav writes (Sandagjav 2010:40). Hence, the first bonafide stage performance of xöömei technically occurred in Xovd province, not Ulaanbaatar, as some research associates tend to state, although only the latter was a public event.

As Marsh notes, these ten-day festivals were explicit apparati for the implementation of governmental cultural policy and were modeled after the dekada (ten-day festivals) of the Soviet Union (cf. Revin 1988; Tsentsentsolmon 2015:123):

Each province was responsible for organizing a “Ten Days” festival in Ulaanbaatar at least once every five years as part of each province’s five-year plan. Provincial cultural officials were expected to prepare performances that display their province’s unique character, usually through concerts, theater productions, and gallery exhibitions. The elements of this ‘unique character’ were expected to be both progressive and symbolic. Ethnic diversity within a province, for instance, was typically expressed through performers wearing costumes of each of the different ‘nationalities.’ The repertoire of these

⁶⁹ Тэгээд сургуулын хийж байтал миний нэг шавь жүжигчин Цэдээ өгсөөгүй задуу “Багшаа, би хоолойгоороо нэг юм дуу гаргадаг юм аа” гэлээ. “Юу дуугаргадаг юм бэ, чи? Дуугаргадах” гээд. Ажил дээр ш дээ. Тэгсэн чинь хөөмэй дуугаргасан байхгүй юу. Тэгээд би ерөөсөө үрдээ ойнох хаян ч сонсоогүй, ямар сайхан глэ юм, гээд тэр “Алтай мутгалаа”-даа дууғаарсэн байхгүй юу. Тэр бол сурвалснайхан Алтай гөлд саяхныг дурсалсан дуу 6 дуу, тэгээд төгсөлд нь аккордон дээр тэр хөөмэйлдэг юм. Тэгээд хөөмэйгээр төгсөлд, аккорд барьдад, Алтай сүндэрлээд, тэгж төгсч байгаан. Хөөмэйг бол тэгж сонсоон.
performances typically emphasized such themes as the homeland, happiness, labor, and progress. (Marsh 2009:65)

Accordingly, Luvsansharav sought to frame the Altai Mountains as a symbol of the homeland’s *(ex oron)* "majestic, wonderful beauty," as Curtet quoted him above, using xöömei as an index for a romanticized, national landscape. Xöömei was unfamiliar to the nation in general and it is perhaps also for this reason that Luvsansharav was particularly interested in incorporating it as an example of “uniqueness” at the Ten Days Festivals.

Uniqueness and unfamiliarity also required mediation. After all, Tsedee did not perform alone on stage, but rather as the climatic ornament of a choral arrangement. As musicologist Susannah Smith writes of the folk choir format in the early days of the Soviet Union, it was a newly designated art form that "presented a positive image of Soviet society completely in accordance with the ideal of socialist realism" (2002:394). As a collection of voices singing songs that "belong" to "the people," the folk choir quite literally indexed resident peoples with the socialist state. Xöömei, as a rare and unfamiliar practice, did not evince this same capacity. Luvsansharav's compositional decision implies that xöömei by itself did not yet fully suit the aesthetic regime of socialism, requiring its framing within the choral arrangement and choir format. Tsedee’s performance of a kind of motivic, versus melodic, sounding in this choral arrangement seems to lend credence to this point.

**Motivic sounding I: Tsedee**

It was commonly believed that there were no recordings of Tsedee's xöömei. Instead, the earliest known recordings of a Mongol xöömeich were said to be of Chimeddorj, whom Badraa says learned by imitating Tsedee after hearing the latter's Ulaanbaatar performance with

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70 See Turino (2008) for a discussion of how musical signs and national discourses interact semiotically.
the folk choir in 1954 (1998:47). The poor state of archives in Mongolia helps explain this surprising fact, despite socialism's great investment in documenting cultural development at the time. But at the Mongolian Film Archives, I indeed found a listing for the Xovd Province Ten Days of Art Festival in 1954. Unfortunately, the head archivist Sugarsüren informed me that the recording had been lost long ago. With much work to do there regardless, I returned several days in a row and asked again two more times, just in case. She kindly obliged on the third day and, somewhat miraculously, she told me she was able to find the reel. I am indebted to her patience. The recording can now be heard on An Anthology of Mongol Khöömii (Buda Musique 2017).

Figure 3.3. The listing for the earliest known film recording of Mongol xöömei at the Mongolian Film Archive, entitled “The Xovd Province Ten Days of Art.” No. 109/304. 1954.
The catalogue card describes the event as a concert of "choir song" (xor duu) by "actors, artists" (juujigchid) and "volunteer artists." The brief black and white clip starts off with a frontal shot of the Opera House on Süxbaatar (now Chinggis Xaan) Square in the center of Ulaanbaatar, then immediately cuts to the folk choir at center stage with Luvsansharav conducting before them, his back to the audience. There are three rows of singers, who don “national dress” (uundersnix xuvtas), while the conductor, notably, wears a European suit. This dress choice seems to underscore the leadership of Russo-European aesthetics. By contrast, the current conductor of the National Horse Fiddle Ensemble now where’s a traditional robe (deel), underscoring the leadership of Mongolian aesthetics. In the next shot, echoing the folk choir’s structured formality, the audience is seated in repetitive rows. They wear a mixture of suits, other European attire, but also deel, the "robes" that Mongolians customarily wear for either everyday or formal occasions. Back to the folk choir, we see the female singers, wearing what is likely the intricately ornamented dress of recognized "nationalities," and the men, wearing white robes that are likely tailor-made national creations. They soon sing the arrangement's iconic refrain,

\begin{align*}
Mönxöö tsasan extei & \quad \text{Silver greatly snowy} \\
Mölgor chuluun orgiltoi & \quad \text{Rounded, straight, peaks} \\
Örgön tümen öndör & \quad \text{Wide, most tall} \\
Xüder bayanxan xaan & \quad \text{Robust, rich king} \\
Altai nutag min gev gene lee & \quad \text{Oh my Altai birth-place}
\end{align*}

![Figure 3.4. The iconic final verse of Luvsansharav's "Altai Praise-song."](image-url)
After the other verses finish, we finally hear the concept of xöömei that Luvsansharav explained above, although the Ulaanbaatar performance did not include an accordion, like the private performance for officials at the Xovd theater. While Tsedee's xöömei only briefly sounds in the very last seconds before the audience roars with applause, and though the sound quality of the sixty-year-old reel is quite low, we can still hear some of the xöömei performance's basic features. Tsedee seems to sound the same phrase twice, moving up from the 8th harmonic and peaking at the 12th, a fifth in tonal terms, then returning to the 8th, implying the choral arrangement's tonic. The two phrases also parallel the major tonality of the choral arrangement. The folk choir then fades out with the second phrase as the piece ends. Like all Inner Asian xöömeich, he skips the 11th harmonic, what somewhat approximates a flat 5th in tonal terms, implying a pentatonic scalar quality. As Levin writes, “the harmonic series is not used naturalistically, in its raw form, but selectively, within a tonal system rooted in cultural preferences” (2006:53). Although he also states that Tuvan and Mongol xöömeich do not employ the 7th harmonic, Mongol xöömeich have employed it regularly at least since the first
renditions of folk song melodies in the 1950s. Also notable is Tsedee’s timing, which is not strictly metrical, but somewhat “loose” in relation to the well-timed synchronicity of the choral singers. Luvsansharav, as Curtet relates, did not compose the phrase Tsedee performed, but merely instructed the latter to come in at the finale (2013: 255-56).

71 See Chapter Four for a discussion of melodic sounding and the first xöömei performances of folk songs.
Figure and audio example 3.1. Tsedee's "ornamental" phrase at the end of Luvsansharav's "Altai praise-song". Ulankhathar, 1954. Sonogram made with Sygyt Software's Overtone Analyzer.
Xayanxyarvaa, the famous military ensemble conductor who attended this concert as a youth, described his reaction to Tsedee’s xöömei performance in our interview. For him, it did not consist of discrete, artful melodies, but rather "small motives." Its instrumental qualities also lent it great interest among the audience:

"When we first heard [xöömei] we were very interested, it was a very interesting thing. Although sung it was not song; although instrumental it was not an instrument. Regardless, a very strange [xachin], interesting sound was being made. When thinking about what it depicted, I thought it depicted baigal' [nature-existence]. There was a small motive [motiv]. There was no native [nativ] melody."71 (Interview, November 21, 2014)

For the conductor, xöömei was an aesthetic anomaly that defied prevalent categories of song, vocality, and instrumentality. As much as it was a vocal practice, it sounded like an instrument. But as instrumental as it sounded, it was still a vocalization. With no recognizable or "native" melody, no established folk song being rendered, this xöömei performance seemed to consist of "motives" instead.

We hear, in short, a kind of motivic sounding, to take up Xayanxyarvaa's terms, framed within the through-composed harmony of Luvsansharav's choral arrangement. I do not suggest that Tsedee himself conceived of his xöömei in these same terms nor that every xöömeich in Mongolia evinced this aesthetic equally at the time. As I detail in Chapter Four, xöömeich before this time likely emphasized sound mimesis, aesthetic propriety, and melodic links to natural sources, such as mountains, rivers, and their master-spirits. Tsedee likely espoused this

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72 See Chapter Two for a detailed discussion of vocal instrumentality.
73 Тийм би бол тарийг анх сонсоод их сонирхсон их сонин юм их сонин. Одоо тийм дуу гэхэд дуу биш хөгжим гэхэд хөгжим биш, тэгсэн мөр төвлөө их хачин сонин одоо эгшиг гаргадаг. Энэ одоо ямар сонин юм энэ юуг дурсалж байгаа юм бол бох би бодоходдоо юм зүгээр байгаагийг дурсалж байна гэж бодсон гэж байсан. Ийм тодорхой хүн бариад авах мотив байхгүй байгаа нугалаа бол байна жижигхэн одоо мотив бол байгаа юм мотив бол байнаа аа. Натив англгуу байхгүй.
same aesthetic orientation. His son Janchiv’s testimony that his father sounded “natural melodies,” as discussed above, supports this point. But from the musicological perspective of musical elites—professional performers, composers, or researchers of the time—Tsedee’s performance conjured a motivic quality, suggesting particular domains to which it then belonged. I take up the term motivic sounding to address this socialistic musicological discourse.

For example, Xayanxyarvaa implies a dichotomy between "nature" and "culture" through his motivic conceptualization: xöömei depicted baigal' (nature-existence) and it had no "native melody," saying nativ with a Russian accent. He made this point even clearer, when describing the difference between Tsedee's xöömei and that of Chimeddorj, who heard and imitated Tsedee's xöömei, and later became the first to render song melodies with xöömei, several years later, as I discuss in Chapter Four. Upon me asking about his encounters with Chimeddorj at a later concert, the conductor responded:

I simply congratulated him and said he did xöömei wonderfully.
Chimeddorj said I know Tsedee's xöömei. I said, Tsedee's xöömei has one difference, whatever the case, it is was natural [naturalii baisan].
You are now making it an art [urlag]. A wonderful thing, I said.

Implicitly, the conductor implies a strong distinction between “nature” and “art.” Badraa described this same achievement of Chimeddorj as progress to “a new stage” in the development of xöömei (1998:47; see below). As Xayanxyarvaa continued, Tsedee’s performance was…

the first time that xöömei came to the professional stage. [X]öömei was an undeveloped, unmastered [ezemsheegui] thing. With this thought in mind, and towards giving it to people, [xöömei] was used decoratively [dekarativnii], it was used as an ornament [chimeglel].

Note that his sense of "nature" and "culture" strongly follows a socialistic sense of the two categories, namely that the former is non-human (hence "unmastered," "undeveloped") and the latter human (mastered, "undeveloped"). But upon the stage, “a natural thing” suddenly
enters a domain of "culture" and thus “the nation,” a novel “art” now "given to the people” through the facilitation of the folk choir format.

"Go learn and return": Our Melody, 1956

This storied performance seems to have greatly inspired a number of performers, conductors, and intellectuals, one of whom, the conductor Damdinsüren Bileg, then created another choral arrangement of "Altai Praise-song." He produced two such arrangements for two different events. Historical narratives also frame these arrangements as seminal moments in the "development" of Mongol xöömei: the first overseas performance at the 5th World Youth Festival in Warsaw, Poland in 1955, which I discuss in Chapter Four, and the first film performance, a musical called Our Melody (Manai ayalguu) from 1956, which I discuss below. Both of these arrangements included xöömei sections featuring Chimeddorj (not Tsedee, who had returned to Xovd province by the time of their creation). For each of these events, Damdinsüren re-worked the same general thematic and lyrical material in Luvsansharav's 1954 arrangement using what is likely a different choir. However, unlike Luvsansharav's version, the xöömei section is not tagged on at the end as a final ornament. Rather, in the film, xöömei sounds as a suspenseful moment juxtaposed against winding waters and monolithic mountains before the choral climax, while in the Warsaw arrangement the xöömei section seems to sound towards the middle of the arrangement. The editing of the latter's film documentation suggests that sections of the performance have been omitted, though enough of the included footage reveals that the Warsaw arrangement is relatively different from the film arrangement. In any case, the Warsaw performance and Our Melody help outline the novel ideological horizons of xöömei following its incorporation into the aesthetic regime of socialism. Juxtaposed with the film recording of Luvsansharav's choral arrangement at the Xovd Ten Days Festival, they also help reveal what xöömei seems to have generally sounded like before Chimeddorj would learn
how to sound songs a few years later. After reviewing the ideological horizons of xöömei in *Our Melody* in this section, I return to the aesthetic of motivic sounding and the issues it engenders.

The year after Tsedee’s performance, in 1955, xöömei circulated internationally within the Soviet sphere at various festivals. However, it was not Tsedee, but Chimeddorj Gaanjuur (1931-1980) sounding at these seminal events, now storied in histories of Mongol xöömei. Born by the Ulaagch river in Nömrög district, Zavxan province, Chimeddorj was working at the National Theater in Ulaanbaatar at the time of the Xovd Tend Days Festivals. By all available accounts, however, he had learned how to do xöömei on his own, having heard Tsedee during the festival performance in 1954 (Badraa 1998:47; Sandagjav 2010:121), a remarkable feat. Chimeddorj was immediately sent to the Soviet Union and Europe, also within the format of a folk choir, to perform as a singer and xöömeich. Reflecting his model Tsedee, Chimeddorj similarly espoused an aesthetic of motivic sounding in these first overseas circulations. And while he would go on to fulfill the internationalist imperatives of socialism, in addition to figuring out how to sound the melodies of folk songs, he was also enlisted, like the choral arrangement of "Altai Praise-song" itself, in the national imperatives of socialism, as I now detail further.

The rest of this section looks at and listens to another incorporative moment in which socialism operationalized the discourse of "culture" when nesting xöömei within a visual and aural format: the film. Just two years after the Ten Days Festival, xöömei sounded for the first time in a film, which was called *Our Melody* (1956). Its scenes and score explicate what "cultural enlightenment" was meant to look and sound like, as a retelling of the narrative illustrates.

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74 However, it is likely that Tsedee was nevertheless first to perform overseas in China, Korea, and possibly Japan, despite popular narratives that Chimeddorj was first, as I detail in the following chapter.
follow up with a brief analysis of the following scene and xöömei's sounding within the romanticized, national landscape in the film.

Some time during the early days of cultural revolution in rural Mongolia…In the expanses of an unknown countryside of dunes, shrubs, and craggy trees, two horse riders are making their way. One of them is a man, the other a woman. A non-diegetic long song (urtyn duu) emphasizes the bucolic tranquility and easy pace of things with winding melissmas and trailing heterophony between a lead vocalist and accompanying flautist. At the same time, an individual is walking across a dune with a bucket. The song stops when this man sees the two riders in the distance and becomes excited.

“Come here! Come here!” he yells from afar, waving his hat frantically in the air. He runs down a dune’s slope, stops by his truck, and puts the bucket down. The two riders, in turn, gallop over to him.

“Are you good!?” says the male horse-rider.

"Good! Are you good? Get down from there!"

They are old friends whose paths have unexpectedly crossed.

"Alright! How many years have we not met? Where have you come from?" says the rider.

“Well I am transporting some goods. Hey, Chimge, why haven’t you sent this one to school?” He is referring to the female rider, Chimge’s little sister.

“Well, I was going straight to the district center [sum]. I can send her with you!”

“Of course! Of course! There is plenty of benzine, right?” he says, tongue in cheek.

The young sister finally intervenes in the discoursing about her and asks what is wrong with the old friend’s truck. The driver states that it needs some water to cool off. She immediately grabs the bucket and gallops off to fetch some before the friend can convince her
to let him do it. The two men watch her take things into her own hands and the driver turns to Chimge: "How about you sing 'Shadow of the Brown Hills' (Xüren tolgoi süüder)?" Chimge obliges and sings these lyrics with a winding, melismatic melody:

- **Xüren tolgoi süüdar** / The shadows of the brown hills
- **Xöndigöö duureed xüüshilhe xöö** / fill the valley.
- **Xünii baga chamtaigaan** / How did I get used
- **Setgel[ee] yundaa dalsaa daa** / to you, my little child?

Shots of the dusty, peaceful landscape pan between shots of Chimge gazing deeply into the distances of his rustic world. The little sister, a young herder whose name we later learn is Delger, gets off her horse at a nearby pond and fills the bucket with water. Chimge's pulseless melody continues to wind upwards, then gracefully releases the tension as it descends along a pentatonic scale. His tone is plain and thin with a slight nasal resonance. The somber lyrics about an absent child seem to anticipate the sister's impending farewell, although they are really about a mother's retelling of the accidental death of a herder boy. When Delger returns, the song conveniently finishes.

"Do you also sing?" she asks the old friend.

"A beautiful song," he responds diffidently, implying that he cannot. But before further conversation is possible, Chimge reminds her that it is time to go. Delger turns to Chimge, who is now mounted on his horse, and looks up her brother.

"Please don’t say, ‘Don’t worry,’" she says.

"Why of course not." And with a smile he kisses her on the forehead: "Go learn and return!

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75 Хүрэн толгои сүүдөр / Хөндийгөө дүүрээд хүүшйпнэ шүү / Хүннй бага чамтайте / Сэтгэл ёундаа даслаа даа

76 I am indebted to ethnomusicologist Sunmin Yoon and poetry scholar and translator Simon Wickham-Smith for insights into this song. The translation is by the latter. In the film, we only hear the first verse.
Delger and the driver, whose name we later learn is Baatar, set off together. It seems as if they have not only left Chimge, but the traditional world itself behind, where herders sing idyll songs and life sweetly unfolds in the slow beauty of the natural landscape. A non-diegetic orchestral piece accompanies the journey to the capital Ulaanbaatar, where Delger will enter automotive school. In sharp contrast to Chimge's long song, European trumpets, clarinets, and strings carry the upbeat, metrically pulsed melody. It seems to mimic the machinery of the Soviet truck and the happy, novel journey forward.

But first, the two travelers stop at a collective (negdel), "a relatively compact social group bringing together people engaged in a particular social task," according to The Great Soviet Encyclopedia (1979). These collectives also served as instruments of sedentarization, economic production, and cultural propaganda by relegating herders to a single locale and various forms of pastoral and agricultural labor (Orhon 2007: 137-141). The truck heads straight to the collective's center. A host of walking milk maids, dressed in clinical white aprons, also head in the same direction. Something remarkable is about to happen. Diegetic choral singing interrupts the non-diegetic theme's staccato optimism. A wall of singers is standing on what appears to be the circular foundation of a yurt (ger) that was either not built or removed to make room for them. The choir consists of two rows, women in front and men elevated in the back. Gender roles unfold in the nationalized garb, too: The women wear flashy, embroidered robes (deel) that extend down to their feet in the form of a dress. The men, by contrast, wear dark, plain robes that stop at their knees, revealing their boots. The male conductor, however, wears a light-colored suit, suggesting the authority of Russo-European aesthetics. It is not Luvsansharav, but Damdinsüren Bileg (1919-1992), another famous

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77 The film score's composer was Gonchigsülmaa Sambo, according to Lucy Rees (2011:45).
composer who played a critical role in the formation of a national opera repertoire (see Rees 2011:26). Just to the right of the performance, a few horses are tied to a yurt. Their heads point in different directions. Either they are oblivious to the human goings-on or they are on guard because of the unfamiliar sounding nearby.

![A still from Our Melody (1956). A choir performs at a collective with Damdinsüren conducting and Chimeddorj sounding xöömei.](image)

A crowd of herders have amassed before the majestic wall of serried singers. Seated or crouching on the ground, bunched together in rows, or mounted on their horses in the background, they loosely comply with the format of this plein air concert. The resounding performers are the center, the silent audience a periphery. They do not heterophonically trail each other, as in a house celebration (nair). At these communal gatherings, as discussed above,
"[t]o sit is more important than to drink, to sing is more important than to sit," as one proverb goes (Enebish 2004:20). Instead, the herders at the collective sit quietly and watch enamored, the work of sung transmission being done for them. The choir, in further contrast, employs full-bodied, chest-voices in the style of bel canto, although in their midst is another kind of voice awaiting its solo interlude.

The choral arrangement is again "Altai praise-song" (Altai magtaal). The piece begins with a legato introductory theme that finishes with a graceful high, setting the mood for the same anthem-like refrain of Luvsansharav’s arrangement. After a brief close-up of the choir and conductor, we rise into the air above the Altai mountains. Their heights and ravines slowly pass below for us to take in their majesty fully. Clouds sit upon the distant peaks. We follow a snowy ridge up to its zenith, then we are flown between other snowy expanses. A prominent peak casts a mighty shadow before we return to the earth, where a river is breaking out of its icy entrapments during the spring thaw. The anthem-like refrain repeats as we move on to still other pastoral scenes. Muted seagulls flock above the newly exposed waters. Yaks run away in a herd as if playing joyfully. And two herders with their horses stand at the edifice of a gloriously gushing waterfall. We have not heard any diegetic sounds. Recorded in a film studio, the piece was later transposed onto these scenes of the natural (now nationalized) landscape. The sonic distance between score and source contributes to a reframing of interrelational baigal’ into mute "nature." The world depicted here is not a world whose master-spirits one must carefully engage and respect, but rather a romanticized, passive landscape in which human ideology wanders freely and seemingly without accountability. Romantic nationalism, with European

78 See Chapter Seven for an in depth discussion of aesthetic propriety while living and sounding with baigal’ (nature-existence).
roots, gushes from this landscape's proud rivers, progressive peaks, idyll scenes, and bustling menagerie. Something better than before is on the move in this screened ideoscape.  

But as the water fall's violent flows give way to a scene of choppy, undulating rapids, flowing by a nearby mountain, the choir suddenly recedes into a soft pedal. Something is about to sound. A singer emits a cuckoo call amidst the suspense and then a choral modulation breaks in. Yet neither event is what we are coaxed into waiting for. The singers crescendo upon one more pedal, only to give way again. And then an unsung voice. It becomes louder (perhaps as the performer approaches the studio mic). The tune is justly intoned, but there is also a drone somewhere in its sounding. On one hand, the tune implies certain vowels as it modulates. But on the other, its metallic whistling conjures an instrument, perhaps a flute. The tune lilts upwards to a tensely held fifth, then down along a major pentatonic scale back to the fundamental. The same phrase repeats several times, before stopping. This was Chimeddorj sounding xöömei. The choir breaks this atmosphere with a robust, pulsed verse. Another refrain follows with a bass line that marks the first and second beats with a root and the fifth, as if the verse itself was marching. We see the collective in its entirety from a distance: three rows of yurt encampments (ail) repeat the same contour. Herders guide their numerous heads of cattle off screen to the left. The nearby horizon of rolling hills encloses the collective's bustling pasture. Delger and Chimge, like everyone else, are transfixed by the performance. They look on, upwards, with proud, sublime smiles on their faces, echoing the optimism of the socialist masses.

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79 For Merca & Morcom, “screened” refers to any live or recorded juxtaposition of sound or music onto a visual medium (2009). “Ideoscape” suggests one of Appadurai’s five dimensions of “global cultural flows” (1990), though here I use the term to suggest the infusion of ideology into an imagined landscape.
The final verse finishes and the gathered crowd claps vigorously. The conductor turns around to face the crowd for the first time and bows in unison with the choir. Even the once statuesque horses are waving their heads up and down and wafting their tails. With the concert over, the protagonists take off again. The film's narrative continues beyond the scope of this dissertation. But they eventually arrive in the capital. Delger enters automotive school, where she puts on western attire and mannerisms. She is no longer “just” a herder. She falls in love with Baatar and they get married. The last shot of the film shows each of them driving their own trucks in the same caravan, heading off into the countryside to continue the work of socialist development…

The above scene both depicts and scripts how "culture" was to play out in everyday life and performance. Not only a representation of "socialism at work," it is a prescription for how the audience is to interpret and realize their own livelihoods and expressive practices within the aesthetic regime of socialism. The audience is shown a path out of the countryside into the city (e.g., away from "the past" towards "the future"), where they are to become educated (e.g., gain factory skills as laborers), refigure gendered sociality (e.g., women at the helm of trucks), and cultivate musicality (e.g., by attending or giving "concerts"). The realism and positivism of "this path forwards" is engendered by syncing various everyday figures (the driver, the herdsmen, the milkmaids, etc.) within a narrative of "improving livelihoods" (e.g., Delger going to school to gain labor skills). The diegetic and non-diegetic use of Mongol and Russo-European musical genres or practices (e.g., the long song, the symphonic score music, the choir, and xöömei) then functions to naturalize the novel link between socialistic and indigenous ways of belonging. The audience hears "their" music (e.g., the long song), along with "foreign" symphonic music (e.g., the travel theme), overlaid upon a familiar, yet re-imagined world of nationalism, development, "nature," and "culture."
One of the choral performers in the scene, the state-honored artist Zangad Baartuu (b. 1936), reflected upon the film's subject matter in our interview (Interview, June 15, 2014). He was but a teenager, just back from conservatory in Moscow, at the time. When I asked what was happening in the concert scene, he stated that it was "cultural enlightenment activity for the masses" (*ard tămnees soyol geger üilex*): "Wherever anyone lived, culture and art had to go and be seen there," he reiterated numerous times proudly. He lamented how such cultural activity no longer seemed to exist in the world. Volunteer artists charged with cultural activities would echo the mobility of pastoralism by packing up their film gear on camels and traveling from encampment to encampment. There was seemingly no household that these "mobile films" (*niįdlitiin kino*) did not reach. Even if there were only two old grandpas or grannies at home, they would come, unpack all the gear, and show a film inside the home for a slim audience of two. They would also perform concerts or read "world classical creations" (*deļii songodog büteeliüüd*) or more specifically, socialist-sanctified literary masterpieces from Russia or Europe. "So many new things were always happening. It was really great," Zangad recalled.

Figure 3.7. State-honored artist Zangad reviews "the collective concert" scene in *Our Melody* (1956) in which he also performed as a youth.
Zangad's enthusiasm for these cultural activities belied their political success and popular appeal. As Stolpe notes, Mongolian historians consider cultural campaigns to have been more effective than revolution or collectivization in achieving the regime's aims (2008:61). While Zangad, and many others who participated in socialist cultural development, fondly recalled these projects, they also had an explicitly political agenda of representing the new order in everyday life (59). Their primary obstacle was the translation of unfamiliar notions and values for pastoralists, who had no familiarity with even the idea of "socialism." Authorities, therefore, had to rely carefully upon "existing cultural resources which could, depending on the perspective, appear alternately as a 'latent threat or a promise'" (Khurana and Diekmann 2007:12; quoted in Stolpe 2008:61). Socialism had a selective relationship to indigeneity: it could not achieve its goals without the latter.

The entire film, in sum, is a musical depiction of socialist development in progress. The characters, accordingly, move from the countryside to the city, where the protagonist Delger gets educated, only to return as a truck driver, culturedness in tow. Musically, this same progress unfolds. First we hear Delger's older brother singing a long song in the rural, natural domains of "tradition," pastoralism, and "the past." When Baatar, the friend, drives Delger off to the city, the upbeat theme helps take them away to the collective, an intermediary point between the rural periphery and the urban center of socialism in Ulaanbaatar (see Orhon 2007). It is notable that we hear "Altai Praise-song" at the collective, not at a concert hall, much further down the path of development. The choir is within the domain of rural tradition, but as urban representatives of "culture." Nevertheless, the choral performance implies that it, too, is of the people in these rural traditional domains. They are cut from the same national clothe, so to speak. Throughout the choral performance, the film cuts to the nationalized
landscape that subumes them all. And when the xöömei section appears, it cuts to various, majestic water sources, echoing the association of xöömei with "nature," a "natural thing," as Xayanxyarvaa put it above, but in the sense of a nationalized nature.

**Motivic sounding II: Chimeddorj**

The motivic sounding of xöömei in *Our Melody* is illustrative of this relationship between indignity and socialism in Mongolia. Chimeddorj performs a kind of motivic sounding, producing two phrases that are separated by and organized around the duration of two breathes. Each follows a similar contour, ornamenting only the highest harmonics, unlike Tsedee, who performs each harmonic "straight." Chimeddorj also leaves out any 11th harmonic, like Tsedee, but dipping farther down to the 5th harmonic before ascending rapidly to the 12th, unlike Tsedee’s more succinct phrases. These two examples do not seem to say much more about what xöömei sounded like just before its incorporation. But in conjunction with the statements of Törbat and other elders in Chandman’ district, who spoke of xöömei once being referred to as "the Melody of the River" or as a sounding "taken" from the Altai Mountains’ waters, aesthetic commonalities with across Inner Asian musical genres seem to appear, whose features a range of musical studies discuss.
Figure and audio example 3.2. An example of motivic sounding in Chimed dorj's xöömei section in Damdinsüren's "Altai Praise Song," Warsaw, Poland, 1955. The transcription in staff notation is a basic approximation of the melodic contour in the xöömei section in Damdinsüren's "Altai Praise Song." Warsaw, Poland, 1955. The sonogram made with Sygyt Software's Overtone Analyzer program.
This general aesthetic seems to evince at least two critical elements: Firstly, Tsede and Chimedдорж’s phrasing seem to be organized around the duration of a breath, not the compositional demands of a song melody. Secondly, the motivic qualities of each phrase tend to be cyclical and succinct: a sole ascent and then descent from the lower to the higher harmonics within an implied pentatonic scale. Several sources address and characterize this aesthetic feature in compelling ways. As Levin writes of Tuvan xöömeizhi, in particular,

Throat-singers themselves do not attach importance to temporally linking separate phrases through measured silence. On the contrary, each phrase conveys an independent sonic image, and the long pauses provide singers with time to listen to the ambient sounds and to formulate a response—not to mention, of course, taking a breath. (2006:54)

Tsedee and Chimedдорж’s performances seem similarly organized around "separate phrases," whose interspersed silences might facilitate aural attention to the surrounding world. Each phrase then becomes an interpretive response to this attention as a "sonic image" of sorts. Our *Melody* even seems to play with this visuality when the camera cuts, during the xöömei performance, to water sources, salient aesthetic inspirations in both Tuvan and Mongol discourse and performance (45-57; Curtet 2013:83-129; also see Chapter Four). A similar association is evident in Luvsansharav’s decision to index the Altai Mountains, another inspirational source, with xöömei. The second source is Badraa’s, wherein he describes the xöömei performance of a certain Genden, a Tuvan, at a celebration in 1954 for the 30th anniversary of the People’s Revolution in Ulaanbaatar. Without any further details, Badraa makes a historical generalization of xöömei itself: "in the beginning [it] was a practice of reciting poems about forgotten mountains, waters, and homelands [nutag oron], using the technique of vocal tension [xooloigo shaxis], following with the recitation of a short melody lasting as long as
one’s breath could⁸⁸⁵ (47). Again, visuality is key here—the audible link to the surrounding world of *baigal*, especially its mountains and waters. And again, the "short melody" is curtailed by breath, not the compositional demands of the melody itself. Badraa seems to be referring to a way of performing *xöömei* that is still common in Tuva (not Mongolia) today: a short text precedes an extended and virtuosic melodic section in which the *xöömeizhi* depicts or imagines a natural source. He also reveals the socialistic frame of his discussion by describing Genden’s performance as being "limited," and thus "undeveloped," because of its organization around breath. He would then be implying the same for Tsedee and Chimeddorj’s performances.

The the Soviet folklorist Boris Smirnov, who was charged with collecting ethnographic knowledge of Mongolia in the 1950s, also seems to describe the general aesthetic of Mongol *xöömei* before its incorporation. Published in 1971, his monograph transcribes but five instances of *xöömei*, a "rarely encountered genre," as he put it (352). The first four are of Chimeddorj and from 1957 at the latest, the year of the earliest sound recordings of Chimeddorj performing song melodies. Three are well-known folk song melodies: “The Bay Horse with Cloven Hooves” (*Tsombon turuutai xüren*), "The Yellow Ambler" (*Shargyn shargyn joroo*), and “Gunan Xar,” an appellation, and the last is "Altai praise-song." However, this last transcription does not suggest the iconic themes of Luvsansharav or Damdinsüren’s choral arrangements, but rather a series of phrases moving up and down the harmonic range of whistle *xöömei* in a manner similar to the film performance in *Our Melody*. For example, the transcription implies that the 8th harmonic, an octave to the fundamental transcribed in the bass clef, corresponds to the F in the treble clef. The notes above and below this note seem to

⁸⁸⁵ *Хөөмэй анх эхээнэ тоочин унших уул, ус, нутаг орныг мартсан шүлгээтэй, тэрэнэ хоолойгоо шахаж тоочин уншсаны дараа хөөмэйлэх аялгуу нь амьгааны хириээр богинохон байлаа.*
correspond to the harmonics within the range of Chimeddorj's whistle xöömei performance of "Atlai praise-song" in the film.

Smirnov's last transcription, however, is of a xöömeich from Altai'-Gov' province called Chimit-Osora, as Smirnov spells this otherwise unheard of Mongolian name in Cyrillic. He may have mistranscribed the common name Chimid-Ochir. The predominance of Chimeddorj, and no other xöömeich beside this Chimit-Osora, may be attributed to the logistical limitations of travel in Mongolia at the time. Smirnov lists this other xöömeich as doing "Imitation of a Waterfall" (Mon. Usnii shorgio; Rus., Podrajaniye Vodopady), which he heard and/or transcribed in 1945 in Ulaanbaatar. This transcription, by contrast, seems to suggest a sounding in which the performer begins with a short verbal phrase that transitions directly into a melodic or motivic phrase. The verbal phrase does not easily suggest a particular word or text, but it seems to be repeated in various ways throughout the transcription. Johann Curtet (2013:231) suggests that the words could be onomatopoeias and the melodic phrases, in light of Sminov's inclusion of the vowels. This may imply a performance in the style of xarxiraa in which open vowel-like sounds (i.e., the formants that characterize spoken vowels) are used to imply melodic contours or song melodies (cf. Levin 2006:52-53). Tellingly, the term xarxiraa can also function as an onomatopoeia for “waterfall.” What look like note ties, which wend up and down, are seemingly meant to indicate transitions between vowels, as the wend up and down as a melodic phrase. The transcription also resonates strongly with Badraa’s description of the Tuvan xöömeizhi Genden, as discussed above, a short poetic text followed by "the recitation of a short melody lasting as long as one’s breath" (1998:47).

It is impossible to say more regarding the affinities between these examples and sources. But they all suggest that xöömeich from the Altai-Sayan region may have shared a general aesthetic based upon repeated, short phrases circumscribed by breath, what I refer to as
“motivic sounding” as a heuristic. My suggestion is that motivic sounding was not yet "musical enough" for the aesthetic regime of socialism. Its aesthetic made sense to the surrounding world of *baigal*, but not to the world of cultural development—the international world, as I discuss in the next chapter. Musical elites like Xayanxyarvaa and Badraa framed such performances as being "undeveloped" precisely because they did not constitute distinct folk song melodies, a recognized genre. Socialism, after all, placed a great premium on sounding the people with song, as the promotion of choirs exemplifies. In the case of xöömei, the obstacle was precisely this lack of melody and songfulness. But that would change within two years of Tsedee’s seminal concert in Ulaanbaatar, where Chimeddorj first heard xöömei. The other transcriptions of Chimeddorj are of folk songs that he eventually learned how to sound with xöömei in the 1950s. As Badraa claims, Chimeddorj, in fact, was the very first Mongolian xöömeich to figure out how to render song melodies with xöömei, what he retrospectively described as “a step” in the vocal practice’s "progress" (1998:47).

To conclude, during socialism every genre entailed different technical or ideological obstacles to their "development." Whereas the *ikel* fiddle's construction from wood and animal parts did not travel well (e.g., in humid conditions the tuning pegs would slip) or sound loud enough on the stage (Marsh 2009), long songs were "too long" and “uninteresting” for audiences seated in a concert hall (see Yoon 2011). In the case of xöömei, I observe a particularly wide ideological and aesthetic distance between it and the socialistic sense of "music." But because xöömei sounded original in the sense of being “unique,” it greatly motivated conductors like Luvsansharav and Damdinsüren to select it for incorporation into the aesthetic regime of socialism. Following their storied arrangements of “Altai praise-song,” it then became necessary to take another “step” and make xöömei more “musical” by performing recognized genres like the folk song with it, as the next chapter details. In this way xöömei
could then become audible to the international world upon “the world stage,” a world in which each nation was supposed to have its own folk songs, according to the tenets of nationalism and socialism. And following this musical step, the motivic sounding heard in the first stage performances in the 1950s would cease to resound in concert halls until much later when cultural nationalism began latching onto the originality of xöömei as a more Mongol voice.
Chapter IV

A Listening World of Other Nations

The incorporation of xöömei into the aesthetic regime of socialism demanded more than the performance of "culture" within the Mongolian nation. It also demanded that Mongolians demonstrate legitimacy as a socialist nation to the international world via “culture.” Only a year after the first stage performance of Tsedee in 1954, the vocal practice was immediately exported to this listening world of other nations. However, xöömei did not yet constitute “a musical art” of its own. Instead, it sounded as an "ornament" without a "native melody," as Luvsansharav and Xayanxyarvaa put it in the last chapter, well within the more familiar formatting of the choir. Xöömei did not appear solo on stage until Chimeddorj, who is said to have learned on his own after hearing Tsedee in 1954, had learned how to sound song melodies, also on his own. He was first to do so, as is commonly said in Mongolian publications and oral narratives, although some elders recall to me how their own elders would perform "The Melody of the River Eev" (Eeviin uyn ayalguu). Later performers, such as Sundui, the exemplar of Mongol xöömei, would also almost exclusively perform short songs (bogino duu), until the 1980s when a renewed interest in "authentic folk art" (ardyn yazguur urlag) would engender another aesthetic shift towards more ostentatiously original genres, as discussed in Chapter Five.

Now storied in the contemporary narratives of Mongolian music researchers, the shift away from motivic to a kind of melodic sounding is said to have enabled Mongol xöömei to reach its "artistic peak" (e.g., Tsend-Ayuush & Rinchensambuu, eds., 2014:160), "a progressive step" (shine shatand dershüülj orxison) in its cultural development (Badraa 1998:47). Euro-

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81 Bogino duu literally means “short songs,” pulsed songs with very few melismatic qualities, in contrast to “long songs” (urtyn duu), which exhibit extensive melismas.
American scholars have described similar aesthetic shifts in Mongolian music in terms of "professionalization" (Xerlen 2010; Yoon 2011), "cosmopolitan re-imagination" (Marsh 2009), or "spectacularization" (Curtet 2013), while in the partly parallel Tuvan case, xöömei similarly became “proof of a distinct voice for a new nationality inside the internationalist framework of the Soviet empire” (Beahrs 2014:15) via its incorporation into official folk ensembles. But some other xöömeich and ways of performing xöömei still did not make sense to the aesthetic regime of socialism and the international world. Suddenly, they were positioned at the edges of cultural development where aesthetic propriety, an ethics of interrelation with the surrounding world (Empson 2011:94), maintained conflicted social relations in daily life with the structures and practices of cultural representation, an officialized ethics of demonstrating national collectivity. As rural life centered more and more around sedentary district centers, xöömeich (throat-singers) either amplified their voices at local or national cultural centers, as happened in Chandman’ district, or they ceased sounding at all, as seems to have happened in Xövsgöl province. Xöömeich in Xövsgöl seem to have maintained social relations of aesthetic propriety with the surrounding world of baigal’ until the 1960s, via musical offerings to supplicate mountains and water deities when hunting. But one can still hear these little-known voices in the recollections of an elder, a few younger residents who say they learned xöömei from other elders, as well as in a forgotten river-melody that still resounds in a local short song, as I detail below.

This chapter and the next draw upon, complement, and, in some instances, query the above literature on musical transformation in Mongolia when describing more specifics of the strategic collaborations, conceptual dialogues, and performative strategies that constituted the aesthetic shift from motivic to melodic sounding. It traces how the international world of delxii came to matter in socialist projects to operationalize the discourse of "culture." This project
required that musical genres and practices make sense to the international world as forms of cultural representation, aesthetic expressions of difference that served as indices for “the nation.” The Xalxa Mongolian euphemism for this sense of the world is *delxii*, which simply means "the world." As I suggest, *delxii* became a socialistic euphemism for the world of internationally legitimated categories of belonging and becoming by virtue of its consistent usage with discourses about internationalism and development over other senses of the world.\(^8\)

In this world, resident pastoralists in Mongol lands became "the people" (*ard tümen*) and the form of their audibility with this world became "culture," in contrast to other forms of audibility, such as musical offerings. Mongolian cultural producers in general began emphasizing the importance of making sense to this world, not only because of governmental injunction, but also out of personal, creative, or communal interest in engaging novel publics or gaining economic or political benefits. In order to gain such audibility, expressive practices had to become "more musical" by meeting the aesthetic and acoustic demands of the stage, including increasing amplitude, practicing stage etiquette, and performing recognized genres such as the folk song. Sanctified intellectuals and cultural producers framed such changes in performances as transitions within the categorical hierarchy of "cultural development" away from the folk (*ardyn*) to the national (*ündesnii*), culminating with the classical (*songodog*). The first professional xöömeich performed this same trajectory by aspiring to perform the main themes of well-known compositions of Russo-European classical music, not only due to official dictate but also out of creative interest. But as was the case throughout the Soviet Union, such cultural development lay the groundwork for cultural nationalism, as I discuss in Chapter Five, and regionalism in Chandman’ district, as I discuss in Chapter Seven.

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\(^8\) See Chapter One for an in-depth discussion of such senses of the world.
**Soviet internationalism and conversing through “culture”**

During the 1950s, the Soviet Union sought to forge international relationships after decades of isolationism under Stalin in a bid to compete with the United States for allies in the so-called Third World and to promote its own version of modernity. Accomplishing this goal required the integration of Soviet-aligned nations in order to highlight their distinction from democratic Euro-American nations in "The West." As historian Tobias Rupprecht writes, "Soviet internationalism after Stalin was a source of legitimisation for the new Soviet political elite and an integrative idea within Soviet society during the turmoil of de-Stalinisation" (2015:3).

Internationalism was not an exclusively Soviet phenomenon. As historian Akira Iriye discusses, the term refers to "an idea, a movement, or an institution that seeks to reformulate the nature of relations among nations though cross-national cooperation and interchange" (Iriye 1997:3).

But in the Soviet world, at least, it also implied the reformulation of relations between "nationalities" (within a state territory) and amongst "nations" (across state boundaries), both of which were official categories of belonging that it had promulgated in the first place (cf. Olson 2004:37-38). To become audible before the international world, in other words, required that one was already *national*, following cultural work in everyday places like that described in Chapter Three. Taken together, international relations amongst nationalities and nations constituted "Soviet culture," what anthropologist Francine Hirsh describes as an "empire of nations" (2000) whose principle was assimilation. Soviet writers, accordingly, concluded that these nationalities, such as the Uzbeks, now had “to bring their music ‘up to the level of world culture,’” meaning it has to comply with European classical music norms (Slobin 1971:7).

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83 See Chapter Three for an in-depth discussion of the national lexicon in socialist-era Mongolia.
Officially speaking, such assimilation and construction was but a means towards another end—a truly communist world society in which the proletariat live together in harmony, free from national, ethnic, and other divisive identities. Hence, over the long term, socialism required the eventual sublimation of the respective nationalities and nations it created. To this degree, it was no different from other European colonial or modernist projects by position local populations within novel categories, dichotomies, and chronotopes. As ethnomusicologist Peter Marsh writes of the Mongolian situation,

In particular, Western-inspired modernist ideologies that were brought to Mongolia through Russia and Russian-educated Mongolians introduced new terms and ideas about what constituted a people, culture, and nation. New modernist concepts of time and history meant that societies would from this time forward be defined in terms that contrasted 'modern' with 'traditional' and 'new' with 'old.' People were forced if they were going to accept the perceived inevitability of progress and modernity or resist and fight against it. (2009:46)

I add that socialism also introduced new terms and ideas about what constituted "the world" itself by re-shaping the categories and terms in which people addressed their collective existence, as I detail below.

Not only a colonial policy, internationalism was also a practice that many cultural producers seem to have subscribed to positively. As Rupprecht writes, “Internationalism was not only an empty political catchphrase, but an ideal that many soviet scholars, intellectuals, cultural figures, political decision makers and, through the consumption of internationalist cultural products, ordinary citizens actually subscribed to” (2015:3). As the state-honored singer Zangad enthusiastically recalled of the 1950s, "It was a time of development (xöggiltei üyed). We would go to the world's nations (ulus orond). For example, although we often performed 'Altai Praise-song' among herdiers [as depicted in Our Melody] we would still go out

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84 I thank Peter Marsh for this reminder.
into the world!" He used the verb *garax*, which can mean "enter, rise up," or "go out" (Bawden 1997) wherein "the world," which he referenced as *delsii* (world, globe), becomes a rhetorical point of arrival. One "reached" (*xürex*) for this world, even as one already lives in it, by performing upon not just any stage (*taiz*), but the world stage (*tartsan*), for which the Mongolian reserves a distinct term. By contrast, this sense of the world did not exist immediately, like *baigal* (nature-existence). Its "masters" were not within the hills, mountains, rivers, or sacred rock cairns networking across the landscape in which one dwells, a topic I further discuss in Chapter Seven. Rather, the international world's judges, spectators, and committees were always elsewhere, awaiting "culture." Actors and performers ventured "into" the international world when participating in cultural festivals as cultural delegations. There, "the world" would briefly form as a conglomerate of politically allied peoples and their respective sounds or appearances. Or at least the Soviet Union encouraged these perceptions in festivals, concerts, and their programs.

The aim of cultural delegations was not only to demonstrate national originality to "the world," but also to "the nation" via a feedback loop between foreign and domestic perceptions. This loop helped to reinforce Soviet-sanctified terms of discourse and performance, as well as correlate creative life across national boundaries within the Soviet sphere of influence. One dimension of this feedback loop consisted of published reports on the achievements of cultural delegations in official journals like *Culture (Soyol)*. These reports reveal the ideological contours of socialist performance within the international world. One particularly exemplary report comes from Lxasüren, the head of the cultural delegation to the 1973 World Youth Festival in partition-era Berlin. He noted how...

[At the great festival, we successfully included our art, receiving praise from the government for the development of our national art—proof of our ongoing attention and consideration—while our artists]
demonstrated the energy they are putting into their creative efforts.\textsuperscript{85} (44)

The key matter here is "proof" to authorities of the cultural delegation’s creative success, which a broader readership with access to these journals could also read as proof of cultural development. Socialism seems to have been highly invested in quantifying cultural development, as the numbers in Lxasüren’s report evidence: there were three main concerts and over thirty subsidiary concerts; over seventy talents participated; among them, nineteen received medals, including gold for the sole xöömeich Sengedorj, whom I discuss below; the radio recorded two people’s (ardyn) orchestral works and three long songs; four television programs featured the delegation’s performers; and over 50,000 spectators witnessed the main concert, while another 5,000 listened via radio or television programming after the delegation returned home. The audience at the concert opening, which unfolded at Berlin Metropolitan theater, was particularly important. Among the many gathered, there were the Central Party, famous public figures, over 43 diplomats from Berlin's embassies, and the judges for the festival’s international competition. Every piece was translated into German.

As anthropologist Bruce Grant writes, "the Soviet cultural project was unabashedly public, reified, intended for mass consumption and intended most importantly to be widely shared" (2011:265). But despite the requisite statistical pomp of Lxasüren's report, the Mongolian delegation does seem to have gained a remarkable reception in the former German Democratic Republic. As he further writes,

\[\text{and so, in the course of displaying the great festival's ideology (ützel sertal) via the concert, the Mongolian representatives, in addition to successfully combining people’s and classical, national and modern}\]

\textsuperscript{85} Их наадамд манай урлагийг хаэгийнхэн амжилттай оролцож зоих их уналтнийг авсан явдал бол нам засган ундсний урлагийг хөгжүүлэн талаар ургэлж буйын анхаарал санахилбэг тавж байдгийн баталгаа нь багаох уран бүтээлчид бидэнд бүтээж туурвихын их эрч хүчнийг өгч байдгийн биет жишээ нь юм.
styles of art, were also able to lift [örgöx] amateur-volunteer artists to the level of professional art, as the great festival's art judges observed unanimously, awarding our concert fifth place with the 5th great festival's medals and diplomas, having selected us from amongst over sixty concerts by a hundred and forty nations.⁸⁶ (44)

The xöömeich Sengedorj Nanjid (b. 1948), a Chandman' native, was one such example of "professional uplift," being a construction worker at the time who could sound xöömei very well. Just two years after the 1973 World Youth Festival in Berlin, he would become the Xovd Music and Drama Theater's resident xöömei performer as well as an actor. Like Zangad, he also regarded cultural development positively, although noting the conflicts of socialism with indigenous expressivity elsewhere. As he stated,

We prepared for two months. We did so much preparation. And so, before going outside [i.e., abroad] they taught classes on how to posture your body correctly. One had to be cultured (søyoltai baix) when arriving at those countries, one had to posture their body and go with culture (yavj søyoltai baix). The government supervised as much as possible. I fondly remember those times. From getting off at the station to the food, we received the healthiest and highest quality treatment because these were officially connected things.⁸⁷ (Interview, September 26, 2013)

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⁸⁶ Ингээд монголын төөгчдийн концертыг их наадмын узэл санал бухээд нь илэрхийлж, ардын ба сонгодог, үндэсний болон үрнүү үрлэгийн төрлүүдийг амжилттай хослууснаас гадна сайн үрэн уран өгөтгөн боловч эмгэжлийн үрлэгийн төвшинд хүртэл орж сагсааныг их наадамын үрлэгийн шүүгчид санал нэгээс узэж, 140 орны 60 гарын концертсийн шилж эмнэлээ таваа байрт суурийг элүүлэн манай концертыг бүхээд нь X их наадмын мэдээ дипломоо шаргахад юм.

⁸⁷ Ер нь тэээл одоохондоо гадаадад явах тоглолтууд хамгийн гол нь юу гэээр тэр үед манай монголын тоглолтууд бэлтгэл их хийдэг. Бэлтгэл сар 2 сар хийна. Маш их бэлтгэл хийнэ. Тэээл гадаад явах тоглолтуудын үр нь хүмүүсийг бие зөв авч явах тухайн хичээл заанаг. Хүннэг соёлтой байх тэр үлс орны дотор очоод одоо угхандаа бие зөв авч явах соёлтой байх тоглолтоо сайн бололцоогор заагийн гаар хангдаг байсан. Тэр их наадаа сайхан санагддаг. Бид нар тэээл бие даагаад орсоо хувиргаа явжил байна. Гэээр бол тэр заагийн төрийн хэмжээний том тоглолтууд гадаг бол их ор шу дэ. Орсоо байж байгаа буудал буудаллаг байгаа буудал даэд заагийн заагаалттай хоол хүртэл их чанартай манай их арүүл хүнс ээ бух юм алан ёсны их хариуцдагтай болдог байсан би бих баярллаг байсан.
Whether a well-known practice like long song, or a then rare vocal practice like xöömei, everyone was taken seriously as a representative in cultural delegations and “culture” was the explicit mode of address between nations and before the international world:

In those times, I had a diplomatic relationship. Countries where we had an embassy would converse through culture (soyolyn xeleltseer), xöömei performers would go overseas here and there and perform concerts as part of governments talks to arrange relationships and treaties.

However, it is notable that other rare practices did not gain official approval. Socialism, in fact, was highly invested in seeking out rare practices as cultural examples of uniqueness, as discussed in the last chapter. Yet rare practices like tsuur, an open-ended flute common among Urianxai and Oirat peoples (see Pegg 1991; Levin 2006), did not receive official recognition until the 1980s, as I discuss in Chapter Five. The reasons may have been happenstance: perhaps no tsuur flautist had the happenstance encounter that Tsedee did with Luvsansharav. Or, the reasons were practical: perhaps no such flautist demonstrated the interest and desire as did the first professional xöömeich from Chandman’ district. Ethnomusicologist Carole Pegg, by contrast, suggests that the tsuur was associated with religious activity and that its practitioners were disapproved of or even suppressed by authorities (1991:71;2001:85), which may have factored into the lack of representation of other Indigenous practices. However, Sengedorj responded that the reasons were mostly logistical or practical: practices like tsuur (open-ended flute) and jaw harp (aman xuur) were even rarer then xöömei, making it harder for them to register on socialism’s cultural radar. The happenstance encounter of Tsedee and Luvsansharav is evidence towards this point: what if someone else other than Tsedee had been selected for the Xovd Theater’s choir, perhaps someone who also happened to be a great jaw harpist? I return to this complicated top of suppression below when discussing the edges of development. But it seems that, regardless of suppression, traveling overseas was considered an honor, carrying with
it much cache back home. For this reason, performers who participated in cultural
development aspired of their own accord to be selected for these strictly regulated cultural
delegations.

Xöömeich also began "conversing through culture" wherever the Mongolian
government was invested in diplomatic relationships with the respective country. Xöömei's
fortuitous incorporation in the 1954 festival, for example, resulted in its immediate exportation
to the 5th World Youth Festival of 1955 in Warsaw, Poland. Of the 134 Mongolian participants
(Krzywicki 2009:305), just one was a xöömeich, the rest being singers, dancers, athletes,
intellectuals, and politicians. Again, Chimedдорj's xöömei seems to have required the more
familiar formatting of the folk choir, with Damdinsüren conducting. Rare black and white
footage of this seminal performance at the Mongolian Film Archive reveals the very moment of
Mongol xöömei's own "opening to the world," as Rupprecht describes the Soviet Union similar
move towards internationalism (2015:2). We see the auditorium of the Palace of Culture and
Science, which had only just been constructed in the same year as "a gift" to Poland (a satellite
state) from the Soviet Union. Members of cultural delegations from other countries sit in the
myriad rows, which extend upwards into the indoor distances of the auditorium. We then cut to
a close-up of the folk choir, the camera panning left to right to highlight the upright qualities of
the singers, stand-ins for "the people." The women are in front, their gender marked by highly
decorated, light-colored robes (deel). Some bear a thin headband, others a kerchief on their
head, and still others were nationalities dress. The sign of an endless knot (ulzii) is emblazoned
on some of their chests. The men, by contrast, stand in back and are elevated, wearing dark
robes (deel) and no head pieces or hats. The women beam, while the men look forward with
stoic facial expressions. After being introduced to the folk choir, we cut to the conductor,
standing before the choir in a business suit, marking his professional conservatory training and
the authority of Russo-European stage aesthetics. He looks intently at his singers with a calm energy, waving his hands with skill to mark the up-beat character and tempo of the choral arrangement.

The recording of the performance begins with the tenor male voices marking the 1st and 2nd beats with vocables to produce a march-like feel, as the women sing a variation of the praise-song’s main theme. The conductor then seems to nod at a member of the choir. The choir fades into a low hum. The camera cuts to the audience, panning to the right. A metallic, whistle sounds at a 5th above the choral arrangement's tonic, then flutters down and resolves. The camera cuts to the folk choir again, except now a man is standing out in front. The conductor is off screen. It is Chimeddorj. His hands are behind his back. His lips are pursed and motionless, despite emitting a wide range of pitches along with a drone. He repeats the same phrase, the choral voices humming in the background. We cut once more to the lofty ceiling and farthest seating of the auditorium. The camera seems to suggest that the sound is “up there,” too, reaching the international audience. But then the scene cuts abruptly to the end of the choral performance. The conductor is now standing before the choir and Chimeddorj, we presume, is back amongst the other vocalists now. The choir bows in unison twice as the audience roars with applause. More bows. And we see the audience one last time clapping vigorously.
Zangad preserved and kindly shared with me the program for this concert (see Appendix B). While the Polish-language program does not even mention xöömei, seminal as this event was for histories of Mongol xöömei, it does provide insight into how socialism indexed expressive forms with a particular sense of the world. As for "Altai Praise-song" (*Pochwała Altaju*), the following brief description and lyrics are given:

"Altai Praise-song"
An old Mongolian song about the mighty Altai Mountains of the MPR

From their eternally snow-capped peaks
The meadowy and forested slopes
Beautiful and generous
Ever mighty
Flowing Altai
Famous Altai
Abundant Altai

88 This is a translation of the Polish text. The program does not provide the Mongolian lyrics. Translation by Agnieszka Rec.
The language of the program's introduction is forthright: "The youth," who are democratic, are already invested in "a global fight," as are "all people of good will," for a "better future, for peace, and friendship." We are told that the festival itself is a "review of the power of the youth of the whole world," a world voluntarily participating in the Soviet project. The festival's performers, representatives from each nationality (Pol., narodów; Rus., narodnost'), demonstrate this will and worldly engagement via the presentation of their respective cultured, not simply cultural, practices. By implication, the basis of their ability to become representatives stems from their cultured talent and ideals of "peace," a key element of "Mongolian art," a value which "the masses" share an affection for. Under the gaze of the international world, only cultured talent can stand-in for national collectivity. Socialism's teleology for the world distributed the sensible (Rancière 2004) through such competitions and concerts.89 As the state-honored horse fiddler Batchuluun Tsend described this distribution in an interview with the linguist Saruul Erdene Myagmar, "If you didn't sing like Norovbanzad [a famous long song singer] you didn't go overseas."90 In other words, only those who reflected the aesthetic ideology of socialism could address the international world and represent Mongolian collectivity. This ideology hinged in great part upon the folk song, as I discuss in the next section.

**Sounding "the people" with song**

Important as the Warsaw concert was, Chimed dorj had performed a kind of motivic sounding that does not seem to have been “developed” enough for the aesthetic regime of

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89 I am reminded here as well of Rancière's conceptualization of aesthetics as a distribution of the sensible, of "what is seen [or heard] and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to see and the talent to speak, around the properties of spaces and the possibilities of time" (2004:13). I discuss his aesthetics in Chapter One.

socialism because Chimeddorj radically altered his xöömei practice immediately afterwards.

Badraa’s short discussion of xöömei in his collection of writings (1998) provides limited, but telling insights into the resulting aesthetic shift. It likely occurred within a year of the Warsaw concert, considering that the earliest recordings of Chimeddorj performing a song are from 1957. Juxtaposed with contemporaneous sources, Badraa’s account reveals a particular concern among the intelligentsia of the 1950s with the folk song. As he writes, it was only after Chimeddorj heard Tsedee’s xöömei, learning from the latter by imitating him, that “the art of xöömei developed suddenly to a new stage [shine shat] wherein people’s short songs [ardyng bogino duu] were melodized [ayagulsan] with xöömei and without any recitation." Badraa thus implies a strong contrast between motivic sounding, the performance of generic phrases, and melodic sounding, the performance of recognized song melodies.91 Chimeddorj’s novel way of sounding "developed" by prioritizing the rendition of a song melody without delimiting it with the duration of one’s breath. It then became conceptually distinct from Genden’s way of performing xöömei, the Tuvan xöömeich whom Badraa heard in 1954: a recited text, followed by a short melody, lasting as long as one’s breath, a topic I discuss in Chapter Three.

To this degree, xöömei could then fit the aesthetic expectations of socialism by performing a sanctified genre and marker of national collectivity: the folk song (ardyng duu). However, this term also evinced its own conflicting semantics, echoing the discussion of the national lexicon in Chapter Three.

During socialism, the Mongolian term seems to have had two meanings: a) an orally transmitted song and b) a song by and for “the people” as the basis of a nation. The first is a folkloristic

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91 Again, I reflect the Xalxa Mongolian use of the verb "to sound" (duugarax) to describe the act of performing xöömei, even when rendering the melodies of folk songs. I detail this usage in Chapter Two.
concept and the second socialistic or nationalistic. Neither meaning is Indigenous in origin. As discussed in Chapter Three, Soviet authorities needed a translation for the concept of narod (Rus., "people") to indicate “the people” in an ethno-national sense when promoting socialism among resident Turko-Mongolic peoples. *Ard* became this translation in the early 20th century. As anthropologist David Sneath writes, *ard* previously referred to something like “commoners” in pre-revolutionary discourse and had no association with any concept akin to “the nation” (Sneath 2010:252). The result was that *ardyn*, the possessive form of *ard*, came to mean "of the people" or "the people's," suiting socialistic discourse.

In musical discourse, this modifier came to imply a distinct generic categorization than extant terms like “short” (*bogino*) and “long” (*urtyn*) song. Both of these genres are Indigenous concepts for distinguishing song melodies that employ extensive melisma, no pulse, and relatively long duration (i.e., long) or that do not employ extensive melisma, have a pulse, and are relatively short in duration (i.e., short) (see Pegg 2001; Yoon 2011). Hence, Badraa felt compelled to specify that Chimeddorj had performed not simply a short song, but an *ardyn* short song, underscoring the song’s alignment with the socialist agenda. But it was not always clear when *ardyn duu* referred to an orally transmitted “folk song” versus “a people’s song” composed by and for socialism. Journals from the 1950s regularly invoke the significance of *ardyn duu*, but never specify whether they are referring to an Indigenous song or one created for socialism. In the words of one intellectual, as published in the Cultural Ministry’s official journal, *Help for Cultural Workers (Soyolyn ajiltand tuslamj)*, “folk-people's songs reflect most widely the many sides, endless wealth, and resources of the people’s [ard tümen] life conditions, spirit,

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92 See ethnomusicologist Mark Slobin’s short introduction to folk music for a discussion of these two semantic threads (2011).
93 See Chapter Three for an in-depth discussion of the national lexicon.
and thoughts” (Tsend 1967:45). For another member of the intelligentsia, "researching Mongolian folk-people’s songs, melody, and composition is important for us in those useful affairs dedicated to the great activity of invigorating our new culture that is national in form, socialist in content" (Dashdorj 1958:37). In both of these quotations, the authors refer to ardyn duu without further qualification. Notably, the song genre in question is presumed to already reflect “the new culture” as if socialist values were latent in “the people” who sing such songs. But in all of these cases the authors imply that to perform a folk song is to perform a cultured sensibility, as I discuss in Chapter One, germane to socialism, a wider sensibility about how to conduct one’s relations to an international world of development.

The ambiguity of ardyn duu was likely intentional, an ideological strategy to cement national policy and public sentiment through song. For Soviet intellectuals and policy-makers, as Russian scholar Frank Miller states, folkloristic literature and art in general were supposed to manifest the three key meanings of narodnost’: nation, the people, and folk (1990:ix). This fusion allowed official discourse “to move smoothly between traditional, village-based folk music and composed, popular songs by identifying them with the same label” (Smith 1997:126; cf. Howell 1992: 363-415). This ideological strategy was explicit in both the Soviet Union and socialist-era Mongolia. As Laura Olson writes, official definitions for key musical concepts like “the folk” as a musical genre shifted with policy in the Soviet Union:

As positive images of the Russian peasant and Russian folk culture were propagated in order to cultivate patriotism, the very conception of 'folk' (used as a modifier, narodnyi in Russian) changed…Thus, in the 1930s the term 'narodnaiia muzyka' ceased officially to mean folk music, and now meant the music of the people, that is, 'any kind of broad-based popular music.' (2004:39)

Smith also notes how this fusion partially stemmed from popular discourse in post-war Soviet society, while following Howell and Miller in acknowledging it as an official, political move.
There was a similar official concern in Mongolia. As Carole Pegg writes, “[u]nder the new [socialist] regime, ‘songs of the people’ or ‘folk songs’ (ardyn duu) were regulated from the center and composed” (2001:273). Scholars like Rinchensambuu set about classifying types of folk songs (1960; quoted in Pegg 2001:273) while sanctified composers studied extant songs to write "composed songs" (zoxiolyn duu) in a folk idiom. The lyrics of these composed songs necessarily reflected socialist or nationalistic content. Socialist journals even provided readers with lessons on how to sing such songs. As one of many examples, there is an article by a certain D.Xandav called "Advice for Singers to Consider" in Culture from 1958. Throughout the article he addresses “volunteer artists” with technical advice for singing alongside ideological reasons for taking song seriously. Around the same time that such articles and journals were appearing in official print, Chimeddorj first learned how to sound song melodies. My suggestion is that it was not only Chimeddorj’s creative interest in expanding the aesthetic horizons of xöömei performance that motivated him to do so. His efforts were likely parcel to the official emphasis on the folk song as a seminal medium for the dissemination of socialism.

The aesthetic difference between motivic and melodic sounding is audible in a recording of Chimeddorj dating to 1957 at Mongolian National Radio’s Golden Collection (Altan fond). Instead of performing the xöömei solo-section in "Altai Praise-song" (which I discuss in audio examples 3.1 and 3.2. of Chapter Three), Chimeddorj renders the melody of the iconic final verse as it was written for and performed by the choral singers, using whistle xöömei (isgere). To note, it seems as if the album producers repeated the original recording three times due to the original’s brevity, as each repetition is exactly the same. In the figure below, we see how Chimeddorj’s harmonic contour is meant to approximate the iconic final refrain of “Alai Praise-song,” as written by Luvsansharav. The harmonic contour, as shown in the sonogram, approximates the melodic line just below it. Notably, it diverges significantly from
the line that Luvsansharav originally wrote. This divergence, along with the non-metrical timing of the harmonic contour, perhaps implies that Chimeddorj was still refining his technique.

a) The iconic final verse of Luvsansharav’s "Altai Praise-song" as sounded by Chimeddorj:

b) The iconic final verse of Luvsansharav’s "Altai Praise-song" as written by the composer:

Figure 4.1. An analysis of Chimeddorj's melodic sounding of the iconic final verse of "Altai Praise-song" juxtaposed with a transcription of Luvsansharav’s original version. Sonogram made with Sygyt Software’s Overtone Analyzer program.

Figure 4.1. also reveals a notable friction between the acoustics of xöömei and the aesthetics of socialism. Along with European-style conservatories, the socialist government had established twelve tone equal temperament as the main tuning system for "national music" (ündesnii xögjim). Accordingly, vocalists and instrumentalist learned how to perform within this system either by adjusting their intonation or even re-constructing their instruments. In the case of the horse fiddle (morin xuur), there were previously multiple tuning systems throughout Mongol lands, although their intervallic specifics have now been forgotten (Pegg 2001:72). Fiddlers also likely tuned their instruments to suit their own timbral preferences, as Süzükei
discusses of Tuvan ikel fiddlers (see Levin 2006:47). Regarding the pentatonic scales that have come to characterize national music, they are also equal tempered. Lucy Rees, for example, relates the work of the Mongolian music theorist Buyanxishig. He or she discusses how the pentatonic scale in contemporary use is not that of pre-revolutionary Mongolia, but rather one that was re-tuned to fit the equal tempered intervals of the diatonic scale in European classical music sometime after the advent of socialism (2011:104).

In the case of xöömei, matters of temperament are complex because it relies upon the naturally occurring harmonics of periodic vocal sound to produce melodic qualities. To this degree, whistle xöömei (isgeree) effectively exhibits “just” intonation. For these reasons, the distance between two notes are fixed and cannot be adjusted. Only the vocal drone can be adjusted "up" or "down," relative to which the intervals of the harmonic series of the whistle move “up” or “down” as a whole. The harmonics that reflect the intervals of a song in equal temperament are those that most approximate the given scale degree. This approximation is suitable enough for most listeners to identify the resulting harmonic contour as a song melody.

The following figure reveals the discrepancies between these harmonics and the notes they are meant to approximate in equal temperament. Note that the 11th harmonic is primarily used to perform non-Mongolian genres, such as the main themes of European classical music compositions, a topic that I discuss further below amongst later xöömeich. The harmonic number is given in the bottom line, the discrepancies between the harmonic and the equal tempered notes in Hertz are given above the bass clef, while the line above the treble clef refers to the frequency of the notes in Hertz. Strictly speaking, only the 4th, 8th, and 16th harmonics of whistle xöömei are perfectly "in tune." Mongol xöömeich subtly adjust for these discrepancies by shifting the vocal drone "up" or "down," or they simply ignore them. Numerous performances of European classical or popular tunes demonstrate how discrepancies in tuning
are not as important as the political act of performing highly regarded compositions with an “original art” like xöömei. In these cases, sounding "out of tune" (if one is focused on the equal temperament of the classically composed tune, versus the just intonation of whistle xöömei) is not perceived negatively as a matter of technical inability. This would not be the case for a horse fiddler, who can tune their instrument and perform employing equal temperament, if they were to use the same harmonic intervals for an equal tempered composition.

![Figure 4.2. The intervallic discrepancies between harmonics and the equal tempered notes they are meant to correspond to when performing folk songs or other song genres with xöömei.](image)

In any case, Chimeddorj’s shift from motivic to melodic sounding introduced a novel paradigm of performance and the de facto legitimation of xöömei as a solo art that could appear on stages without the armature of a choir. The xöömeich and researcher Saruultögs voices this general perception in his recently published master’s thesis on another seminal figure of Mongol xöömei, his grandfather Sundui, whom I discuss below. As he writes,

The art of xöömei at the time [meaning the 1950s], it can be said, had not reached the level [tövshin] of a solo art [biye daasan urlag] and on the stage xöömei merely sounded in a praise-song as a fleeting sound. It seems possible that it was not enough for the art of xöömei to became

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95 As one example, see Tsogtgerel Tserendavaa’s performance: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u3BznEfT4Ao. Last accessed: 5/24/2017.

96 Saruultögs’ master’s thesis is fully published in Myagmarjav’s monograph (2015:108-340)
a professional art of its own by only being a sound [chimeg], whistle, or a bit of xarxiraa [as in “Altai praise song”]. (2015:113)\(^7\)

Saruultögs goes on to describe how his grandfather “enriched the store-house [uryn san] of xöömei not only with folk songs, but also with the compositions of world [delsiin] classical music,” a feat that would come later in the 1960s. This enrichment hinged upon the performance of song melodies, a "pitch-centered" addendum to scholarly characterizations of Mongol xöömei as a timbre-centered art. Valentina Süzükei (2010; Levin 2006) and others following her (Curtet 2013; Beahrs 2014) have argued that xöömei is a "timbre-centered" vocal practice, as I review in Chapter Two, by virtue of it evincing a drone-overtone form that enables sound mimesis. Examples of xarxiraa, a guttural style that, as discussed in examples below, is closely associated with the mimesis of water highlighting, bolsters this timbre-centered point. The term xarxiraa itself is an onomatopoeia for “waterfall.” But Chimedдорж's recordings from 1957 onwards are exclusively of pitch-centered song melodies. Following his aesthetic shift, Mongol xöömeich in general began focusing predominantly on the performance of folk or classical song melodies using whistle xöömei, as I discuss below. Not until the 1980s did they begin performing praise-songs or demonstration pieces involving other styles, as Curtet's in-depth survey of recordings of Mongol xöömei shows (2013:276-329). A concern for "timbre" certainly registers in discourses of sound mimesis and aesthetic propriety, namely "imitation" (daunaix), as further discussed in Chapters Three and Seven. But the concern for rendering song melodies still predominates in

\(^7\) Хоомэйн урлаг тухайн үед бие даасан урлагийн төвшинд хүрээгүй байсан өгөө үзэж болох бөгөөд тайлан дозор хөөмэйлөхөө дүүгэр л няг маглаалын дундуур чимэг тодий халгын дуугарад л өнгөрдөг байж. Хоомэйн урлаг нь бие даасан мэрээжлийн урлаг болоход дэн ганд “Алтай магтаал”-ын днд чимэг хийх юмнуу, эсвэл дэн ганд нисэгээ, хархиррага хөөмэйлөөр дуугаарах нь хангалттын байсан байж болох талтай. Ийм учраас хоомэйч Д.Сүндий хөөмэй хөгжүүлэхийн төлөө олон жил уйлага ныхоолторлж өгт эмд урын саагаа баяждуулах ардын дуу тодийгүй, далхайн сонгодог хөгжмийн зохиолчдын бутээлээс хоомэйлж урын саагаа баяждуулах ирсэн хүн юм.
contemporary performance in both rural and urban places. Only in recent decades have a few younger xöömeich began diverging by experimenting with soundscapes on the stage in order to conjure the surrounding world of bai-gal (nature-existence) through explicit mimetic sounding on the stage or through demonstration pieces that showcase the stylistic and timbral diversity of xöömei. There are significant exceptions of mimetic sounding that I consider in the final sections to this chapter and others of which Curtet notes in his survey and when discussing Mongol xöömei as “an art of timbre” (83-129). They provide important counterpoints to the predominance of melodic sounding but they also prove the rule of its predominance as a melody-focused aesthetic among the vast majority of professional Mongol xöömeich. The retrospective developmental narratives of Badraa and Saruultögs, among many others, underscore this point as does a discussion below on how and why other xöömeich in rural Mongolia aspired to make their xöömei “fluid” (shingen) in the 1970s. For these reasons, I suggest that it is difficult to characterize the predominant aesthetic of Mongol xöömei primarily in terms of one musicological dimension over another because of the pastoral practice’s entanglement with socialistic aesthetics. For Mongol xöömeich, this entangled aesthetics effectively constitutes the basis of xöömei’s originality as a pastoral tradition the developed into a national art capable of performing folk, and then eventually even classical song melodies.

**Going songodog ~ classical: Sundui’s apex, 1960s-70s**

Although Chimeddorj was the first to perform folk songs with xöömei, or to sound before far-flung audiences in Europe, many contemporary Mongolian narratives like Saruultögs’ emphasize the salience of Sundui Dovchin (1938-2003) in progressing xöömei to its artistic peak and establishing a predominant aesthetic. As a monograph on famous members of the National Music and Drama Theater puts it,
Having done the necessary children's activity of rural herding, singing and whistling on the sand-dune, and thanks to learning xöömei from elders and youngers, he took a remarkable talent he alone possessed and opened up the path for making that unique art complete [tögs tögöldör], until reaching the peak of a famous, state-honored artist and leaving behind many tens of disciples—one of Mongolia's people's arts arrived at the world's arena [delxin demjee] (Tsend-Ayuush & Rinchensambuu, eds., 2014:160).  

This "peak" consisted not simply of the performance of traditional or national genres like folk or praise-songs (magtaal) but also genres that were more "worldly." Most biographies, for example, place a premium upon Sundui's ability to perform "world classical creations" (delxin songodog büteel), meaning the thematic melodies of European masterpieces. As Sundui's younger brother Myagmarjav, a music researcher from Chandman' district, writes, "[i]n addition to first xöömei-ing Mongolian folk, middle, long, and short songs that we now do with xöömei, this person set the foundation for xöömei-ing foreign classical creations" (Myagmarjav 2015:36).  

Unfortunately, there are no available recordings of Sundui performing the iconic themes of Bizet's "Carmen," Tchaikovsky's "Swan Lake," or "Nepolito" (sic), the pieces that Myagmarjav states were part of Sundui's repertoire. However, there are numerous examples of contemporary xöömeich performing other classical themes or pieces.  

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98 Тээрээ хүүхэд ахуй цагаа ходой мал маллаж ёстой л элс манхан доогуур иргээн дуулж, улмаар хөөмэй гэдэг эвэрмөн урлагийг нутгийн ах дүү нараасаа суралцах өрт байгаа гайхамжит авьяасг нээсэн нь тэр эвэрмөн урлагийг төгс эвэрмөн болгох замыг нэж нэж өгч алдар гавьяаны оргилд хүрээл олон арван шагийн сүргэж улдээсэнээр Монголын ардны урлагийн нэгэн төрөл болох хөөмийн урлагийг дэлхийн давжээнд гаргаж ирэн.  

99 "Middle" is a literal translation of besreg, a category for songs that are neither highly melismatic (e.g., "long") nor explicitly pulsed (e.g., "short"). See Pegg (2001) for a general discussion of these genres.  

100 Оддо бид нары хөөмэйлж байгаа монгол ардны бэрээг уртын дуу, ардын богоо дуу зэртүүгийг ахлэн хөөмийлсэн төдийгүй, гадаадын сонгодог бүзээгийг хөөмэйлж болох суурийг гавьяан хүн бийлээ.  

101 For an example, see the following performance of “Solo mia”: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WFY9Uak8cdw. Last accessed 3/20/2017. I discuss the acoustics and poetics of songodog performance below.
engagement with the classical constituted another "step in development" for xöömei following Chimeddorj’s first renditions of folk song melodies. His results are still an aesthetic ideal for contemporary xöömeich.

Sundui’s worldly aesthetic aspirations lay in the privileging of European classical music in socialist-era Mongolia as much as in his own creative interests as a remarkably talented xöömeich. Peter Marsh has written extensively on the hegemony of European classical music in socialist-era Mongolia (2009) while scholars of post-Soviet Central Asia have noted the same. Mark Slobin, for example, notes how Soviet writes expected Uzbek cultural producers “to bring their music up ‘to the level of world culture’” (1971:7) while Theodore Levin notes the same in his later work (1980). In Chapter Five, I detail the ideological specifics of the classical in relation to the formation of yazguur, or “originality,” as a novel official category in the context of cultural nationalism. There, I note how songodog implied not only “classical,” but also “select, best,” implying European classical music to be an apex of human expression. Here, I focus on the complexities of songodog as a hegemonic notion that cultural producers engaged with as creative musicians. Songodog, furthermore, is an evolving discourse that has changed in its social and political meanings in the post-socialist era. It is through a contemporary classical lens that Mongolian cultural producers now understand the worldly achievements of significant artists like Sundui, among others.

Batchuluun Tsend, the famed horse fiddler (morin xuurch), explicitly discusses the complexity of the classical in his forward to a monograph on the horse fiddle quartet (Morin xuur dörvöl), a socialist-era format meant to reflect the European classical music quartet. His discussion is an attempt to tease out the meanings of “classical” as an aesthetic category that any musical practice may espouse, regardless of its non-European provenance, versus as an indication of westernization by virtue of exhibiting aesthetic similarities to European classical
music. Batchuluun begins his discussion by noting how despite socialist interventions, such as the horse fiddle quartet, there were also Indigenous genres of "urban music" (xüreeenii xögjim) in pre-socialist urban centers, especially in Urga, the former capital (now Ulaanbaatar), where many foreign residents from Tibet and China introduced many kinds of "bands" (samtlag) (2008:3). Many Mongolian traditional (ulamjłalt) instruments were incorporated into these bands. For him, songodog can thus refer to "acknowledged standards" or "models" (OED), following European classical discourse but implying that this status can apply to non-European musical practices.

However, as Batchuluun continues, songodog can also refer to music that is "complete" (tögs tögöldör) in the senses that the tonal quality (egshig) of the instruments are distinct, while implying high, middle, and low registers (türshin) (4). He gives the example of a flute, spike fiddle (xuuchir), and horse fiddle (morin xuur) addressing each register, from high to middle to low, while chordal instruments like the hammered dulcimer (yöchin) imply the music's "melodic background" (ayalguuny aryn suur’). This sense of songodog as being “complete” derives from its socialistic usage to imply Eurocentric developedness and universalism by virtue of exhibiting aesthetic elements of European classical music. But Batchuluun nevertheless distinguishes this meaning of songodog from its usage to refer to music that is "westernized" in the sense that the timbre, range, and construction of traditional (ulamjłalt) instruments are re-worked to suit the aesthetic, symphonic, and acoustic demands of European classical music and the concert hall itself. For example, Batchuluun notes how the Soviet folklorist Smirnov, “retuned instruments like the long-necked lute [shudraga] and the horse fiddle in order to correlate them with western harmony [egshig duur’sal], after it became a master principle [noyolox zarchim]” (5). But the result was a "mixed concept" (solimog büreldexüün) of national traditional (ündesnii ulamjłalt) music in which the study of western classical music became the chief influence. Peter Marsh’s
monograph discusses precisely this “unique conception of modern culture—simultaneously claiming to be of the ancient Mongolian past and the modern international present” (2009: ix). He also discusses how musicians were personally invested in the creative opportunities of the socialist development project, albeit under the hegemony of the classical. Sundui exhibited this same interest in the novel possibilities of vocal performance within the aesthetic regime of socialism, requiring that he alter its aesthetic to reflect "completeness" in technical, tonal, and harmonic terms, but resulting in a “mixed concept” of xöömei as a pastoral art that reached a classical level.

Figure 4.3. Sundui performs a folk song in Soviet-era Moscow in 1973.

Courtesy of the Mongolian Film Archive.

He initiated his creative engagement with the classical by studying and adapting bel canto technique to sound the thematic melodies of European classical music masterpieces with xöömei. He did so after an initial career performing nationalized song genres. Myagmarjav (2015) gives a detailed biography of Sundui, a Chandman' native, although some argue he is
from Dörvöljin district, Zavxan province, by virtue of a birth certificate that supposedly states he was born there. In any case, he was raised in Chandman’ district. In 1958, he left the army and became a driver, but became the first registered xöömeich in Mongolia at the provincial theater in Xovd City in 1961. Mongolian National Radio recordings list Sundui on recordings with Chimeddorj from 1957, suggesting that he already had professional ties to Ulaanbaatar, where the recordings were likely made. During this time, he performed folk songs or in symphonic pieces (*nairal xögjim*) and traveled to three foreign countries, including two folk songs at the 8th World Youth Festival in Helsinki, Finland in 1962\(^{102}\) and the 4th National Festival.

Another seminal career event occurred in 1971, when Sundui participated in provincial or district contests as part of the celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of the People's Revolution. "During this time," as Myagmarjav states, "the art of Mongol xöömei was spread throughout the Mongolian homeland, setting a new beginning" (36). The implication is that xöömei was still a relatively little-known genre by the 1970s despite Tsedee, Chimeddorj, and Sundui's feats. Xerlen also states that xöömei was officially recognized as a national art in this same year (2010:4). She does not elaborate on this historical event but it seems that one direct implication was that Sundui would be selected to join the People's Folk Song and Dance Ensemble (PFSDE), following a decree (*tushaal*) from the Cultural Ministry in 1972, as Myagmarjav notes. It was during this period that he began studying voice with Dorjdagva Jigzav (1904-1991), the famous and influential voice pedagogue and long song singer. During this time, "it can be said that xöömei was taken (*xürgex*) to its classical measure (*sen xemjee*)" (Myagmarjav 2015:34).

\(^{102}\) Myagmarjav gives the years as 1961, although the festival happened in 1962.
Notably, Sundui drew upon both long song and bel canto singing to re-work xöömei into a classical art, underscoring what Batchuluun referred to above as “a mixed concept” of Mongolian music. Tseden-Ish gives more technical specifics on how Sundui incorporated formal singing and breathing methods that Dorjdaeva and perhaps other voice pedagogues had taught him (2008). Sundui particularly emphasized the exercise of reciting "thirty two white bottles" with one breathe. Key exercises by M.Dugarjav (1893-1946), the father of professional singing pedagogy in Mongolia, were also influential on the xöömeich. The latter took cues from Dugarjav when creating exercises to train one's lips, form the "resonance box" (tsuurain xairtsaag), meaning the oral cavity, and the nasal cavity to deliver melodies. These exercises revolved around sounding and singing nasal vowels, such as /i, I/, and open vowels, such as /a, a/ or /o, o/.

These exercises became the basis for many of Sundui's students or followers and few professional pedagogues do not employ variations of them. Johanni Curtet details these exercises amongst the most renowned (but also less renowned) pedagogues, arguing that many sought to distinguish themselves in doing so (2013:330-401). But what is less discussed in Mongolia is how Sundui re-worked aspects of bel canto and long song singing pedagogy to shape xöömei pedagogy. For this reason, Tseden-Ish calls his paper, "How Xöömei Became a Category of the Art of Singing," one of the few contradictions to the predominant association of xöömei with instrumental vocal sounding, a topic I also discuss in Chapter Two.

Sundui extended these singing exercises to practice the harmonic whistle (isgeree). These exercises consisted of sounding particular consonants, such as /l, ы/ or /s, с/, whose production most approximated tongue position during whistle xöömei. These exercises, as

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103 This paper is now available in a collection of Tseden-Ish's writings (2009).
104 For specificity, I am using IPA signs along with the Mongolian Cyrillic.
105 Хөөмэй нь дуулах урлагийн нэгэн ай болох нь.
Tseden-Ish continues, showed the performer how to “spread out” (*devses*), “roll up” (*xuilax*), and “enclose” (*xashix*) the tongue in order to distinguish (*yalgarax*) the “double tone” (*darsar egshig*) or harmonic (*overton*) from “the base tone” (*suur’ öngö*) or drone. To note, Tseden-Ish is using terms from Soviet and Euro-American studies of xöömei to describe these acoustic features, but Sundui, along with most Mongolians until the last decade, did not use this terminology. In fact, Sundui did not have a stylistic categorization for xöömei, an issue that Badraa criticized him for, as Curtet notes (Badraa [1987] 2005:168; quoted in Curtet 2013:246). Regardless, Sundui strove "to develop" Mongol xöömei to a classical level through these technical explorations. It seems that he then set about promoting the novel aesthetic wherever possible, both overseas when participating in cultural delegations, as I discuss in rest of this section, and in rural Mongolia when participating in cultural competitions, as I discuss in the next section.

If Sundui were invested in performing “world classical creations,” then how did “the world” interpret his performances in which harmonic and equal temperament? Some answers to this question arise from Sundui’s participation in cultural exchanges in the 1970s, during which his xöömei performances became instances of “traditional” over “classical” or “national” art. These “exchanges” followed a comparative logic of “culture” that folkloric institutions throughout the world were now employing to make sense of each other’s expressive difference for purposes of political or diplomatic engagement. Among the most significant diplomatic partners of the time was Japan, which became the largest development assistance provider to

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106 Various sources discuss what I think of as an internationalized discourse of “culture,” including those on internationalism (Iriye 1997; Rupprecht 2015), while the formation of international cultural heritage organizations like the International Council of Folk Music or UNESCO’s Intangible Cultural Heritage Initiative are further evidence. During socialism, Mongolia interacted with these organizations when seeking international legitimacy and representation, as I discuss in Chapter Five when Badraa was conceptualizing *yasguur* (i.e., authentic, original) art in relation to internationalized folkloristics.
Mongolia starting in the 1970s, when the two countries normalized diplomatic relationships (Narangoa 2009:373). Around this time, The Japan Foundation also sponsored a cultural exchange project to promote "communication and exchange between Asian countries in the field of traditional performing arts" (Emmert & Yimigishi 1980: vi). The results consisted of mutual performances amongst the many participating countries and documentary collection for research purposes, centering around the theme of that year: the voice. Researchers and musicians would focus on "points of comparison" arising from voice production, text, melody relationships, techniques, textual content, "revealing a people's way of thinking and feeling." But while long song, by virtue of its widespread performance throughout Mongolia, could conceivably suit this comparative equation between song, voice, and the people, xöömei was decidedly rare and as foreign to most Mongolian ears as it was to foreign ones, at the time. As I discuss below when detailing the edges of development, only a few xöömeiich resided in a few communities beyond Chandman’ district, where it was heavily promoted and practiced, as I discuss in Chapter Two. In other words, xöömei did not yet have wider currency as a marker of collectivity and Mongol values in Mongolia, as evidenced by reactions of amazement by the conductor Xayanxyarvaa in Chapter Two or the xöömeiich Ganzorig when first hearing xöömei on the radio in the 1980s, as I detail below. Nevertheless, The Japan Foundation's project preceded according to plan and also “conversed through culture,” projecting its comparative precepts onto xöömei and framing it as a marker of a Mongolian ethno-cultural collectivity: "In Mongolia, vocal traditions display unique methods of voice production such as in xöömei in which two 'voices,' a melody in the high register and a drone in the low register, are produced simultaneously by one singer." The subtle indexation (Mongolia-tradition-xöömei) in this statement registers the same logic of cultural representation as Soviet internationalism—that audible difference equals ipso facto nationality. Whether within or without the Soviet-aligned
world, the basic logic was the same, beginning in Warsaw, through Berlin, and extending to the Japan Foundation initiative. Rendering an internationally legitimated musical genre like the folk song, as I suggest, was crucial to this indexation of xöömei with “Mongolia” before the international world. Xöömei only came to voice “the people” by reflecting the requisite musical markers of the latter political concept, not by being presented “as is” via motivic sounding. The rest of this chapter mediates on why and how the latter aesthetic practice did not resonate with the aesthetic regime of socialism for a range of idiosyncratic, ideological, and logistical reasons.

**Going shingen ~ fluid: Uvs province, 1970's**

Sundui’s technical achievements were so successful that he would come to influence later generations of xöömeich for decades. While the aesthetic qualities of his style were inspirational in themselves, his affiliation with national institutions, like the People's Folk Song and Dance Ensemble, and participation in numerous cultural delegations, reinforced the appeal of his style. In other words, his creative acts still had a political dimension to them, especially when it came to the matter of “style” (töröl). In short, Sundui's emphasis on the whistle xöömei (isgeree), in order to render the pitched qualities of folk or classical melodies, corresponded to a de-emphasis of xarxiraa, a style that highlights gutturality and timbral density. Many contemporary historical narratives even hail Sundui as the xöömeich who consolidated the originality of Mongol xöömei by making it “fluid” (shingen). A lack of recordings of xarxiraa by Sundui, along with Mongol xöömeich in general, underscores this influential aesthetic, as Curtet’s survey of the available discography reveals (see Curtet 2013: 479-480). In our interviews, many established xöömeich noted how the description of Sundui's aesthetic with the term *shingen* began in the 1990s during efforts to consolidate the origins of Sundui, and his highly influential aesthetic, in Chandman’ district in the face of debates about his birth elsewhere, as discussed above. This politics of sounding "fluid" persists today in communal efforts to maintain
originality in Chandman’ district. For example, I have witnessed several cases in which a resident xöömeich suggested that xarxiraa is not a form of xöömei at all. In another instance, I witnessed a resident xöömeich castigate a student for sounding xarxiraa in a group performance that otherwise employed whistle xöömei. Although the performance simply required whistle xöömei, the xöömeich seemed to imply that the use of xarxiraa had negative connotations in itself. National perception, not socialistic governmental censure, was at stake in these instances. I return to this topic of communal politics in Chapter Seven.

While it is unclear whether Mongol xöömeich practiced xarxiraa before the aesthetic shift to melodic sounding, in light of the dearth of recorded examples, a range of ideological pressures seems to have been responsible for the style’s absence. For example, Saruultögs, Sundui’s grandson, suggests how during socialism xarxiraa xöömei was practically banned under the pretext that it resembled the vocal practice of Buddhist lamas called umzad xooloi in which guttural vocal tension is used to recite sacred texts (2015:121). He does not elaborate further on this point although it is feasible. The demands of sounding the people through song also likely discouraged any vocalization that was not “tuneful” or “musical” enough. Perhaps less “tuneful” practices like mouth harp (aman xuur), voice flute (xooloi limbe), a vocal imitation of the flute, and tsuur (open-ended flute) did not rise to prominence because they could not evince the requisite capacity to render folk or classical melodies. Perhaps the harmonic contours of jaw harp performance did not resonate pristinely enough, as in whistle xöömei, and the scalar range and timbre of tsuur flute could not evince an aesthetic reminiscent of bel canto, as Sundui’s classical xöömei did.

On the other hand, it seems that many xöömeich were simply interested in Sundui’s novel aesthetic. None of the xöömeich whom I interviewed regarding this topic described their shift as one from an "Indigenous" to a "socialistic" aesthetic or as a form of hegemonic
imposition. Nor did they imply any negative oppositionality between what I am calling motivic and melodic sounding, let alone binaries of naturalness and culturedness like that Xayanxyarvaa and Badraa inferred in the last chapter. They were simply interested in expanding their creative horizons. But as a result, motivic sounding like that in "Altai praise-song" ceased to sound prominently on the stage. Notably, I have encountered a third choral arrangement, dated to July 8, 1966, by a conductor called Daramzeveg, a copy of which Prof. Odsüren kindly provided me with. But the score indicates that the arrangement did not include a xöömei section, while the general themes and lyrics are highly similar to those of Luvsansharav’s arrangement.

Figure 4.4. The professional xöömeich Toivgoo Ejee.

The professional xöömeich Toivgoo Ejee (b.1957) is among these xöömeich went "fluid" in the 1970s. He is among the very few xöömeich beyond Chandman’ district to gain national prominence for his xöömei during socialism. He is now retired from the provincial
drama theater in Ulaangom, Uvs province, where he began working officially as a xöömeich in 1980. He recalled several elders he heard in his birth-place of Zuun Gov’ district, also in Uvs province, in the early 1960s (Interview, August 24, 2014). These elders, whose names or biographic information he could not recall, did not perform song melodies either. Instead, they sounded in the style of sarxiraa, as Toivgoo stated, or played with melody and timbre, as he implied in an imitation of them. At house celebrations (nair) or festivals (naadam), he would “follow their sounding" (daqaad duugaralt) out of interest as a small child. He could not elaborate more, but he did imitate what he heard for me.

Audio example 4.2. Toivgoo imitates the xöömei of the elders he heard as a youth in Zuun Gov’ district, Uvs province.

"This was how they sounded,” he said. His was an informal imitation and it would be difficult to make any broad conclusions with it. His mouth was almost closed and his lips did not move. The melodic contour was sing-songy, but not a particular song melody. In this way, he suggested an informal melodic play, as opposed to the performance of a distinct genre or recognized song. They “melodized" (ayalsan) as so, he said. I pressed him for more details, following the demonstration: Those elders had not learned from others, only "through their own talent." Like Darjaa in Chandman’ district, as discussed in Chapter Three, these elders also did not know, or did not tell Toivgoo, any origin narratives or legends (domog) about xöömei. Echoing Darjaa’s discussion, Toivgoo’s elders would place a cup before their mouths to reflect the sound back to their ears as well, when learning or, in some cases, during house celebrations (nair). Toivgoo did not know more and had not asked those elders such questions. He simply wanted to learn how to sound xöömei, after hearing them, and tried on his own until he was recognized for his talent.

Audio example 4.3. Toivgoo performs the folk song "Gooj nanaa."
After some time sounding on his own, Toivgoo eventually shifted intentionally towards melodic sounding. He located this moment specifically in 1972 when he first learned "Gooj Nanaa," a folk song. The title is an appellation that was once given to remarkably talented figures in some Mongolian communities before socialism (Alimaa Ayushjav, Personal communication, April 14, 2017). Upon asking him to demonstrate, he laughed at how I was "closely inspecting" (nariin shagnax) him and then sounded the melody. As he elaborated, "I am someone who tried on my own to make my xarxiraa xōomei 'fluid' [shingen]." This same year he also heard a recording of a Mongolian xōomeich, whose name he could not recall. Because of the paucity of xōomei recordings at the time, it is likely that the recording was of Sundui, if it is a Mongolian, the only officially established xōomeich at the time, as discussed above. But in 1972, Uvs province also had its first "art inspection" (urlagin üzleg) and competition, at which Toivgoo met Mangaljav Lxamsüren (b.1944), an older xōomeich who became a teacher to him. He also met Sundui at this time, who influenced him greatly. Mangaljav, a native of Tes district, was selected and traveled to Ulaanbaatar, along with Sundui who had come from Xovd province, to participate in a national round of competitions at which the latter received gold and the former silver. After this event, Toivgoo preceded to “enrich” (bayajuulax) his xōomei on his own until the provincial theater hired him as an artist (jüjigchin) in 1980, upon his participation in a later art inspection. It would seem that Toivgoo desired to make his xōomei “fluid” in light of his encounters with Mangaljav and Sundui in the context of these national competitions. It is also telling that the first song melody he sought to render with whistle xōomei was “Gooj nanaa,” also the first melody that Mangaljav and others rendered, as I detail below.
Like Toivgoo, Mangaljav first heard xöömei from two local elders (Interview, September 13, 2014). One of these elders was a Tuvan called Kongar-ool who would herd in the area in the days before the nearby border with the Soviet Union was closed around 1970. Toivgoo said he would hear Tuvan herders in the 1960s when visiting Tuvan households in the vicinity, as was common practice amongst these communities, point that Carole Pegg mentions in her own interview with Mangaljav decades ago (1992). Mangaljav’s other elder influence was a distant family relation of his father called Tsezen Xündereg. Other xöömeich in the family, all students of Mangaljav, did not know about Tsezen until my interview elicited the information.
On one or two occasions Mangaljav heard these elders from afar on different occasions and rode over to them to ask about the remarkable sound. They did not have an explicit conversation over technique, origins, or concept—all topics I was interested in. Instead, the elders simply said that it was xöömei, demonstrated it again, and they parted ways. As Mangaljav recalled of Tsezen, "I once heard that person (ter xün), who was doing xöömei until he reached his 60s. And so, after that I tried xöömei on my own." From afar, the sounding seemed to be whistling, but there was something different about it, prompting his inquiry into "this thing called xöömei" (xöömei gedeg yum). This encounter likely happened in 1957, when Mangaljav was twelve. He did not know how Tsezen had learned himself. Two years later, he began attempting folk song melodies on his own volition. Like Toivgoo, he stated that "Gooj Nanaa" was the first song he ever sounded. He simply knew the song and sought to figure out how to sound it with xöömei on his own because it was simpler than other melodies. Otherwise, he "just" sounded in "a style" (mayag) similar to the Tuvan herder he encountered. His demonstration of this style consisted of a generic melodic phrase employing a vocal tension akin to other examples of Tuvan xöömei in which phrasing begins with an upwards glissando with the vocal drone. He noted that the phrase was not a particular song melody, referring to it as a “Tuvan melody.” Now that he was older and had no front teeth, he demonstrated both the folk song and his Tuvan way of sounding using "lip xöömei" (uruulyn xöömei), meaning that his lips were pursed and the root of the tongue, with the tip down, modulates the harmonic whistle. In the past, he would instead do these same examples with whistle xöömei, in which the tip of the tongue is pressed against the hard palate, creating a more defined harmonic with less resonance or "echo" (tsuurai). In other words, he was stating that teeth (the forward incisors, in this case) directly influence the timbre of the harmonic contour one can produce with xöömei.
Audio example 4.4. Mangaljav demonstrates his ways of sounding xöömei: the folk song "Gooj nanaa" and a generic melodic phrase in "Tuvan style."

Although Mangaljav went “fluid” in the 1960s, a decade before Toivgoo did in the 1970s, both discuss a similar aesthetic shift that revolved around performing the same folk song melody. For Mangaljav, “Gooj nanaa” was perhaps an accessible first tune to learn, but it is notable that the first recordings of Chimeddorj and Sundui from 1957 also reveal this tune. In the case of Toivgoo it seems likely that Sundui influenced the former to go “fluid.” Although Toivgoo was highly influenced by Sundui, he did not state that the latter was responsible for his interest in sounding song melodies. But what is certain is that participation in cultural competitions entailed some degree of formal musical performance, meaning that one could not perform in any way they desired on stage. Instead of “just” sounding on stage, they would have had to evince the requisite aesthetic markers of cultured performance, such as a folk song melody. The benefits of doing so were clear. At talent competitions, cultural officials might take notice of them and select them for professional courses (kurs) at the provincial center, as happened to Toivgoo. These competitions were not compulsory. They encouraged participation by offering the benefits of a steady professional salary and social recognition, in the form of various medals and honors. Medals and honors from these competitions consolidated social status at family or communal events while influencing xöömeich to distinguish themselves from others with aesthetic achievements of their own, as Johanni Curtet discusses in depth (2013). However, only Toivgoo registered under socialism’ cultural radar and became an officially recognized xöömeich in Uvs province. Mangaljav, on the other hand, "blipped," so to speak, and remained a herder in Tes district. It seems that he did not have the interest in pursuing a professional path despite his selection to go to Ulaanbaatar in 1972. Only with the release of Johanni Curtet’s anthology (Buda Musique 2017) has Mangaljav received considerable
recognition in the discography of Mongol xöömei. Mangaljav and Toivgoo’s stories also epitomize a key mode of transmission: the passing encounter. Research associates in Xövsgöl province, as I now discuss, and Chandman’ district (e.g., Chuluun’s visit to Tserendavaa's house) (see Pegg 1992) reveal similar stories about unfamiliar elders who were heard from afar, briefly conversed with, and then imitated independently thereafter. These encounters unfolded well beyond the cultural radar of socialism between members of the same local community or kinship network. Similar encounters in Xövsgöl province, by contrast, did not result in any official recognitions as in Uvs province, except for one archival recording that I discuss below. This discussion brings this chapter to “the edges of cultural development” and the international world it privileges. These edges were ideological, idiosyncratic, and logistical.

**The edges of cultural development: a forgotten river-melody**

Despite many positive opinions of cultural development amongst my research associates, there are nevertheless a range of frictions, conflicts, and absences compounding discourses and performances of Mongol xöömei. They seem to reveal expressive practices that could not make senses to socialism’s aesthetic regime, even if they blipped under its cultural radar. Here, I delve into these cases, exposing some of the edges of this dissertation in the process. They concern forms of expression and sociality that socialism could not make sense of. They place positivistic narratives of development (sögjil) of Mongol xöömei into critical perspective, revealing a complicated relationship between Indigeneity and socialism.

The most explicit reference to any form of suppression in the Mongolian-language literature on xöömei is from Sandagjav. He briefly mentions how a selection committee member explicitly told the performer Gongorjav (b.1938) from Zavxan province that he would not win a folk art competition because his limp "did not suit ideology" (üzel surtald taraxgui), a clear case of "persecution" (xelmegdüülel) (2010:126). Participatory as socialism was, it still
demanded a robust, proletariat, and cultured body, without which one would be excluded from
festivals or competitions and the social, economic, and political benefits they entailed. The only
other similarly explicit reference in a Mongolian publication that I am aware of is Saruultögs'
observation, as discussed above, that xarxinaa xöömei was probably banned under socialism due
to its resemblance to the chanting voice (umzad xooloi) of Lamas. This ban would have been
parcel to the cultural destruction and purges of prior decades, when socialism sought to subvert
Indigenous authorities, especially Buddhist monasteries, the aristocracy, and shamans (Bawden
1968; Cheney 1966). During the purges of the 1930s and 40s under the direction of Marshal
Choibalsan, “[a]ll old things in Mongolia—including folk and religious traditions—were
denounced by the hard-line revolutionary government” (Pegg 2001:253). As Marsh writes,
 “[t]hese Party efforts were accompanied by civil strife that disrupted all aspects of the tradition-
oriented ways of life of the pre-Revolutionary period, especially musical traditions” (Marsh
2009:45). In particular, the demise of aristocratic patronage for epic singers (tuul’ch) severed
longstanding modes of economic and social livelihood for many performers. Accompanying the
wholesale destruction of Buddhist monasteries throughout the country was the burning and
outlawing of Buddhist instruments (Vähl 1992). And only the few who altered their narratives
or aesthetic to reflect Party ideology received government support and public visibility before
the 1950s, such as Luvsan, a fiddler who won the favor of authorities by adjusting his practice
(see Marsh 2009:45). After the 1940s, state violence waned with the death of Marshal
Choibalsan, a brutal leader who has been compared to Stalin. The Party initiated "cultural
development" policies that seem to have been favored by the general public, if interviews with
research associates suggest. But even this participatory form of cultural development had its
aesthetic and geographic limits.
It was simply difficult to reach many rural places, just as it was hard to locate and engage highly mobile herders in the vast countryside. As a result, music researchers rarely conducted rural ethnography or on-site interviews with the people they discussed in articles and monographs, even as they framed these practices as exemplars of national "folk art" (ardyn urlag). For example, the state-sanctioned folklorist Smirnov seems to have conducted interviews with or transcribed the performances mostly of persons he was able to meet in the urban capital, as the limited description of his transcriptions imply (1971). And the influential music researcher Badraa Jamts, who grew up in Xövsgöl province, faced the same task of studying "national culture" (ündesnii soyol) from the limited purview of the capital, relying on fleeting encounters with performers or personal recollections to produce his short research articles that would appear over the decades in official journals. As he wrote without conducting ethnography or interviews, "all Tsaatan men do xöömei" (1998:46), without having conducted research among Tsaatan people in the northernmost reaches of Xövsgöl province. It is possible that Badraa learned from the xöömeich Tserendorj about Tsaatan or other groups in Xövsgöl province performing xöömei after their collaborations in the late 1980s and early 1990s, as I discuss below. The proximity of Tsaatan lands to neighboring Tuva (Russia), where xöömei is a widespread practice (see Levin 2006), as well as the association of xöömei with the River Eev, as discussed in Chapter Two, provided Badraa with a speculative basis for his statement. As he follows up,

There are legends that xöömei originated with the imitation of the interesting, beautiful sounds [chimee] of the River Iv's waterfall. Some say that the River liv lies in the Tagna Mountains [in Tuva]. I would like to note that the River Iv probably lies in the birth-place [nutag] of Uulan-Uul and Rinchinlxümbe districts in Xövsgöl province, in the

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107 The Tsaatan are one of the world's smallest ethnic groups and are renowned for their reindeer herding practices. See Wheeler (1999) for an introduction to the Tsaatan.
area of the River Möörön and Xög River. The reason is that the River Xög [Melodious River] might have been called Iiv before (1998:46).

In Xövsgöl province there is indeed a river named Ivd, as I discuss detail below in a narrative on my research there. But Badraa is making conjectures based on sources he never mentions. Archives and albums do not support his claim about Tsaatan men, as there are no documented examples of a Tsaatan xöömeich. Nor have I ever met a Tsaatan xöömeich during my several years living and researching in Mongolia. Other researchers have informed me that they have not met one either. Notably, Badraa, a member of the Xalxa majority, still emphasizes that "the art of xöömei is a remarkable phenomenon that arose during the process of creating and mastering musical art among Mongolians," despite the Turkic associations of Tsaatan people. To this degree, he evinces a subtle form of Xalxa-centrism akin to that discussed in Chapter Three by discussing a Tsaatan expressive practice in terms of its generalized (Xalxa) Mongolness, a topic I return to in Chapter Five. Although Badraa sought to describe the peripheries of "national culture," he could not fully fathom it from the center in Ulaanbaatar.

As for the melody of the River Eev that Badraa mentions, it rarely sounds in archival listings or in the discographies of Mongol xöömeich. The paucity of this river-melody, let alone examples of aquatic mimesis, is a striking aspect of Mongol xöömei in light of its rhetorical or historical salience among Mongol xöömeich and scholars. The earliest scholarly reference to a mimetic performance of river waters is from Smirnov dated to 1945, the transcription of Chimit-Osora from Altai-Gov’ province, performing "Imitation of a Waterfall," although it does

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108 Ийвэн голын хүрээний сонин сайхан чимээг дууриан хөөмэй үүсэн гэдэг домог бий. Ийвэн голыг зарим хүн Тагнын ууланд бий гэдэг, зарим нь Алтайн ууланд бий гэдэг. Ийвэн гол чухамхуу Хөгийн голын ах хавнар байж таармаар байна. "Хөгийн гол ч чүйин буюу Ийвэн гол гэсэн нэртэй байсан байж болох учиртай нэр байн. 109 Ундул хөөмэйлэх урлаг бол монголчуудын хөгжлийн урлагийг бүтэнэ эээмшиг явлд гарсан нэр гайхамшгийг үзэгдлэйн нэгэн мэн.
not refer to the River Eev specifically. As discussed above and in Chapter Three, it is ultimately difficult to say whether Smirnov heard whistle, xarxiraa, or another style of xöömei. All we know is that the performance did not fit easily into the pitched and rhythmic dimensions of European musical notation, as the vowels and their wending ties suggest.

In archival listings for the river-melody itself, there are only three recordings at Mongolian National Radio (MNR), done decades later in the 1980s. Two are by a man called Pürev Byaxar (1949-2009) from Bayanxongor province, and the other by Tserendorj Puntsag (1929-2008) from Zavxan province. Curtet kindly provided me with copies of Pürev's recordings. Both are listed as "The Current of the River Eev" (Eeviin golyn ursgal). One precedes a performance of the folk song "The Dessert's Expanses" (Goviin öndör), and the other recording's title implies that it precedes a performance of "mouth percussion" (tagnain tsōxilt), though only the river melody sounds in this recording. From a music analytic perspective, Pürev's two versions are considerably different from each other, while sharing several features akin to the motivic sounding of Tsedee and Chimeddorj. One is done with whistle xöömei, the other in a style resembling borbanganydyr, a Tuvan style in which the lips are pursed and the tongue modulates quickly to create a quick, pulsing warble of sorts with the emphasized harmonic meant to conjure sonorous currents (Levin 2006:58-62). But both evince a melodic contour that lasts as long as Pürev’s breath. They also wind from the 8th harmonic up to the 10th or the 12th, then back down, skipping the 11th as usual and briefly reaching the 7th before resolving on the 8th. There is no date for Pürev’s recording, but they were catalogued in 1986 and are simply described as "original art" (yazguur urlag). They were likely recorded during the first Authentic Folk Art Festival in 1983, which intellectual elites like Badraa Jamts organized to promote "original art," as discussed in Chapter Five. Johanni Curtet managed to find the family of this xöömeich, but they could not tell him how Pürev had learned xöömei or the river-
melody: he simply liked to imitate the sounds of baigal' (nature-existence) and in 1965 he may have first heard the vocal practice on the radio, thereafter learning on his own (Johanni Curtet, Personal communication, October 10, 2016).

The third recording of the river-melody in the MNR collection is by the herder Tserendorj Puntsag from 1988. Sandagjav provides a basic biography (2010:123). Hailing from along the Tuvan border in northern Zavxan province, Tserendorj performed at the 1988 Authentic Folk Art Festival (ardyn yazguur urlagiin naadam) in Ulaanbaatar, using xarxiraa style to win a gold medal. His recording is also one of the few among Mongol xöömeich demonstrating xarxiraa. Tserendorj was born in Bayantes district, Zavxan province in 1929. He learned from Tsend-Ayush, apparently a famous Xotgoid xöömeich, though "famous" here must mean within particular networks in Zavxan province, not on a national level. This detail is important as one of the only references to a member of the Xotgoid minority sounding xöömei. Notably, the Xotgoid happen to live along the Tuvan border in Zavxan and Xövsgöl provinces, around where, Badraa surmised, "all Tsaatan men do xöömei." Badraa invited Tserendorj to perform with Tümen Ex in the early 1990s, an ensemble that the music researcher founded to promote "original art" (yazguur urlag) after the fall of socialism. After the early 1990s, it is unclear what happened to Tserendorj. As for the recording, it is remarkable. Done in xarxiraa style, it resembles numerous Tuvan examples of kargyraa (the Tuvan term for the same style as well as a reference to waterfalls). A short clip of Tserendorj exists among the film reels for the 1988 People's Authentic Art Festival in Ulaanbaatar: he stands with his hands behind his back, his head slightly tilted and green eyes gazing head on at the listener, emitting a dense texture of sound that seems to exceed his calm composure. While it is not clear if the filmed xarxiraa performance is meant to be the River Eev, a sound recording of Tserendorj at MNR is titled as such. Consisting of seven phrases, one per breath, he alternates between an "open" (e.g., mouth
open) and "closed" (e.g., lips pursed) phrases. The "open" phrases seem to share a similar melodic contour that starts off around the 9th harmonic, elevating or widening to the 12th before return briefly to the 8th, perhaps signaling the path of the river.

![Figure 4.6. Tserendorj performs at the 1988 Authentic Folk Art Festival in Ulaanbaatar. Courtesy of the Mongolian Film Archive.](image)

A final significant example of the river-melody is by the Chandman' native and established performer Sengedorj Nanjid. He recorded "The River Eev" on a collection of various artists called *Clear Buyant River: The Wind of The Mongolian Homeland* (2002), an anthology of artists from the Music and Drama Theater in Xovd province. Overlaying tracks of his own *tsuur* playing and xöömei, he roughly follows the performance of Narantsogt, who greatly inspired him to produce the album as he stated in our interview (August 26, 2014). In other words, he did not learn the river-melody via communal custom in Chandman’ district. And yet before socialist cultural development, it seems that the river-melody was a staple of xöömei performance there. For example, Chuluun, who spearheaded the study movement in Chandman' in the 1930s, is said to have sounded the melody. According to Tserendavaa, the renowned xöömeich, Chuluun would teach the melody to his students before any other song, as
it was the most basic of xöömei's "forms" (xelber) (Personal communication, September 8, 2015). Tsedee, his famed disciple, is also said to have sounded the melody while it is notable that his son Janchiv recalled his father sounding xarxiraa, as discussed in Chapter Two. But no one seems to have continued to do so in Chandman', as the elder Törbat's remarks in Chapter Six imply, including Tserendavaa. The latter attributed this absence, or rather silence, to the "destruction" (ustgas) of Mongol "art" (urlag) (Personal communication, February 15, 2015). Furthermore, the melody of the River Eev has not been revived in the post-socialist era alongside the sounds and sentiments of yazguur, or “originality,” discussed in Chapters Five and Six. Curtet notes this curious absence of the River Eev in the documented repertoire (2013:303) even as he discusses how Mongol xöömei employ mimetic devices specifically towards representing sonorous waters (83), following the above exceptions in discourse and performance. While mimetic or aquatic references pervade discourses of Mongol xöömei, as I discuss in Chapter Two, mimetic performances are rare in public or private occasions like those that Levin describes in a section on the Tuvan xöömei Anatoli Kuular (Levin 2006:58-62) or which Curtet documents in two ethnographic performances that he organized as part of an acoustic experiment (2013:127-129). Why?

A conversation with Mishgee, Xövsgöl province

During my fieldwork, I attempted to understand this silence of the River Eev by conducting fieldwork in Xövsgöl province. In particular, I wanted to investigate Badraa’s claim that “all Tsaatan men do xöömei” with ethnographic research. The following narrative recaps that experience, admittedly streamlining many aspects in order to maintain a focus on the melody of the River Eev because it is so difficult to latch onto. While Levin looked across the Mongolian border with China's Xinjiang province when dreaming of finding this legendary river (2006:124), Mongolian maps reveal a plethora of rivers of the same name or a cognate. Badraa

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notes variations on "Eev" in western and northern Mongolia as *Iiv*, *Ivd*, *Yeev*, and *Kiiv* (1998:46) while Xerlen gives additional examples, such as *Eeven* (Sagsai district, Bayan-Ölgii province), *Shijin Beevei* (Xovd province), *Iven* (Baruunburen district, Selenge province), *Ervin* (Sant district, Selenge province), *Yantsid Erevin* (Jargalant Xaan district, Xentii province), and *Kiiviin* (Xyargas district, Uvs province) (2014). Darxad people in Xövsgöl province also have enigmatic ties to the river-melody, as the following ethnographic experience suggests. Hinging upon regional and natural social relations, these ties reveal more of the aesthetic, logistical, and epistemological edges of cultural development.

Relying upon my network of friends and musicians, I sought out contacts in the province. As it happened, Chimde, the horn-player (*bisguurch*) for the band Altan Urag, once knew a fellow student in high school from Xövsgöl province who could do *xarxiraa*. Months later, he found this former cohort and put us in touch. Via phone, the latter said that there are some elder *xöömeich* in Tsagaannuur district, but he could not say more. I did more research and through the help of an American doctor, I made contact with Tulga, a resident of the district. He said he would look into the topic on my behalf. Several days later, he called back saying he found some *xöömeich*. I asked for details, but he said, "Just come." I pressed him further unsuccessfully. "Just come," he repeated. Several weeks later, I left Ulaanbaatar for Xövsgöl province without any further details or logistical preparations, aside from bringing my equipment and questions.

After a two hour plane ride, I stayed the night at a hostel in the provincial center of Möörön. The next day I took a *pargon*, a Russian-made van that can handle the countryside, to Tsagaannuur district, arriving after eight hours. These were the worst roads I had seen in Mongolia, having done the much longer, two-day trip to Xovd province in the far west many times. Even still, fellow riders said Zavxan province was actually the worst. But as usual, we
made it. After a night in a local hostel, I met Tulga in person. He was a short, inquisitive man who happened to be among the few Tsaatan residents in town. He did not know of any xöömeich among the Tsaatan. Nor had he ever heard others speak of it during his lifetime in the province. My eyes widened. My trip's prospects seemed grim. As a guest, I did not want to push Tulga on why he did not tell me this information over the phone. However, he reminded me that there were some xöömeich living around, as he had learned through hearsay over the last few weeks. We would need to hire a driver and car for the long distances we would travel.

The first contact, however, was just outside of town. The next day, we arrived at the home of Bat-Amgalan Ochir, or "Gana" for short, a young herder (b. 1992) who had learned xöömei from “a local teacher” whose name he could not recall, like Toivgoo and his elders (Interview, August 28, 2014). He had encountered this teacher some time ago, wherein the latter briefly showed him how to do xöömei. Gana then proceeded to learn on his own. Tulga and I could not find this teacher. No one else he knew did xöömei and at a cultural competition he was the sole entry for xöömei. He listened to Tuvan songs with xöömei in them via mp3’s he received from friends attending university in the Tuvan capital of Kyzyl. But he did not know the artists' names and no longer had these recordings in his possession. He did not know of any renowned Mongolian xöömeich from Ulaanbaatar or western Mongolia, indicating his isolation from national or regional discourses of Mongol xöömei. He did not practice the sound mimesis of aquatic sources (per Levin 2006), nor did he know of the River Eev, a river that might be flowing somewhere in Xövsgöl, he surmised. But it was not a melody he knew of.

Tulga and I then traveled farther away, over some mountains and through some forests to a place called Tengis. We had come to meet Ganbaatar Dash or "Ezer," for short, (b. 1968), who, it was said, sounds xöömei. But he was off in the mountains collecting berries. We waited. The log cabin, not a yurt (ger) as most rural Mongols prefer, was damp, dark, and quiet. After
several hours, Ezer showed up, weary from climbing and picking. After some introductions and
discussion, he agreed to an interview nevertheless (August 29, 2014). He had learned from
having seen Tserendavaa and Yavgaan performing on television during a cultural program. After
that, he also tried learning on his own out of a creative interest, applying the program’s insights
to his own experiences as a herder. He emphasized that he was not a professional, but just liked
to do xöömei here and there. And occasionally he liked to imitate the sounds of waters with
xöömei, following the precepts of the television program. I asked him to demonstrate, but his
voice was tired and rough, emitting a raspy, almost electronic sound. He did not know the
melody of the River Eev.

But next on Tulga’s list was Mishgee Choidon (b. 1945), an elder who lived back in
town and who had been a professional musician during socialism. He lived in a one-room,
wooden shack in a small courtyard (xashaa). He was wrinkled as a raisin and smoked a pipe. But
he was interested in an interview (August 28, 2014) on xöömei and kindly shar
ded his
compelling thoughts and recollections on those persons in the far off past who, he remembered,
cease sounded xöömei in forested places where socialism never found it. The following narrative
is an amalgam of recollections, quotes, and personal views, just like Mongol xöömei itself. In a
few cases, the history he recalls and his personal recollections seemed at odds with each other,
complicating his visions. But I include a few, mentioning them explicitly, in order to highlight
the difficulties of doing ethnography at the edges of development. I quote Mishgee at length,
having heavily mixed and matched his statements in the following narrative to concisely convey
an interview that expanded in so many compelling directions at once:

“I am someone who was born in Ulaan-Uul district in a birth-place (nutag) called Soyo,
what is now called Buural river. When I was small and in the care of my mother and father, I
had to focus on herding and agriculture, so I did not go to school and study culture (soyol). I do
not have such a thing \textsuperscript{110} [tiim yum nadad baikgii]. But like all children from time immemorial, I was very interested in music. My talent was looked after and I was sent to a short musical course for forty-five days in Arxangai province in 1967. Upon getting there I had no remarkable learning or knowing and I came playing bad notes \textsuperscript{110} [muu not]. Then I started working for well-known musicians at district clubs. Now I am quite old. I have organized artistic and cultural work for seventy years without interruption in this district homeland \textsuperscript{111} [sum oron]. And I have participated in every kind of artistic work within this district homeland. The people \textsuperscript{111} [ard tiimen] valued this work, so the presiding administration of this homeland, the district administration, bestowed two silvers and one gold medal, while five years ago an award called the People's Talent \textsuperscript{111} [Ardyn ar'ystan] was also bestowed onto me. But I understand that the most important thing is your questions on xöömei, your wish to do some in depth research.\textsuperscript{111}

\textsuperscript{110} Mishgee implies that he was not proficient in European musical performance or notation. He refers to “notes” (\textit{not}) directly here.

\textsuperscript{111} Намайг Чойнжин овогтой Мишгээ гэдэг. Миний оссон төрсөн нутаг гэвэл Улаан-Уул сумын 3-р багын нутаг Соёо гэдэг газар, одоо тэр Буурал гол гэдэг газар төрж оссон [нийм хүн.]. Бага насанд аавын асаргаанд мал аж ахуй үл голлож ясанаас биш явсан, сүрсэн сүрүүл ниймээ тиймээ юм бол надад байхгүй. Аль хүүхэд байх цагаасаа хөгжимд их сонирхолтой [тийм үл хүн байсан юм байж уу, одоо бодож байдаг.] Тээр аавасыг ч харгалзсан ч юм билич, 67 онд Архангай аймагт хөгжмийн түр күрэн 45 хоногийн түр күрст явуусан. Тэнд очоод нээж тээж гайхалтай сүрч мадчихсан юм байхгүй муу хот ол гардарладаг бодож ирээд. Тээжээд сумуудын клубуудад хөгжимчийн көртэй үл ажиллаж явсан. Тээжээд өндөр насанд хүрээлэн. Сүм орны дотор зохиогдож байгаа урлаг соёлын ажил 70 гартаа харин тасалдаж байгаагүй ёэ. Сүм орны дотор болж байгаа урлаг уран сайхны ажил бүтэнд нь үл оролцож явсан. Энэийг маань ард түмэн ч үнэлсэн, харьяалагдаж байгаа орон нутгийн засаг захиргагаа, сумын захиргагаа ч үнэлсэн байх 2 мөнгө, 1 алт 3 медаль хайрласан, 5-н жилийн орноо Ардын ажың баг тийм алдар цол хайрласан. Хамгийн гол нь таны асуулт бол хөмийг ю их судлах хусэл бодолтой үл гэж би ойлогж байна.
Figure 4.7. The elder Mishgee Choidon discusses those who could do xöömei in his youth in Xövsgöl province.

"Everyone understands xöömei differently, there is no single explanation for it.\(^{112}\) I believe that xöömei is something to please our mountains and waters with. There are places whose mountain waters [uul usaa] spirits are difficult and ruthless [xatuu dogshin lus sardag], bitter places [xaxir yaxir gazar]. In the times of our ancestors [övög deedsin üye] the most important thing about xöömei was to tame [nomruulj], soften [zöölröx], please moutain water master-spirits, to relate with mountain waters as with people [xün shig]. This, basically, was the merit [ach gar’ya] of xöömei and its origins [garal üüsel].\(^{113}\) The mountain waters of the earth [xangai delxii] all have master-spirits [ezentei]. Mountain waters without master-spirits do not exist. For example, these mountains have horse master-spirits, cow, or mouse spirits. The most

\(^{112}\) Хөөмий гэдэг хүн болгон өйлгөвч, хүн болгон тайлбар яг ганц байхгүй байх. Хүн болгон өөр өөр тайлбарладаг болов уу гэж би бодож байна.

\(^{113}\) Хөөмий л бол хамгийн гол нь. Уул усаа баясах зүйл бол хөөмий л гэж уздаг хүн бол би бол. Хатуу догшин лус савдагтай уул үс ч гэдэг, хахир яхир газар л гэдэг, хэнцүү хүнд ч газар гэж ярдаг. Тийм газрыг бол овог дээдсийн үе хөөмий хамгийн гол хөөмийгөр уул усны ээдийг баярлуулж, баярлах, номхруулж зөвлөрүүлж, уул устайгаа хүн үнг харьцах явсан бол за ер нь бол ундсэндоо хөөмийн 1 ач гавьяа байсан боловуу. Би нь бөмбөгөлттөй явдаг хүн. Хөөмийн гарал уусэл бол тийм.
important thing is to praise the master-spirits of mountain waters. Regarding people in the far
off past, the significance of doing xöömei lay in calling and catching prey, as I understand it. A
different xöömei, one that recently became art is now being used by artists.114 My general
understanding of what is called xöömei, my own understanding, is as so. Beyond this I don't
understand well what further can be said about xöömei. What is called xöömei in our birth-
place is about praising mountain waters and sky spirits [tenger lus]. Its most important aim was
that. And so, it is not only ours but also Tatar, Turk, Bel'gi, and Uigar…these steppe peoples
[talyn yastanuud] use xöömei a lot. They xöömei primarily to praise mountain waters and the sky
[tenger].115

"I did xöömei myself until I became forty. After that I stopped and could no longer do
it"116 …I just generally did a little song melody, a bird's call (jirgee), or a water current. I would
imitate (duuraix) the sounds (avia chimee) of baigal' (nature-existence). Such things I would
imitate a lot with xöömei.117 I didn't do xarxiraa, only whistle xöömei. I was not that great.
Besides me there was another person who did xöömei well. He has become a god (burxan

114 [propriety]
115 Хөөмий гэдгийн ёрохий ойлголт бол, одоо миний зүгээс ойлголт энэ л байна. Одоо ээнэнээс цаа шөнөм хөөмий гэдгийн ойлголт одоо няц мах няц мах гэсэн одоо би учирч нь сайн олоохгүй. Хөөмий гэдгий нь манай нутагт бол уул усаа баясах, тэнгэр лусаа баясах, Бүрхэдээ баясгах.... Хамгийн гол зорилго бол тэр л байсан юм шиг байгаан. Тэр ээгээ ганц манайд [propriety]ч биш Татар, Турк, Белг, Уйгар... энэ талын ястангүүд бол одоо тээ хөөмийг бол мах их хэрэглэнэ. Тэр ганц уул ус, тэнгэрээ баясгахын түлд л хөөмийлэн.
116 Би нэг 40 гарталлаа хөөмийлсөн. Тэгээд чаашлагч гэсэн болсон.
117 Зүгээр л ногоо жиргийн нэг ийм усны урсгал ч юм уу, шувуудын жиргэн ч юм, тэр ав дууны юм бол нэг их ядагтууй. Байгалийн аян чимээг л дуурайгаж л майгт. Тийм л юм их дуурайж их хөөмийлнө
That person would do xöömei way back in the throat [xooloi deer] while making a whistle in his mouth. So he did this two things together. He was such an amazing person. He was a Darxad from Ulaan-Uul, born by a river called Gun, a person of that river. He was called Sodnomdorj Baatar and became a god at Xalxa river. We would play together on hillocks. Beyond his voice [xooloi deer tsaana] he would xöömei through his nose [xamraaraa xöömeildöx] and whistle through his mouth [amraaraa isgerex]. How great did he sound, his whistle and xöömei coming out at the same time [neg zamaar garax]. So admirable.

"Of course, I thought about really learning and striving to do so. And so until parting at evening, having herded, watching the cows in the morning, when collecting dried dung [arga], firewood, or grass on the steppe, the two of us would be doing xöömei, improving and improving. Compared to today's xöömeich, what can you say? That Sodnomdorj was great..."

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118 This idiom refers to someone who has passed on. It implies that the person is now a spirit to be praised and revered as a god might be. Hence, it signals a transition from the human estate to the spirited estate.

119 Хархираагүй, зүгээр исгэрээтэй хосоор нь явж болов манг баих нь байсан. Би арай л чадаагүй. Надаас өөр хүн, бас саин хөөмийлдөг хүн байсан юм уу даа, байхгүй ээ Бурхан болчихсон. Тэр хүн цаанаа хоолой дээрээ хөөмеийг я байдаг, наанаа аман дээрээ исгэрч я байдаг. Тэгээд л тэр хоёр нь хосоорөө явдаг. Тийм үнэн гайхалтай хүн байсан юм.

120 Дархад. Ээг Улаан-Уллын хүн. Улаан-Уллын Гүн өөдөг голд төрж эссэн, Гүнү өлгөн хүн.

121 This historical note complicates or contradicts Mishgee's biography of Sodnomdorj. Xalxa river is where an important battle took place in 1939. Presumably, Mishgee is implying that Sodnomdorj died at this battle, but Mishgee himself was born in 1945, making it impossible for him to have met Sodnomdorj, as he states. I take this as a slippage in memory that I should acknowledge to reveal the limitations of this ethnography to the reader.

122 Mishgee seems to imply that Sodnomdorj was doing whistle xöömei, i.e., producing a vocal drone at the same time as a harmonic contour.

123 Бaaатын Содномдорж өөж. Аав нь Бaacтар өөж хүн байсан юм. Байрын Бaacтар өөж. Тэний тэрсэн ч хүү нь биш. Өргөж авсан хүү нь. Содномдорж өөж. Одоо байхгүй ээ. Тэр Халх голд бурихан болсон. Бид хоёр тоолж эссэн юм. Нэг дөөв дээр. Тэр бол харин гайхамштай тийм хүн байсан юм. Хоолой нь ээ цаанаа, хамаараа хөөмийлж я байдаг, амаараа исгэрч я байдаг. Тэр хөөмий исгэрээ 2 нэг замаар гарaad явахардаа ямар гөө сонсолдож байна. Ёстой бишрэн.

124 Pastoralists use dried dung for tinder.
If he were alive today, Mongolia would have no other like him. I never saw him on the stage. Outside on the steppe, making pastries, at the watering hole, making a fire, or boiling tea and sitting, living like this when young I would imitate him.

“So you learned from Sodnomdorj?” I asked.

“No. I listened to him a lot. I really liked to listen to my friends do xöömei. I never really mastered xöömei. And so, I would imitate [duurai] Sodnomdorj until making a sound [av'ya] like ‘uuuu.’ From there I developed a little.

“In other words, there were others who did xöömei besides this Sodnomdorj.”

"There were very few. Ok, there was that Sodnomdorj. There was a person called Tsevegdorj. He passed recently. Actually, if I speak correctly, he was my paternal uncle. That person did xöömei considerably great. Before him there was sir Chuluun. When he was around, there was also another person who did xöömei so-so. Before that, Baatar Damdin could not do xöömei decently, but if he had tried he might have done really great xöömei. There was another person who just became a god. Dashdavaa Gavaa did xöömei in all kinds of great ways. We imitated [duurai] that person greatly. He no longer lives. If he did, he would be a person of ninety years. He is originally a person of this birth-place. He worked at Xalxa river. Having

125 Би сүръя ҕэж ёрдөө улайж мэхэйсэн /улайрч хичээсэн/ юм байхгүй л дээ. Тэээд л орой угэж мал маханд явж, олно нь үхээр мал, ҕээр өвс хүлс түлэн аргаач байгаад л, ҕээр л одоо хөөмийлж байгаа юм болж хоёулаа балайрсаар байгаад л, тэээд л, тээр маань засарсаар засарсаар байгаад л...одооны хөөмийчийн хажууд ямар хөөмий болхов дээ. Аа яахав гээдээ тэр Содномдорж ч агуу л даа. Одоо байсан бол ҕэстэй монголд байхгүй хөөмийчий байх байсан юм. Би тэр хөөмийгөөр тайз майз ээ ээ тээр бол гарч узээгүй. Ёрдөө узээгүй. ҕээр гадна залуудаа гээ хийж явахдаа уд усандаа л галаа угэж цайгаа чанаж суухдаа л тэээд худлал хөөмийлж байгаа юм болж л дуурайж байсан.

126 Угүй ээ. Түүнийг их сонсдог л байсан. Зав л гарвал би нехрөө л хөөмийлүүж соосх л түн их дүртэй, хусалтэй. Өөрөө бол нэг их хөөмийлж ҕэж зэнэлдэгтүй (sic). Тэээд ер нь тэээд л, тэр Содномдоржогудоо дуурайж л ааа ууу ҕэж байтал тэээд нэг тийм аваа л ороод ирсэн юм надад. Тэээд тэрэнээс жоохон хөгжүүлж хийгээд л.
arrived, he could not return from that direction. He is said to have become a god there and would be around ninety now. He knew how to hold [bar’y] xöömei not only for two, but for three minutes. He was such a person. His older sister could probably tell you how he learned.

Batsüren Gavaa, his older sister is around.127

I looked at Tulga. He said we could certainly find her the next day. It was only a few hours’ drive. And on the way, he also mentioned, we might find Erdene, a local who is said to sound xöömei well. But first, what happened to all these xöömei performers? Only Dashdavaa had any archival traces, a few folk songs stored at the MNR Golden Collection (Altan fond). But he was not renown and I could not find anything else on him, while all these other performers Mishgee recalled were only known to him and their descendants.

"These few forest friends [taigyn nöjdüüd]129 are no longer around. People of the forest [taigynxan] were a people [uls] who did xöömei in all kinds of ways."

"That was in the past. Now it has broken off [tarsax]," Tulga interjected.130

Mishgee continued.

127 Again, Mishgee seems to be complicating the historicity of his recollections as Dashdavaa, whom I discuss below, was likely too young to be involved in the battle of Xalxa river in 1939.

128 Ховордуухан байсан. За тэр Содномдорж гэж байсан. За Цэвэгдорж гэж хүн байсан. Сааян явлалаадаа. Уг нь саий ярввал миний арга ах хүн. Тэр хүн харин нилээн гөө хөөмийлдөг хүн, нилээн чадалтай хөөмийлдөг хүн байсан. Тээрээс чинь хойш Чуллуу гуай гэж, нажавдэн нүүг дүүнд ээрэг л хөөмийлдөг бас нүүг тийм хүн байсан. Тээрээс хойш, Дамдингийн баатар ч гэж сүрхий хөөмийлдөх майттай, олигтой ч хөөмийлж чадахгүй оролдоод байвал бас их сайн хөөмийлж магадгүй нүүг хүн байгаад бас л нилээн түрүүхэн бурхан болчихсон. Гаваагийн Дашдевзээ гэж ёстой языны хөөмийлдөг хүн байсан. Бид тэр хүнийг их дуурайж, хөөмийлж болоход байсан. Одоо байхгүй байахаа даа. Байвал одоо 90 гарцанд хүн явава. Уг нь эх нутгийн хүн. Бур эх нутгийн хүн. Тэээд тэр Халх гөлд ажилласан. Очоого тэр чиглэрээ эрж чадаагүй. Бурхан болсон гээн. Гаваагийн Дашдевзээ гэж, одоо эх нээл арч нь Гаваагийн Батсурэн гэж эх нээд зацдад, амд ямн байна. Тээрэн эх нь. 130 Meaning that they were residents of the forests and Mishgee’s friends.

129 Mishgee: Эээ хэдэн тайгын нтүүдөө одоо байхгүй ээ. Тайгынхан л ёстой янын хөөмийлдөг байсан үлс

Tulga: Дэр үед байсан, одоо бол тасарсан.
"If I consider my own native roots [unagan ündes] then I am myself a person with origins in the forest [taiga]. I am a person of Tsaatan origins. I am not a real Darxad person. My mom was a Darxad person. My father was way back a Tuva person. And usually I never saw my father doing xöömei. My older brother by birth has become a god. But when out on the steppe, he was a person who made all kinds of sounds [avia]."\textsuperscript{131}

This is a familiar story in the literature on Tuvan xöömei, wherein a herder is said to do xöömei only while out on the steppe, away from other who only hear them from a distance (e.g., van Tongeren 2002: xxiii-xxvi; Levin 2006: 8; Beahrs 2014: 1-2). Mangaljav’s encounter with his two elders is another example. Mishgee is also referring to a Tuvan genealogy of his own, which his familial, communal, and social relations in Mongolia have seemingly obscured. Notably, his description of xöömei in the far off past suggests regional links in aesthetic practice between these “far off” xöömeich in Xövsgöl province and Tuva. Our conversation began approaching sensitive matters. The Xalxa-centric Mongolian government, for example, sought to diminish or efface Turkic-ness amongst resident peoples in northern and western Mongolia, towards consolidating its authority.\textsuperscript{132} Carole Pegg, for example, quotes an elder called Luvsanjav who had to say he was Xalxa under the communist regime, even though his family had originally come from north of the Tagna Mountains in Tuva. They were Urianxai, an ethnonym for the various peoples who would become Tuvans in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century under Soviet nationalities policy (Forsyth 1992). But this history of ethnic repression did not necessarily

\textsuperscript{131} Миний бас унаган үндэс гарал өвөл би тайга гарлын хүн. Би одоо цаатан гарлын хүн. Би өөрөө. Жинхэнэ дархад хүн биш. Ээж минь Дархад хүн, аав минь хойшогоо Тув хүн байсан юм. Тэгээд өр нь манай аав чиг л хоомийлж байхыг үзээгүй. Миний нэг тэрсэн ах байж байгад бүрхэн болчихсон юм. Харин тэр ах минь ба тэгээж яна бүрүйн авиа гаргадаг хүн байсан юм.

\textsuperscript{132} See my discussion in Chapter Three on the role of Xalxa-centrism in socialist cultural and nationalities policy for further background.
correspond to a repression of xöömei, as Mishgee implied in the rest of our interview. I asked him more directly about what happened to all those peoples who did xöömei, why they never seemed to have achieved recognition, except for Dashdavaa. Mishgee seemed to skirt around the question, always emphasizing a correlate topic: the development of original art (yazguur urlag) in the 1980s, after a period of neglect that seemed to begin around the year 1960. But whenever I asked him directly about repression he insisted there was nothing of the sort when it came to the performance of xöömei. The problem between xöömei in Xövsgöl and socialism in Mongolia, instead, was aesthetic despite the problem between Turkic peoples and the Xalxa majority:

"Well, my own understanding is that xöömei ceased as such, during the time of communism and socialism. I saw this. It was generally a time when people were forgetting about the cultural heritage of our ancestors, while there was no awareness [xaan ch baisgui] of it. And so, looking back after some years, when people recognized this cultural heritage [övtei soyl], such as xöömei—such rare, wonderful, old and forgotten cultural heritage—when this realization came everyone saw how our great ancestors [övög deed] in the far off past [deer üye] had such things. The people [ard tümen] understood that these things needed to be returned [irex gargax]. Now there is this understanding.\(^{133}\) From around 1960 until around 1980, a part of art was extinguished [untraax]. Song and music were greatly extinguished. People's talents [ardyn ar'yastan] did not demonstrate these things. Hence, there were all kinds of things that the aim of

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\(^{133}\) Харин миний ойлголтоор бол одноо төр нэг үе төгөж тасарсан, коммунизм, социализмийн үед тасарсан л гэх үздээ байгаа би. Ер нь төр овог дээдсийнхэн ов соёлтын хүн өрөө нь ухаан ч байхгүй, мартчихсан л үе байсан. Тэгээд эрээд хадан жилийн дараа тийм өтгөй соёл, тийм өйлгөлт болох нь нэг нь нэг хөөмийлдөг ч юм уу, аа тийм өөрөө хөөмийлдөг. Эрээд эрээд гэрээчийн үед төр хүн гаргаж ирлээ гэхэд төрөлөөлрөөс санаа авдаа авдаа бутгүйрөөлөө л энэ чинч өөр үед овог дээдсээс маань тийм юмтай байсан байна. Энэийн гэрээчийн өөрөө хөөмийлдөг ч юм гэсэн ойлголт одоо л ард түмэнд байх шиг байна. Одгоо л тийм ойлголттой байхшгийн байна.
developing culture and art [urlag soyolyg] could not accomplish. Then beginning around 1980, celebrations of what is called original folk art (ardyn yazguur urlag) began happening throughout the provinces, districts, and rivers, probably reaching every nationality (yas ündes, ugsaa). In this birth-place in the spring there are now Darxad song celebrations. Many people from your country and other brother-sister countries [egch duu oron] come to conduct these games and concerts.  

He preceded to discuss these recent festivals, like the one Bat-Amgalan participated in. But what exactly happened in 1960? Did locals stop teaching xöömei due to repression targeting the vocal practice specifically?

"People stopped learning. People would xöömei on their own initiative. If you do not xöömei, then there is no xöömei. There was no one seeing and becoming interested in xöömei with the aim of passing on (avchirax) original art. People would do a little xöömei when hunting or going to mountain waters. But when coming to the district, there would be no xöömei. It was like this in the far off past [deer üye]. Perhaps they were shy or worried and couldn't do it well. But among mountain waters there were no pressures or requirements. Whether good or bad, you could do xöömei. It was like that. But since the 1980s, national musical arts like xöömei and epic recitation are being passed on very well."
Mishgee returned to more positive topics of present preservation. But I hoped to stay on the topic of repression or neglect in the recent past. Were local xöömeich scared of the government, lest they be associated with religious activity by sounding and praising mountain water spirits?

"No, no. They were not scared of art and culture. They just didn't understand them to be important. Xöömei was a way of coaxing mountain waters [uul usaa l argadax] and so it was not an artistic thing [urlagiin yum]. There was no reason for people to know it. Mountain waters had to hear it. There was an understanding that there was no reason for a lot of people to hear it [e.g., a concert audience], as I see it. For example, if I go hunting in the mountains and into the forest and I don't see any prey, I could go to a mountain spring (uul usan), to a high place and sit to do some xöömei, tsuur (open-ended flute), or some nice whistling, firstly to please the water spirits (us lus) and master-spirits (ezen), and secondly with a plea for the master-spirits to provide prey. In those times, people who did xöömei well had this purpose and so among the people (ard tümen) xöömei was hidden (nuutlagdmal) probably. Because xöömei revolved around praying to receive fortune (buyan xishig guix) from mountain waters, it was declaimed [orilos] amongst the people in such ways. My opinion is as so.\textsuperscript{136}
Mishgee implies that хөөмейч were not scared to perform хөөмей as a form of “art and culture” before socialist authorities in, say, the local cultural center. Instead, they were personally inhibited from performing in public and thereby presenting хөөмей to the greater public. They were simply accustomed to performing for themselves or master-spirits in places hidden from collective witness. It is important to consider here how Chuluun in Chandman’ district and Mangaljav in Tes district were proactive in teaching others about хөөмей. And while Chuluun perhaps had the support of his brother Derem, he is the sole хөөмейч given the credit of spreading хөөмей in his district. Mangaljav’s stories suggest a similar singularity. His recollections of his brief encounters with хөөмей suggest that his elders had not been proactive about teaching him or other the vocal practice. Taken together, perhaps Chandman’, Tes, and Tsagaanuur experienced different trajectories with хөөмей due to the personal decision-making of key individuals. Either one diverged from sequestered practice (e.g., musical offerings in the mountains) and entered the public gaze (e.g., perform at the local cultural center) or they witnessed the disappearance of their practice. The social and political structures of socialism, however, also helped engender this situation in the first place by creating a novel dichotomy between public and private by reorganizing communal life around the district center. Passing encounters, a key mode of transmission, perhaps became rarer and rarer for these reasons, contributing to a decline in transmission. And in the district center, where residents live side by side, there was little reason to perform in private for master-spirits, far away from the mountain springs of their residence. One could freely perform within the strictures and formats of “art and culture” at the local cultural center. But this required that one perform in public before others, adding a novel social pressure that not all desired to
experience. Instead, they remained silent. I have heard many anecdotes of talented performers not transmitting or discussing their practice to others simply because there were not invested in doing so. My suggestion is that a tacit socio-political pressure to re-organize local expression, in contrast to targeted repression of the feudal past, is at work here.

Finally, I had to mention Badraa's statement that “all Tsaatan men did xöömei.” Was it true?

"He is not far off the mark. It's almost true. Xöömei was a private culture [xuvin soyol] that only existed inside a person’s head. There was no such thing as spreading it amongst the people. It was only used for personal purposes [xar amin]. In these ways, there was probably no one who could not do it amongst people of the forest (taigyn ulsuud). There was me as I child.

People of the forest do all kinds of great xöömei.”

In this way, Mishgee left me at the edges of cultural development with few other ways of hearing or learning more about xöömei amongst “the people of the forest.” But he had mentioned the living sister of Dashdavaa, the one xöömeich from Xövsgöl province who did register under socialism’s cultural radar.

**Melodious river ~ Xögiin gol**

The next day Tulga and I went to the house of Erdene, the local who did xöömei well, as Tulga had heard from Mishgee, but he was out of town on a business matter. So, we drove further to the house of Batsüren Gavaa (b.1938), Dashdavaa's sister. She lived between the River Ivd, which Badraa noted in his list of euphemisms for “Eev,” as discussed above, and the River

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137 За тэр бол одоо хол аэржэхгүй ээ. Бараг унэн. Тэгэхдээ тэр нь одоо тэр хүний зөвхөн тэр хүний толгой доторх хувийн сөёл байсан. Тэрийг ард тумэнд дэлгэрүүлж барих тийм юм байхгүй. Зөвхөн ортоо л хар аминдаа л хэрэглэнэ. Тэрэнэ эс тайгын улсуюд бол бараг хөөмийлж чадахгүй хүн байгаагүй юм дөө. Намайг л багад. Тайгынхан гээд л янзын гоё хөөмийлдөг.
Xög, which literally means “the melody river,” perhaps not coincidentally. Unfortunately, Batsüren was losing her memory. My questions were met with confused responses, while her daughter Enxjargal had to interject on her behalf, repeating my questions in a loud Darxad accent. Our interview, as a result, focused on the recollections of both Batsüren and Enxjargal, recollections which would sometimes shift in relation to other recollections.

Dashdavaa had learned through his own talent (just as Bat-Amgalan and Ezer had). He could sound songs with xöömei or imitate the sounds of birds, animals, or river currents (ursgal) and sounds (chimee). "He could do them all. I know," emphasized Enxjargal. “He would do these things when on his horse.” But he mainly did whistle xöömei. However, there was another older man in the area who did xöömei until recently. He, like Dashdavaa, did xöömei in “all kinds of ways.” In Batsüren’s childhood, there was yet another performer, whom she knew nothing else about. But after some prodding, she mentioned that her own father did a little xöömei, though badly. She did not know how her father had learned. He was simply talented, she said with a note of irritation at my persistent questions. There were no Tuvans around.

Neither Batsüren nor Enxjargal had heard of the melody of the River Eev. But they stated that these performers practiced forms of sonic mimesis when saying that they imitated (duuraix) the sounds of baigal’ (nature-existence). As for any pictures, there was one of Dashdavaa performing with a horse-fiddler (morin xuurch) at a national festival in Ulaanbaatar, sometime in the late 1980s. It was probably 1986 when the recordings of him were done in the studio at MNR. She kindly shared the photo with us.
Dashdavaa had “gone off for art” (urlagaar yarsan), Enxjargal stated, although he normally went as a singer to cultural events. The recordings at MNR are of him sounding three Darxad short songs, only one of which I am able to translate because they employ Darxad terms: Xadat tööm and Dund tööm. The other, however, is “The Fifteenth Moon” (Arvan tavny sar), meaning the new year moon. Keeping well in mind how I had no further details on the recordings, the qualities of his xöömei suggest someone who had not learned from professionals like Sundui due to their different aesthetic qualities. The details Dashdavaa’s family gave me were as compelling as those Mishgee did, but there were even fewer. With little time on everyone’s hands, I proposed leaving. Tulga interposed: “How about you record Enxjargal singing a Darxad song?” I turned the microphone back on, embarrassed that I did not think of

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138 Хадат төөм, Арван тавны сар, Дунд төөм.
this myself. After some thought, she chose "The River Xög" (Xögiin gol), meaning “tuneful river.” It was a short song (bogino duu) from this birth-place (nutag) about the river of the same name, which flowed just by the surrounding pastures, and the River Ivd, which flowed to the opposite side of her encampment. Enxjargal first explained that the song came from the people (ard tümend) and the far off past (deer üye).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Mongolian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foaming, foaming, flowing</td>
<td>Խөөсөрөн Խөөсөрөн үрсэн</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past the River Xög</td>
<td>Խөгийн голын арагшаа</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twenty amusing this life</td>
<td>Ҳорын энэ амьд зугаалсан</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oh, my tuneful river</td>
<td>Ҳөгж гол зангод маа</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivriin Ivriin flowing</td>
<td>Ийврийн Ийврийн үрсэн</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past the River Ivd</td>
<td>Ивдийн голын арагшаа</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smiling and laughing</td>
<td>Инээж наадаж зугаалсан</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and growing, my dear river</td>
<td>Ихэж гольдоо зонгод маа</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure and Audio example 4.5. "The River Xög" (Xögiin gol) as sung by Enxjargal Batsüren.

And so, I was surprised: the refrain contained what seemed to be a variant of "Eev" (ivriin ivriin). While not a reference to the river-melody itself, the onomatopoeia did resound in a song about a tuneful river. And the River Ivd, one of Badraa's variations of "Eev," flows to the opposite side of Enxjargal's home. Enxjargal, however, did not know the melody of the River Eev. Upon me noting this feature in her song, she surmised a possible connection (xolboo) between the two songs. She did not have more to say. But as a modifier for ursax, meaning "to flow," the phrase ivriin ivriin seemed like it was meant to evoke the sounds of rapids and currents. I have found no dictionary entries for the term. I could only speculate if local xöömeich also had a relationship to local waters like those that elders in Chandman’ describe. Perhaps Dashdavaa had similarly "taken" melodies from these rivers, like the Chandman’ elder Darjaa surmises of Altai Mountain residents in the far off past, as I discuss in Chapter Seven.
There is a literature on Darxad “attachments” to the immediate world through songs whose melodies are specific to a valley, even as residents often change their lyrics to reflect personal content (Legrain 2011). Perhaps xöömei was once another means through which these attachments unfolded in pastoral life.

After giving our gratitude to Batsüren and Enxjargal, Tulga and I drove to the banks of the River Xög and I made a recording. I stood in different places, listening or placing the microphone closer or farther, trying to listen for its tunefulness. Its rapids were shallow. Rocks bulged just beneath the surface, creating pockets into which the river waters gurgled and plopped.

"Don't they sound like Ezer a bit?" Tulga noted, as we drove away.

Audio example 4.6. The sound of the River Xög, the tuneful river.

The next day, just hours before I was to leave, Tulga called me. Erdene, the xöömeich who had been out of town on business, was back and so we could arrange to meet in my hotel just before my van back to the capital was to leave. Erdene Batxaa (b.1969) recounted the same
story as Bat-Amgalan and Ezer (Interview, August 30, 2014). In his youth, he had heard one or
two elders, one of which was a Tsaatan or Urianxai man called Xöxee, a friend of his father.

After the brief encounter, Erdene tried on his own to perform. He could say little else about
the elder. He sounded Dund tööm, the same Darxad tune that Dashdavaa sounded. Erdene’s
coughing let on that it had been a while since he had done so. He did not know the river Eev,
nor did he do anything akin to sound mimesis. He did “vocal tension xöömei” (shaxmat xöömei),
the style in which the tip of the tongue is down and the root of the tongue modulates the
harmonic whistle, resulting in an "open," resonant timbre. This style produces less “fluid”
(shingen) melodic qualities than whistle xöömei. And he did not speak with any technical terms
for what he was doing. There was little more to say and little time to say it. He needed to do
some business, after all. I needed to go myself. My funds were running out and I could not stay
longer, even if there were likely still others around with something to say or sound about
xöömei at the edges of cultural development.

    Audio example 4.7. Erdene demonstrates a Darxad song called Dundal tom.

Perhaps in the past, all Tsaatan men did do xöömei. But this would have been in the far
off past,
as Mishgee surmised. Today, only Erdene practiced xöömei through local social relations with
recent or long ago connections to Tsaatans, or Tuvans or Urianxai persons. And yet, Ezer, who
had learned from the radio, nevertheless enjoyed imitating the sounds of waters when alone, a
reason for which Tulga associated the current of the River Xög with his sounding. Tulga had even
just come back from the mountains, where, as Mishgee said, residents would sound xöömei
alone for mountain waters. Many of these persons, places, and practices suggested a sense of the
world in which dealing with unpredictable local spirit-masters had once taken precedence in
xöömei performance. This way of performing xöömei did not make sense to socialism, with its
emphasis on cultural representation in public life—or rather, socialist performativity did not make senses to the xöömeich who desired not to sing at the local cultural center, versus the mountain springs where they had been doing so before the 190s, according to Mishgee. One played into or with “culture”—or they remained silent in public. Referring to xöömei in Xövsgöl as “a cultural tradition,” for these reasons, would be somewhat ironic. For it was precisely the rationale of “culture” that encouraged their loss. Mishgee, registering this tension, described xöömei in Xövsgöl province as a practice of “private culture” (xuviin soyol). It resounds to me an important counterpoint to the public and international orientation of socialism in concert performance upon the world stage (delxiin tartsan). This “private” xöömei fell to the wayside without concern amongst its practitioners for cultural development. A somewhat literal nature-culture dichotomy seems to come into play here: this xöömei was something that people did outdoors before the surrounding world, making “all kinds of sounds” from birds with their throats for local master-spirits. As such, it could not make sense within the cultural domains of the district, the nation, or socialism in general. As for Dashdavaa, he did not present such sounds upon the stage in Ulaanbaatar. Instead, he presented three folk songs, following the socialistic rationale of “culture.” But nevertheless, it would be this same rationale that nationalists would eventually co-opt to promote and preserve xöömei as an original folk art in the 1980s in response to the imminent demise of Indigenous expressive forms, as I now discuss in the next chapter.
Chapter V

The Return of the Far Off Past

The novel association of xöömei with “culture” and its successful international reception imbued it with an ideological capital that the Mongolian intelligentsia would eventually leverage toward an agenda of cultural nationalism and sovereignty. Although most of my research associates described “cultural development” largely in positive terms, an increasing number of officials, intellectuals, and music researchers began recognizing its pitfalls by the 1970s. Soviet hegemony and urbanization were contributing to the demise of many Indigenous expressive practices, such as epic singing (tuul’). Indigenous genres, like long song (urdyn duu), served a subservient role in concerts that otherwise highlighted “world ” (delxiin), or rather Russo-European, classical music. In response, members of the intelligentsia and other cultural producers began seeking the special recognition of rare or lesser-known practices, like xöömei, as more Mongol ways of sounding. But like other nationalist movements in the post/colonial world (Chatterjee 1986), this movement employed the conceptual tools and aesthetic formats of the hegemon to realize its agenda.

Instead of rejecting socialism’s official categories, formats, and aesthetics of “culture,” for example, cultural nationalism produced a novel category with which to recognize Indigenous genres. Most influentially, the music researcher Badraa proposed the idea of ardyn yazguur urlag, which he translated himself into English as “authentic folk art,” following European and Soviet folkloristics (2005[c.1972]:56). His concept referenced expressive practices that are “original” in the double sense that they originate in a far off past (deer üye) and are thus “unique” markers of a Mongolian originality, xöömei being one of two prime musical

139 I would like to thank ethnomusicologist Tsetsentsolmon Baatarnaran for reading versions of this chapter discussion.
instantiations, the other being long song (urtyn duu). Badraa thereby contrasted yazguur with other official categories of musical culture, namely folk (ardyn), national (ündesnii), and classical (songodog), the last being the most "developed," legitimate, and Russo-European. He challenged the Eurocentrism of the classical by redefining it (rather than rejecting the concept wholesale) to include non-European expressive practices, which now fell under the rubric of yazguur. His challenge further entangled the sounds and sentiments of indigeneity, nationalism, and socialism.

Not only an intellectual intervention, yazguur sounded in public life in the form of two landmark cultural festivals and competitions in 1983 and 1988, setting the stage for post-socialist revivalism and nomadist\(^{140}\) receptions among foreign publics, once performative representatives of yazguur began circulating overseas. Badraa's intervention initiated a sustained attention to the politics and economics of sounding original, or more Mongol, among musicians and their cohorts in the post-socialist era and especially in overseas world music economies, as I discuss in Chapter Six. Primordial and essentialist as the novel official category was, however, yazguur was still a matter of debate, construction, and performativity amongst performers, intellectuals, and officials. And following Badraa's coinage of the term, actors began employing it to articulate a range of sounds and sentiments that exceed Badraa's semantics of "authenticity" by locating its aesthetic basis and performative origins in baigal' (nature-existence).\(^{141}\) Yazguur, despite it folkloristic origins, now also functions as a euphemism for

\(^{140}\) As discussed in Chapter Two, I use "nomadism" to refer to the Eurocentric and Orientalist discourse of stereotyping Inner Asian pastoralists for purposes of analytical clarity whereas "pastoralism" refers to the lifeway of highly mobile herders in Inner Eurasia.

\(^{141}\) Badraa himself may have espoused this same association. His musical dictionary from 1956 gives an entry for the Russian term natyral n'ye instrument', meaning "natural instruments," as yazguuryn xöjjimiin zevseg. He does not elaborate further.
matters of aesthetic propriety, "custom" (yös), or "nature" (natur, baigal’), while also implying "indigeneity" alongside "being or sounding original."

This chapter considers, firstly, how xöömeich (throat-singers), music researchers, and officials co-constructed yazguur and how xöömei became a crucial voice for this politically important notion in the 1970s and 80s. Secondly, it shows how the concept came to take on semantics and sentiments that exceed authenticity. The conceptual dialogues and strategic collaborations discussed below pose an important counterpoint to scholarly approaches to authenticity. The notion was once primarily the project of authenticators, mostly elite, white scholars who positioned themselves morally in relation to people of color or lower social status to determine whether the latter's practices were "genuine" or not. The critical turns of the 1980s in anthropology and then ethnomusicology thoroughly upturned this tradition (especially Rabinow 1977). Bendix, for example, focused her seminal publication, *In Search of Authenticity*, ultimately on "removing authenticity—in particular, its deceptive promise of transcendence—from the vocabulary of the emerging global script" (1998:7). Later scholars, however, have argued that authenticity should not be purged, but rather expanded into a more reflexive framework. For example, Bigenho's ethnography of Indigenous Bolivian music focuses upon "different ideologies of authenticity" (2003:16), taking up the term primarily as a heuristic for the aesthetic politics of legitimacy. The general literature roughly follows these two trends of critically purging or reflexively refining the concept of authenticity. But neither has necessarily succeeded in purging or refining how people beyond North American academia have employed, re-deployed, and re-worked the concept.

In contrast, Mongolian actors have worked to include yazguur into globalizing discourses of heritage, security, and legitimacy. My associates return and return to this novel, yet timeless, concept as a central locus of "being Mongol" (Bulag 1998), with xöömei as the
metaphoric voice of a far off past. Theresa Nichols' survey of public heritage perceptions reveals ample statements by survey takers, taken randomly at a festival, referring to yazguur as a necessary focus of cultural heritage policy, with xöömei often exemplifying this notion (2015:223). Yazguur is also explicitly primordialist and essentialist, echoing its folkloristic roots. Many contemporary actors, for example, fret over the impending loss of yazguur among young xöömeich, distinguishing, in effect, between "real" and "fake" xöömei. The current national security concept of the Mongolian government itself articulates yazguur as a "genuine national interest of Mongolia" (italics added), which things like history, language, culture, and tradition all constitute. National security, in other words, also regards the maintenance of yazguur. Although playing into or with colonial discourses and representational structures, these articulations all emphasize cultural sovereignty and coevalness. They are not simply "symptoms" of hegemony to the degree that they resemble Eurocentric discourses of authenticity. They span "origins," "originality," "Indigeneity," and "nature" in ways that are irreducible to "authenticity," despite Badraa’s original translation. Conceptual, discursive, and ethnographic nuance is required to understand yazguur in intellectual, pastoral, and public life.

In response to similar re-deployments of authenticity by Indigenous nations, Krystal approaches authenticity differently (2011). He acknowledges how authenticity, as the social sciences have defined it, is an impossibility: societies and practices change inevitably, making the pure truth of a cultural original unable to persist in evolving time and space. But he also notes how the concept remains politically important for social actors, particularly in post/colonial places. He advocates that researchers focus on the construction and deployment of authenticity, following Warren and Jackson (2002:10). His authenticity is not a necessary

component of tradition, Eurocentric object of criticism, nor a refined theoretical framework, but rather a concept possessing cultural value among social actors, whose productive and problematic work researchers should pay thoughtful attention to. Ethnomusicologists have similarly begun to focus on the social life of authenticity among research associates (Weiss 2014; Jirattikorn 2005; among others). Boiko, in particular, describes how an anti-authoritarian and nationalistic folk movement in Latvia invoked the concept of authenticity itself by valorizing “untouched” rural folk exemplars, when countering Soviet-derived aesthetics and authority (2001). The Mongolian cases below, however, revolve around a merging of governmental, intellectual, and pastoral actors to create an eventually sanctified, but still evolving aesthetic of authenticity that unfolded in conversation with exemplars. They show how the folkloristic notion of authenticity itself circulated into Mongolia via the interactions of these actors towards a nationalistic project of cultural sovereignty. But they also show how even a most Eurocentric and static of concepts became dynamic and polyvalent as it departed from its hegemonic sources to facilitate the politics of Indigeneity.

**Conceptualizing yazguur: an original voice**

*Yazguur* appeared in the 1970s against the backdrop of socialism's official categories of culture. These categories appeared regularly in public discourse as givens of cultural reality, as a report on the achievements of the cultural delegation to the 10th World Youth Festival in Berlin in 1973 demonstrates. Lxavsüren, the delegation's director, writes how “in addition to *folk* and *classical, national and modern* styles of art successfully being combined, [the delegation was] able to lift *amateur-volunteer* artists to the level of *professional* art” (Lxavsüren 1973: 44; italics
These italicized categories were necessarily teleological in their relationship to each other, evincing stages of development along which expressive forms were to transform from the feudal to the socialist, the particular to the universal. In certain respects, they were inherently opposed to each other (e.g., "amateur" vs. "professional"), while in other respects, they implied synonymous attributes (e.g., being "national" as an inherently "modern" phenomena). In performance and discourse, actors muddled the official categories of culture, producing a conflicting semantics akin to that of the national lexicon discussed in Chapter Three. But these categories still formed a teleological hierarchy along which expressive practices were "developing" towards an ultimately “universal” (read Russo-Eurocentric) condition and which official performed into existence through cultural policies and institutional programming.

As ethnomusicologist Tsentsentsolmon Baatarnaran, “folk” and “national” categories of music were “part of a process of developing strategic normative definitions of public culture’ (2015:122), although they culminated, at least rhetorically, in a third “classical” category.

The following summarizes the official relationship of the categories to each other (see tables 5.1 and 5.2) in order of legitimacy, as derived from articulations in official journals or scholarly publications from the socialist era. To note, I observe two orders of official categories: the three primary categories (classical, national, folk) given below and secondary categorical terms (modern, amateur, professional) that primarily serve to modify the former.

1) Songodog is "classical," as in European classical music, and "select" in the sense that social evolution had “developed” it beyond other categories. It is the artistic apex of humanity, although its aesthetic practice derives from Russo-European classical music. It is inherently mergejiiin (professional), orchin üyiin (modern), and "universal" as an audible exemplar of what humanity must (and will) struggle towards.

Ардын ба сонгодог, үндэсний болон орчин үеийн урлагийн төрлүүдийг амжилттай хослуулнаас гадна сайн дүрэн уран сайханчдыг мөргөжлийн урлагийн төвсүнд хүртэл орж эч чадсаныг.

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2) A step below, ündesnii means "national" in relation to the "modern" nation-state. The national is “developed” as the modern product of state cultural production, but its links to ardyn (people's, folk), from which it gathered source materials and sounds, imbues it with "particularity," and thus a certain level of undevelopedness. Hence, it is necessarily mergejliin (professional) and orchin üyiin (modern), but it is only "universal" to the degree that all nations evince their own brands of national music. The national is not inherently universal, being a stage in development towards the classical.

3) Finally, ardyn can mean either "the people’s,” as in the socialist masses, or "folk,” in the romantic nationalist sense of European 19th century folkloristics, which Soviet folkloristics modeled itself upon. It is the evolutionary result of the (undeveloped) past and is thus the aesthetic foundation for national music. Although typically "amateur" or "volunteer" (sain duryn) in practice, there can be "professional" performers of ardyn music via their "development" at musical institutions. But this category is not inherently "modern" or "universal" and implies an opposition to the classical, being fundamentally "particular."

The “secondary” official category orchin üyiin literally means "of the immediate period," but implies "modern." Sain duryn means “amateur” or “volunteer,” referencing performers without institutional training, regardless of their skill level or communal authority. Finally, mergejliin is "professional" in the sense that it espouses the institutionalized and formalized aesthetic of European concert hall performance, regardless of the professional practice's non-European generic content. All of these salient notions originated directly from Soviet and European musical pedagogy, folkloristics, and policy and were used to express the positionality of Indigenous expressive forms within the scheme and pathway of cultural development. Nevertheless, Mongolian intellectuals, researchers, and performers often employed these terms inconsistently.
Elsewhere in the Soviet Union, and at different periods of its imperial project, these terms seem to have carried divergent meanings. For example, ethnomusicologist Theodore Levin implies that in Soviet Central Asia, primary categories of national music were "folk" and "professional," wherein "musical evolution" progressed from the former to the latter. Yet these categories blurred into each other: "[b]oth ‘folk’ and ‘professional’ music have been made synonymous with ‘national’ music. It is in this framework that the fabric of musical life is constructed and evolved" (1980:154). As for "classical," it was cautiously avoided when discussing national or folk music due to the existence of an Indigenous classical music legacy, which authorities eventually "expunged" from the Uzbek lexicon (153). In Mongolia, which did not have an Indigenous discourse of classical court music, the category of classical was
instead a key focus of cultural discourses, policies, and practice. Today’s Mongolian scholars and performers now re-interpret the meaning of classical. As discussed in the previous chapter in relation to Sundui’s “fluid” aesthetic, horse-fiddler Batchuluun identifies Indigenous classical genres and precedents. But he is deploying a concept that he recognizes to be socialist in origin in order to explore and complicate the meaning of classicalness in Mongolian music (2009), as I discuss in Chapter Four. For him, classical can encompass pre-socialist ensemble practices that evinced similarities to European-style ensemble performance, or to Indigenous music that was re-harmonized (i.e., nationalized) to suit the aesthetic needs of European-style concert performance and composition.

Badraa was critical of the Eurocentric exceptionalism of the classical and, in response, sought to re-work (not expunge) the official categories of culture. He revealed his thoughts and critiques in a number of articles published in the late 1970s and re-published in the posthumous anthology Folklore: Intellectual Matters (2005). The first article to mention his conception of yazguur is called "On the Problem of Folk Art Research Methodologies." The posthumous anthology gives the year of the article as 1972. However, Badraa refers to a conference paper by I. Zemtsovtskii from 1977 in the article, implying that he actually published it after this date, sometime before 1983, the year of the first Authentic Folk Art Festival. Many of the articles in the anthology were published in official journals during socialism, as is likely the case for this article as well. In an article called “The Problem of a Methodology for Studying Folk Creative Works,” dated to 1977, Badraa reveals the general foundations for his critique of the official categories of culture.

Within “folk music” there is “professional music,” but this statement does not imply that the particular conception of “modern professional music” can substitute for “folk music." I would like to mark deliberately that the given meaning of “classical” refers to the quality of being final in form, complex, and select, demonstrating the
requirements of artistic quality and the working capacity for artful creation. But “professional music” is not only the hallmark of “modern music.” Because “classical music” is no longer a quality germane only to western music, the order of things in modern times is still being clarified. (Badraa 2005[c.1977]: 57)

Badraa argues that the classical should be able to include non-Soviet and non-European practices that are similarly “final in form, complex, and select.” Not only European classical music, but also non-European, non-classical genres may exhibit these features. They can thus demonstrate “artistic quality” on a level that can be “professional.” By extension, modernity, for him, was something to be co-constructed in relation to Indigenous music, not only in subservience to “western” music. Also by extension, Indigenous music associated with “the past” and “undevelopedness” could then be “professional,” “developed,” and “modern,” too.

For this argument to work, he required socialistic intellectual scaffolding. In the article, Badraa reveals his familiarity with Darwin, the comparative musicologists Carl Stumpf, and folklorists like Karpeles, Sharp, and Lloyd. Pegg (2001:273) states that socialist intellectuals, such as Rinchensambuu (1961), conceptualized folk song differently from these European folklorists. As a point of "stark contrast," she relates the definition of Maud Karpeles, which the latter gave at the Conference of the International Folk Music Council in 1955: "the product of a musical tradition that has been evolved through the process of oral transmission" (Karpeles 1955:6-7). But for Badraa, these figures evince theories of human, social, and musical evolution.
that are amenable to socialist ideology, along with his agenda for yazguur. He even mentions the relevance of the 1955 definition itself.

Even more influential was the work of the Soviet folklorist I. Zemtsovskii, whose conference paper Badraa describes in detail before introducing his novel cultural category of yazguur. As Badraa writes, Zemtsovskii proposed that all modern art (orchin iiyin urlag) exhibits three "fundamental regularities" (etgeed zii togtool): firstly, the present "contains" (aguulj baidag) both the future and the past; the range of action in the present consists of direct transformation (ers xuvirgax); and the ways to know and evaluate the past, present and future, are always being changed. Correspondingly, the roots of development stem from tradition, the past having been the present. Folklore, by extension, is teleological and dialectical, and the longer a practice has survived, the more "select" it is—just like "classical" music. Badraa goes on to describe a range of features that Zemtsovskii proposes to be a suitable framework for comparing and classifying folklore. But for him, the key matter is this re-framing of the past as engendering development, with persisting practices becoming "select" due to a pre-existing evolutionary process, as opposed to the state-induced evolution or development that the socialism introduced—a marked shift away from official cultural ideology.

For these reasons, it corresponds that the oldest, extant Indigenous practices would then be the most "developed." Their archaism would be proof of their developedness—not their backwardness—and there would be a distinction between such archaic folk practices and non-archaic folk practices. The folk, as Badraa writes, thus consists of...

those selected artistic works that arise from traditional ways of life (bui axui), that are absorbed during the masses’ (ard olon) livelihoods via the requirements of their combined collective interests, the complete and complex features arising from the people’s ingenuity, which underpin
the people’s (*ard tümen*) experience of historical understanding and knowledge. (2005[1972]:56)\

Yazguur, however, is more specific than the folk:

I would like to introduce the term **authentic folk art** (*ardy yazguur urlag*) into the vocabulary of research on folk art in order to differentiate what, in contrast to modern innovations, has relatively preserved and maintained the best features of traditional life, despite any form of innovation folk works have been involved with during the process of a society’s historical development. (56; boldface in the original)

Badraa himself translated *yazguur* into English as “authentic.” But it is likely that he also associated *yazguur* with the Russian term *samobytnost’,* meaning “originality,” a concept I discuss in Chapter Three in relation to the national lexicon. For in a conference paper written in Russian, which I discuss below, Badraa relies upon this term to imply the “originality” and “authenticity” of xöömei. *Yazguur* evinced successive “stages of musical development—from the earliest, initial appearances to the classics, i.e. professional music of the oral tradition.” While “folk art” is the accumulated body of artistic works of people, “**authentic folk art**” consists of those expressive features, qualities, or practices that existed well before socialism, but which have persisted amidst modernity because of their evolutionary selection. While a sub-category of the folk, *yazguur* is also distinctly legitimate in ways that the folk is not via *yazguur’s* connotations of pure indigeneity. As the conductor Xayanxyarvaa explained in our interview, performing a Mongolian folk song on an accordion is an example of folk art, but it is not

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145 Ардын уран бутээл бол ард түмний түүхэн ухамсар мэдлэгийн түршлэгээр эрдэмд тулгууран ардын уран урхахаар бүрдээх тогс шинжийг олон бутээж, ард оны эрх ашиг нийцсэний шалтгааныг тэдний аж амдаргалд шингэн оршин буй ахуй уламжлах болсон уран сайхны шилдэг бутээл мэн.

146 Ардын уран бутээл нийцсэний хөгжлийн түүхэн түрхүү гэдэж сонсож, аль нэгэн хэлээрээ фантастик орочны хамтгийн агуй ардны уран урлалд ахуй уламжлах болсон нь тэдний шинжлэх уулзалтай хараахан буюу хэрэглэл/title add here/хөгжлөөрөө тодорхойлж ардны уран урлалаар нь ардын нэрлэг
yazguur, because the accordion is a Russian instrument (November 21, 2014). Dashnyam, the head of the Mongolian Academy for Tradition, further suggested that “Indigenous” was an apt translation, considering its pre-colonial connotations (Personal communication, September 22, 2014). Most explicitly, the music researcher Sonomtseren gave the following pithy definition in the late 1980s, marking the salience of yazguur while maintaining a necessary degree of socialist conformity:

According to dialectics, everything is developing forward. But before development, there is the foundation of tradition. That is the main cause for everything’s existence… And so, should we forget these things we require? No, we must know them well. We must all be proud indeed of the art created by the herder masses (malchin ard tümnees).

(1988:37)

Sonomtseren finished up with a concise metaphor to clarify the relationship between yazguur and ardyn: “If folk art is a flower, then it can be said that its seed is yazguur art.” He, like Badraa, was emphatic: yazguur was not a relic or remnant, but a revenant, requiring specific acknowledgement from well within the structures and strictures of socialism towards a nationalist liberation from Soviet (not socialist) hegemony. Like the far off past (see Humphrey 1992), yazguur had moral authority as a guide for contemporary aesthetic and social action in the present. And this moral authority, in turn, facilitated the political power of musical performance at public events to shift official policy in the direction of cultural sovereignty.

However, Badraa did not simply translate authenticity into Mongolian cultural discourses. He also associated the folkloristic concept with the existing semantics of his chose
translation: yazguur. This association set the stage for later re-associations which he would protest, as I discuss below. Bawden gives a range of aligned English translations for yazguur: as a noun, “root,” “basis,” or “origin” are possible; and as an adjective, “basic,” “fundamental,” or “original” are apt (1997). Tsevel’s socialist-era dictionary gives more specific definitions: yazguur can either mean "original," "of a very old age," "genealogy," or "being of the same construction or category." Words with the same etymological root reveal what Sneath suggests is the word’s pre-socialist meaning, a reference to "nobility" or "ancestry" (2010:252). Interestingly, the pre-socialist dress of nobility (yazguurtan) have come to stand in as markers of ethnic grouping in contemporary performances associated with yazguur, which seems less a coincidence, considering that the term implies the legitimacy of indigeneity. Because of these diverse meanings, I do not typically resort to an English translation of yazguur in this chapter, as I do with "folk," "national," or "classical." However, I do refer to “originality” in a double sense (“origins” and “being original”) as a decent translation throughout this dissertation.

According to Badraa, yazguur had two prime musical instantiations: long song (urtyn duu) and xöömei. He unveiled his influential logic in the first academic discussion of the latter by a Mongolian: a paper given at an international folkloristics conference that the International Music Council and the National Music Committee of the USSR held jointly in 1978 in Samarkand, Uzbekistan. The theme of the conference was "Professional Music of the Oral Tradition of the People of the Near East and Middle East and Contemporaneity" and its aim was to address the "problem" of "rapprochement and reciprocal influence between the two cultures—that of the East and the West" (Kossacheva 1979: 112). This "rapprochement," as numerous papers stated, consisted of professional mastery in "Oriental music" of "European forms and genres" and in "European music" of "the cardinal principles of Oriental aesthetics." The author is presumably referring to examples of "national music" in the Soviet sense, namely
"folk orchestras" and other institutional re-workings of Indigenous music (see Levin 1996). But ensconced within Soviet international discourse, national orchestral music seemed to act as a stand-in for "the East" throughout the conference, despite its amalgamate origins in Soviet nation-building and Indigenous expressivity. The papers also concerned themselves with empirical proof that "synthesis" between "East" and "West" was indeed possible, while exploring the theoretical significance of synthesis for cultural development (Kossacheva 1979:114). As he had done when conceptualizing jazguur, Badraa drew upon Soviet-sanctified and internationalized folkloristic discourse when vocalizing the concept with xöömei. Without empirical, ethnographic, or interview data, his paper was similar in epistemological basis and methodological means to that of late 19th and early 20th comparative musicologists. The latter's grand theories of musical evolution similarly relied upon speculative reasoning, scant documentary evidence, and severely restricted musical analysis with little in the way of direct ethnographic engagement. But Badraa differed in his political agenda by re-deploying this musicological rhetoric to articulate and exemplify his novel concept and his aims of cultural sovereignty.

For example, Badraa surmises that the Mongols likely first employed the voice as an instrument out of convenience, as opposed to taking out the time and work to fashion materials into an instrument (Badraa 1981:116).¹⁴⁸ This argument directly parallels that of earlier comparative musicologists like Stumpf (2012[1911]), among others (Mahillon 1874), that early man did the same. For Badraa, further evidence for xöömei's ancientness lay in its associations with and supposed origins in whistling (isgeree), "one of the earliest initial forms of playing music" (1981:116), and herders' association of whistling with magical implications, such as the

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¹⁴⁸ Translation from the Russian by Anna Bisikalo.
capacity to summon the wind deities (salyn tengerü). Xöömei, in this sense, evinced successive “stages of musical development—from the earliest, initial appearances to the classics, i.e. professional music of the oral tradition.” In other words, it is not a “primitive remnant,” but an “advanced result” of cultural evolution. It is "ancient" and, by implication, "original" (samobytnost'): its archaic origins translate immediately into (pre-Soviet) national distinction. In the terms of the conference theme, xöömei’s cultural development constitutes a continuity between pre-modern (i.e., oral tradition) and modern practice (i.e., professional, classic). As for the classicalness of xöömei, evidence lies in the vocal practice’s apparent "complexity," which evolved out of whistling's monophonic "simplicity." To note, the socialist-inflected term for "classical" operates here as well to mean both "best" and "select" in the sense that it has evolved into a "complete" form. For these reasons, he suggests that the vocal practice could be categorized as an "original archaic musical classic" (117). This conclusion, as he finishes the paper, requires the need for "more permeating and complex study of…national musical culture in the full breadth of its system, using the methods of ethnomusicology" (118). In the 1980s, Badraa set about fulfilling this cultural imperative from within the aesthetic regime of socialism.

Establishing yazguur: The Authentic Folk Arts Festivals, 1983 and 1988

Ethnomusicologist Peter Marsh provides insight into the political and cultural atmosphere of the 1980s in Mongolia (2009:100-120). Urban Mongolians in the 1970s were registering increasing discontent with Eurocentric cultural development along with nostalgia for the far off past, resulting eventually in a shift in cultural policy. Towards addressing this discontent, it seems the Party sought out someone who might balance nationalism and socialism, without disturbing the order of things too much. It decided upon the now-famed composer Jantsannorov to head the Ministry of Culture in 1981, providing him with the opportunity to realize his own vision of Mongolian music. A capable politician, Jantsannorov did
not describe himself as a nationalist, even as he valued the cultural resurgence of the Mongolian people (103). The composer Boldbaatar’s retrospective description of Jantsannorov’s ambitions seems to reinforce this point. As the former writes, Jantsannorov “necessarily worked hard towards the aim and policy that usually we Mongolians alone have to make the world receive our classical styles of Mongolian traditional, wise, and intellectual art” (1996:158).

Jantsannorov selection of Badraa as one of his chief advisors—despite some criticism of the latter’s nationalism from the Party—reflected his non-nationalist, yet still pro-Mongolian stance. The collaboration of these two figures proved momentous. Soon after personally warning the current general secretary Tsedenbal on numerous occasions of the possible demise of “traditional authentic art” (ulamjlalt yazguur urlag), Jantsannorov secured budgeting and official approval for a national art inspection of rural talents (156). Yazguur then entered official discourse as a cultural category with the issuing of a government resolution towards this inspection’s completion (cf. Jantsannorov 1989:19).

Jantsannorov personally conducted the inspection in 1982, traveling to rural places and scouting for talented performers. Badraa likely accompanied him. The aim was to organize a concert for these unknown talents in Ulaanbaatar that, as Marsh sums up, would "convince the Party that cultural development required both learning from the outside world and applying this new-found knowledge to the development of the national arts" (105). The result, echoing socialist internationalism, would be proof “to the international community that [Mongolia] could become as developed and modern as any other nation while simultaneously retaining its own unique cultural identity.” But the inspection was also part of a greater developmental

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149 Ер нь монголын уламжаалт мэрэн ухаан урлагийн сонгодог төрлөөдийг монголчдун бид өөрөө дэлхийн давхцана хүлээн зөвшөөрөөлөх хатуу чиг бодлого, зорилготой ажиллах ёстой гээн хэнээ бодол энэ хүнд лавтайн байгаа нь олаааархууцтой.
objective to “clarify the classical form of folk musical works, refine their classification, to research the process of completing their form and structural principles, and research their connections to the historical stages of social development and historical ethnography” (Jantsannorov 1989:19). Jantsannorov, in short, believed that yazguur could be "perfected," following socialist cultural ideology, despite it being the result of cultural evolution.

The first performative result of the national inspection was called the 1st Authentic Folk Arts Festival (Ardyn yazguur urlagiin naadam), held in 1983, with a second festival following in 1988. These two festivals are now storied events. Over the course of ten days, they presented numerous rare and popular dance, narrative, and musical genres at the Mongolian National Circus right in the heart of Ulaanbaatar. Performers ranged from professional folk musicians or recognized people’s talents (ardyn av'yas) to little-known herders. Select performers were documented by the Mongolian Film Factory footage of whom is held at the Mongolian Film Archive. A committee of officials and scholars presided over the performances, observing and deciding who would receive gold, silver, or bronze for their abilities. Emblazoned above the circular stage area in golden lights were the words “Authentic Folk Art,” a direct intellectual intervention into public life. In the preface to the anthology of Badraa’s writings, Jantsannorov elaborates on Badraa’s role in the festival: “When leading and preparing the program and conditions for the 1982 (sic) first national authentic art festival, among the numbers of selected styles (töröl) to be included as styles of art, Badraa officially included melodious whistling, the art of mouth percussion (tashix deldex) and discovered many masterly and outstanding laborers.

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150 Өнгөрсөн жилдөрдөрдөн хөгжмийн уран бүтэлдийн сонгогдог хэлбэрүүг тодорхойлж, ангийлддэг нарийвчилж, бүтэн зүйл, хэлбэр бүрдүүлэх явцыг судлан, түүх угсаатны зүйл, нийгмийн хөгжлүүгийн яр дээд холбогдох баримт мөдээ сурвалж бичгийн харьццуулсан судалагаа зэрээ.
These were the first official recognitions of human instrumentality as a form of art, excepting xöömei. It received official recognition much earlier in 1971 although the festivals played a pivotal role in establishing the still little-known vocal practice.

A program for the 1983 festival’s medalist presentation concert, which the xöömeich Tserendavaa kindly provided me, reveals the festival’s ideological aspects. The concert was called “Celebration of Melodious Sounds” (Ay egshig xurim naadam) (see Appendix C). Badraa is listed as producer and advisor for "origin-group" (ugsaatny) music research. Notably, he is not described a "yazguur music researcher," though in later decades researchers would begin

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151 1982 онд Язгуур урлагийн улсын ахулгаар наадмын хотолбор, болсыг Ж.Бадраа удирдан болворуллахаа шалгаруулах төрлүүгө тооңд урлагийн дүрүүгө төрлүүгө албанд ооор оруулсаар яруу сайхан иргердөө, таалды урлагий эдепмелгө эээмшүүдөө олсун саичууддыг нээжүү олосон билээ.

152 As I detail in Chapter One, “human instrumentality” refers to a common conception among researchers and performers in Mongolia that associates xöömei with a form of instrumental vocalization using “the vocal apparatus” as opposed to a generic form of singing with “the voice.”
describing themselves as such, including myself when discussing my research project in Mongolian. Although Badraa regarded xöömei and long song as exemplars of yazguur, there are only four performances of long song in the program, and just two involving xöömei. One is a praise-song in which Tserendavaa participated, as I discuss below, the other being a group performance by the competition’s xöömei finalists—the only performance dedicated to the vocal practice. Film footage of the xöömei finalists begins with a close-up of Tserendavaa and Davaajav, both natives of Chandman’ district, who are standing at the center of a line of performers. They all sound the same melody. The camera then pans out to include the other medalist, Mönxsanaa and Tüdev, standing to the left of Tserendavaa (in blue) and Jargal and Gansüx, to Davaajav’s right. The narrator introduces each performer, stating their places of residence, the style they performed, and the medal they received. The Mongolian Film Archive’s catalog entry describes the footage: “1. Two Mongol folk songs. Xovd province xöömei performers Tserendavaa, Davaajav doing nose, voice [bagalzuur], chest; Bayanxongor province’s xöömei performer Tüdev doing mouth percussion [tagnain tashilt] with xöömei receives silver medal; Uvs province’s Mönxsanaa [unclear] receives silver medal; ten People’s Army youth, Jargal and Gansüx, do chest xöömei and receive bronze medals.” The folk melodies are “The Bay Horse with Cloven Hooves” (Tsombon turuutai xüren) and “Gooj Nanaa,” the folk song that Toivgoo and Mangaljav first learned. Notably, Sundui does not seem to have participated in the festival likely because he was no longer a "people's talent" and had reached a professional level.
Figure 5.2. The xöömeich who participated in the 1983 Authentic Folk Art Festival. The first two persons are either Gansüx or Jargal. The following persons, from left to right, are Davaajav Rentsen, Tserendavaa Dashdorj, Mönxsanaa Chuluun, Pürev Byaxar. Photo courtesy of the Mongolian Film Archive.

The program also reveals the variety of genres that instrumentalists and vocalists from numerous nationalities (*yastan*) performed. Notably, the names of performers are listed under the rubric of their respective genre and nationality, as if exemplars for official categories. There are no pervasive references to doves of peace, laborers, progress, the masses, the revolution, national development, etc., as in the program for the 5th World Youth Festival discussed in Chapter Four (see Appendix B). And there are no marches, classical tunes, or other Eurocentric markers of internationalism and socialism. Rather, there are genres and practices associated with pastoralism, such as long song (*urtyn duu*), praise-giving (*yerööl*), praise-song (*magtaal*), horse fiddle tunes (*morin xuuryn tatлага*), xöömei, whistling (*isgeree*) and other vocalizations.

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153 See footnote seven.
The pieces performed were almost all non-composed folk songs, except for the case of “Jalam Xar,” a composition by E. Chodoi, which P. Batjargal performed with mouth percussion (*tagmain tashilt*). Another exception was the *bishguur* (horn)\(^{154}\) performance of a “beginning melody” (*garaany ayalguu*) for tsam dance, despite it being a Buddhist dance form and thus a former target for ideological destruction in the decades just after the revolution in 1921. Performers would appear in solo or arranged groups. Perhaps only in one case did two performers seem to have had prior collaborative experience, such as in a *biyelgee* and horse-fiddle performance. There appear to have been no ensembles, choirs, or bands in the 1983 festival, unlike in the Warsaw program likely because these formats better reflected the World Youth Festival’s socialist and internationalist aesthetics of collective performance. There were several small ensembles and bands at the 1988 festival. But the *yazguur* festivals are otherwise significant for their attempt to evoke pastoral performance using the aesthetic structures of socialism.

In further contrast to the Warsaw program, the *yazguur* program refers to specific nationalities (*yastan*), all minorities: Kazakhs, Burjat, Dariganga, Bayad, Barga, Darxad, Üzemchin, and Urianxai. The Warsaw program, by contrast, only references the nation, the homeland, as a whole. The former emphasizes nationalized ethnic particularity, the latter nationalistic homogeneity. However, there is no single reference to the Xalxa majority alongside the other nationalities, in the *yazguur* program. This discursive move is likely a tacit indexation of the Xalxa majority with Mongolness itself. *Yazguur* was not devoid of ethnic politics, despite its purported origins in a far off past before the socialist construction of ethnicities, which I discuss in Chapter Two in relation to the national lexicon (per Atwood 1994; Bulag 1998; Marsh 2009; Sneath 2010).

\(^{154}\) Originally used in Buddhist monasteries, this horn was also nationalized, like the horse fiddle, to suit the performance of European classical music and harmony.
Otherwise, neither the 1983 nor the 1988 festivals seem to have departed radically from socialist structures, strictures, and aesthetics. They took the standard format of prior national competitions, art inspections, and festivals. As with the cultural delegation to the Berlin World Youth Festival in 1973, a report appeared in the official journal *Culture and Art* on the 2nd Authentic Folk Art Festival in 1988. Again, statistical figures become key indicators of development and success. The competition consisted of three levels (*shat*), the third being reserved for the most select performers. Among the 52,000 examined people’s talents (*ardyn ar’ystan*), as the report states, fifteen families, twenty teachers and students participated.

Among the participants from Dornod province to reach the first stage were the pioneer students’ “Xalxa River” ensemble (*chuulga*) from Sümbir district’s middle school and an authentic folk art band (*yazguur urlaqtin xamtlag*) from the “Ulx” collective of Dashbalbar district—“wonderful examples of the heritage (*ör san*) of elder traditional artists being passed on from our older generations to children and youth” (Anon., 1988:23). Two hundred and eighty persons reached the third stage, sixty percent of which were laborers (*ajilchin*), twenty percent herders, seven percent intellectuals (*sexeeten*), and the last ten percent students or army officers (*xaagch*). These numbers included ninety-five-year-old Dulmaa from Dundgovi’s province, the folk dancer (*biich*) Jam’ya from Xovd, the famed epic-singer Avirmed from the same province, the six-year-old Erkugul from Bayan-Ölgii province, and Tserendavaa from Xovd province, “the xöömeich who reached the interest of foreign listeners via his own talented abilities.” Seventeen medalists from the first *yazguur* festival participated in the second. In total, the second festival’s national commission (*komiss*) gave 63 gold, 71 silvers, and 84 bronze medals to the participating talents. On a regional level, the commission recognized provinces for finding and identifying the most *yazguur* talents, Uvs receiving first, Xovd second, and Xentii third. Notably, only the last provinces’ population is predominantly Xalxa, the others consisting
primarily of Mongolic minorities. As the report’s introduction finishes, the technical and scientific features of the medalists’ concert enabled the performers to gain the gratitude and interest of many thousands of listeners.

These figures suggest an unimpeded, top-down governmental process. But establishing yazguur was also a conflicted project, as the critical opinions of music researchers and prominent figures included in the report reveal. Badraa himself was among those who noted deficiencies. Namely, medals for tsuur (open-ended flute) and tatlaga were fewer than before in the 1983 festival. More seriously, Ulaanbaatar was ill-prepared for the festival; the health ministry participated in the inspection, although the national commission did not; and elders from the factory laborer’s council were missing—all issues he recommended the city commission consider more deeply (23). The music researcher C. Tsoodol was critical of other matters. The national commission overseeing the festival’s art inspection encountered a badly prepared Süxbaatar province. The local organizers had not scouted for resident talents, resulting in the Dariganga and Üzemchin minorities’ lack of representation, such as the famous horse-fiddler Saaral. Other provinces had similar problems and missing talents, many of whom Tsoodol mentions by name. “What if there had only been three years instead of five for this inspection!?” he quips (24). The music researcher Enxbayar, a member of the festival commission, was similarly critical of the second festival’s organization and results. And while musical practices were being passed on or professionalized, horse or wrestling medals and folk games had received far less attention.

The novel, yet original aesthetic of yazguur was similarly a matter of contestation, friction, and debate. The state-honored artist C. Dorjpalam, for example, noted how some of...

155 See Chapter One for a discussion of the distinction between Mongol, Mongolic, and Mongolian.
the clothing was lacking yazguur qualities, such as polished mica (gyaltganuur). Some participants wearing aristocratic headdresses and western Mongolian robes (deel) wore ill-suited, modern boots (orchin üyin gutal). But artists from Dundgov’, Arxangai, and Ömnögov’ provinces donned ethnically appropriate garb. Some deserved praise for wearing lama hats (a controversial religious marker during socialism) while Dornod province’s participants were exemplars of how to display and wear yazguur clothe. Dorjpalam, nevertheless, suggests that it was more appropriate for red robes to don blue cuffs. Last to provide critical comments was a performer, the folk dancer (biich) Ö.Jam’yan. Among his numerous student participants were those who could not study well, having been sent to the army, as he laments. A number of elder horse-fiddlers and dancers also could not participate, despite their importance as exemplars of yazguur. On the other hand, the National Folk Song and Dance Ensemble "convincingly danced yazguur" (yazguuryg gajuudulalgii deglej biyelsen) with a new work based upon Bayad folk dance (biyelgee) and tatлага, even getting the hand motions correct, he marveled. But the majority of folk dance concerts failed to pay attention to the nuances between Bayad, Zaxchin, and Torguud styles (töröl).

“Altai praise-song” I: novel origins

For Jantsannorov, the above performances and reports were not the final step in establishing yazguur as a legitimate cultural category. The final step lay in creating an empirical, yet performative, connection to modernity via scientific study, professionalization, and symphonic composition. This connection would necessarily revolve around professional performance within urban, not pastoral, institutions, as the advent of a yazguur version of “Altai praise-song” illustrates. These events would further re-frame xöömei as an original voice while laying the aesthetic groundwork for post-socialist performance practices. As Jantsannorov outlined at the time, there were several requirements for achieving his “final step":
1) to widen the theoretical thought on folk musical works, towards a unified conclusion;
2) to research completely the relationship and connections between folk music and modern professional musical thought via the foundation of science, towards fulfilling and clarifying the active processes of traditional innovation;
3) to involve composers, primarily young creative workers (uran büteel), in this research and science, towards increasing the number of works dedicated to symphonic music using folk musical instruments, thereby enriching their styles and forms, and progressing their quality.

(1989:21)

Professional musicians would carry out this research. Jantsannorov elaborated with a metaphor:

“The People’s Folk Song Dance Ensemble (PFSDE) is the biggest mine for work on the research, study, mastering, promotion, and creative development of folk art works” (20).

Ethnomusicologist Tsentsentsolmon describes how “the ensemble” was seen in the 1980s as a critical means of realizing “the professionalisation, standardisation, nationalisation as well as ‘advancement’ of certain musical forms” (2015:124). Immediately after the 1983 festival, members of the PFSDE carried out this objective and presented their results in a concert, which Badraa describes in an article from 1984:

In the past year, the singers, instrumentalists (xögjimchin), and dancers of the PFSDE announced a call for participation in an authentic art competition in order to find and research the best of forgotten and neglected folk song, music, and dance works, letting loose their own active initiative as public creative workers (uran büteelch) and finding many wonderful examples of folk musical authentic art to create the wonderful concert called “The Eight Tones of Melodious Sound.”

(2005[1984]:66)
The number eight was significant, having numerous connotations within Buddhist symbolism, a possible indication to the revivalism at hand. Only the rarest, most neglected of expressive practices were included in this concert: versions of the zither (numt yatga), fiddle (ix aralt xuur), open-ended flute (xulsan tsuur), horn (bishguur), deer horn (modon uram), lute (tovshuur), and jaw harp (aman xuur), among many others. Among the more successful professional musicians at this concert was G.Yavgaan. As Badraa continues, Yavgaan “masterfully” performed a rare two-stringed lute with a headstock representing a human head, played the jaw harp and open-ended flute while employing vocal tension (xooloi shaxax), recited epics, and sounded xöömei, among others. O.Bold, on the other hand, focused on western Mongolian fiddles, namely the four-eared fiddle (dörvön chistei xuuchir), though in a performance of “Altai Praise-song” he played the ikel, an Oirat term for the “fiddle” from which the nationalized horse fiddle (morin xuur) was produced (see Marsh 2009). And I.Tsogbadrax performed several Oirat tunes, among them “Call of the Four Oirat,” “Current of the River Eev,” and “Altai Praise-song.” Other performers focused on Tsaatan dance or song, or on examining, researching, and “enriching” (bayajuulax) rare instruments, usually from minority groups.

This initiative to engage and “develop” yazguur resulted in a number of significant strategic collaborations between researchers, professionals, and pastoralists that would further re-frame xöömei as an original voice. Like the 1983 festival’s organization, these strategic collaborations would also hinge upon political or aesthetic frictions as much as ideological or nationalistic resonances. One renown result of these collaborations was the creation of a yazguur version of “Altai Praise-song,” the same preamble to epic recital that Luvsansharav transformed.

159 This term refers to western Mongolian ethnic groups, such as the Bayad, Dörvöt, and Zaxchin, among others.
into an anthem-like ode to the homeland.\textsuperscript{160} The performance of xoömei in this \textit{yazguur} version in the 1980s entailed aesthetic shifts akin to those necessary to index the vocal practice with "culture" in the 1950s. But whereas as Tsedee's xoömei sounded as a marker of national distinction within a Soviet-sanctified format like the folk choir, now xoömei needed to sound as a marker of original Mongolness within a pastoral format like the epic recitation.

Two seminal performances engendered this \textit{yazguur} version of "Altai Praise-song," one at the 1\textsuperscript{st} Authentic Folk Art Festival in 1983 and one at the "The Eight Tones of Melodious Sound" (\textit{Naiman egshig}) concert in 1984, which Badraa described above. The 1983 performance consisted of three rural performers who participated directly in this aesthetic shift. However, only Avirmed Baldandorj (1935-1988) and Enxbalsan Tümen-Ölzii (1940-2008) were epic-singers by inheritance. The former was Altai Urianxai\textsuperscript{161} and the latter Zaxchin, both western Mongolian minorities. The third performer, a member of the Xalxa majority and resident of Chandman' district in western Mongolia's Xovd province, is Tserendavaa Dashdorj (b.1954), a talented xoömei performer and close collaborator of Badraa's whom I also discuss in Chapter Seven. He continues to be a key figure in the unfolding story of Mongol xoömei today, as Chapter Seven shows.

\textsuperscript{160} See Chapters Three and Four for more on Luvsansharav and the significance of “Altai Praise-song.”

\textsuperscript{161} There are also Urianxai groups in Northern Mongolia and Xinjiang. Plueckhahn (2013) provides an overview.
In our interview (September 6, 2013), Tserendavaa described at length his role in creating a "slightly changed form" of the praise-song in the early 1980s:

The original motivation arose when the Science Committee called upon the famous epic-singers Choisüren and Avirmed to recite epics and record them [sometime in the 1970s]. Having done so, these researchers and scholars translated the words from Urianxai language (xel) into Xalxa language (xel), encountering many difficulties. They thought a performance of the praise-song would be interesting, but then listeners would not understand the Urianxai lyrics if performed. The listening public, however, would fully understand the Xalxa translation.162

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162 Уг сэтгэлий нь үү түүлэг гээд хайллууд байдаг алдартай туультуы тэр одоо Чойсүрэн, Авирымд энтэрийг шинжлэх ухааны хүрээнд дор дуулуу авачаад л хайллуудаг бичиж аваад бичиж аваад л бичиж аваад л бичиж аваад л сонсоод нохойдоо судлаач эрдэмтэд эгүүг нь орчуулдаг энэ урнанхий хэллэгээр тээж халж байна халх хэллэгээр тээж халж байна гээд л ингээд л бас хаццуу байсан тэрийг сонсоод нохойдоо орчуулдаг нь гоё тугдагдаж гээд ингээд л сонин байх болоно уу урианхай хэллэгээр тээж бодоод л тээж л орчуулдаг л хүрээнд тээж байгаа ард түмэн бүгд л тогтоосон ойлгосон онцой ойлгосон байсан халх хэллэгэн дээр нь аях урианхай хэллэгэн дээр нь муу ойлгож байсан байх нь тээж дээд одоо бухий хүртээл болосон ний түүхтэй юм аа.
For the most part, the same melody and words of this Altai praise-song were recited (xailax) in a variety of ways and changed little in its form in the Mongolian homeland (oron). I was the person who translated into Xalxa five verses (badag shilleg) from the Altai Urianxai epic-singer Urtnasan, the elder by birth of the state-honored, famous epic-singer Avirmed, to create this Altai praise-song in 1981. I did this together with Jam’yan Xu, a Xalxa national (indesten) from Xalxa Chandman’ district. We arranged the lyrics and melody that afterwards became a praise-song of the Mongolian homeland and which came to be recited and sung before the world's nations.\(^{163}\)

I first slightly changed this praise-song in 1980. After the 1983 Authentic Folk Art Festival [where it was performed] three members of the PFSDE—Yavaa, Dashaa and Boldoo—first wrote down the words of the five verses from me, though they could not learn it well. Avirmed was very mad at me for revealing the secrets (nuutsg aldax)\(^{164}\) of ‘Altai praise-song’ in the Xalxa translation of the verses. This true history came to be. And then the PSFDE recited (xailax) this real (jinxe) ‘Altai praise-song,’ slightly changing its tone (öngö ton) and changing the melody by melodizing (xöglöx) on a dissonant tone (öshöö öngö). Most people have now learned by diverging from these performances.\(^{165}\)

Tserendavaa tells Johanni Curtet a very different story in which Avirmed’s sickness required him to fill in for him (2013:290). He seems to be referring to the same set of events that

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\(^{163}\) Заа ихэвлээ энэ алтайн маатаалыг олон янзаар ганц нэг үе үг ая данг ын хоохон өрчилсэн хэлбаруудаар Монгол оронд хайдлаг болжээ. Заа энэ алтайн маатаалыг ах 1981 онд Урианхайийн алдарт түүлчийг магнаж авирмадийн төрсөн ах Уртнаасан гэдэг Урианхай түүлчийг 5 бадаг шүлэг хэллэгэнээ дээр орчулсан хүн бол би байнаа. Энэ нь халхын Чандмань сумын халхын үндэстэн Ху Жамиан гэдэг хүнэтэй хамтарч хойрдоо үг ая найруулагы нь одоо хийсэн ям энэ эс хойн монгол орон маатаалын орон болж дэлхийн улс гүрэнд хүрээлэгээ маатаалыг хайлдаг аялгуудаар болсон байна.

\(^{164}\) The phrase nuutsg aldax can imply "mistaking," "losing" or "revealing" a secret.

\(^{165}\) Заа тээздээ энэ маатаалыг хоохон хоохон өрчлөөд энэйг чинь 1983 он гэг болж байхад чи 80 онд ах магаал хийлээ төрхэн хойш сурах гээд чадахгүй үрдийн дуу бүжгийн чуулгын Явган, Дашаа, Болдоо гэдэг 5 хүн надад ах нь угийг нь бичиж авч байсан энэ 5 бадаг шүлгийг. Энэ 5 бадаг шүлгийг халх хэллэгэн дээр орчулсанар тар хэллэгэн айлдарт түүлчийг авирмад гуай надад алтайн маатаалын нуучыг алдаж олон хүнд дэлхэлээ гэж их уураж байсан 3 нын одоо унэн бодит түүхүүд байна. Ү даа тээздээд ардын дуу бүжгийн чуулгынхан одоо Сухбаатрын мэндэлсэн 200 жилийн 2 сарын 2-нд болгод Сухбаатрын нарамжит баяр болдог төрсөн одрийн төрүүгээр нь ардын дуу бүжгийн чуулгынхан хайдлаг аан тээздэд дээрэн тэнгээ нь жинхэнэ алтайн маатаалын аян аялгууны дээр хоохон тийм оңгө тонныг ын хоохон өрчлөөд соль ри-гэр явж байсан бол өөрөө оңгөн дээр хогловд нийгэд хоохон аялгууг нь өрчлөөд нийгэд явсан түүхэй. Ихэвлээ улс орчир нь сурсанд байдаг.
involved him in re-creating the praise-song in the early 1980s. In our interview, Tserendavaa instead referred to another history behind the praise-song that resonates with the common socialist-era practice of institutional intervention by music researchers and their collaborators, as Marsh also details in the re-construction of the horse fiddle (2009). Tserendavaa even noted Avirmed's anger towards this "revelation of secrets," admitting to the resulting conflict, though he did not say more on why the committee sought to appropriate this song specifically. His collaboration was parcel to a cultural national agenda that Xalxa elites, like Badraa and Jantsannorov, were spearheading from Ulaanbaatar. This nationalist imperative perhaps explains why Tserendavaa can be heard on Badraa's short documentary *Mongol Xöömei* (1983) describing and performing the praise-song without referring to his strategic collaboration with Badraa.

Sitting in a yurt, Badraa interviews Tserendavaa regarding xöömei in Chandman' district. He then asks the latter, "Tserendavaa, could you show us an example of xöömei from among the songs of your birth-place?" Tserendavaa responds, "Sure, sure. I will perform 'Altai praise-song.'" Nothing more is said about Badraa or Tserendavaa's roles in engendering the Urianxai praise-song that the latter performs as a song “from his birth-place.” To note, this is also the first documented instance in which a xöömeich performs with the tovshuur (lute), as Curtet’s survey of the repertoire demonstrates (2013:242).  

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166 Цэрэндаваа та нутгийнхаан ая дуунаас нэгийг хөөмийг үзүүлж болох үү?  
167 Тэгие тэгие би Алтай магталаалг магтий.  
168 Tserendavaa seems to tell Johanni Curtet a very different story in which Avirmed’s sickness required him to fill in for him (2013:290). He seems to be referring to the same set of events that involved him in re-creating the praise-song in the early 1980s. The story he told me resonates with the common practice of institutional intervention by socialist-era music researechers and their collaborators, as Marsh also details in the re-construction of the horse fiddle (2009).
This interest in the praise-song also lies in the positionality of the Altai Urianxai as living exemplars of the far off past within national discourses of Mongolness. As discussed in Chapter Three, the Xalxa-centric socialist scheme of ethnicity framed minorities as "less developed" exemplars of Mongolness (per Bulag 1998). However, with the turn towards yazguur, Xalxa elites began privileging the far off past as a source of moral authority, as anthropologist Caroline Humphrey discusses (1992). This turn towards the pre-socialist past imbued the Urianxai with Xalxa-centric perceptions of being "old," pre-socialist, and thus "more Mongol," though also more "backward" in some senses, as anthropologist Rebekah Plueckhahn discusses (2014:57-62). Upon asking the Urianxai epic-singer Baatarjav Erdenetsogt about this persistent Xalxa-centric interest in Urianxai-ness, he suggested that it
stems from the numerous references to his people in historical texts, dating as far back as the imperial period (Interview, October 10, 2014). These documents conjure a direct ethnic continuity between Urianxai today and those in the far off past. Their expressive practices, by extension, become exemplars of what the Mongols generally sounded like before the drastic transformations of the Manchu (1635-1912) and socialist periods (1924-1992). Ironically, this discourse implies that the most “developed” of ethnicities, the Xalxa, are the least “original,” while the least “developed” of ethnicities, such as the Urianxai, are the most “original.” The 1983 yazguur festival seems to have played a seminal role in engendering this discourse by presenting the shorter version of "Altai praise-song," along with a host of Altai Urianxai performers, such as Avirmed, the epic singer, and Narantsogt, the tsuur flute player.\(^\text{169}\)

These political frictions register in the composition itself of the yazguur version of “Altai praise-song.” Most notably, Tserendavaa decided to employ the famous final refrain that Luvsansharav composed for the choral version (see figure 2.4) in the yazguur version as well. A recording of Avirmed performing the praise-song,\(^\text{170}\) by contrast, finishes with a final verse that follows the same melodic contour of the prior verses. The use of this famous final refrain suggests a tacit move to index the yazguur version with “the nation.” Another notable difference is the reference in the final line of each refrain to the Xangai Mountains, which lie in central, not western Mongolia. By contrast, all the Urianxai versions of the praise-song that are transcribed in Süxbat and Baatarjav’s monograph on Urianxai music only reference the Altai Mountains, their birth-place (nutag) (2009). Avirmed’s recording of “Altai praise-song” is the

\(^{169}\) There is much written on this famous tuureb (open-ended flute player) in Pegg (2001), DesJacques (2004), Levin (2006), and Plueckhahn (2013).

\(^{170}\) I thank Johanni Curtet for providing me with a copy of this recording.
one exception I have found: it references the Xangai Mountains. These observations suggest that the additional reference to the Xangai Mountains may be a cultural nationalist intervention.

Performing this novel, *yazguur* version of “Altai Praise-song” required a balancing act between epic recitation (to suit the aesthetic of *yazguur*) and stage delivery (to suit the aesthetic of socialism), as a film recording of the 1983 performance reveals. Avirmed, Enxbalsan, and Tserendavaa are seated next to each other, facing the camera, implying an address to an audience seated before them as in a stage performance, not as in a *nair* celebration where the audience is seated around the performers at the northern side of the yurt (*ger*). Notably, Tserendavaa sits in the center of the trio even though he is the least senior of the performers. Pastoral performances and celebrations, by contrast, customarily place elders at the center of any performance arrangement with younger performers seated to their sides. Behind the three performers radiate red stripes across a white backdrop, suggesting the wooden spokes of a yurt ceiling. For a few seconds during one of the verses, the footage cuts to scenes of the Altai Mountains, further associating the stage performance with pastoralism and nature. Throughout the performers turn to each other and nod with pleasant expressions, heads bobbing to the pulse of the *tovshuur* (two-stringed lute) each performs in unison, marking the tonic and lower fourth in a quarter-note ostinato. Each performer plays a distinct role in the arrangement: Avirmed recites the first verse in his deep, guttural voice, and then Tserendavaa and Enxbalsan take on the second verse in their tenor voicings. For the third verse, Avirmed returns, but this time with Tserendavaa outlining the melody with xöömei. Then Tserendavaa and Enxbalsan take their turn for the next verse. And so on, until they reach the iconic final refrain, which Tserendavaa also outlines with xöömei. The ostinato of the *tovshuur* stops and the performers trail off together on the fundamental.
This performance of “Altai praise-song” would become the original inspiration for numerous later versions of the praise-song in the albums of xöömeich in the post-socialist era by effectively providing later generations with a non-Soviet (yet still partly socialistic) aesthetic framework for the performance of Indigenous music. These proliferations reveal how yazguur is an evolving discourse within which the Indigenous poetics of origins converge with the socialistic politics of originality. But before ending the chapter with a discussion of these variations and their performance in the present, I would like to discuss another key event that would also help re-frame xöömei as an original voice in the 1980s.

**Originality and nomadism for the international world**

This other key event in the 1980s that helped re-frame xöömei as an original voice arose during the project of musical elites to present the originality of xöömei to the international world by conjuring nomadism, the stereotyped representation of pastoralism, as I elaborate upon in Chapter Two. As a rare practice with a “limited” repertoire in the 1980s, xöömei presented a problem to conductor and researcher Tseden-Ish, who directed the PFSDE at the time and who would later become the head of the Mongolian Xöömei Association (Mongol xöömein xolboo). The “problem” was that xöömei’s repertoire did not reveal its original styles and ways of sounding. After all, the performance of folk songs using only whistle style (isgeree) by xöömeich was a novel, socialist-era practice that began with Chimeddorj, after whom Sundui would only diverge by performing classical tunes also in whistle style, as detailed in Chapters Three and Four. A "solution" came to Tseden-Ish in collaboration with the xöömeich Gantulga Sovd (1962-2010) and Ganbold Taravjav (1957-2011). These three figures all played a key role in creating a novel demonstration piece for xöömei in the mid 1980s that would also help re-frame the vocal practice as an original voice not only for national, but also international audiences, especially in the post-socialist era. (This is the same piece that I heard
the young professional xöömeich Ashid perform, mistaking it for a performance by some pastoral elder in the Altai Mountains, as discussed in the prelude to Chapter One.) As Tseden-Ish stated in our interview, "at that time when I was the director of the ensemble and we went to Japan, I thought to [demonstrate] the yazguur sounds of xöömei—no folk songs—with the ‘four styles [piece]’ (June 22, 2014). He gives more specifics in a conference paper (2006) that the following discussion is primarily based upon.

As Tseden-Ish writes, the inclusion of xöömei in art festivals like the 1983 Authentic Folk Art Festival and the 1985 Asian Folk Arts Festivals laid the foundations for the "problem" (asuudal) and its resolution. At these festivals, the xöömeich Gantulga Sovd, an army clerk from Erdenet, revealed his mastery of various xöömei styles and was later sent to the 2nd German-Mongolian Youth Festival in 1986 as a cultural representative. But the large number of other representatives required that some performers shorten their sections or combine their performances for the delegation's concert. Regarding Gantulga, one person suggested that he perform alongside the contingent of contortionists (nugaralt) and the singer B.Badruu as one artistic "aggregate" (tsogts). Gantulga, despite his lack of artistic or professional training, was more than capable of clearly demonstrating the many styles he had mastered, as a "true talent" (tserer ar’yaas), following his own "spirit" (setgel), implying that he improvised the performance. For Tseden-Ish, Gantulga had basically created single handedly a two and a half minute-long display piece (üzüülber) by taking xöömei melody to "the level of an artistic work" (uran büteliin xemjeend). His demonstration "piece" became the precursor of the one that virtually all contemporary xöömeich now perform today in numerous concerts and albums. However, the popularity of this demonstration piece is largely due to Ganbold Taravjav, a student of Sundui.

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171 Тэр үед би энэ чүүлгийн даргаад Японд аях авчихдаа тийм дөрөө маргаан яажурын дуугааралт ардын дуу биш гэж ээс дөрөө маргаан бичих нь улим.
who is renowned as an exemplar of "fluid" (shingen) style, second only to his teacher. Ganbold first performed his version of the demonstration piece in 1988 while resident xöömeich for the PFSDE. He simply called the piece "The Four Xöömei Styles" (Mongol xöömein dörvön törôl). Contemporary xöömeich now usually refer to this same basic demonstration piece through a number of alternative titles, the most popular being "Linked Mongol Xöömei Melodies" (Mongol xöömein xolboo ayalguu). Curtet provides a survey of this demonstration piece in commercial and archival recordings that demonstrates its popularity and idiosyncratic variations (2013:300).

As Tseden-Ish continues, Ganbold was among the few to become a truly professional xöömeich by performing with the PFSDE. Among the goals of his incessant studies was to perform with the tovshuur (tovshuur) and ikel (fiddle). This ambition was part of a growing trend associated with performing yazguur. As Curtet discusses (2013:241-245), archival or commercial recordings only reveal a few instances of self-accompaniment among xöömeich, namely Tserendavaa’s use of the two-stringed lute in "Altai Praise-song" in 1983 (see above) and Gantulga’s performance for the 1988 Authentic Folk Art Festival, wherein he strums the tovshuur with a technique resembling rasgueado in flamenco or classical guitar performance. As for Sundui, the picture of his group performance (figure 5.3) at the 1984 "Eight Tones of Melodious Sound" concert wielding a two-stringed lute contrasts greatly with all prior available recordings or images of him from the 60s and 70s. In these recordings, a hammered dulcimer (yatga) performer or horse fiddler (morin xuurch) accompanies him, if there is any instrumental accompaniment at all.

The impetus for Ganbold’s ambition was not simply an aesthetic faithfulness to yazguur, but the demands of concert performance itself, as Tseden-Ish elaborates. The novel occasion was a tour of western Europe by a contingent from the PFSDE. One concept for this tour was
that every performer demonstrates their own artistic abilities in solo performances in addition to group performances. Hence, Ganbold found himself with the question of what to perform as a solo xöömeich, which prompted him to consult Gantulga for his prior experiences performing his xöömei demonstration in Japan. Together they worked on an arrangement, creating numerous versions in the process with much pressure lying upon Ganbold's shoulders. The resulting demonstration piece eventually became the basis for the one that contemporary xöömeich now perform in their own idiosyncratic ways. French ethnomusicologists Hugo Zemp and Tran Quang Hai, who attended the concert, write that Ganbold did not actually perform the piece, in the end, because Tseden-Ish felt it needed further preparation. Instead, Ganbold performed “Altai praise-song” in a group, accompanying himself with a fiddle (ikel), with long song singer Tüvshinjargal and praise-giver (yeröölch), praise-singer (magtaalch), and fellow xöömeich Yavgaan. Nevertheless, Zemp and Hai were allowed to record a performance of it specifically for Zemp's film *The Song of Harmonics* (1990).

Zemp's remarkable documentary provides an idea of how Euro-American audiences interpreted Ganbold’s yazguur performance and demonstrates a widespread nomadist reception (see Chapter Two) among Euro-American audiences of Mongolian music. The film begins directly with a pan across the steppe with a recording seemingly of Ganbold performing what comes across as a "a folk song" in whistle xöömei (isgeree). An introductory text then states that "[f]rom the Altaï mountains in Central Asia comes a very special singing technique which the Mongols call khöömii, or ‘pharynx.’ In English, it is called biphonic singing because two tones issue forth simultaneously from the same mouth." The introduction demonstrates a conceptual emphasis on xöömei as a means of producing multiple tones from a vocal organ that “normally” produces "one." It thus lays the conceptual groundwork for a "mystery" from far away to be explored and explained throughout the documentary. While the Altaï Mountains figure first as
the original setting of this vocal practice, the introduction finishes by noting how "[b]iphonic singing has become a national symbol in the People’s Republic of Mongolia, and is included in the repertoire for the National Ensemble for Traditional Song and Dance" (meaning the PFSDE). Note how the English term "traditional," as in Sommers' review of the New York concert, replaces *ardyn* in the ensemble's name, effacing the term's doubled socialistic meaning as both "of the folk" and "of the people." This is another example of conceptual and translational slippage between “tradition,” “the folk,” and “the people.”

After reinforcing the emphasis on natural, nomadic origins, the film then cuts to a performance by Yavgaan, accompanying himself on the two-stringed lute (*tovshuur*) on stage before a black backdrop. This is likely the private performance that the filmmaker was allowed to document. While the lute provides an ostinato composed of fourths and fifths, he alternates between loosely-defined melodic phrases in whistle xöömei and intermittent droning in *xarxinaa*, the "deep," guttural, and highly resonant style of xöömei. He also recites texts in between each demonstration, employing vocal tension (*shaxaa*). The filmmakers describe the performance as an "ode" to a "sorrel" from "Hotgotchoid," likely a reference to Xotgoid, the region where Yavgaan is from. But to recall, Yavgaan likely learned xöömei as a member of the PFSDE after Jantsannorov and Badraa began directing its musicians to study the *yazguur* performers who attended the 1983 Authentic People's Art Festival (see above). The overall effect of these coupled scenes is to ground xöömei primarily in a nomadic, non-socialistic Mongolia where the steppes unfold endlessly, out of which tradition itself emerges before the international world on (Euro-American) world music stages. The film’s outro, overlaying another pan across the steppe, reinforces this interpretation. As it states,

[a]cording to the traditions of nomadic herdsmen and hunters from the Altai Mountains, biphonic singing is linked to the forces of Nature, the Nature itself. It answers and interprets the cries of wild animals, the
murmur of streams, the whistling wind on rocky peaks, and it glorifies the Master of the Mountain.

"Nature" (or rather baigal’) is certainly a key discursive and performative aspect of Mongol xöömei, as discussed in Chapters Two and Seven. My point here is that the emphasis on nomadism and nature accompanies a strategic de-emphasis of socialism and modernity on the part of both the Mongolian performers and the French film-maker.

Figure 5.5. Tserendavaa (far left) performs as part of a cultural delegation in 1988 that would eventually go to New York City. Photo courtesy of Tserendavaa Dashdorj.

Another pretext for the cultural delegation and its nomadist performances was diplomatic. Ganbold’s yazguur performance in France (beyond the Soviet sphere of influence) anticipated the establishment of diplomatic ties with the United States (the Soviet Union’s antipode) in 1987. A cultural delegation headed by Badraa and which included Tserendavaa, his chief xöömei collaborator, performed in New York City at the Asia Society to mark the
occasion. But as foreign publics and researchers heard Mongol xöömei, they "understood" this original voice through their own versions of nomadism. For example, the journalist who witnessed the New York concert not only associated xöömei with the sound of synthesizers, as discussed in Chapter Two. As she also writes, the concert “provided a cogent and charming sampling of traditional Mongolian movement, song and music-making...that made one forget one’s surroundings,” especially the long songs which “evoked dreams of exotic temples and ancient rites” (Sommers, October 12, 1987). Sommers' description is certainly an expression of Eurocentrism, orientalism, and simple unfamiliarity. But it is still an intended result of the Mongolian performers’ performative strategy and nomadism: she does not describe socialistic or Soviet-informed “movement, song and music-making” even though these yazguur performances derive from a conceptual dialogue (and friction) between indigeneity and socialism. The performers, after all, dressed the part of nomads by wearing diverse concert robes (deel) and performing ceremonial acts on stage, such as offering milk in a silver cup (ayag) while holding a xadag, a silk ribbon whose blue, yellow, or gold color signals various degrees of reverence to whom it is offered. Figure 5.5. shows the cultural delegation performing at what seems to be a location in Germany during the same cultural delegation trip that went to New York City. This performative strategy and the aesthetic shift towards yazguur arguably served to de-associate Mongolia from socialism and the Soviet Union as it sought to bridge ties with "the West." But it did not translate into a shift in economic policy towards pastoralism. For the next decades and continuing into the present, the Mongolian government has privileged nomadism
as cultural heritage while enacting policies that encourage the sedentarization of highly mobile herd ers in order to facilitate neoliberal development.\textsuperscript{172}

It is important to note that the socialistic history of xöömei enabled these international staged performances of xöömei, even as they maintain a conceptual dialogue with indigeneity and pastoralism, a topic that I discuss in depth in Chapter Seven. Indeed, Badraa’s folkloristic intervention and cultural nationalism engendered Zemp’s encounter with a "nomadic singing technique." Pegg describes the same nomadist slippages and frictions of a concert in England in 1988:

> In their imaginations, members of the audience were transported from the restrictions of their own society by the long-song (urtyn duu) and horse-head fiddle (morin huur) to the wide-open spaces of the Mongolian steppes; by the strangeness of overtone-singing (höömii) to some potentially mystical experience among shamans of the Altai; by the dancers to a fun-loving, nomadic life. How could they, as spectators, have known that these sounds had been manufactured by a Soviet-influenced, hard-line totalitarian state? (2001:3)

She continues on to describe how "state cultural policy had attempted to create a homogenous, socialist national identity." She thus emphasizes an opposition between indigeneity and socialism. Other Euro-American researchers understood Mongolian music in similar terms of "tradition" and its opposition to socialist "modernity." For ethnomusicologist Trần Quang Hai, for example, "Russian domination" had not encouraged Tuvan xöömei, a practice with origins in "an ancient time," but still "it survived" (2003:278). But ethnomusicologist Robbie Beahrs demonstrates how the Soviet Union reframed and engaged the voice of xöömei as a marker of various contemporary ideologies and discourses throughout the Soviet period, which unfolded

\textsuperscript{172} I discuss this issue in the Introduction and Chapter Two. Upton (2011) and Humphrey and Sneath (1999) provide concise overviews of the general tensions of nomadism, pastoralism, development, and heritage in Mongolia.
through local, national, and international performance (2014). More extreme was anthropologist Caroline Humphrey's perception that…

in Mongolia and other formerly socialist and socialist-dominated countries this continuity was broken and cultural scenarios were obliterated. The deep past of Mongolian culture has to be reached across a chasm of foreignness, and this is now done not by structures but by means of singular, diverse and individualized actions. (1992:377)

Later research complicated this indomitable opposition between "foreign" modernity and "local" traditionality. Humphrey herself recanted her vision of obliteration when stating a decade later that "there can never be a sudden and total emptying out of all social phenomena and their replacement by other ways of life" (2002:12). It this confused space of both absences and potentials out of which yazguur and the original voice of Mongol xöömei arose.

It is also important to note that despite playing into or with nomadism, the objectives of Mongolian performers, intellectuals, and official in these nomadist performances varied considerably from their new Euro-American audiences. Where the latter imagined themselves as "discovering nomadic tradition," their Mongolian counterparts considered themselves to be demonstrating the worldly legitimacy of yazguur and Mongolness itself, re-working the rhetoric and ideology of Soviet internationalism for cultural nationalist aims. Professionals, intellectuals, and officials leveraged nomadism to the degree that their performative strategies intentionally played into and with the expectations of foreign audiences and followed the non-Soviet aspirations of cultural nationalism. Anthropologist Orhon Myadar’s discussion of nomadism is apt here. As she writes,

The essentialised and romanticised construction of Mongolia as the 'timeless home of nomads' has endured—despite the fact that 'nomadic' hardly describes modern Mongolia or the majority of its people. Rather, the Mongolian landscape and Mongolian herders are used to construct and perpetuate the romantic, if medieval, portrayal of Mongolia in order to serve the need of outsiders for an imagined
Other and the need of Mongolians for a cultural demarcation and social bond. (2011:336)

Indeed, "nomads," if we take the term to mean herders who practice pastoralism, constitute less than half of Mongolia's population. Yet they predominate as the discursive embodiment of Mongolia and Mongolness through professional performance, a topic I discuss in detail in Chapter Two. While I agree that nomadism constructs and perpetuates compromised stereotypes of Mongolia, I only add that pastoralism as an Indigenous lifeway is indeed a significant element of contemporary Mongolian experience. I discuss this topic generally in Chapter Seven but I would like to note specifically how indigeneity has co-informed the formation of yazguur following the 1980s as an end to this chapter.

“Altai praise-song” II: originality and custom ~ yōś in the present

On one hand, it would be easy to frame the above relationships in terms of “contradictions” that primarily reveal “modern politics,” "the invention of tradition," or "cultural construction" more so than any “ancient tradition” let alone an indigenous sensibility. But on the other hand, they reveal a particularly Mongol relationship to the strictures and structures of socialism and its modernist discourse that continues to unfold in the present. To this degree, yazguur is an evolving discourse that hinges upon the ongoing convergence between Indigenous, socialistic, and now capitalistic lifeways and practices. The proliferation of the yazguur version of “Altai praise-song” is illustrative. Its incorporation into the repertoires of xöömeich also facilitated nomadist receptions overseas while engendering novel debates about the meaning yazguur in post-socialist Mongolia. Actors interpret the meaning of yazguur in relation to their immediate, national, or international surroundings.

As Tserendavaa stated above, the inaugural performance of “Altai praise-song” in 1983 and its professional reiteration at the "Eight Tones of Melodious Sound" concert in 1984
established it in the repertoires of later xöömeich. Curtet’s survey of the available discography is testament to the praise-song’s wide currency today (2013:479-480). These later performances, as Tserendavaa stated, are part reiteration, part alteration, each changing the "original" in their own ways. While maintaining a sense of yazguur, meaning that they follow the general aesthetic of the inaugural performances in the early 1980s, contemporaries also evince a performative strategy to distinguish their versions and themselves from each other. One cannot simply copy the original, while they cannot diverge from it significantly either—no matter if the original, in this case, is itself an alteration of the preamble to epic recitation. Curtet notes a similar performative strategy in the idiosyncratic classifications of xöömeich pedagogues to demarcate themselves from others in the hopes of gaining distinction (2006).

My own first teacher Enxjargal, Chuluunbaatar (b.1975) introduced me to the “original” yazguur version when I asked him to teach me “Altai praise-song” in 2007, before I had commenced my dissertation research. (I had asked him a year earlier, but he refrained because of my inadequate language skills at the time.) The two-month process involved detailed discussion of the historical, ethnic, geographic, and performative specifics of the praise-song, understanding the nuanced lyrics, how and when to sound xöömei during the verses, and plucking the two-stringed lute (tovshuur) correctly, a requisite for the piece’s performance. But he could not say much about the praise-song’s translation and re-iteration. He said he had done research into the first stage performances, locating a recording of a performance, a copy of which he gave to me, but he did not know more. This recording is likely from the 1984 "Eight Tones of Melodious Sound" concerts as it differs considerably from available recordings of Avirmed, Tserendavaa, and Enxbalsan at the 1983 Authentic Folk Art Festival. Although most performers learn the praise-song orally or by listening to recordings, Enxjargal wrote down the verses on my behalf and roughly outlined the melodic contour above many of the verses.
Together in my living room, we poured over the lyrics as he corrected my pronunciation, described the general meaning of the text, and explained when to sing a verse with or without vocal tension.

The following figure summarizes Enxjargal’s indications, providing a rough template for the *yazguur* version of “Altai praise-song” as generally performed today. The vast majority of bands include the basic elements (a-b) detailed below, though diverging significantly in other respects. In the following figure, the analysis progresses from top to bottom. The first element we hear virtually in all performances: the introductory *torshuur* (lute) motif (a). Then the main verses follow, employing the same basic melodic contour (b). It is very common to perform each verse with a respective vocal timbre: plain voice (d, f, o, q, t) or vocal tension (I, k, m) and perhaps *xarxiraa* (the guttural, “deep” style), though the last is not as consistently used for a respective verse as are the other timbres. Each verse roughly follows the same melodic contour, but varies according to the syllabic beats of each word or repeating motives, depending on the number of lines in the verse. Among the verses, only the 7th significantly alters this general contour in the first line, reaching the octave (q) in climactic fashion before descending back to the typical motives of preceding verses. Typical for verse 6, the *torshuur* (lute) drops out for the second line (n) to provide rhythmic variety. And finally, the iconic final verse (s) that Luvsansharav originally wrote for the choral version in 1954 is an absolute must. Its melodic contour also diverges from the prior verses in order to produce a sense of resolution that is nationalistic or anthem-like in sentiment, as discussed in Chapter Two. In contrast, a recording of Avirmed’s "Altai praise-song" shows how he repeats the same melodic phrasing for each verse, without any such melodic or rhythmic devices or alterations. To note, some bands may perform fewer than seven verses as needed for the demands of a concert’s length, but it is rare to hear more than seven verses. As for the *torshuur*, it marks the pulse in quarter notes that
alternate between the upper and lower line. The upper line follows the melodic contour of the verses whenever the latter reaches the fundamental, second, third, and sometime fifth while the lower line remains at a fourth below the fundamental.

a) Introductory *torshuur* (lute) motif:

b) General melodic contour of main verses:

c) Verse 1

d) plain voice

Öglöödee jingeer uniartaj l baidag
öödör dundaa suunagalanj l baidag gevelee
üyin min iyeldiiuxen öööxen targon baidag
örgön öödör xuđer baixan buural
Altai Xangai xoyor min’ bilee

e) Verse 2

f) plain voice

Areen öndörriix iiüütiin nuruu n’ dünxij l baidag
rashaan bulgüin us n’ butsolqanlaj l baidag gevelee
angir galuu shuvuu n’ gangoanaj l baidag
arin xargai mod n’ duureej l baidag gevelee
artsats saixan mod n’ sagsaijil baidag
agi sharilj övs n’ sharlan tsenxerteeg l baidag gevelee
Arvinee uujiimxan bayaxan buural
Altai Xangai xoyor min’ bilee

g) Verse 3

i) vocal tension

Areen oroi deen n’ argal yangir düüleeg l baidag
Övör tald n’ uqeg chönö n’ xöötsoldoj l baidag gevelee
Bulaqiiin us n’ bulqalanaj l bulga suusar solbildeeg l yavlaa
gevelee
Ünexeeeriin sonin saixan bayaxan buural
Altai Xangai xoyor min’ bilee
j) Verse 4

k) vocal tension
Arvinee uujim is l tal n’ dunxiij l baidag
Altain tsat l öndör nuurund n’ argal yangir diüüleej l yavlaa gevelee
Uudmiin uujim salaa n’ uniartaj l baidag
Törxön tohun ugalz n’ toshilxonson yavlaa gev genee
Öntei örgön xuder bayasan buural
Altai Xangai xoyor min’ bilee

l) Verse 5

m) vocal tension
Shinexen tsas n’ xailan shimeedeetal xailan ursaj l baidag
Shinexen söx l nogoo shirgee dagan urgaaj l baidag gevelee
Shingen duutai öösöö shuvuu shilee dagan dongoodonj l baidag
Ünexeeriiin sonin saixan bayasan buural
Altai Xangai xoyor min’ bilee

n) lute drops out for this line

o) plain voice
Shingen duutai öösöö shuvuu shilee dagan dongoodonj l baidag
Ünexeeriiin sonin saixan bayasan buural
Altai Xangai xoyor min’ bilee

p) Verse 6

q) plain voice; high octave
Suunain öndörriin ulaan uul n’ dunxiij l baidag
Shörövgör ulaan yamaa shilee dagan shörgildeej l yavlaa gevelee
Xaadiin öndörriin tortsoin nuruu n’ dünxiij l
Xaliun Xarlag tex n’ xadaa damjin xargildeej l yavlaa gevelee
Xariin min’ tijeeteel ünexeer sonixan bayaxan buural
Altai Xangai xoyor min’ bilee

r) Verse 7

s) Iconic final verse written by Luvsansharav for the 1954 choral version of “Altai praise-song”:

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\[ \text{Mönxöö tsas n’ extai} \\
\text{mölgör shuluun orgiltei} \\
\text{örgön tümen öndör} \\
\text{xüder bayaxan xaan} \\
\text{Altai nutag min’ geve gene lee} \]
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Figure 5.6. The basic elements of the yazguur version of "Altai praise-song."

Contemporary performances of “Altai praise-song” follow these basic aesthetic and lyrical strictures. Practically every performer, for example, begins with the introductory lute
phrase, sings the climactic octave in the sixth verse's first line (Suunain öndörin...), and drops the lute in the second line. At the same time, each performance must evince its own originality (ontslog) via musical, but sometimes lyrical alterations as well. Typically, novel instrumental motifs or rhythmic elements are added, but sometimes performers decide to recite fewer verses while the general content of the verses remains the same. Each performer negotiates these aesthetic antipodes of consistency and alteration by working creatively within the characteristic elements of the yazguur praise-song. Diverging from them too greatly can incur public criticism, especially when becoming international representatives of Mongolian culture, as the band Domog experienced when unveiling their version. The approbation they experienced reveals the tensions between tradition and creativity, “custom” and “originality” that animates yazguur. In an online interview, the band’s leader Bat-Orshix responded humbly to the following question:

Interviewer: Regarding your band, you perform this praise-song more originally (ontslogtoigoor) than other bands. You took this art work to the famous F. Schubert International Music Festival and received a grand prix award. But "Altai praise-song" exists with its own features and qualities relating to custom (ýos). There are criticisms that Domog is changing custom and tradition. What do you think regarding this praise-song?

Bat-Orshix: Regarding “Altai praise-song,” I understand it to be an amazing thing for praising the birth-place (nutag) waters of the thirteen peaks' lords (ezen) and the beloved Alia with a yellow-golden horse. Through these agencies people of the Altai (Altaichuud) traditionally avoided misfortune and secured fortune by reciting (xailax) Altai praise-song. Our band perhaps symbolizes how, through this meaning, the fate of the people who heard this praise-song would be balanced out and revealed. Not only is this the praise-song's epic feature (tuulyn shinj), but it is also the originative spring (ex bulag) of...
today’s Mongolian praise-song, as one can understand. All of our yazguur art bands recite Altai praise-song from this [source]. Additionally, the world public (delsin niit) can be moved by, worship, be amazed by, and receive the fortunes and spirit (sünsleg) of the original praise-song’s wonders. Today we all recite but seven or eight verses. We strive to recite this generous yazguur feature.174

Notably, Bat-Orshix refers the readers of www.bodlogo.mn to the praise-song’s "original spring" among “the people of the Altai” and its usage to engage the uncanny agencies of the surrounding world. He does not discuss the translational and political processes by which the yazguur version he performs was created in the 1980s by Tserendavaa, Jam'yan, or Badraa. It was the same with Enxjargal, as discussed above, who derived “his” version by researching the "original" concert performance of the 1980s. The interviewer, for example, subtly notifies Bat-Orshix of a concern over sounding the praise-song “too” originally in the sense of being distinct (ontslogtoi), departing “too” far from "custom" (yös). On one hand, Bat-Orshix’s ensuing discussion that “all bands” somehow maintain a performative connection to the praise-song’s “source” resembles a performative strategy of framing one’s “innovation” in terms of “tradition.”

But on the other, these relationships reveal a particularly Mongol relationship to the strictures and structures of socialism and its modernist discourse. The above interview, I propose, demonstrates yazguur to be an evolving discourse that actors re-frame and shape according to their own entangled realities with Indigenous and imported or imposed moral authorities.

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174 Алтайн магтаалын хувьд миний ойлгосноор 13 нон ээний өрхийн эзэн Алтая өрөгөр мөрөгийн Алина хонгор, үүнийг нутаг усыг магтан тийм агуу зүйл юм. Нөгөөгүйгүүр Алтайчүүд жилийн гай барак алд, хиймор лундаагаа Алтайн магтаалыг хайлдуулж сэрээдөг уламжлалтай байж. Тэр ч утгаар бал энэ магтаалыг сансстойн хүмүүний хувь зана тэгширдгөө нигүүр байдаг юм болох уу гэж манай хамтлаг биелэхүүнээц. Мөн эл магтаал түүний шинжтэй төдийгүй Монголын өнөөгийн магтаалын эх булаг гэж ойлгоно болно. Тэр ч үүдэнс нийш манай язгуур уралдгийн бух хамтлагууд Алтайны магтаалыг хайлж байна. Унаас гадна дэлхий нийт уу магтаалын сайхан урч, биширч, гайхаж, хийморлог, сүнслэг гэдгийг эдэрч байна шуу дээ. Бид бүхэн өнөөдөр овохон долоо, найман бадгийг нь л хайлж байна. Болж юмөө язгуур шинжээрийг нь хайлах эрмэлзэлтэй байдаг даа.
These moral authorities, in turn, reside in respective senses of the world in which different aesthetic relationships prevail: either one addresses the international world of other nations on the world stage with “culture,” fundamentally a national instantiation, or one addresses the surrounding world of *baigal* with “custom,” a reciprocal engagement with the world itself. The meaning of *yazguur* unfolds within the entanglement of these senses of the world and their respective moral authorities, practices, and relationships.

Another example is illustrative. The participants of the *yazguur* festivals in 1983 and 1988 also conceptualized *yazguur* in relation to their own values and lifeways, diverging from Badraa’s folkloristic authenticity in notable ways. Another performer at the 1983 festival was Davaajav Rentsen (b.1950), a renowned xöömeich and herder also from Chandman’ district. Not only was familiar with the origins of *yazguur* as a political intervention into public life and cultural policy, but Hosoo175 Dangaa, the renowned xöömeich, also referred me to him as a living exemplar of *yazguur* chanar or “original quality.” I visited Davaajav and we discussed his international travels, cultural accomplishments, and biography. But when I asked him about *yazguur*, he echoed others when saying it was “from nature,” side-skirting its political history in cultural nationalism. In addition to using the Russian term *natyra*, Davaajav referred to the Mongolian term *baigal*, which refers not only to a non-human domain of “nature,” but also to the greater order of things, to existence in general (Humphrey and Sneath 1999:3), as discussed in depth in Chapter Three.

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175 As stated, when actors spell their own names in English I use their own transliteration scheme. His name would otherwise be “Xosoo” but he is renown in Germany and throughout the world as “Hosoo.” The band “Egschiglen,” not “Egshiglen,” is another example.
I was curious about specifics, but it was only when he turned the tables on me and asked me to sound some xöömei that he, in effect, elaborated on how yazguur and the natural are linked. He said, “Let’s see whose student you are.” And then I got very nervous and sounded the folk song “My Four-Year Old Bay Horse” (Dörvon nastai xaliun). While he positively remarked that I had correct xöömei technique, he wanted to point out that there was something lacking in my performance. He imitated my version, then sounded the melody in his own way, after which we talked more. For Davaajav, my phrasing was rushed, not calm. His version was “slow” (udaan), “lyrical” (uyangyn), “calm” (taiwan), and very importantly “beautiful” (saixan). Its peaks held longer, swiftly dipping into the lower registers, then climbing back upwards with ease and grace.
Colwell: [I perform]
Davaajav: [Imitates my performance]
You were like that, right? Not like that.
[Performs his own version]
Calm [taivan], slow [udaan], right? Lyrical [uyangyn].
Real slow, this steppe, such beauty, no one around, silent, just this, riding a horse, camel’s walking around….
A: My Four-Year Old Bay Horse was a little bit “hard,” right?
D: It’s fast. True. It should [yöstei] be calm, slow.
Shouldn’t it?
[Imitate myself]
[Sings his own way]
Slow, lyrical, gentle, quiet…like this…like this…like this…ts…ts…
(Interview, August 22, 2013)

Davaajav trailed off with a series of aspirated fricatives, not only speaking of, but also emoting the desirable aesthetic qualities of lyricism, beauty, and calmness that "should" imbue yazguur. He was describing more than a pleasing sound and style. The performance of this song had to be a certain way, a way things should be. He seemed to imply the same ethical sense of aesthetics that anthropologist Rebecca Empson refers to as "aesthetic propriety," a basic dimension of everyday or musical acts. As Empson writes, “such acts point to a wider sensibility about the right way to conduct one’s social relations (with various people, objects, and the invisible land masters)” (2011:95). Even holding a bucket of milk (or setting up one’s recording equipment, as I learned when once reprimanded for being in a hurry) requires a proper way of being done in order to maintain greater community with the surrounding world. Musical performance matters in such ways, too. As anthropologist Rebekah Plueckhahn writes, following Empson, “[s]inging is an action that has multifaceted and esoteric ramifications. The sound of “musical sociality is ‘beautiful’ and thus, synonymously, ‘morally correct’ and ‘viewed as generating particular outcomes’” (Plueckhahn, 2014:130; quoting Empson 2011:97). As a form of behavior, it "is often seen to have potential efficacious properties that can be extended into
esoteric realms” (48). Among them are contractual matters of interdependent existence, as Levin writes of the Inner Asian pastoralist:

To coexist peacefully with... spirit-masters and gain access to the natural resources under their protection, humans have to make offerings, offer praise, and show respect. Sound and song provide a means of doing all three, albeit in different ways. (2006:23)

This understanding of aesthetic propriety blurs the boundaries between self and existence, individual and birth-place, producing what Humphrey and Hürelbaatar describe as an “impersonal subjectivity,” “a suffusion of the self with the most external, the boundless” (Humphrey & Hürelbaatar 2012:153). In other words, one is not only indebted to, but also ontologically bounded to the cosmos through audible acts of aesthetic supplication that "should" arise in everyday life as much as ritual spaces. Davaajav’s association of the melody with the landscape, a “calm” and “peaceful” link, seems to imply this same aesthetic basis in reciprocal interrelationship with the surrounding world. This is the aesthetic that he is renowned for as a living exemplar of yazguur, for xöömeich like Hosoo.

I suggest that "authenticity" is not the only trope at work in Mongolian discourses and performances of yazguur. Yazguur is far more complex, nuanced, and evolving in its various connotations of origins, authenticity, and indigeneity. It is not simply the appropriation of a Eurocentric folkloristic concept by Badraa in order to legitimate yazguur as an official cultural category. I am reminded of fellow ethnomusicologist Tsetsentsolmon Baatarnaran’s recollection that her grandfather, Badraa himself, would always complain that scholars and performers would not use the term yazguur as he first intended (Personal communication, November 26, 2014). In conversations, custom, and daily practices like the two examples above, they would eventually re-deploy and re-signify the concept to reflect another sense of belonging that is not only folkloristic or primordial, but also relational, and certainly independent of Badraa's
intentions. Numerous research associates made seemingly aligned statements that *yazguur* is a matter of *baigal* (nature-existence) or *natyra*, as they would pronounce the Russian word with a heavy Mongolian accent. These statements had equally to do with a more Mongol indigeneity as much as a pastoral relationship to the world.

This is Trouillot’s point when stating that "[c]onceptualizations, whether or not encapsulated by a single word, take full significance only in the context of their deployment" (2003:98). In many instances similar to Davaajav's discussion, performers seem to have re-defined and re-signified the concept in manifold and evolving "contexts" (such as interviews for a website or dissertation research project) in order to speak of their accountability to “custom” and the surrounding world of *baigal* alongside the socialistic imperatives of cultural development or nationalism. The gaps and slippages between the above conceptualizations-through-deployment, which Badraa seems to have lamented as “deviations,” resemble “global friction,” more so than ‘appropriation” (per Tsing 2005). Indeed, it would be misleading for me to say cut and dry that all of these actors “appropriated” authenticity. Only Badraa seems to have done so explicitly. Many of his cohorts, on the other hand, seem to have made the Eurocentric concept accountable to another sense of the world during their everyday lives. But with the fall of socialism in 1992, circumstances for all Mongolians changed drastically, pressuring them to employ *yazguur* to survive the ensuing economic crisis. As circumstances changed, so did the meaning and performance of originality, engendering contemporary debates over the future of the past (Levin 2016:ix) in times of great uncertainty at home and far-flung circulations overseas. This uncertainty persists well into the present.
Chapter VI

Uncertain Circulations

Cultural nationalism succeeded in recognizing and promoting certain forms of Indigenous expression in the 1980s. But with socialism's fall in 1992, following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990, state-support for the arts and culture in Mongolia virtually vanished overnight. Suddenly, performers had to seek economic livelihoods on their own in foreign, mostly European places, where audiences had capital to spend on musical performances from other peoples and nations. These first independent professional musicians quickly realized that these audiences were interested more in ancient nomadism than the developedness of their national culture. But prior performances of yazguur provided them with a ready-made stage aesthetic suitable for conjuring nomadism. Professional musicians had to organize and manage their own concerts and tours, seeking livelihoods wherever they could through personal networks. No longer the most "select" (shildeg) exemplars circulated overseas, as socialist policy once obligated. Now it was the more resilient, but still talented, who managed to emigrate, especially to Germany, a commercial hub for world music. These path breakers secured livelihoods by versing themselves in the aesthetic expectations of Euro-American audiences, aficionados, organizations, and culture brokers, tailoring the yazguur aesthetic for their novel audiences as well as the demands of post-socialist cultural nationalism. In particular, the pioneering band Egschiglen carved out a place for Mongolian music in Europe. Through Egschiglen's success, and then its expatriate offshoots, many Euro-American aficionados first encountered Mongolian music in concerts or street performances (a critical way to make ends meet). In my own case, a chance street encounter with Khukh Mongol in Munich in the early 2000s ultimately became the spark for this entire dissertation research project. Fifteen years later, I returned to Munich to interview them in Mongolian, to their surprise.
This chapter retells this post-socialist story of musical resilience and ends with an account of some of its more critical consequences. Egschiglen and its offshoots set a standard for what would become a key format for post-socialist performances of Mongol xöömei: the band (xamtlag). While this format had precedents in socialist-era ensembles (chuulga) or other musical groups, it differed from them in a number of ways: Bands were not institutionally affiliated. They operated under private leadership, despite often having mentors at institutions and counting conservatory-trained musicians among their members. They composed their own original works or arrangements of repertoire standards. And they were particularly concerned with interpretive originality, sounding different from other bands when performing an established repertoire. Some of these novel bands eventually began receiving direct patronage from institutions (e.g., Domog in the 2000s), but the vast majority operated on their own economic and aesthetic terms. Their performative strategies helped engender an ongoing debate over the post-socialist meaning of "culture" and yazguur in the age of “the free market” (neeltin zaax zeel). As they played into audience expectations, some began to wonder whether they were commercializing “culture” and thereby “destroying” it. These debates echo nationalist discourses of ethnic extinction (Billé 2008) in times of increasing uncertainty.

Dayaarshil, the translation for "globalization," also figures prominently in these debates, although what it means and consists of are rarely issues of explicit discussion in musical terms. This chapter also addresses what dayaarshil specifically means to my research associates in perception and practice. As I suggest, this term refers to an implicitly distinct, global sense of the world, one that is not "reached for," as is the international world of delxii, but one which seems to encroach upon Mongol lands, life, and custom, producing novel uncertainties and possibilities that are challenging to both Indigenous and nationalist narratives of being Mongol.

Dayaarshil is a notion of recent vintage in Xalxa Mongolian. Tsevel's dictionary (1966) does not
mention the term, nor does Bawden (1997). Yet contemporary online dictionaries give two basic variations: either it is a direct translation for the English term "globalization" (www.bolor-toli.com), a "process of generalization (dayaarshil)" and being "connected (xamarsan) with the whole world," or it is a "proper (zoxistoi) merging of economies, intellects (oyun sanaa), and leadership" (www.mongoltoli.mn). These definitions reveal an important equation: whatever it is, dayaarshil is synonymous with connectivity and homogenization, "merging" economies, leadership, and "intellects." In contrast to socialist cultural development, this process results in the erasure of difference, not its creation.

This perception partly stems from the terms under which Mongolia chaotically entered "the free world." Globalization came on the heels of socialism's demise. As Peter Marsh reviews (2009:121-123) Students began protesting for democratic change in January of 1990, echoing protest movements throughout the Soviet bloc. A few months later, the Politburo decided behind closed doors that it would resign. The news soon went public, along with an announcement for democratic elections that same year. The MPRP won these elections decidedly, although a few opposition leaders won seats in the Great Xural (i.e., parliament). To complicate matters, the Soviet Union also dissolved, resulting in the cessation of significant economic aid to Mongolia. The tögrök, Mongolia's currency, became worthless. Food became scarce. People had to seek out new livelihoods as many institutions closed their doors and people were left to their own wits to survive. But at the same time, dayaarshil engendered novel aesthetic, economic, and political possibilities, which actors immediately began capitalizing upon out of economic necessity as much as artistic interest. And their resulting performative strategies arose in relation to the recent socialist past. Following the Democratic Revolution, as Peter Marsh writes,
In other words, socialist-era institutions, discourses, and practices did not fade away. As was the case in post-Soviet Central Asia, the Soviet Union had introduced internationally legitimated cultural forms and frames, effectively giving post-Soviet states "readymade links to the global community," which "have played an important role in defining post-Soviet identities by giving culture producers a frame of reference for what their national culture should look like" (Adams 2005:335). Cultural representation before the international world persisted as a performative logic with which to begin a novel engagement with the non-Soviet aligned world, a world whose salient characteristic would become "globalization." And among these forms and frames was the notion of *yazgur*, or "originality," itself. It has become a subject of great ethno-national focus as Mongolia seeks to navigate the uncertainties of transnational connectivity, especially processes that seem to result in degrees of social homogenization. For these reasons, the voice of Mongol *xöömei*, in particular, has figured deeply, and is figured by, these debates over continuity, connectivity, and belonging in a global world.

Responses to these questions are necessarily strategic, imperfect, and evolving. My research associates take advantage of the uncertain possibilities of *dayaashil*, both overseas and at home. While pursuing concert tours overseas, they are cognizant of communal and national perceptions at home. Chandman' district, in particular, takes the global world as its frame of reference when organizing international *xöömei* festivals or participating in film productions by or for foreign filmmakers or media corporations. I recall how Tserendavaa referred to the *delsiin niitiiin astuult*, "the question of a common world," noting its two sides, one "bad," the other...
"good." Economic opportunity is among "the good things." But among "the bad things" is the seeming demise of yazguur as younger performers increasingly learn in urban places, foregoing the sounds and sentiments of aesthetic propriety with the surrounding world of baigal, via pastoral livelihoods. As discussed in Chapter One, neoliberal elites began framing post-socialist circumstances as an ineluctable "search for a new identity" (e.g., Batbayar 2000; also see Campi 2005) in a world that was now "global." For the music scholar Xerlen, it has been a question of how to "combine" (sodluulax) yazguur with the global (2010:5). But whatever dayaarshil is, it is a pivotal moment of drastic change that my research associates are still conceptualizing and engaging through a number of innovative, creative, and experimental ways.

**Egschiglen ~ Melodious: a post-socialist beginning**

Egschiglen is a band (xamtlag) with twenty-plus years of expatriate experience in Germany. Not only were they first to succeed in securing musical livelihoods in a novel world without state-support, but they also influenced the aesthetics of a whole generation of younger musicians. None of the initial members performed xöömei, although that would change in the near future. The group was founded in 1991 when its four initial members graduated from the Music and Dance Middle School (MDMS), now the Music and Dance College (MDC).

However, they were not yet "a band," but rather "a quartet" (dörvöl) of three horse fiddlers—Tümenbayar Migdorj (b.1969), Xayagsaixan Luvsansharav (b.1971), Tömörsaixan Janlav (1972)—and a bass fiddler (ix xuurch) Ganpürev Dagdan (b.1971). A monograph on the history of the horse fiddle quartet discusses the significance of this distinction:

The horse fiddle quartet is one type of musical group (xamtlag) that is connected to particular styles of music, a concept that did not exist in Mongolian traditional (ulamjilt) music, and because of the strong
influence of western (өрөнө) music influence for a century, it would later become widespread. (Batchuluun 2009:3)

The quartet, in short, was a socialist import, a format reserved for the performance of "classical music" in its socialist sense. As the monograph continues, the very first Mongolian horse fiddle quartet, which apparently had no group name, performed Mongolian and European compositions under the leadership of state-recognized horse fiddler Batchuluun. It became a catalyst for the composition of new works by Mongolian composers. Notably, its members—Ch.Batsaixan, Ts.Tsendculuun, D.Ganbat, and D.Tsogtsaixan—wore sleek robes (deel) akin in general style to earlier professional musicians and choirs that performed national (Үндэсний) music.

176 Морин хуурын дөрөл гэдэг нь хөгжмийн хамтлагуудын төрлөө орхуул хөгжмийн төрөлд хамаарах агаад ээ бүрэлдэхүүнээрээ монголын уламжлалт хөгжимд байгаагүй, бас орництол хөгжмийн нөлөө онгорсон адууны эхэн үеэс монголын хөгжимд хүчтэй нөлөөлсөн ч нэлээд хожуу буй боловч хамтлаг.

177 Also see Chapter Three. A seminal horse fiddler and member of the first horse fiddle quartet, the author, Batchuluun Tsend, nevertheless argues that the success of this "western influence" lies in an Indigenous precedent. As historical documents detail (he does not cite or list them), musical groups would perform at imperial courts or monastery theater productions, including what is now considered the first Mongolian theater production, Saran Хохул.)
Egschiglen, however, was founded on the cusp of socialism's demise in 1992. Its members were immediately challenged to procure livelihoods without institutional support. They altered their repertoire and performative strategy out of both aesthetic interest and economic necessity. Their repertoire reflected the times: alongside the works of Mozart and Mongolian composers were works by the Inner Mongolian horse fiddler and composer Chi Bulag and The Beatles' "Yesterday" and "Michelle." They unveiled themselves at an independently organized concert at The Cultural Center and Palace of the Mongolian Worker's Council (CCPMWC) in 1992. The inclusion of The Beatles signaled a marked ideological shift since socialism had once banned the reception and performance of "western" popular music, the soundtrack of a morally bankrupt capitalism. Bulag’s presence was also significant in light of a longstanding Sinophobic policy in Mongolia. As Marsh relates, Chi Bulag only visited
Mongolia in the 1980s after waiting years for his visa’s approval, due to deteriorated diplomatic relations between the two countries (2009:110-115; also see Billé 2014). But “western popular music was already making inroads into Mongolian life in the 1980s. One socialist-era journal article from 1988 even details the feats of Iron Maiden (or *Airen Meiden; Tömör Xüüxen*) as the author J.Sanduijav transliterates and translates the band’s name. As the author writes, “The era of rock music’s arrival has reached the interest of the youth.” Ten-to-twenty-year-olds usually listened to disco (*disko*), break dance (*breik*), while fifteen-to-twenty-five-year-olds preferred rock n’ roll (*rok-n-rold*) and heavy metal rock (*xevi-metall rok*). The article also mentions hard rock, blues rock, jazz rock, symphony rock, and reggae-art-rock, suggesting that the author misunderstood “rock” to be a larger generic category for sub-categories like blues or jazz. The article then precedes to briefly introduce some of the cultural feats of Iron Maiden and their history. These were among the first soundings of “globalization.”
Although Egschiglen’s repertoire was very eclectic, they still emphasized Mongolness by invoking yazguur. Their concern for yazguur registered especially in their attire: more ornate robes (deel) than the generic national robes of the first quartet, with traditional belts and tinder-pouches and knife sets (xet xutga). These items may have been included in response to exhibitions of Indigenous metallurgy and craft at the 1983 and 1988 festivals, which rural persons contributed from their family holdings (Bat-Ochir 1988). It was customary for pre-socialist nobility to don such items and so they functioned as contemporary symbols of cultural sovereignty. Another influence, as the quartet’s first horse fiddler Tömörsaixan explained (Interview, January 11, 2016), was their trip to Tuva in 1991, where they performed with the
renowned xöömeizhi Gennadi Tumat (1964-1996). This concert featured many other renowned xöömeizhi and their groups, including Huun-Huur-Tu (then named Kungurtuk), the highly influential band whose performance style would become the aesthetic basis for later Tuvan bands (Levin 2006; Beahrs 2014:75-83). Following the Tuvan tour, Egschiglen remained a quartet. But the experience did convince them that they needed a stronger vocal element in their group than the few praise-songs that they performed with Bold. Bold was one of the professional musicians at the PFSDE who, with Sundui, performed the yazguur version of "Altai Praise-song" at the Eight Tones of Melodious Sound concert in 1984. He is shown in Figure 5.4 and discussed in Chapter Five. In response, Egschiglen would eventually enlist a xöömeich and the members would each learn to perform multiple instruments or provide back-up vocals, effectively turning themselves into a band (xamtlag). The coalescence of these experiences with the fall of socialism were fortuitous.

The distribution of private passports to citizenry for the first time provided a hitherto unknown option: independent travel overseas. Ganpürev (b. 1971), the first bass fiddler (ix xuurch) for Egschiglen and first to graduate from MDMS with a degree in bass fiddling, discussed how they had little recourse but to look beyond Mongolia for economic opportunities (Interview, October 31, 2014). Without the sanctified support of government cultural institutions, they relied on personal networks with transnational links that formed during the twilight of socialism. This was long ago and he could not recall all the details. But he described the basic tenor of those difficult times:

And so, there was the story-teller called Bold. Bold, Yavgaan, and who else was it, the three who were performing Altai praise-song with the People's Folk Song and Dance Ensemble [PFSDE], were very famous and performed at international festivals. The PFSDE also stopped its activities, Bold lost his 178

The Tuvan spelling for xöömeich, although the term also implies the performer to be a master.
work, and we artists were faced with the question of how we would live. So, Bold had very close relations with an elder called Damdin. Damdin was the director of the Santa Luchi Company, and was working with Italians. Through Damdin’s connection, we were able to secure invitations to international yazguur art festivals, and the opportunities came to us increasingly. No Mongolians were going to them. And Damdin said, ‘I am going to cover all of your costs for coming and returning. When you get here, we won’t find everything suitable. There is only one thing we need and to work hard for. So, let’s get our folk art (ardyn urlag) out there.’ With that, we needed concert clothing, instruments, and support for everyday expenses and budget, all of which that elder did when taking us to twelve countries.\(^{179}\)

This tour of European folk festivals, which Ganpürev referred to as yazguur festivals, took place in 1993. Its audiences, as fiddler Tömörsaixan explained, were primarily world music fans. But under the sponsorship of the Santa Lucia Company, and with the inclusion of Bold, the musicians called themselves the Gruppa Santa Lucia. The experience was pivotal for Egschiglen’s later expatriate success in Germany. As Tömörsaixan put it, "Our eyes and ears were opened." For European audiences outside of the former Soviet bloc, Mongolia was terra incognito. Although some Mongolian musicians had circulated within the Soviet-aligned world, Euro-Americans beyond this world had virtually no familiarity with Mongolia. As a result, listening to a Mongolian horse fiddle quartet perform European classical music and the Beatles in addition to praise-songs likely came as an even bigger surprise to European audiences. It was

\(^{179}\) Тэгээд Болд гээд нэг үлгэрч хүн байсан. Болд, Ягваан, оор хэн билээ дээ 3 хүн Алтайн магтаал магтдаг байсан. Алтайн магтааллаараа Ардын Дуу Бужгийн Чуулгадаа налээд алдартай, олон улсын наадамд явдаг байсан. Ардын Дуу Бужгийн Чуулгын уйл ажиллагаа бас зогсонгүй байддал орсон учраас Болд бас ажилгүй бөлөөд, бидний олон уран бутээлдийн яаж амьдрах вэ гэдэг асуудалд орсон. Тэгээд Болд ах Дамдин гээд нэг ахтай налээд ойр дотно харилаад тай. Дамдин ах болсоор Santa Лучи гээд компаниийн захирав, Италийн холбоотой ажилладаг байсан. Дамдин ахын шугамаар олон улсын яягуур урлагийн урлагуула, урлаж буйлаа, оролцох боломжтой налээд ирдэг байсан. Монголччүүд тэр болгон явдагтэй. Тэгээд Дамдин ах "Би та нарын ирж буцах бүх зардлыг даа. Очоод бид нар бол олштой юм олоогүй. Бидэнд байгаа зүйл бөлөөсөөгөө сэйн хичээж байж л тэндээс ганц нэг юм олох зэрэгтэй. Тэгээд ардын урлагийг гаргах" гээд бид нарын ирж буцах бүх зардал, дээр нь тогтолцооны хувцас зэрэгтэй, хөгжим хэрэгтэй, ерөнхийдөө тодорхой хэмжээнэй хөрнөгө монголийн тусалцаа дэмжлэг ууулаж байгаад тэр ах бид нарны аваад 12 улсаар явсан.
the combination of familiar and unfamiliar elements that explained their particular success, as Tömörsaixan implied. And the reverse was true for the musicians, as Ganpürev explained:

Firstly, in those times we ourselves were people in a society out of balance. [Regarding] our thought (setgelgee), the problem of our thinking (setgelgee), there would be culture shock among Mongolians themselves, between today's Mongolia and that of 1993. There is that much difference. In those times, between our thought and that of Germans there were two truly black and white ways of thinking. Western information always came to us incorrectly. Beggars on the streets in western countries (örnödüüd) were always without money and were always people with high education. They had no [public] news and read the news from papers taken from the trash. These imperialists generally robbed and killed people, and instigated war—communism instilled us with such thoughts. With these thoughts, we went there.

Ganpürev, of course, meant capitalist Western or Central European nations when mentioning "the West," not the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc countries. Nevertheless, the quartet adapted quickly, as he continued:

Of course, as young people, we did not yield to our inheritance (yas avtagdaxgüi). Having arrived, we were truly surprised by everything: the traffic, people's most open character, their relationship with us, their society in general. We saw and found so many things that we had never found in our own lives. And we took (olj avsan) from them [i.e., were influenced]. This was mainly visual reception (xarax medremj). Living was different. Living requires responsibility. Social responsibility is necessary. We found an agent. Artists need contracts. And with contracts come questions regarding the rights of composers. Regarding working internationally and all its marketing, or manager policy, there were so many problems we had never encountered. [We were] a big zero [i.e., tabula rasa].180

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180 Гэхдээ мэдээж залуу хүмүүс бид энди яс автагдахгүй. Тэнд очоод билд гөрөнхийдөө төдний нийтэм, ал харилицаа, хүмүүсийн хамгийн нэлээтэй байдлаа, бидээсий харилицаа, бүх юм биднийн уөөхөөр гайхшаануусан. Бид тэнд маш олон зүйлүүг, амдыраддаа олоогүй маш олон зүйлүүг олж харсан. Олж авсан гэсэн үг. Энэ бол зүүгээр өөрөө хэрэмж. Амьдрах бол өөрөө. Амьдрахын тулд харицуулага хэрэтэй. Нийгмийн харицуулага хэрэтэй. Агент одоо. Уран бутаач хооронд бөөрөө хэрэтэй. Гэрээг давад зохион бүтэн эрхэтэй хөлбөөтэй асуллууд хэрэтэй. Олон улсад үйл ажиллагаагаа нүүлхүүгээ өөрөө бүх маркетинг, менежментийн бодлогын маш олон асуллууд бидэнд огт байгаагүй. “00” байсан.
In particular, they learned from the other bands they encountered at the first festivals they performed at, as Tömörsaixan explained:

And so, they organized for us to play at many city festivals, the first being in Westhoffen. We said, 'Look at how many musicians came from different nations (oron).' And then we played in all kinds of places, one of them a stage put up on the street. We had never known such a thing. The Central Cultural Place, the Drama Theater, the Factory Workers Palace—we always played in these kinds of places. So, when we came here and played in all these interesting places, packed with people, and saw all the small bands, we knew. We learned so many things from them. We said, 'Ah, we have a lot to work with.'

Egschiglen then proactively set about cultivating these novel experiences. But their success in this new world was not simply due to their “exotic” sound as a band from Mongolia. It seems that their performance of familiar musical elements as representatives of a wholly unfamiliar place predisposed them to this success. As Tömörsaixan surmised, “[Listeners] would say, 'What an interesting thing!' Mongolian instruments from people who came from far away, but [the music] enters (orox) the heart. Why they didn’t know. Chinese instruments are Oriental and hard to understand, right?” To underscore the point, he imitated their sound with a high, nasally pitch, implying their lack of aesthetic affect upon European listeners.

But because we were performing as a quartet, we exhibited a lot of classical harmony. Although through Mongolian instruments, [the music] was close [in an aesthetic sense]. Secondly, the horse fiddle’s strings are not steel, but made from horsetail, originally of nature (baigalynx), and so it was also “close” in this way. And so, the people (tümen) thought how great the music was.

Ganpürev elaborated:

While traveling to these twelve countries, and while Mongolia’s socialist system was closing down, throughout the world no one had talked about the

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181 Тэгээд Эрөнөн олон хотод фестивалд ахион байгуулсан. Тэгээд хамгийн аихын нь Востхопфен хотод байсан. “Эстэй аймар олон орны хөгжим ирсэн” гэсэн. Тэгээд янаа янын газард тоглоод гудамж нь нийт газар. Бид нар мэдэхгүй шуу даэ тийм юм. Соёлын төв оргоо, Драмын театр, Уйлдворчны Ордон — дандана тийм газард тоглож байсан. Тэгээд чин энэ чин ирээд тийм сонин сонин газарт, тэгээд аялгуу их хууний нигээд тоглоод тэгээд жижигэн жижигэн хамтлагууд занд баида боловд ингээд байсан. Тэднээс бид нар аялгуу их үйлдэгсон. “За, бид нарт аялгуу ихтэй байна.”
Mongolia that is independent from Russia or China. When we went to Germany in those times, people were amazed during our tours and thanked us, after listening to our songs and fiddles. We were performing Tchaikovsky as a horse fiddle quartet. We also played Mozart's 'A Little Serenade.' Because the communist system focused greatly on education and knowledge of classical music at the Music and Dance Middle School (Xöjjim Bayjigin Dund Sorguul), we were performing quartet notation in addition to our folk music (ardyn xöjjim). And so, this horse fiddle quartet music came before the eyes of people in Germany. They were truly amazed. At that time, we quickly found a manager and agent. And in 1994, when we went back [to Mongolia], we returned via the invitation of agents, and after being sent to Europe again and again, we eventually remained there for work (iiil ajillagaa).\textsuperscript{182}

In other words, Tömörsaixan and Ganpürev imply that much of the band’s success lay in the familiarity of their German audiences with the European classical music pieces they performed—not only in the novelty of their Mongolian instruments, pieces, or sounds. Yet they still had to play into and with nomadism—the discourse, not the lifeway, as I discuss in Chapter Two.

**Culture brokerage, nomadism, and nature**

Although he became Egschiglen's bass fiddler in later years, Uluganbaatar Tsend-Ochir shed some light on how the band then set about leveraging its familiar, yet exotic performance practice. He recalled how a co-worker called Rudi Wagner had asked Damdin, the “elder” at the Santa Luccia Company who first brought Egschiglen’s members to Europe, about "bringing something 'exotic' (egzotish) to the festivals," helping to spawn the Santa Lucia tour in 1993.

\textsuperscript{182} 12 улсaar явахад, тэр чинь коммунист системд байсан хаалттай Монгол, далхий дахинд Оросын буул Хятадын Монгол гэдэг байсан бие даасан Монголын тухай орт үригддагтуй байсан тэр угд бид Герман руу гаравад, тойролд явахад маш олон хүүхдийс гайхах, байрлаж, бидний дуу хуурыг сонсох ... Бид морин хуурын өөрөлтэй Чайковскийн тоглодог байсан. Моцартын "Бяцхан Серенада"-г тоглодог байсан. Бид хадий коммунист систем ч гэсэн манай Хөгжим Бужгийн Дунд Сургууль сонгодог хөгжимийн нэлээд том хэмжээнэй мэдэг боловорол оёдог учраас бид ардынхаа хөгжимтгий гадны том том дөрөөлний нотыг тоглодог байлаа. Тэгээд тэнд очоод морин хуурын дөрөөл тийм хөгжим гэлээх хүүхүүсийн нүүд орой дээрээ гарна. Унхээр гайхна. Тэр угд бид нарт агентууд, менежерүүд маш хурдан олсон. Тэгээд л 94 онд буцаад агентуудын бүрдүүлээр дахиж тийшээ гарах Европт байганы үйл ажиллагаа явулаад үлдсэн.
Wagner wanted something that was "fully Mongolian (bur Mongol), something about fully natural (bur natur) living, and wanted to bring Mongolian people who knew something about being 'green modern" (Interview, February 25, 2014). Following the tour, he would become Egschiglen's first culture broker even though it was not his profession. Over twenty years later, he continues to work with and support a few expatriate bands for free, when he is not working full time as director at a waste management facility in Ingolstadt, Bavaria.

Figure 6.3. Rudi Wagner in his office.

As Wagner recalled in our interview, the most pressing problems in the beginning were economic and logistical:

In the beginning, Egschiglen was concerned with folk art and the problem of getting from stage to stage. At first, we were headed for Sweden but then came a fax that Sweden had canceled. Six weeks later there was Spain, but there was no money. And so, we were held up for six weeks over logistical issues [über Wasser gehalten], here in Ingolstadt. I knew many people and guesthouses where

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183 нэг хүн итальян компанитай хамтарч ажилладаг байсан хүнтэй тэр улсүүд холбогдох ухаандаа тэр фестивалыг их орган өөрөөгч өгөг болгохын тулд одоо "эгаотиш" тийм сонин юмжудыг сонирхсон юм билээ. Тэрэн дунд нэг хүн бүр Монголын тухай ч юм уу одоо бүр натур амьдралын тухай ч юм уу байгалийн тухай өнөр юм бодохгүй тийм "грийн модерн" хүн монголын тухай түүхийн эцэггээ хүн тэрэнтэй холбогдоод хүмүүс авчирч болов уу нийг хүмүүс хэрэгтэй байна.
they could stay for the summer. It was like that. They played [aufgetreten] in beer gardens and only then they finally went to Spain. The second year they then came directly to Ingolstadt and we then searched for and organized concerts. That was when Erka, the leader of Khukh Mongol, first came along with Egschiglen. We spent the first three years in such amateurish ways, securing concerts. We later had the luck of getting a professional agent in Bremen, I believe, through one my acquaintances. They then secured a contract with the agent and they finally got some professional training [in the music business]. (January 10, 2016)

And so, Wagner saw Egschiglen off, but only to begin work with Khukh Mongol, the first of many offshoot bands, as I discuss below.

Wagner has effectively operated as a “culture broker” for Mongolian bands in Germany in that he has both presented and re-presented Egschiglen in relation to Germanic or European understandings of Mongolness, nature, and nomadism. The reasons haven been both practical and ideological: on one hand, there was a need to provide the audience with proper “background” to the music; on the other, he seemed to have had a personal interest in the music’s “greenness.” As Uuganbaatar discussed, European listeners in the early 1990s, like Wagner, were drawn to the "exotic nature" [exotisch] of Egschiglen as a possible alternative to modernity by espousing "green" [griin], meaning “environmentally friendly,” values. Note that the bassist used the German or English word for these foreign concepts, as there is no equivalent in Mongolian. Wagner did not elaborate on how he represented Egschiglen in the early 1990s, but his description of how he presents Khukh Mongol seems to reveal a similar emphasis on nature and nomadism beyond modernity:

I do not have a lot of time, but when they are in the vicinity, I moderate their concerts. I always tell the people, I will take you now on a journey to Mongolia. We will begin with the Altai Mountains and I say what the Altai look like, what livestock there is, and try and associate them [with the music]. The region and the mountains, or the desert and the lakes. And the horses…That is really what the people should imagine with their eyes, they are now in the desert or the mountains and hear them. The people must now go there for a
little bit. To just make a program, and play a few songs, without any background, is certainly not helpful. If you present it like this, then one experiences it differently and it sticks more.

As anthropologist Robert Paine writes, the cultural broker is "one who, while purveying values that are not his own, is also purposively making changes of emphasis and/or content" (1971:21). Unlike the patron, who purveys their own values in relationships of gift exchange with their clients, the broker re-deploys the values of their clients to voice alternate values of their own. But ethnomusicologist Jesse Ruskin discusses how, in the case of African musicians, cultural brokerage can also reproduce Indigenous models of patronage, organization, and transmission, even as the musician may play into European assumptions about "Africa." African performers, as "global musicians," "reproduce and transform tradition in dialogue with the people, places, and ideas they encounter"(2011:86). In other words, narratives of hegemonic appropriation and exotification do not do justice to the polyvalent relationship between Indigenous performance practices and cultural brokerage under asymmetric circumstances. Productive slippages, frictions, and resonances also characterize relationships like those between Egschiglen and Rudi Wagner, enabling each actor to fulfill their agendas even as they may disagree or diverge from each other’s points of view. For anthropologist Ana Tsing, misunderstanding, in fact, is often a productive moment for global interaction (2005:4). I observe a similar dynamic in various musical, discursive, or visual aspects of Egschiglen’s performative strategy, which the band co-created with German agents like Rudi Wagner or Albakultur, the agency that started representing Egschiglen in the 1990s, as they began to emphasize yazguur in their music.

Going yazguur

The phrase "going global" pervades musical studies of globalization. Anthropologist Deborah Klein’s ethnography of Yorùbá drumming (2007) is but one example. Typically, this
phrase implies that a performer from a non-European locality plays into the aesthetic norms of Euro-American popular music, at the cost of significant elements of their Indigenous aesthetic, in order to attain an international reception. But in Egschiglen's case, "going global" also meant "going yazguur." Having begun as a quartet that was well-versed in European and Mongolian classical music, they had the opposite problem of not sounding "traditional" enough for the European world music economy, despite their initial successes. And so, they adjusted their performative strategy in order to conjure nomadism for European audiences with a more yazguur aesthetic that also echoed the post-socialist cultural nationalism growing at home. However, they continued to perform works by Mongolian classical music composers, interspersing them with other more “traditional” genres. Egschiglen’s album releases demonstrate how the band responded to and negotiated nomadism, classicism, and nationalism when “going yazguur,” especially by eventually including a dedicated xöömeich in their membership.

Egschiglen’s first album release, Traditional Mongolian Songs ( Traditionelle mongolische Lieder) from 1996, inaugurated their yazguur aesthetic. It suggests significant aesthetic diverges from their past performances, such as at their first concert at the CCPMWC in 1992. Whereas that concert was an eclectic mix of Mongolian pieces, Mozart, and the Beatles, their 1996 release focused exclusively on Mongolian pieces. However, these pieces were still generically diverse in Mongolian terms. For example, the first track is an arrangement of “Dunjingarav praise-song” (Ode an der Berg Dunjin Garav) and the last one of “Altai praise-song” (Ode an das Altai-Gebirge) both of which would be exemplars of “authentic folk-people’s” (ardyn yazguur) music in late socialistic discourse, per the discussion in Chapter Five. However, it is important to note that the praise-song (magtaal) is also an Indigenous pastoral genre that had no associations with folk collectivity until socialism, as discussed in Chapters Three. “The Gallop of
One-thousand Horses” (Galopp von 1000 Pferden), on the other hand, is Inner Mongolian composer and fiddler Chi Bulag's novel and somewhat nationalistic composition. Tracks like “On the Shore of Flower Lake” (Am Ufer des Blumensees) by C. Süxbaatar, and “Serenade” by Mend-Amar Jambal are thorough-composed in a nationalized style that is based upon European classical harmony and composition. These generic slippages are not clear in translation since socialistic Mongolian categories for music do not overlap neatly with European ones. For example, “Mongolian Folk Melody” (Mongolischer Volkslied) is, in fact, a composition by Jamjam, although it may be his arrangement of a folk song.

On the other hand, Egschiglen perhaps could only make sense to the world music economy by effacing these generic nuances and emphasizing traditionality over all. Albakultur’s online description of the album in English is illustrative:

> On the one hand Mongolian sounds seem strange and mysterious to Western ears. On the other hand the music sounds familiar, expressing basic human feelings such as love, longing, sorrow and thankfulness. This album is a collection of pure traditional musics from Mongolia presented in fine-tuned arrangements. With their virtuosity Egschiglen musically transmit the harmony of their culture and show an impressive variety and delicacy of expression.¹⁸⁴ (italics added)

The description is partly a mediation of difference for European listeners (the market audience): it tells the listener that the music is verifiably “other” and “authentic” (or “strange, mysterious to Western ears,” “pure traditional”) and yet still “accessible” (“basic human feelings”) and “sophisticated” (“the harmony of their culture,” “impressive variety and delicacy of expression”). Yet the description partly reflects Tömörsaixan’s discussion. As he put it in our interview detailed above, Egschiglen’s music "entered their [the listeners’] hearts" directly because their music evinced elements of European classical music, harmony, and stage

performance already familiar to German audiences. Perhaps it is this familiarity that the description invokes with the reference to “basic human feelings.” The description is seemingly a variation of Tömörsaixan’s statement, but tailored to the world music economy. However, for this same reason the description also de-emphasizes or obscures the classical and national aspects of Egschiglen’s music in favor of its “purely traditional” aspects, what is yazguur in Mongolian terms.

Albakultur’s description of Egschiglen’s second release Gobi, however, directly notes this characteristic mix of “traditional” and “classical” music. But it seeks to balance out its classicalness with a strong assertion that the music is still thoroughly and fundamentally grounded in traditionality:

'Gobi' contains a selection of both, traditional songs and pieces of contemporary Mongolian composers. With their fine-tuned arrangements, Egschiglen’s pieces often have chamber music quality and transparency—without losing the original enchanting power of a strong tradition.  

Accordingly, the album begins with “Praise-song for Chinggis Xaan” (Chinggis Xaany magtaal), a “traditional” element. This piece was first released in 1992 by Mönxbat Jamsranjav, who also wrote it and later released it on the renowned album Mongolian Traditional Classical Music Art (2001). The praise-song, like the yazguur version of “Altai praise-song,” became a staple in the repertoire of xöömeich in the post-socialist era. Notably, the title of Mönxbat’s album’s title suggests a contemporaneous attempt to emphasize both classicalness and tradition, like Egschiglen, in the early 1990s. Second on Egschiglen’s Gobi album is a “classical” element: "The Dessert Pierces my Soul" (Seltgeld shingesen gobi), a renowned thorough-composed classical piece by Jantsannorov, the famous composer discussed in Chapter Five. Again, there are notable

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generic slippages. For example, track seven is listed as *Ardyn huyor duu*, literally meaning “two folk-people’s songs,” but is translated into English as “Two Traditional Mongolian Songs.” The first song, in fact, is “The Four Seasons of the Steppe” (*Dörvön tsagiin tal*), a socialist-era “composed” (*zoxiolyn*) song whose lyrics D. Pürevdorj wrote and whose melody L. Mördöj composed. The second is “Gooj nanaa,” a song that fits the European generic criteria of “traditional” in that it has no known composer and is generally sung by a society or community.

Another key aspect of "going yazguur" for Egschiglen was the incorporation of xöömei. Flautist Erdenebold Dashtseren (see below), who joined Egschiglen for their return tour in 1994, briefly became a member of Egschiglen and helped to transform the quartet into a band. He was explicit about how the band approached "the market" (*zaax zeel*) (Interview, January 9, 2016). As he recalled, when they understood how things worked, they decided to incorporate xöömei. At first, during the 1993 and 1994 tours, Bold, a guest performer, or Ganpürev, the bass fiddler, provided vocals and did some xarxiraa when performing the yazguur version of "Altai Praise-song" or "Dunjingarav Praise-song." It was only in 1995 when they enlisted the now-renowned Xosbayar Dangaa or Hosoo\(^\text{186}\) (b. 1971), as the band’s xöömeich, further expanding the quartet into a band. Hosoo had graduated with Egschiglen’s members from the MDMS in 1991 and even worked with them for a short period in Töv province’s cultural palace, only for them to return to the city because the work ran out. It was at this point that the quartet began searching for overseas opportunities and during which Hosoo taught Ganpürev how to do xarxiraa for "Altai Praise-song." But because of the economic limitations, Hosoo remained behind, when the band traveled overseas. For the next few years, he worked at companies or did private business to make a living, in addition to performing with the Tümen

\(^{186}\) He spells his own shortname as such, hence I do not use “x” to transliterate his name.
Ex ensemble in Ulaanbaatar. By 1996, Egschiglen was in a position to bring Hosoo to Germany as a full member, following their economic reconnaissance.

As Tömör saixan recalled in our interview, the fans of the renowned Tuvan band Huun Huur Tu, which consisted of four xöömeizhi (e.g., xöömeich), would ask Egschiglen after shows if they were familiar with the latter. But Egschiglen did not emulate the Tuvan band's aesthetic, whose initial releases evince what Beahrs describes as "experimental, ambient" and "neotraditional groove" aesthetics (2014:77-84). He is referring to the Huun-Huur-Tu's engagement with various Euro-American pop and rock influences to present "old songs and tunes" and evoke the "ancientness" of Tuvan music and xöömei, intentionally foregoing the Soviet-sanctified aesthetics of prior ensembles (80). Egschiglen, by contrast, continued to engage with classical and national aesthetics associated with socialism, as much as yazguur.

Figure 6.4. The cover Egschiglen’s third release Sounds of Mongolia (2001), well after they "went yazguur."
Xöömei features in Egschiglen's first two releases, although only the latter features Hosoo. Albakultur's description of Gobi alludes to his presence: "It's time for a walk through the labyrinth of vocal acrobatics: the diaphonic, the epic singing, or the melodic." The description seems to imply Hosoo's Xöömei uran setgemj, which is translated into English as “Five Different Styles of Throat-singing,” although uran setgemj refers to a creative improvisation or “fantasia.” The piece, however, is really a variation of the xöömei demonstration piece that Ganbold helped create, as discussed in Chapter Five, in order to present the stylistic diversity of xöömei in foreign concert settings. Hosoo’s performance similarly begins with an introductory phrase that announces a demonstration of "throat melodies" (xooloigoor ayalguu), while a horse fiddle provides accompaniment with a steady ostinato. Hosoo then precedes to demonstrate each style in one or two breath-long phrases, each of which features a single style. The whistle (isgeree) xöömei phrases share a similar melodic contour to Ganbold’s, while the other phrases share general commonalities as well. Nevertheless, Hosoo eventually diverges from these shared aspects to highlight his virtuosity. Xöömei features on many of the tracks of Gobi—five out of eleven, in fact. Egschiglen's first release Traditional Mongolian Songs, by contrast, has just three out of sixteen tracks in which Ganpürev primarily renders the lyrics in xarxiraa. Only in "Manduul Xaan" does he use “whistle” (isgeree) or “vocal tension” (shaxmat) xöömei in an interlude-like section. Gobi, in other words, features xöömei as a key element of the band's new aesthetic. Their professional successes in Europe would set a precedent for later bands, most of whom now incorporate a xöömeich into their line-ups.

Expatriate offshoots: Khukh Mongol

Although Gobi was a successful release, Hosoo, along with Ganpürev, soon left Egschiglen to start a briefly extant band together. They, in turn, parted ways to establish more enduring bands, the latter’s Boerte (founded in 2000) and the former’s TransMongolia (founded in 2005). Before them, Erdenebold, the flautist, had also done the same when establishing Khukh Mongol. It was only after these first departures that Egschiglen’s own membership was mostly consolidated for the next decades with the inclusion of Uuganbaatar Tsend-Ochir (b.1970) on bass fiddle (ix xuur) and Amartüvshin Baasandorj (b.1976) as xöömeich and the departure of Xayagsaixan and Migdorj, who returned to Mongolia to etch out a life at home.

The memberships of the expatriate offshoots would change more regularly than Egschiglen’s over the following years, creating a transnational circuit of Mongolian musicians. After seeking success in Germany, as their predecessors had, these circulating musicians, in turn, tended to move back to Mongolia, where they formed bands of their own. Some of these bands would then travel overseas again, relying upon their expatriate knowledge. Many of these “third generation” offshoots are now themselves aesthetic and economic models of performance for younger musicians graduating from the music programs at Ulaanbaatar’s colleges and universities. The leaders of Domog (founded in 2006) and Khusugtun (also founded in 2006), for example, both had brief stints as members of Khukh Mongol. The members of Sedaa (founded in 2010), on the other hand, got their start in Hosoo's band TransMongolia. They were founded in and continue to reside in Germany. After two decades of these transnational circulations and offshoots, devising a comprehensive list of all these members would require some in-depth investigation. Some band leaders even had difficulty recalling all the musicians who once had been in their ranks. But in any case, Erdenebold Dashtseren noted how his band
Khukh Mongol had played a seminal role in giving younger musicians important professional experience, which included becoming proficient in xöömei as a back-up vocalist.

I had the privilege to interview Erdenebold and two current band members, bass fiddler Dashka Ulziibat (b.1980) and horse fiddler Yesun-Erdene Bat (b.1988) at his home in Ingolstadt, Bavaria (January 27, 2016). It was a particularly significant moment for this dissertation: Khukh Mongol happened to be the very first Mongolian band that I had ever heard, as I discussed in this dissertation’s prelude, during a trip to visit my Colombian cousin while he was studying in Germany. Fifteen years later, having gone off to live in Mongolia and then do a PhD in ethnomusicology, I caught up with them and interviewed them in Mongolian. The occasion was a full circle of sorts that began with their performative strategies in Germany and my profound reception, both of which hinged particularly upon the sound, source, and originality of Mongol xöömei. But I also wanted to understand this transnational circuit of expatriate musicians and its relationship to contemporary professional performances of yazguur.
Figure 6.5. Erdenebold Dashtseren stands at the underpass where I first heard Khukh Mongol fifteen years ago.

During our group interview, Erdenebold tended to respond first, with Yesun-Erdene and Dashka adding here and there. All were very direct in their statements. For example, when I asked what members gain from their expatriate experiences with Khukh Mongol, Erdenebold said:

When coming to Germany, they learn xöömei. They straight away need xöömei for their own sake [aminy xur’d]. You need to learn how to do xöömei when standing next to me on the stage. They are all the same, not only doing xöömei. After graduating from the Music and Dance College and arriving as professional artists, their theater or music teachers say that they have a diploma. But when they come here, we don’t have symphonic music, solo musicians, and music teachers. We perform by ourselves. We only have ourselves to present and work with. And so, one cannot just play horse fiddle. They have to have something additional. It's necessary in order to perform

188 За, ийм байна. Одоо жишээ нь, Эх орны акулгуйн альб, эх оронч байсан бол…. Германд ирэхдээ хөөмий сурсан. Заавал ч угий хөөмий хэрэгтэй амины хувь. Чи одоо өөрөө надтай тайзаан дээр хөөмийлж сурах хэрэгтэй. Тэгээд сурч байна. Тэгээд дорнын Ориихоо байна. Пуужээ байна. Бүт д адилахан, ганц хөөмий биш. Манай хөгжим бужиг чинь төгсөөд мэрээндийн уран буулзах гарч ирээд. Театрын болон хөгжмийн багш гэсэн дипломтой төгсдөг.
satisfactorily. There is no requirement that we have a lot of xöömei, or bass fiddles or horse fiddles. We decide this ourselves.

Erdenebold, in effect, highlighted a tension between post-socialist musical pedagogy at Ulaanbaatar’s conservatories and the realities of getting by in the world music economy. While the former emphasizes specialization within large institutions, such as the Horse Fiddle Ensemble (Morin Xuuryn Chaulga), the latter emphasizes diversification within a versatile format like the band.

However, Erdenebold wanted to add that his band’s performance of yazguur is not simply an economic response to the world music market; it is also a response to the specialization of professional pedagogy at Mongolia’s musical institutions. As he continued,

at the Music and Dance College [during socialism], I learned specifics about professionalism. There was a rule there that we could not learn about many things. But after democracy and the market, people’s intellects became free. It became possible to do things as one liked and choose to do something on one’s own. And so, none of my kids [xüüxdüüd, i.e., younger musicians] does just one instrument. Original folk art can consist of many things. If you are talking about xöömei, epic, praise-song— many kinds and styles of things. If someone is flesh and blood then they can do this wonderful original art. For these reasons, I am not just a flautist and I also play lute [tovshuur] and sing. After these eighteen years here, a few of my younger musicians [düü nar] have gone back to Mongolia and they think like this. They know what Europe’s world

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189 Энчээ ирэхэд чинь бид нар найрал хөгжим байхгүй, гоцлол хөгжимчнин байхгүй, хөгжимийн багш байхгүй, зөвхөн өөрөө өөрөө тоглож, өөрөө өөрийгөө үзүүлж гарч ирэх хэрэг болно. Тээвэр зөвлөж байхгүй мөрөн хуурт тоглоод байх биш, давхар зайлшгүй юм хийх шаардлага хангахдаг ёстой. Яяа зохицоо бид нар олон хөөмийг, их хуурчих, мөрөн хуурч олоод явах шаардлага байхгүй, бид нар өөрөө явад болж байгаа байхгүй юм. Хөгжим бүжиг биднийг нийт иргэдийг сургасан. Тээвэр өөр яна зохион байхгүй болохгүй гэсэн зарчимтай байсан. Ардчилал гардан зохион бүх өөрөөгөө, хүний оюун хуяа чөлөөт болсон. Ингэж тавьсаны уучлал хүн ёөрөө өөрийнхөө дүртэй юмнан сонгож сурч ингэж явах тийм сайхан боломж бололцоо бүрдээ. Түүнээс биш ийнхээ явж байгаа хуунаас уураасаа бугдээрээ нэгэн хөгжим биш заавал ч угуй ардын язгуур урлагийн ямар нэгэн юмтай байх. Ардны язгуур урлаг гээд яриад байгаа юм ын чиний энэ яриад байгаа хөөмийг, тууль, мэтэлэр гээд мэх олон төрлөөрөө юм байгаа нэгэн нэгэнгийг яаж хариуцалт бүрдүүлсэн. Хүн өөрийнхөө мах цуснаас гарсан тийм сайхан язгуур урлагад хүн бүр чадна. Тэрийг нь хариуцалт бүрдээр нь байгаа явж байгаа юм. Тууңөсөө биш би одоо лимбочин хүн зөвхөн лимбөө тоглоод явах шаардлага байхгүй, дуулж болж байна.
market is like. It is like this because classical art [songod urlag] comes from Europe. After learning here and going back to Mongolia, they think like this.  

Erdenebold's point is a partly a critique of Eurocentric musical hegemony because, by encouraging specialization, it delimits the exposure of musicians to other performance practices. In contrast, "original folk art" is inherently diverse, consists of multiple genres, it is not specialized, resulting in a tension. He also associates this diversity with humanity itself ("if someone is flesh and blood then they can do this wonderful original art"), perhaps suggesting that it is "more human" to have a diverse performance practice. For him, yazguur seems to imply not simply faithfulness to an original modern, but also embracing human diversity with creativity ("we are changing things up").

In fact, Khukh Mongol's music were initially unintelligible to Mongolian audiences, as Erdenebold continued. He noted how his approach contrasts with the "softer" sounds and sentiments of customary stage performances of folk art in Mongolia. He was referring to performances that even now resemble the positivistic performances of national culture during socialism, as detailed in Chapters Four and Five:

For example, people in Mongolia did not understand the compositions we were playing here back then. That happened in 2000 or 1999 [during a concert in Ulaanbaatar]. What we perform is different for folk art [ardyn urlag] audiences there [in Mongolia]. Because we are adjusting [taaruvlas] to European audiences, our music, style, and art is different. For example, the intro of 'Altai Praise-song' goes like this…[He hums the yazguur version's standard lute intro in a slow and labored way]. We arrange and change it as so…[He imitates the same intro, but now it is faster and more energetic]. We

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190 Тэгээд сволжээд гарч байгаа юм. Тэгж гарсны ундсэн дэээрээ одоо ...манайд ажиллаж байсан дуу нар маань надаас гадна 3 хүн байна л даа, одоо бараг 17,18 жил болж байна. Тэгээд одоо нэгээ хэд маань Монголдоо очоод ингэж болдог юм байна Европд зах ээл нийм байдаг. Европ дэлхийн зах ээл. Яагаад гэхээр эх,хамгийн сонгодог урлал бүх урлал Европод шуу дээ. Энчээ хийж сурчихаад Монголдоо очоод хийвэл ингэж болох юм байна гэж.

191 Одоо жишээ нь бид нарны энд тоглож байсан зохиолыг Монголд очоод тоглох юм бол монгол хүн бол ойлогдогтуу байсан.
do a kind of 'hard' \[\textit{xantu}\] folk art. We are free to do things that are "ethno" \[\textit{etno}\] or "jazz" \[\textit{jaaz}\]. With these latter terms, he is referring, in effect, to stylistic fusion with elements of Euro-American popular music. Khukh Mongol's music is perhaps "ethnic," according to the European music industry, but not "jazz," in the senses that it engages with the African-American idiom or interacts with jazz musicians. But despite the initial confusion of Mongolian audiences, expatriate bands like Egschiglen and Khukh Mongol established a paradigm for local bands to gain international audibility, a point that Yesun-Erdene reinforced:

The style of the bands now playing in Mongolia is that of [Mongolian bands in] Germany in the 1990s. Their members all once played here in bands like Boerte [the group that Ganpürev's had started after leaving Egschiglen]. Mongolians once did not understand the compositions of that time. \(193\) Audiences were not ready. But now everyone is receiving this folk art really well. \(194\)

Dashka elaborated: "Those younger bands all got inspired by bands like those [in Germany] and are now imitating them. \(195\) But they are also developing and changing many little things." In short, as Yesun-Erdene concluded this part of our discussion: "The main source [\textit{ex üüsver}] of all these Mongolian folk bands is those bands that reside not simply in Europe, but Germany. \(197\)

\(192\) тэр чинь одоо 2000 он \(1, 1999\) он байсана. Яагаад гэхэд бид нарны тоглож байгаа ардын урлагийн узэгчид өөр шүү дээ. Бид нар Ёвропын үзэгчдэд тааруулж, хөгжмөө урлаггаа стилээ өөр болгож байгаа байхгүй юу. Одоо жишээ нь, нээнэх " дан дан дийн дан дайийн дан " гэгчүүг шүү дээ, одоо дийн дан дийн гээд найруулга нь өөр болж байна. Тийм нэг хатуу ардын урлаг байгаа байхгүй юу. Бид нар болохооор тэрийгөөрөөд чөлөөт болгоод \(196\) этно, жааз болохөө байгаа байхгүй юу.

\(193\) Одоо Монголд тоглож байгаа хамтлагуудын стиля нь хэлбэр нь Германд 1990 – ээд оны сүүлээр бүтээгээрэнэй өндөр тоглож байсан хамтлагууд хүмүүс... Борт эхлэндээгээр Монголччуд сонсохлоорон ойлгож чаддаггүй байсан.

\(194\) Узэгчид балэн болоогүй байсан. Тэгээд чинь одоо бүгд ардын урлагаа үзэг аягуй гоё хүлээж авдаг болсон.

\(195\) Тэд бүгд тоглож байсан. Тэд нар араас залуу хамтлагууд санаа авад одоо ингээд дуурайгаад ууланаас зуунд өөр байгаа.

\(196\) хөгчсөн байхгүй юу. Жаахан өөрчлөөд явсан юмцууд зоодоо байгаа.

\(197\) Монголын ардын олон хамтлагуудын эх уусяэр нь Европа дахь ялангуунаа Германдах хамтлагууд байсан.

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Dashka then wanted to interject something, ensuring that I understood Erdenebold's point: "We are not stuck to one style…" He implied that Khukh Mongol's "adjustments" in Europe were equally about post-socialist aesthetic freedom, not only about commercialism. Furthermore, the capacity for these “adjustments” stemmed directly from their plural inheritance in both “folk” and “classical” music, while the results were equally positive examples of “cultural development,” as Erdenebold continued:

We adjust our music. Our Mongolian music is pentatonic, while [European] classical music is diatonic. And so, what have we learned in musical terms? We learned classical music from Russian pedagogy [surgalt, i.e., at European-style conservatory]. We mastered both folk music and classical music and so we have the capacity to arrange our music like this. All those younger musicians who were once with me and went back to Mongolia are the same. In this way, our folk art has been developing [xögjix] in really good ways in the last four to five years. The main point is that these persons who are developing are my younger musicians, as they say in their own words. After learning about the European market, they understand how it works.

To sum up, this transnational circuit of musicians was not only a product of post-socialist “globalization.” It was also a result of a plural inheritance that musicians like Erdenebold drew upon (e.g., “mastery of both folk and classical music”). This plural inheritance provided musicians like him with a diverse set of practices and aesthetics to succeed with in the world music economy. But it also reflected his own conception of yazguur as a diversely constituted aesthetic or practice that contrasts with the specialization of European-style musical

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198 стильд баридхахгүйгээр  
199 тээвэр хөгжилдөө төхирруулж, манай монголын хөгжим чинь пентатоник шүү дээ, хөг нь бөл,сонгодог хөгжим бол долоо хөтгөй шүү дээ. Монголынх тав. Тээвэр бид нарны хөгжилдөж сурсан юм юу вэ гэхээрээ Оросын сургалт орж ирээд бид нар сонгодог хөгжмийг сурсан. Монголынххоо ардын хөгжим сонгодог хөгжим 2—ыг бүрдүүлэн ээшмээрээ бороо бөрдөө тийм ийм найруулгыг хийээд оранжирвлэх хийээд явх боловч бүрэн байгаа байхгүй юу. Над дээр бороо бөрдөө надтай хамт Монголд явсан дуу нар бүтээд тээвэр адилхан явсан. Тэр угттаараа одоо бөл суллинд 4,5 жил манай ардын урлаг ангуулт байгны хөгжим байна шүү дээ. Тэр гол үр дүн нь хөгжүүлж байгаа хүн нь бол түрүүний халж байгаа манай дуу нар байгаа. Энчээ сураад Европын заа зээл гарал юу хөгжим яаж явав гэдгийг ойлгоосон гэж бодож байгаа.
institutions. And so, he seems to imply that the performance practice of Khukh Mongol is neither purely commercial nor purely yazguur, defying easy narratives of commercialization or homogenization in unfolding debates over the evolving meaning of originality in the globalizing present.

**Cultural tourism, economic survival, and New Agism**

The uncertain circulations of post-socialism coincided with novel circulations of foreigners into Mongolia, especially in the form of cultural tourism. Cultural tourism for Soviet-aligned citizens existed during socialism under the management of the state tourism ministry Juulchin. But now Mongolians were free to leverage cultural tourism for themselves as entrepreneurs. Foreigners could come and go with minimal visa restrictions or requirements, and with no official oversight upon arrival, as had been the case before. At the same time, institutional ensembles, namely the resident ensembles of state and private institutions, began producing daily tourist shows, securing an alternate source of revenue as the tourism industry in Mongolia expanded. Independent bands also sought such revenue by performing at tourist camps. As I argued in my master's thesis (2012), the poetics and politics of cultural nationalism and indigeneity played out in the novel formats and circumstances of tourism, too. Tourism did not simply roll in and homogenize musical performance in Mongolia. Cultural tourism introduced another economic domain in which socialistic, nationalistic, and inherited discourses and performances unfolded in conflicted and resonant ways. Like expatriate bands, many professional musicians in the cultural tourism industry sought a balance between commercialism, nationalism, and yazguur. But their plural concerns could not avoid engendering debates over "the future of the past," as Levin puts it (2016: ix), and the continuity of Mongolness and originality in the midst of transnational connectivity and flux.
Part of the alarm over commercialism stemmed from its highly negative, socialist-era associations with capitalism, the antipode of socialism. While professional musicians would receive government salaries, there were no associations of receiving a salary with commercialism (i.e., selling your music for payment) because they were governmental, not private sector or corporate salaries. This monetary role of the government facilitated a belief that “culture” was a public good or right, a venerable responsibility of the government to “develop.” And so, to entangle “culture” with self-organized, independent, or entrepreneurial profit-making was to turn “culture” into a debased, business matter and entangle it with foreign values or agencies broadly construed as “globalization.” Against this background, the economic activities of expatriate bands and professional musicians who engaged in cultural tourism easily sparked the ire of critics, whom I detail below. But I begin with an exploration of this socialistic background to current debates about commercialism, yazguur, and “the future of the past” before discussing some forms of cultural tourism today. This discussion further reveals how xöömei was critical in cultural tourism settings as an original voice for foreigners intrigued by nomadism. Many of these foreigners, furthermore, had already heard xöömei in recordings or concerts by touring Mongolian or Tuvan musicians.

A conversation with David Hykes, a renowned overtone singer who managed to travel to Mongolia in 1981, helps illustrate why global influx would become so alarming in the post-socialist era (Interview, August 12, 2013). His anecdotes and recollections reveal the difficulties of foreign access to cultural practices like xöömei during socialism, which are taken for granted today. His journey began with a recording, Hungaroton’s Mongolian Folk Music (1972), which contained one recording of xöömei by a person called Bori. "That recording completely changed my life," Hykes said, inspiring his project to cultivate overtone singing into a spiritual practice. In response, he sought to travel to either Tibet, Tuva, or Mongolia, all sources in "the
East” for vocal practices that he grouped together as “overtone singing” by virtue of their “shared overtones.” However, it was Mongolia that first responded with approval for his visa—seven years after sending the visa application.

The timing was not optimal. The call came in the middle of his honeymoon in Nova Scotia in June, which he cut short "to rush off to Mongolia" and make the designated plane flight for the allotted period of time: a single week. The only reason why his application was eventually successful was his participation, through the kind mentorship of Prof. Chuluun Xangin, then at Indiana University, in a Soviet Friendship Society meeting in Mongolia. After getting picked up by a caravan of black limousines made in the 1930s, the foreign contingent was taken to the Ulaanbaatar Hotel, where no Mongolian citizen was allowed to enter. But Hykes was allowed to go on excursions into parts of the city. At Gandan, for example—now a popular tourist site in addition to a functioning monastery—people scattered when they saw the European foreigner enter the grounds, perhaps out of fear that he was a Soviet official, he surmised. Interestingly, Hykes saw people on prayer planks despite the official ban on religion in those days.

Gaining access to xöömei proved even more difficult. Sometime during the endless speeches marking the momentous occasion, Hykes managed to make contact with the renowned music researcher Badraa Jamts, through the help of one of the trip's organizers or Prof. Chuluun. One of these persons, in turn, helped him connect with a xöömeich. Over thirty years later, Hykes could not recall the xöömeich's name. But he did recall how he was an official (perhaps even an undercover agent, he wondered) who did xöömei, as opposed to being a dedicated professional xöömeich. Their brief and overly formal exchange, which included

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200 I discusse the poetics and politics of such comparisons in Chapter Two.
Hykes' translator and "guide" (much more likely an undercover agent), took place outside of the Ulaanbaatar Hotel in a park. They exchanged a few songs and some introductory conversation, not more. This was Hykes' only encounter with xöömei during his seven days in Mongolia. But he did note how officials participating in the research exchange were proud that an American knew about and could do a little xöömei.

Things today are far different from what Hykes experienced. Xöömei is a central element in the myriad culture shows in Ulaanbaatar, which foreign tourists primarily attend. Anyone can easily hire a xöömeich or a band to perform at their hotel or ger camp. These bands often have verbal contracts with particular yurt camps or tourism organizations via personal or kinship relationships. But cultural tourism is still a domain in which issues of nationalism, development, and originality play out. It was so from the very beginning of independent cultural tourism just after the fall of socialism. For example, the Tümen Ex Ensemble is amongst the most renowned and successful in the cultural tourism industry. Badraa himself helped found the ensemble, which he dedicated to promoting and preserving “authentic folk art,” per his cultural nationalist agenda. The ensemble describes its motto in Mongolian as such in a promotional document I was personally given:

To expose, research, promote, and develop the remarkable types of Mongolian national ethnic, original, folk art, and cultural heritage; to introduce their respected qualities to the homeland and the world (delxii); to flourish and satisfy the needs of the intellect. (Anonymous, n.d.)

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201 I translate yazguur as "authentic," not "original," here to reflect Badraa’s conception for the term, as discussed in Chapter Five.
202 Монгол юндэстэн истний ардын язгуур урлаг, өв соёлыг нээн илрүүлж, судлан суртаачилж, үгжигүүлэх түүний төрөл түүний гайхамшлаг эх өрөнөө бөлөн долхий дахин сэрэг чанартай хүрээн танилж ур чадвараараа мандайлан оюуны эрэлт хэрэгцээг хангахад оршно.
The ensemble's English website describes the same ethos of promotion, but not without anticipating the nomadist expectations of primarily Euro-American tourists as well:

The Tumen Ekh ensemble will take you on a brief tour to Mongolia’s world of folk art, where vast steppes of grassland, clear blue skies, and a nomadic way of life has been developed and preserved for thousands of years.\(^{201}\)

These two quotes illustrate how the ensemble is engages cultural nationalism alongside nomadism (the discourse) to realize its intertwined political and economic agendas. Not only a business entity, the ensemble is a heritage institution. Accordingly, the ensemble functioned in diplomatic settings. As former ambassador to Mongolia Jonathan Addleton notes, former president George Bush was taken to Tümen Ex during his visit to Mongolia in 2005, although the author does not give the ensemble’s name (2013:43). Likely thousands of mostly Euro-American tourists do the same when tourism companies take them to the ensemble every summer. In the post-socialist world, economics and politics, nationalism and nomadism are entangled in such projects.

Individual entrepreneurs have also sought to leverage cultural tourism on their own terms. The most successful example is Hosoo, the one-time xöömeich of Egschiglen. He became particularly adept at leveraging cultural tourism to compliment his economic life in Germany, even obtaining a degree in business management from a German university. In the early 2000s, he began leading his own cultural tours to Mongolia. His first trips would even go to his birth-place (nutag), Chandman’ district in Xovd province, in an effort to address economic, cultural, and familial obligations at once. I had the opportunity to attend two of his tours. In 2005, just months after I had first met him, he invited me to tag along, since I was already living in Ulaanbaatar. And in 2014, I again traveled with him as part of my dissertation.

fieldwork. During both tours, the participants were predominantly Central Europeans. Hosoo lead the tours primarily in German. The 2014 tour traveled to Xarxorum, the pre-socialist capital of Mongolia, and natural sites in the vicinity, and then to various locations in Arxangai province, but never to Chandman’ district. In both tours, his guests stayed at hotels or tourist camps, although in Chandman’ district they stayed in yurts that his family members had set up specifically for the tour just outside of town. The participants were almost all amateur musicians or vocalists who had prior experiences with Hosoo at the latter's concerts or workshops.

A key aspect of these cultural tours were workshops in which Hosoo taught xöömei through methods that are adjusted to his European students. For example, most Mongolian pedagogues carefully push their students' voices to the point of exhaustion as a means of strengthening the voice. They also emphasize the "fluid" (shingen) aesthetic that I describe in Chapter Four, which requires severe amounts of vocal tension (shaxaa) that can initially irritate the throat. As I recall of my own lessons with Enxjargal, I would regularly protest that I could not push my throat further, although Enxjargal knew better of what my throat was capable. Hosoo did not do the same for his European students. Coughing a lot is probably not good for business. In many of the workshops, participants also sat cross-legged on the earth and closed their eyes in a bid to incorporate meditation into their practice sessions. Most Mongolian pedagogues, by contrast, emphasize rigorous technical development, often while standing up, as Curtet surveys in his dissertation (2013: 479-480). On the other hand, Hosoo also asked his participants to imagine the Mongolian landscape when sounding, a visualization technique that many music teachers encourage their students to do in order to produce a favored aesthetic. I discuss one example of this in Chapter Five in the context of a conversation with the renowned xöömeich Davaajav.
Figure 6.6. Hosoo (on the left) leads a xöömei workshop during his 2014 cultural tour in Övörxangai province.

Nevertheless, participants seemed to interpret xöömei, Mongolia, and their own selves in situ through their own perceptions while some resulting perceptions seemed to be the result of slippage. For example, I recall how one participant was truly excited to be "in the homeland of xöömei." However, we were in Central Mongolia, far away from western Mongolia or the Altai-Sayan Mountain region, and Chandman' district, where xöömei is said to originate, as discussed in Chapter Two. The cultural tour, perhaps inadvertently, had somehow given this participant reason to make their assumption. Other sentiments were a matter of idiosyncratic spiritualism. Many participants, for example, noted how, somehow, they "felt at home" in the Mongolian landscape, while one remarked on "the connection" they felt, as if they "belonged" there. The remarkable sound of xöömei during the workshops perhaps served to index their own voices and sentiments with the immediate landscape. There were a few cases of friction that resulted of these alternate perceptions. One occasion was notable: a participant felt that
there was a "connection" between his Central European country and Mongolia in that each country had particular powerful mountain ranges in their territories. With my translational assistance, they wanted to know if a shaman, who was also participating in the cultural tour, felt the same. The shaman disagreed, stating that the "connection" between Mongols and their lands had to do, in effect, with their ethnic collectivity: "It lies in the people [ard tümen]," the shaman countered, not in the mountains in themselves.

It has been my general experience that spiritualist practitioners are a considerable demographic among tourists interested in studying xöömei in Mongolia. The dissertation of ethnomusicologist Alex Glenfield, which details how New Age cults re-work Tuvan xöömei and engage Tuvan sacred places, is testimony (2007). He quotes the work of Dutch social scientist Wouter Hanegraaf. The latter describes New Agism as a form of "secularized esotericism" (1996) in the sense that practitioners couch their spirituality in terms rhetorically amenable to scientific discourse, rather than to religious discourse. In the case of xöömei, for example, acoustic terminology for "drones" and "overtones" often becomes a conceptual basis for linking scientific explanations of cosmological phenomena with human psychology. Sonic waves, as vibrations that interact with matter, become a medium for facilitating bodily health. New Age discourses about musical difference, however, tend to rely upon colonial constructs or Eurocentric dualisms, such as "the East" and "the West," to re-situate non-European peoples.

However, Glenfield further notes how New Agism is no longer purely a European phenomenon in that many renown Tuvan shamans are themselves invested in leveraging and bolstering its discourses and practices, especially to the degree that they employ xöömei for musical therapy. There are several parallels that I am aware of in Mongolia. One renowned xöömeich is now employing practices into his pedagogy that have direct ties to New Age variants of Buddhism that have become increasingly popular in Mongolia amongst youth in
recent years. He used the word *energi*, or "energy," to name the intangible medium through which he effected students' capacities to sound xöömei. He noted that he first heard the term when he saw a program by a Buddhist monk on television. In a lesson I documented, he employed *energi* by making the recipient, the student, close their eyes and raise their hands in a gesture of receptivity. The teacher then wafted his hands into the air while aspirating, an act that transmitted the *energi* into the student. After this fairly brief, preparatory act, he moved on to practical exercises for developing technique. I am unaware of other xöömeich who do the same, but New Agism, as a discourse and practice of employing secular concepts (e.g., energy) for spiritual ends (e.g., mediation) appears to be a growing practice in Mongolia.

**Originality in crisis**

For some intellectuals and xöömeich, these touristic re-framings of xöömei and heritage imply commercialization and the loss of originality: they are fundamentally alterations of indigeneity in response to the tourism market. They imply an incursion of "foreign" processes and persons under the rubric of "globalization." Like musical actors throughout Central Asia, Mongolian stakeholders are concerned with "the future of the past," as Levin puts it, or "how traditional forms of music-making are being adapted, appropriated, transformed, and revitalized by a variety of contemporary actors and stakeholders in the domain of arts and culture" (2016: ix). In Mongolia, these same concerns tend to center around the continuity of *yazguur*. Perspectives on the future of originality are diverse, contradictory, and perplexing, yet they are critical for understanding the contemporary horizons of xöömei and indigeneity. While some argue that Mongol xöömei has successfully been "preserved" and "developed" into a "classical art," others lament that the original quality of xöömei is either on the brink of "destruction" (*ustgal*) or has already been destroyed. Despite the increasing popularity of xöömei and record numbers of young professionals, "original quality" and its exemplars are
now all gone, as many have noted. By contrast, socialism had seen the rise of Chimeddorj, Sundui, and Ganbold, who lived during what some now call “the golden age” of xöömei performance, starting roughly in the late 1950s and extending no further than the early 1980s, by implication (e.g., Myagmarjav 2016; Curtet 2016). Key exemplars described in this dissertation include Chimeddorj, Sundui, and Ganbold (Chapters Two and Three). Some actors, accordingly, are invested in addressing the loss of original quality through innovative performative strategies or projects. Before ending this chapter, I would like to survey several critiques and responses to commercialism, which expatriate musicians and cultural tourism initiated, and the apparent loss of original quality.

Mongolian music researcher Xerlen Lhavsüren is among those who hails the preservation and development of Mongol xöömei, but not without addressing the question of globalization. The critical issue for her is how Mongol actors are “to combine” (xosluulax) globalization and “original folk art” (ardynd yazguur urlag), as she elaborates in an article entitled "Xöömei: An Art with Original Quality" (2010b:5). She begins with the familiar statement that xöömei arose out of relations with the natural world or environment (baigal’ orchin) in the earliest stages (shat) of human development (siójil). Yet xöömei is a "unique" (övörmöts) and "inimitable" (davtashgui) example of "original culture" (yazguur soyol) that is "unspoiled" (xol’tsoögii) and "pure" (tsever) (180). While non-original carriers (teegchid) began practicing xöömei, as a form of "acquired culture" (oldmol soyol), and inevitably began to alter it, they also perform important duties and help "to develop" it. In this statement, she seems to imply professional xöömeich in this statement without direct kinship or communal links to original places in the Alta-Sayan Mountain regions, such as Chandman’ district.
She goes on to state that it is a source of pride for Mongolians that they have preserved original quality, while citing how xöömei has reached "a classical level" (songod türshin). She then ends the article without going into some of the complexities that my research associates note.

While Xerlen seems to imply that the question of globalization has been somewhat resolved, others like Hosoo are more critical of the contemporary situation. In the summer of 2013, I sat down with him at Ix Mongol, a restaurant in downtown Ulaanbaatar that serves great German beer, along with mostly European food. I wanted to follow up on something he had told me previously, regarding this loss of original quality. As he elaborated,

There are now a lot of people trying to do xöömei. In university they are teaching it, along with original art. However, the more those interested in xöömei increase, the more traditional, original quality disappears. That being so, what about xöömei's own structure [tsogts], its own concept? It's xöömei. It's not rock, right? It is an art of nomads [nüüdelchin]. This art of nomads embodies original quality, has its own structure, and that can still be classical, right? Today it is mixed up with other things.204 (Interview July 31, 2013)

Like Xerlen, Hosoo suggests that the professionalization of xöömei has fundamentally effected the performance of xöömei. However, he laments that the transmission of xöömei in institutions of higher education imparts values and understandings that depart from its original practice in pastoral settings. He elaborated in another interview on how the mode of transmission effects xöömei performance:

When you are watching your herd on the steppe and singing, then at least your spirit [sünsleg] comes through your own voice on its own as you drone [düngenex] well and so you can understand your heart [zurx] and character [setgel]. City kids have to pay money before learning to

204 Odoo tsegd xoomiyildog bolsohn xoomiy orolldog huumus er nh oolon bolson shuu daa, taimaa? Ih surguullinar saagaad bainha yarguur urлагийг бас тим ээ? Гэхдээ оноодор манайд хөөми олон хөөми сонирхогчидын хүрээ ихэнх тусам уламжилт язгуур чанар байхгүй шуу даа. Тэхлээр хөөмиий гэдаг энэ чинь вере ногоо офрийнхэн бүтэн офрийнхэн ойлголт нь юу биээ хөөмиий шуу даа. Түүнээс Рок биш шуу даа тимээ? Энэ чинь нуудалчидийн урлаг. Нуудалчидийн урлаг чинь нуудалчидийн язгуур чанартайгаа цогц байж л тэр бас соогоодог болно шуу даа тимээ. Оноодор болохоор тийм нэг ним мийшлүү ним юм юмтай холилдсон.
sing [\textit{duulax}] xöömei and because money occupies their heads [\textit{tolgoi}]
they have no heart or spirit [\textit{zurx setgel}].

His words were frank and perhaps dualistic, but they hinged upon a plausible point: the
environment of musical transmission shapes how one sounds and the values and aesthetics they
espouse, regardless of perceptions of primordial identity. Hence, learning a pastoral practice
like xöömei in urban circumstances poses a problem of transmission: Is it still xöömei if the
musician is primarily informed by non-pastoral circumstances, lifeways, and values?

These concerns, however, can easily lead into rigid dualisms. For example, Hosoo made
a corresponding stark contrast between urban and rural Mongolia, or rather between
Ulaanbaatar and the countryside: "Ulaanbaatar is not Mongolia. Mongolia exists beyond
Ulaanbaatar," he emphasized. I asked him about how "national culture" figured into this stark
dichotomy: "Look around you. Do you see national culture here?" And he pointed to our
surroundings. Not far from us were the National Drama Theater as well as Tsuki House, where
the Moonstone Song and Dance Ensemble performs for tourists regularly. In other words, these
urban places and practices also did not constitute original culture and lifeways of Mongolia. On
the other hand, Hosoo did not regard original quality purely in ethno-cultural sources. Rather,
he located it in pastoralism. Any nation or ethnicity around the world may have once practiced
things like xöömei, when their ancestors also likely practiced forms of pastoralism. He noted
the example of Corsica, where \textit{quintina choral} singing incorporates a timbre in the bass voice

\textsuperscript{205} Hosoo is one of the few xöömeich who states that "to sing" (\textit{duulax}) is an appropriate
verb for the act of doing xöömei, whereas others state that "to sound" (\textit{duugarax}) is the
only other appropriate verb in addition to the verbal form of xöömei (xöömeildöx). See
Chapter 1.

\textsuperscript{206} Малаа хариулалтай малийнхаа бэлчээрт дээр дуулаад явж байгаа бол тэгээд адгийн
наад зах нь тэр сүнслэг чанарыг нь өөрсдөө хоолойгоороо өөрөө сайн дунтгэнэж зүрх
сэтгэлэнгийг нь өйлгөж чадаж байна. Хотны хуухддад бол одоо энэ хөөмэйг ингэж
dуулж сурахаас омноо хэлэн цаас орхээг вэ өгдөө тоглойд нь өөрсөө зүрх
сэтгэл нь байхгүй.
that somewhat resembles xarxiraa. He also noted that herding is still a fairly common practice there, at least in the mountains. Whether his comparative move was sound or not, he meant that "xöömei is not about imitating the person whose xöömei you like, whether it is your or my xöömei. When someone is alone, outside and getting to know their animals and seeing, that is the most important thing." He went on to lament that it is this sense of “real” (jinxene) xöömei that could disappear in ten years, despite there being more professionals now than ever before.

Renowned Mongolian music researcher Enebish seems to share Hosoo’s sentiment, as he writes in an article on the problem of preserving the cultural heritage of Mongolian "people of the felt tent" (tuurgatan), a term for Inner Asian peoples who reside in yurts, regardless of their Turkic or Mongolic ethnicity. He argues for a focus on the “artistic thought” (uran saixany setgelgee) and “creative means” (urlan büteex arga) by which pastoral "carriers" (teegch) (i.e., culture bearers) have produced their expressive practices, a focus that entails a direct consideration for baigal’ (nature-existence). As he writes,

It is impossible to consider the artistic thinking of Mongolian people who were raised in pastoral lifeways (mal axui), along with the real meaning and significance of their creative means, apart from the nature that birthed them, their geographic surroundings, the seasons, daily living with herds, custom, and free labor. Because the feeling and knowledge of their beauty, character, and formation, which comes from living very closely with nature, along with their personal experiences, has been allotted to the Mongolians. (2012:71)

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207 Хөөмийлж байгаа хүн болгон Андрэйгийн ч юм уу Хосоогийн дуулах хөөмийг дуурайж дуулахдаа биш тэ? Өөрөө бодох өөрөө гардад мал ахуйтай танилцаж үзэж харах, тэг нь хамгийн чухал шүү дээ.
208 Малчны ахуйд орч хүмүүжсэн монгол хүний уран сэхэн уртан сэргээлэгч, туурвийн бутээх арьын жинхэнэ утга учрыг тухайн хүнийг төрөллөөн байгаль, газархуян орчим, чаг улирал, малчны өдөр тутмын амдырал, зан үйл, эрхлэх хөдөлмөрөөс ангида анч узэхийг аргагүй юм Ягаадад зээлээ, байгалтайгаа илүү ойрхон байж түүний айш тогтол, аяа ааш, гоо сайхны нь танин мадах мэдрэмж, хувь тохиол монголчуудад тулхуу нөгджээ.
Like Hosoo, Enebish emphasizes how Mongolian musical practices are inseparable from the pastoral lifeways and natural environments that gave rise to them. Also like Hosoo, he locates the origins of today’s crisis of originality in the social, economic, and political changes of the last decades: changing social organization, ideological pressure, unstable government policy, westernizing cultural influences, urbanization, sedentarization, economic relations, and consumer interest (75). In response, he identifies two possible solutions: the first lies in documentary preservation, the second in the publication of research materials. Hence, he sees hope in the programs of UNESCO to document and preserve Intangible Cultural Heritage.

On the other hand, yazguur is not only about natural origins, but also about sounding original. While the threat to natural origins lies in increasing urbanization, the threat to sounding original lies in professionalization. A number of xöömeich point to how younger xöömeich are primarily learning from a small number of teachers, especially Prof. Odsüren, who founded and taught the xöömei program at the Arts and Culture College. For contrast, they point to xöömeich who sound original by virtue of their direct relationships to pastoral places and the resulting innovative qualities of their practice. For example, Amartüvshin Baasandorj, the current xöömeich of Egschiglen, gives the renowned elder xöömeich Sengedorj Nanjid as an example of someone with original quality because he “has his own style” (ööriin shtiltei) (Interview, January 12, 2016). Most everyone, by contrast, sounds the same, he continued. Other exemplars are Sundui or Ganbold, innovators who sounded original precisely because of their origins as herders. Sengedorj himself is of the same opinion (Interview, October 26, 2013). One must sound like themselves, and, as a Mongol, one sounds natural via their direct experience with baigal’. Without this originality, as Amartüvshin lamented, Mongol

209 Mongolians often refer to “style” (obtil) with the English term.
xöömei is on its way to finishing (dausaj baina). For these reasons, Hosoo argues for more
critical (shüümjtei) approaches to the transmission and performance of xöömei to avert the loss
of original quality, although he did not elaborate more. In the final section of this chapter, I look
at how one group of younger professionals themselves engage originality, nomadism, and nature
in tandem with how Prof. Odsüren himself has addressed these critical issues of originality with
an innovative “nature study” trip that he organized for his aspiring professional students. Taken
together, they provide perspective onto contemporary perceptions and practices of yazguur in
times of globalization.

The futures of originality: Khusugtun and Prof. Odsüren’s "nature study" trips

On April 30th of 2015, many Mongolians were excited to learn that the band
Khusugtun, an “offshoot” of Khukh Mongol, had qualified for the final stage of Asia’s Got Talent.
Many supporters had been spreading the news and had concerted their efforts to get the vote
out in favor of Khusugtun. While the band’s first performance in episode two had been a success
for the judges, it was the fans alone who could vote them into the top nine. The feat worked and
was widely reported in Mongolian newspapers, television, and social media. As one commenter
stated days before the finale in the comments to one article, "You are almost a world band."210
As for the members, they seemed to be fulfilling their raison d’etre. As they describe themselves
on their website,

We are a group of Mongolian folk musicians with the objective of
bringing Traditional Mongolian music to the world. We are inspired by
our nomadic ancestry and by our historic civilization. In addition to
the traditional instruments of our group, we also incorporate the
breath taking throat singing of our forefathers. We hope you can feel
the passion and pride in our music as strongly as we do. We are

210 Дэлхийн хамтлаг болоход ойрхон байна. See:
KHUSUGTUN…conveyors of the Mongolian nomadic culture.\(^{211}\)

(sic)

The responses of the celebrity judges to the band’s first performance seemed to confirm its performative strategy. After hearing them perform "a traditional Mongolian musical piece, initially starting with bird chirps and a few instruments," as one Mongolian journalist wrote (B.Tungalag, May 3, 2015), the judges gave their reactions:

Arun: Your music made me travel and the way you sing with that dual-tone, that is only in Mongolia.

Melanie C: I feel very privileged [sic] to have experience that part of your musical culture. So, thank you.

Venice: I was mesmerized by it. It was very hypnotic. It really just takes you into a whole new story. I loved it. Good job.

David: I think this is unique and that you maybe are the best that Mongolia has to offer.\(^{212}\)

Although Khusugtun did not win first place, they did reach second, a mighty achievement for its members. Commenters to the video of the final performance reveled in Khusugtun’s finale, giving their praise or describing their own visions of being out on the steppe.

The thread of comments for the final performance reveals a diverse array of perspectives about the significance of the performance. The description for the video set the thread in motion\(^{213}\):

Khusugtun Band’s hypnotic throat singing takes listeners back thousands of years to the majestic mountains of Mongolia. David [the judge] loves it so much he declares Khusugtun the One Direction of Mongolia!

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\(^{213}\) The following comments and quotes are all taken from the video cited in the previous footnote.
The judge, of course, was being facetious by comparing the culture-bearers with the popular English-Irish boy band. Khusugtun had performed "Tes river praise-song" (Tes golyn magtaal) a cappella with xöömei, following a soundscape in which they imitated a range of natural sound sources, while wearing fur-lined robes (deel) that conjure ancient nomadic dress. The judge's comparison prompted a critique from one commenter, who felt it to be disrespectful to the aura of authenticity that the performers had invoked:

One Direction. What a dumbass. How dare he compares the authentic, traditional and musically diverse Khusugtun to those lame-ass, wannabes One Direction. (sic)

But most of the commenters were unfazed, especially the ones who now imagined themselves traveling (quite literally) to Mongolia, too:

Great job! I really check about Mongolia tour and flight ticket, I've taste about Mongolia food in Taiwan, it's really delicious, and I believe not just only food also great great culture as khusugtun show for us. (sic)

These comments then became the focus of the few Mongolian commenters keeping tabs on the thread. They appeared happy to hear the worldly attention their country was now receiving. As one stated in response the previous comment, “Welcome to My Country.” Another Mongolian elaborated more on their own sentiments of pride, echoing the rhetoric of Soviet internationalism discussed in Chapter Four:

Amazing, thank you for promoting our Motherland and going throughout the world introducing Mongolian culture. I believe everyone who sees our culture and then says they wish to come and see Mongolia. A thing of pride Real Motherland youth.\(^{214}\)

\(^{214}\) Гайхалтай, Эх Оронноо сурталчилж Монгол соёлд олдоо дахийн дахин таниулж явад баярладлаа. Өөгүйг ясах хүн бүрт Монгол улсад очиж ясах өөсөн хүсэл торж байгаа гэтэгт иртэлээ байна. Бахархалтай юмнаа жинхэнэ Эх Оронч залуус.
In addition to a platform for pride and sentimentality, the thread became a place for serious reflections about difference and continuity when one viewer lamented how she or he understood about the song, even as its beauty mesmerized them:

I did not understand a word, but this performance truly brought tears to my eyes. Their music is so pure and visceral. An absolutely amazing performance. Very well done.

This comment prompted a Mongolian to confirm how little people understood the general significance of the praise-song:

No offense, but Mongolian language is too beautiful for translate it into English. I want translate it into English. But even English adepts can't do properly. I'm afraid of I might break it, so I don't dare. I wish you could understand it. (sic)

Nevertheless, the Mongolian commenter did attempt to help the non-Mongolian understand some things about the terminology in the praise-song's lyrics, resulting in an impromptu lesson about Mongolian values of aesthetic propriety. Upon realizing that another non-Mongolian commenter had previously translated the lyrics already, the Mongolian felt compelled to elaborate:

...Enough accuracy, but bit less form of those respecting form beautiful words. Whole lyric contains 100% respecting words, I don't know how to describe it. For example word "head", when we normally talk we call it "tolgoi", when we use disrespect form we call it "bondgor", when use respecting form we call it "terguun" etc. So If lyric contains head, we just can translate it "head". But it using respecting form, so I don't know exact form in English. Mongolians worship mountains, rivers, so we don't talk normally (at this generation almost forgotten tho). It's like those "thee", "thy" forms in ancient bible. AFAIK Japanese, Korean have this form of talk too (maybe our language from same branch). (sic)

The Mongolian was attempting to convey how Xalxa Mongolian reserves different words for the same noun depending on the level of respect that the speaker wishes to convey. This kind of language, which is not "normal," the commenter then states, facilitates veneration of non-
human entities or authorities, such as mountains and rivers. I discuss practices of aesthetic propriety in depth in Chapter Seven. This discussion also addressed the topic of cultural loss in the form of forgotten words of respect for moral authorities amongst younger generations. It suggests a parallel concern to that of Khusugtun as self-described "conveyors of the Mongolian nomadic culture."

Figure 6.7. A still from a video of Khusugtun's finale performance at Asia's Got Talent.\(^{215}\)

Khusugtun's success is a well-respected achievement, overall a good thing for the promotion of Mongolian musical culture, in the eyes of many. But renowned elder xöömeich have a different view of the band. Several criticized Khusugtun for combining xöömei with musical genres that are not aesthetically appropriate to "original art" (yazguur urlag). One noted how the metrical timing and fast pace of the music contrasts greatly with fluid timing of long songs and the calmness of sounding saixan, or "beautiful," in ways akin to what Davaajav discussed in Chapter Five as a key sentiment of aesthetic propriety. The band's rapid, a cappella arrangements, which conjure “rock or hip-hop” to these elders more so than a Mongol sound or

\(^{215}\) See: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e7B6rNUc3u0. Last accessed:5/29/2017
sentiment, are “too fast, too hard,” despite their conspicuous nomadism. Nevertheless, the plethora of other bands in Ulaanbaatar, which arose after the successes of Egschiglen and their expatriate offshoots, follow the same aesthetic guidelines that Khusugtun does. These critiques make a significant point about time as critical aspect of jazguur performance: metrical and fast-paced timing suitable that is common in world music performances for seated audiences in a concert hall contrast both aesthetically and ethically from “calm” (taivan) or “wonderful” (saixan) timing in pastoral performance events, such as nair (lit., festival). This is a topic in need of further research, as I discuss in the conclusion to this dissertation.

*   *   *

In response to such widening aesthetic gaps between pastoral aesthetic propriety and professional cultural representation on the stage, Prof. Odsüren, now retired, organized a series of innovative field trip for his students during the final four years of his tenure at the Arts and College Culture, where he founded and headed the professional xöömei program. He is among the critics of bands like Khusugtun, yet his own students have gone off to found similar bands. In response to this issue, he took his last senior classes of xöömei students on "nature study" (baigalynx surgalt) trips to Zavxan province, western Mongolia, the professor's birth-place (nutag). The idea was to ameliorate the aesthetic and experiential limitations of classroom study (tanxim surgalt), where one is locked inside the buildings, soundscapes, and environments of sedentary life, far away from nature, pastoralism, Mongolness, and creative vocal development outdoors, a topic I further discuss in Chapter Seven. As one student participant noted, the majority of students during his year were from rural places, but they did not have backgrounds with xöömei. But the point for Prof. Odsüren was to emphasize the true sources of xöömei’s originality in baigal' (nature-existence) and pastoralism.
Unfortunately, I was not able to attend one of these trips. But Prof. Odsüren did share photo documentation and discussed them briefly with me. I also interviewed Basan Damdinsüren (September 27, 2014), one of the student participants, although he had already grown up as a herder and had a family genealogy of xöömeich. And on the 2013 field trip, D.Zolbayar, a film student from the Arts and Culture College, documented the excursion as a student project that resulted in a program that was aired on national television. In an interview scene from the documentary, Prof. Odsüren explains his rationale behind the trips:

My life has mostly passed along with xöömei. I think that xöömei is always a melody [ayalguu] that harmoniously connects the sky and earth. In the classroom, I say that xöömei is an art of the correlation between people, baigal’, and animals. But what exactly that means remains unclear [to students], so we go to unknown places, stop and do xöömei, breathing wonderfully before the wind, pleasing the world of nature [baigal’ delxii] and receiving the wind's call. Nature is as so, they see, along with yaks and goats. They stand before the animals and do xöömei to see if they can get loud enough to make them prick their ears. And they get to know clearly what the call of the wind means. In this way, they are guaranteed to understand and know what their teacher is talking about in class, whether it is true or a lie. It is one way to give them a true understanding.216

The film then unfolds with a series of vignettes of his students exercising their voices by rivers and on mountains in the broad daylight of Zavxan's summer. In other scenes, they sing to a herd of yaks, who watch them curiously while chewing their cuds.

216 Миний амьдралын ихэнхи хүүхдүүд хөөмийтэй хамт ойлгололоо. Хөөмийг тэнгэрийн газар хоёртыг холбосон аяллах ёөглөн юм гэж би боддог. Хөөмийг хүн, байгаль, амьтан гурван шүүгэцээт урдлаг гэж танхимд яриад байгаа юм. Яг бодит байдал дээр яах вэ гэвэл бүрэн дуу газар очиж зогсож байгаад хөөмийлөхөд салхи урдаас сайхан сөвлээлээ, тал газар хөөмийлөхөд байгаль далхий баясад урдаас салхиар урж байдаг. Байгаль ийм байдал бол амьтан дээр очоод узэхэд сарлаг ч бай, ямаа ч бай урд нь очоод хөөмийлөхөд явагдаад ч юм урдаас хараад, буур чагнаад, сортоогоод хардаг. Ингэээр амьтан чиглэгээр юм байна, хардаг юм байна. Харин байгаль салхиар урдлаг юм байна гэдгийг нь тодорхой мэдэгдэж байгаа. Ингэээр хууцдуд батаалахтай ойлгож, батаалахтай мэдэж авдаг. Энэ багш эр нь юу яриад явад байгаа юм бэ? Унэн юм uu худал юм uu гэдгийг бодит унэнээр нь ойлгололж юрж байгаа нэг жишээ нь энэ.
The final scene, however, takes place in winter in the woods of the Xangai Mountains, as one of the professor's remarks reveals. He sits with his graduating students around a fire. They are dressed in robes and furs just like Khusugtun did on the stage in Singapore. They are partly performing for the camera, but they are also in the midst of a lesson. They hold wooden cups to their mouths to reflect the sound of xöömei back on to their own ears, following the statements of elders that they would do the same when practicing in the far off past, when most could not afford silver cups. One student plays the tsuur, an end-blown flute, amidst the free droning of the other students. The fire crackles and gives off smoke and embers. They heat up a bowl of mutton and Prof. Odsüren begins speaking about their futures, how they are about to graduate and probably go off to learn from other teachers. But their "steppe practice" (xeriin davtalga) should remain with them. With their work over, he begins the motions for leaving the place respectfully and intones a benediction (yöroöl) to thank the world of the Xangai Mountains (Xangai delxii) by sounding a song. And so they break into a performance of "The Steppes at Four O’clock" (Dörvön tsagyn tal), the famous composed song that the socialist-era composer L. Mördöj wrote in the 1950s, as discussed in Chapter Six. Now retired, Prof. Odsüren has given the reigns of the xöömei program to one of his prized students.
The question of transmitting *yazguur* to future generations is a complicated one. The answers seem to lie in great part somewhere between innovative pedagogy and creative performance, pastoralism (the lifeway) and nomadism (the discourse), aesthetic propriety and cultured aesthetics. Both Khusugtun and Prof. Odsüren play into and with nomadism while also contributing to the promotion of cultural heritage. The latter has played a pivotal role in the creation of a professional class of xöömeich, helping ensure the practice’s continuity, yet many accuse his students of lacking originality. As for Khusugtun, the band’s goals are not simply commercial, but also national, in their concern for promoting attention to and respect for Indigenous expressivity in Mongolia on the “world stage” (*delxiin tavtsan*). Nevertheless, many in Mongolia now fret over the future of pastoralism and even *baigal’* (nature-existence), the sources of original art, and thus many fret over the future of Mongolness itself, too.

“Destruction” (*ustgal*) remains a specter in contemporary discussions of *yazguur*. "Steppe practice" is one way of addressing this concern for Prof. Odsüren, while Khusugtun focuses on being "conveyers" nomadic heritage.

The passing of remarkable elders, like Darjaa (see Chapters Three and Seven), and Prof. Odsüren’s retirement, only reinforces sentiments that the future of original arts (*yazguur urlag*), like xöömei, are at a critical juncture as their performance by younger musicians seems to revolve less and less around the surrounding world of *baigal’* and more around the international world. No one can sound like they did, most xöömeich say of past exemplars of *yazguur*, such as Chimeddorj, Sundui, and Ganbold. For elder pedagogues, this observation is both inspiring and worrisome. Yet these exemplars of original quality (*yazguur chanar*) were heavily invested in the aesthetics of stage performance and "foreign" genres like classical music,
too. They did not focus their efforts solely on “origins” by emphasizing the far off past, Mongolness, the natural world, and nomadism. In fact, they focused heavily on sounding “original” by studying the vocal apparatus in a professional setting and exploring novel genres. On the other hand, some xöömeich argue that pastoral experience and inheritance engendered the creative capacities of these yazguur exemplars, echoing the argument of Prof. Odsüren about the limitations of “classroom study.” Whatever one’s position may be, these arguments seem to share a view that yazguur does not only concern innovative pedagogy and creative performance, but also lived experience with baigel’ in pastoral places. I now turn towards these experiences and relations in the last chapter of this dissertation as a meditation on the future of the past as it plays out in a pastoral community.
Chapter VII
Living and Sounding with Baigal’ ~ Nature-existence

The international reception of xöömei during and after socialism has revolved in great part around the performance of nomadism (the discourse). But pastoralism (the lifeway) continues to inform practices of xöömei in rural places. Chapter Four detailed some of these practices in Uvs and Xövsgöl province. This chapter focuses on Chandman’ district, also discussed in Chapter Three, which many in Mongolia refer to as “the birth-place (nutag) of Mongol xöömei” because of the seminal role of its native-born xöömeich in “developing” the vocal practice. Chuluun, Tsedee, Sundui, Ganbold, Tserendavaa, Davaajav—all of these previously discussed xöömeich were born in the vicinity of the Jargalant-Altai Mountains in Xovd province. The last two still live there, making a living as herders with additional engagements with cultural tourism and concert touring. Besides them are many other less-renown residents—elders, janitors, herders, and officials, among others. Together, these community members have collaborated in a longstanding district effort to promote xöömei as a localized practice while negotiating (and sometimes challenging) discourses of xöömei as a pastoral tradition from the Altai-Sayan region. Whereas now many residents invoke xöömei as a “cultural heritage” (soyolyn öv), following the internationalized discourse of UNESCO’s Intangible Cultural Heritage program, they still employ socialistic discourse of cultural development (xögjil), too. These internationalized discourses then interact with Indigenous ones about baigal’ (nature-existence) as an intra-active moral authority. In short, residents in Chandman’ district live with a plural inheritance in which socialistic “culture” or UNESCO-informed notions of “heritage” are just as real and important as Indigenous values, local master-spirits, kinship networks, and birth-place (nutag) relationships. They draw upon this “dynamic
repertoire,” in the words of anthropologist Ines Stolpe (2006:24), depending on the performative, social, or political moment.

This chapter details the entanglement of these imported, imposed, and inherited discourses in Chandman’ district, but also in a few other rural places, as they center around the practice of Mongol xöömei. It then provides ethnographic insight into the relationship between natural “origins” and sounding “original”—the two conceptual elements of yazguur. As the prior chapter showed, many Mongol actors state how “real” (jinxene) or "original" (yazguur) xöömei, along with Mongolian music in general, lies primarily in the countryside, amidst the natural world of baigal’. But these narratives tend to ignore the evolving, direct, and pro-active relationship of rural agents to socialism, nationalism, internationalism, or tourism, among other non-pastoral or non-traditional formations. The following discussion highlights the rural complexity that unfolds in rural places like Chandman’, which national and international discourses tend to privilege as traditional, pastoral, and even “timeless” locus of indigeneity. Where some xöömeich, scholars, or intellectuals have struck hard oppositions between the rural and the urban, the local and the foreign, Chandman’ district demonstrates its own plural inheritance that is indebted to pastoralism as much as socialism and post-socialist heritage-making.

This plural inheritance unfolds in everyday situations or ceremonial occasions. Residents invoke forms of sound mimesis (Levin 2006), the timbral representation of sound sources via sonic or musical performance, to maintain ethical relationships to the surrounding world of baigal’. Sound mimesis is then a practice of aesthetic propriety (Empson 2011:95), the everyday imperative to speak, sound, and behave appropriately amongst the world’s spiritual forces. But socialistic songs about a romanticized nature, in which pitched melodies and national sentiments reign, also matter in this regard, as can any form of aesthetically appropriate
musical performance (per Plueckhahn 2013). Even post-Soviet structures of socialism (e.g., the local cultural center) cater to the surrounding world in significant ways, as portraits of medaled state-recognized artists super-imposed over images of their exact birth-places (nutag) demonstrate.

Conversely, residents suggest understandings of socialistic concepts like “culture” (soyol) that are directly informed by pastoral values of aesthetic propriety when invoking the natural origins of a cultural heritage like xöömei or the transmission of xöömei from natural sources to residents, both in the narrated or legendary (domog) far off past and in the present. This perspective contrasts greatly with official socialist concepts of "culture" as deriving fundamentally from the development of "the people" or "the nation," as discussed in Chapter Three. Indeed, baigal’ (nature-existence) permeates performance, discourse, and even musical subjectivity, whether in the form of receiving musical talent as a natural gift (baigal'ias aviastai) or perceiving the surrounding world as an aesthetic guide for crafting wonderful (saixan) melodies. In passing comments, uncanny anecdotes, extended interviews, and public performances, baigal’ is far more than “a landscape” or “natural environment”—it is a moral authority and musical agency that has co-engendered the creation of xöömei. These relations, perceptions, and practices continue to unfold in the midst of seemingly pervasive processes like globalization, providing an important point of focus for discussions regarding “the future of the past” (Levin 2016: ix) in Mongolia, which often separate “tradition” and “modernity,” despite their mutual entanglement. They also provide a counterpoint to the increasing globalism (the neoliberal discourse, detailed in Chapter One) in Mongolia that promotes globalization (the process), modernization, and resoursification as the only viable (and thus legitimate) futures for Mongolia.
Baigal', nature, and aesthetic propriety

The idea of “nature” figures prominently in this chapter, requiring some preliminary discussion. As theorist Raymond Williams notes, the Euro-American idea of "nature" refers to much more than the non-human world of animals and plants. It implies a Eurocentric political ordering of the world and foregrounds a particular sense of man. As he writes,

the idea of nature contains an extraordinary amount of human history. What is often being argued, it seems to me, in the idea of nature is the idea of man; and this is not only generally, or in ultimate ways, but the idea of man in society, indeed the ideas of kinds of societies. (1995: 286)

Hence, to think differently about nature is to think differently about being human and human relations with non-humans as well. In Euro-American places, “nature” has tended to imply a mute context upon which human society unfolds, employing the resources of the world for its own purposes as it chooses. But peoples elsewhere subscribe to very different senses of being human or non-human and being-in-the-world. Salient words that they use to reference this general sense of co-existing might only partially fit into the Euro-American sense of "nature."

As Humphrey and Sneath note of the Mongolian case,

The Mongolian term baigal, often translated as ‘nature’, is closely related to baidal (‘state of being’, ‘the way things are’)…Baigal includes animate beings as well as inanimate objects. Objects in nature are attributed with a notion akin to 'spirit', often personified in ritual contexts as ejin (‘master’). (1999:3)

This “nature” is an amalgamate of human and non-human entities living together as a greater community, even as the term functions in a sense akin to “the environment” in scientific and public discourses in Mongolia. As Laurent Legrain writes, “[n]ature (baigal), which includes several different and legitimate ways of being (human beings, animals, stones, rivers and so on), is conceived as a collection of energies which influence each other mutually” (2009:337). In contrast to the mute, romantic “nature” of many Euro-American peoples, over which humanity
"presides," this nature speaks, sounds, and listens through its various land deities (gazryn ezen) and mountain or river spirits (lus savdag). Humans may refer to themselves as ezen, or "owners" of a place when law is concerned, but their "ownership" of a land really implies a "custodial" relationship while local spirits are also referred to as “lords” or “owners” using the very same Mongolian term (Sneath 2002:197). In any case, temporary human residents, who come and go with each generation, are obligated to appeal to these master-spirits who are the permanent owners of the things they preside over.

As anthropologist Rebecca Empson notes, this understanding of belonging and place requires a sense of aesthetic propriety in all domains of life, “a wider sensibility about the right way to conduct one’s social relations (with various people, objects, and the invisible land masters)” (2011:95). Even holding a bucket of milk (or setting up one’s recording equipment) requires a proper way of being done in order to maintain greater community with the surrounding world. Pastoralists throughout Inner Asia practice forms of aesthetic propriety. Humphrey, et al., elaborate through the words of a Tuvan research associate called Mongush:

all natural objects have their owners. If the natural things are badly treated, or even if you just have a bad attitude to them, the owners will cause trouble to the people. Humans can influence the "owners" by means of rituals, but generally the actions of nature are mysterious and beyond human control. (1993:53)

For these reasons, many pastoralists demonstrate a great caution when engaging baigal’ in everyday or musical circumstances. Ethnomusicologist Theodore Levin, for example, relates the words of the Tuvan xöömeizhi Tolya Kuular,

If you are calm inside, your singing will calm the spirit. If you’re angry or plotting against someone, it will arouse the spirit. A bad person shouldn’t sing (2006:28).

In other words, music requires caution due to its potential effects upon the temperaments of master-spirits. As anthropologist Rebekah Plueckhahn writes, following Empson, “[s]inging is
an action that has multifaceted and esoteric ramifications. The sound of musical sociality is 'beautiful' and thus, synonymously, 'morally correct' and 'viewed as generating particular outcomes'" (Plueckhahn, 2014:130; quoting Empson, 2011:97). And as a form of communal behavior, it "is often seen to have potential efficacious properties that can be extended into esoteric realms" (48).

On the other hand, master-spirits and baigal' itself reciprocate with humans, in turn, by gifting musical talent itself. Levin notes one of many statements demonstrating a conception of musical talent as a form of gift exchange with baigal'. As he quotes the renowned xöömeich Sengedorj, born in Chandman' district, "[l]istening to the mountain sing is how humans first got the idea to sing höömii" (2006:39). By extension, xöömei becomes "a gift." As Pegg writes, "[r]eciprocity is necessary, for, whether it is vocal reproduction of sounds heard in nature or using materials from nature in order to produce those sounds, something has been given that must be returned" (Pegg 2001:97). And so, baigal' is not only an aural model in practices of sound mimesis (Levin 2006:62). It is directly involved in engendering (via "giving") the vocal practice to a xöömeich. As Levin also writes,

To coexist peacefully with…spirit-masters and gain access to the natural resources under their protection, humans have to make offerings, offer praise, and show respect. Sound and song provide a means of doing all three, albeit in different ways. (2006:23)

Music is then a particularly communicative medium for engaging baigal' as anthropologist Carole Pegg discusses in her survey of Mongolian music (2001: 235-248). She mentions the work of Mongolian music researcher Dulam Sendenjav, who describes how ikel, the name of a two-string fiddle, derives from the phrase ix xel, meaning "great language" (1987:41). It is used "to communicate with animals, natural phenomena, and the gods [in order to] influence them"
But baigal’ is also an everyday musical interrelationship. The Mongolian music scholar Enebish Jambal writes eloquently on the topic:

The Mongolian people have many chances to be close to nature and to know its rules, cycles, and beauty. Herders spend most of their days looking after their herds in the open natural environment. When they get up in the morning, they look near and far and then organize their days’ work according to their sense about the weather and direction of the winds. In the evening, when they go to sleep, they can determine not only the month’s work, but even the year’s work, by the movements and locations of the stars and planets. There is a Mongolian proverb that say, ‘if you sleep late, you will hear something; if you get up early you will see something.’ (2004:18)

As Enebish implies, this sustained exposure to baigal’, translated here by Marsh as “nature,” is the primary aesthetic source and creative condition of musical performance amongst pastoralists and, by extension, “the Mongolian people.” I return to the politics of nature below.

This understanding of nature and aesthetic propriety has several implications. Firstly, it blurs the boundaries between self and existence, individual and birth-place, human society and nature or even cosmos. In a resonant discussion, anthropologists Caroline Humphrey and Hürelbaatar refer an “impersonal subjectivity,” “a suffusion of the self with the most external, the boundless” (Humphrey & Hürelbaatar, 2012:153). One is not only indebted to, but also ontologically bounded to the cosmos through audible acts of aesthetic supplication that "should" arise in everyday life as much as in ritual spaces, regardless of the music’s genre or provenance. Musical talent is not simply a human capacity, but an infusion from baigal’.

Secondly, there is an epistemological implication: baigal’ does not act like a “context.” Rather, baigal’ it acts as a greater “text” that exists by virtue of its co-constitution in action and embodiment. As Dillon, et al., write about Indigenous conceptualizations of the surrounding world in Mongolia, this kind of space is not empty, but “defined by its potentiality” (2009:23). “[M]eaning and context emerge from people’s interactions with their environment” (italics in
original), not from the calculative juxtaposition of variable texts to an invariable (and universalized) context. The surrounding world evolves as one moves, does, or knows in it. To speak of traveling to so and so a place at such a time will depend on unknowable future circumstances of one's human and non-human social relations. Perhaps the river will be there—or not. Perhaps the weather will allow for it—or not. Instead, one must ask the way while traveling, and cannot depend on a line drawn from point A to B across an imagined geography. In contrast, maps promote a false perception of a static and mute terrain "upon" which humans act "freely." "Super interrelation," for Dillon, et al., is one concise and compelling way of referring to this sense of the world.

*Baigal’*, however, also has a significant political life in Mongolia in light of its importance to pastoralism. As Caroline Upton writes, pastoralism and “its implications for relations to the natural world remain important discursive and material elements of contemporary Mongolian identities and livelihoods, and ones which merit greater critical attention” (2011:305). Practically all of my research associates have referred to the importance of *baigal’* for Mongol xöömei. But how they understand or realize this significance ranges with their urban or rural livelihoods and upbringings. While some xöömei performers grew up as pastoralists, others would stay with pastoral family members only during the summer as otherwise urban youth. Still others had no such experiences, primarily residing in the city with little or no familiarity with rural lifeways. Rather, as professionals they learned in school of the importance of pastoralism and *baigal’* for Mongol xöömei’s origins and aesthetic. For example, *baigal’* appears in the background imagery of posters for concert events or as a static backdrop on concert stages against which cultural actions unfold. On Facebook posts it is an idealized image that performers circulate amongst each other to remind themselves of valued principles, customs, and beliefs of “being Mongol” (Bulag 1998). And in public statements, published
interviews, or online articles, baigal’ often becomes an idealized rural, past-tense elsewhere that discursively exists as another (non-modern) world or “foreign country” (per Lowenthal 1985).

**Sound mimesis, timbre, and the drone-overtone form**

All of these senses of baigal’ variously animate discourses and practices of Mongol xöömei while Euro-American scholars, in turn, have sought to theorize a pastoral conception of sound, music, and nature. I now survey these theories in order to contrast them eventually with the conceptions and practices of my research associates in Chandman’ district, discussed in later sections. Throughout this short survey I emphasize how even these theories are entangled with the politics of representation or nationalism in Mongolia or Inner Asia, as are my research associates in Chandman’ district.

Among the more compelling theories is what Theodore Levin calls "sound mimesis" (2006:73-78), the representational imitation of (implicitly natural) sound sources. Building off the work of evolutionary psychologist Merlin Donald (1991), he distinguishes mimesis from literal mimicry (e.g., exactly copying an original) or loosely accomplished imitation (e.g., a child emulating its mother), meaning "the invention of intentional representations" (169; quoted in Levin 2006:75) through aural analogy, symbolism, and metaphor. A musical performance is mimetic to the degree that it is meant to represent a source, a feat that is only possible when the listener, accordingly, understands the sound to be a trope for the source. Whether hunter or musician, sound mimesis figures prominently among many pastoralists in Inner Asia. It is also important to note that Levin, working off of Donald, locates the origins of sound mimesis in human evolution itself and among the attempts of early hominids to strategically represent their environments. Accordingly, he frames his monograph partly as a "musical archeology" of sorts that aspires to explore "remnants of what had existed before the Soviets—an understanding of
music, and of sound itself, that was rooted not in...staged performances [by Soviet "amateur" groups], but rather in the natural environment of grasslands, mountains, and taiga” (2006:19).

Notably, socialist-era Mongolian scholars like Badraa also located the origins of “national art” in a far off past that is ancient in an evolutionary sense, directly drawing upon comparative musicology, evolutionism, and Soviet ethnography. Their views, in turn, have influenced practitioners they have collaborated with, resulting in popularized perceptions of the same.

Below, I discuss a conversation with the xoömeich Tserendavaa, a close collaborator of Badraa’s, who conjures evolutionism when discussing herding calls and xoömei, among other practices, as the ancient foundations of national art.

Many Mongolian xoömeich do speak of learning from baikal through a mimetic engagement with the surrounding world, whether they practice sound mimesis or not in public performance. But nationalistic narratives of "being Mongol" (Bulag 1998) readily latch onto these mimetic engagements with the sounds of baikal’. Two examples are illustrative. Firstly, there is Bilgüün, a xoömei prodigy who has recently been recognized for his talents in a variety of music videos, television appearances, and online interviews. His recordings are almost exclusively of folk or short songs, never of sound mimesis akin to those that Levin describes amongst certain Tuvan khoömeizhi (xoömeich). Yet when discussing how he learned xoömei, Bilgüün still refers to a kind of sound mimesis:

Interviewer: Why did you become interested in xoömei?

Bilgüün: It just seemed great to me. I never really saw anyone do xoömei before. But in the countryside at my grandfather’s the wind and grass sounded [duu gargax]. Interested in the sound [chimee], I would try to follow it when sounding [dagaj duugarax]. My grandfather only taught teach me once I pleaded and pleaded.218

217 See Chapter Four for more on Badraa’s theories and political work.
218 Зүгээр гоё санаагдаа ө. Би омнон хөөмийлж байгаа хүнийг нэг их харж байгаагүй л дээ. Харин хөөмөө овоогийндоо очоод байдал салхинд өвс дуу гаргаад байсан. Төр
Bilgüün uses the phrase *dagaj duugarax* to refer to how he "followed" the sound of the grass when "sounding." The reluctance of his grandfather to teach Bilgüün suggests that he spent a time “following” the sound of the grass before receiving any formal training. This form of transmission or “auto-pedagogy” (Beahrs 2014:132) is a common practice in pastoral Tuvan and Mongolian places. Other actors who I describe below, furthermore, use the Mongolian word *duuraix*, or "to imitate," when discussing how herders or themselves learned in mimetic ways from *baigal*.

The second example is from Sandagjav, an established xöömeich, horse fiddler, and author (2010) from Zavxan province. Like Bilgüün he implies a form of sound mimesis, but he immediately links birth-place (*nutag*) and Mongolness together via this sound mimesis in an online interview:

Interviewer: When did you become familiar with the art of xöömei?

Sandagjav: My grandfather on my mother’s side was a person who did xöömei. When he crossed the mountains, one would hear xöömei. By hearing the sound of his xöömei, his mother would understand that it is time to put the tea kettle on the fire. [...] Xöömei is also greatly connected to the waters of one’s birth-place [*nutag*] … Xöömei is tied to the sound of water, the echo of rocks, the whistling of the wind, herding, the earth’s water, and the Mongol person [*Mongol xün*]. When I was sixteen and my father had reached eighty-one, he showed me xöömei. He taught me xöömei’s positioning [*tavilt*; i.e., technique] and way of sounding [*duugaralt*]. From this time on I came to like and love the art of xöömei.219

219 "Манай овог эдгээр хөөмийлдөг хүн байсан юм. Хадэн уул давж хөөмийлөх нь ардагдлын хүйдээ байсан гэдгээ. Обог энэтэй хөөмийлөх дуунаар ээж нь шийгээ гал дээр тавих цаг болжээ гэж ойлогног байсан гэдэг. Цай булахахад гэртээ орж ирдаг байсан гэж ырдаг юм. Хөөмий нь нутаг угтагдаа ихээ ээн холбоотой. Уусны дуу, хадны цуурхай, салхины иргэрээ, мал аж ахуй, газар ус, монгол хүн төгөөгээ хүртээ хөөмий уялдааны. Обог энэтэй хөөмийд олоо домог, түүхийг аялгын сонсоод би хөөмийлж огоч гэж гуйдаг болсон. Намайг 16 настай байхдад онов мянг 81 хүрээд хөөмийлж уялдсан. Хөөмийн тавилт, дуугаралтыг зааж огосон. Энэ үеэ с хөөмийн урлагт
For Sandagjav, sound sources akin to "aural models" (Levin 2006:62) are directly associated with the originality of "the Mongol person," echoing the view of many other Mongolian xöömeich and Mongolians in general. Pastoralism becomes a lifeway that is inseparable from Mongolness and nationalism. This ethno-national association, in turn, produces a tension with theories of pastoral music as an Inner Asian phenomenon that is firstly and foremost informed by the natural environment.

Another salient theory of the relationship between nature and music in Mongol xöömei is illustrative. Tuvan ethnomusicologist Valentina Süzükei proposes that Tuvan xöömei is "timbre-centered" in the sense that "discrimination of pitch height, the fundamental building block of melody and of melodic perception, [does not] play a role in the [perception of musical] sound" (quoted in Levin 2006:47). By implication European (especially classical) music becomes "pitch-centered." Many scholars subscribe to her theory. For example, ethnomusicologist Johanni Curtet follows Levin and Süzükei when describing Mongol xöömei as "a vocal art of timbre" (2013) and ethnomusicologist Robbie Beahrs proposes “timbral singing” as a more accurate term than “throat-singing” (2014:5). Süzükei’s point is that timbre, more so than pitch, provides Inner Asian pastoralists with a sonic palette for depicting the natural world towards ludic, aesthetic, and spiritual ends. It thereby epitomizes an ancient Inner Asian, nomadic and pan-Turkic aesthetic or "musical system," more so than “pitch-centered” music. However, there is also a pitch-centered musical system in Tuva of more "recent" vintage, about a thousand years ago during the Turkic Khaganate (50). Because the timbre-centered system is older, by

дүрлаж, хайрлах болсон. See: polit.mn/Show.aspx?category=1710&code=1582. This URL is no longer accessible online.
implication, it is then more Indigenous to Tuva. Again, a significant degree of ethno-nationalism informs her theory, raising political questions. As ethnomusicologist Robbie Beahrs points out,

Süzükei’s goal might be best described as constructing and popularizing an indigenous epistemology to confront the aesthetics that have emerged in Tuvan music over time (which she found useful in studying her own music). Some might critique this effort as essentializing Tuvans and their music, akin to the Soviet folkloric model. Others might complain that Süzükei is essentializing Eurocentric models of music-making. (2014:114)

On the other hand, many of my Mongolian research associates employ essentialism themselves when discussing the origins and originality of Mongol xöömei, as the example of Sandagjav also illustrates. I discuss other examples in following sections. It would also be interesting to consider how acoustic studies of “timbre” and “pitch” might situate Süzükei’s theories. For example, timbre is a basic aspect of acoustic perception in general (Fales 2002), raising the question of what specific criterion is necessary for a music to become “timbre-centered” in Süzükei’s sense.

A final salient theory also comes from Süzükei. A critical aspect of her timbre-centered theory is the reliance of Inner Asian pastoralists upon “a drone-overtone form” as a versatile way to enrich timbre (quoted in Levin 2006:50; Süzükei 2010). For example, Inner Asian fiddles mostly consist of two-strings, one of which is primarily used to produce a drone, the other for melodic upper lines that constitute “the overtone.” In jaw harp performance, the sound itself consists of a drone (the fundamental) and the acoustic overtones that are emphasized by modulating the oral cavity, while in xöömei the pressed voice produces the drone and the oral cavity is similarly modulated to emphasize overtones. And among tsuur flute players, a vocal drone is typically added to "enrich" the sound. Süzükei argues that these cases imply that the drone-overtone form is not simply a facet of periodic sound itself (e.g., in the case of the jaw
harp and xöömei), but rather a desired and consciously produced aesthetic for Inner Asian pastoralists.

Curtet builds upon this same timbre-centered, drone-overtone theory to argue for a "Mongolian cultural conception of the world that is centered around the notion of verticality" (2013:51). Relating the work of Dulam (2001) and Hamayon (1990:79-80) and Magail (2004), among others, Curtet (2013:67-70) discusses how the world itself, for many Mongolians, is vertically segmented: the sky (Tenger), a supreme deity, constitutes the uppermost register; the earth is the middle register; and the water is the lowermost register. Verticality seems to register in everyday life in a variety of senses: sacred rock cairns (ovoo), as I discuss below, dot the tops of most hilltops and mountains because of their proximity to the sky and when hosts request an elder to sit at the northerly side of the yurt (ger) just next to the family alter, they say "deeshee suux," literally "sit up there" (see Amarsanaa 2013:3; quoted in Curtet 2013:70).

Indeed, the notion of the far off past, a source of moral authority in post-socialist Mongolia, is not a "deep" past, as Humphrey translates the Mongolian term deer üye in her famous article (1992), but rather a "high" past. The preposition deer can mean "at," "on top of," "towards," or "above," but also "better, best" (Bawden 1997), hence my translation as "far off" past throughout this dissertation. Nevertheless, Humphrey, with Hürelbaatar, acknowledges this "sacred verticality" in places such as sacred rock cairns (ovoo), whose orientation towards the sky "offers not so much a viewing point on the everyday world as an opportunity for the visionary to glimpse the void" (2011:164).

Curtet focuses upon a particular Mongolian term in order to associate xöömei with verticality. Although he notes how öngö is used to describe "high" or "low" pitched qualities, Curtet translates it as "timbre" (2013:72-78). The link lies in the association of timbre with the drone-overtone form: "The suur öngö, the drone, is the base and represents the earth and
isgeree, the whistle or the harmonic melody, [represents] the aerial world, that of the spirits” (2013:78). And to the degree that xōōmeich are concerned with timbre and the use of the drone-overtone form to enrich it, as Curtet’s logic continues, they imply a concern with verticality as an Indigenous cosmology. However, he does remind the reader that this is not a concept that xōōmeich themselves speak of, especially to the degree that it hinges upon the notions of drones and overtones, terms that derive from Euro-American acoustics. Rather, he explores the poetic affinities of Süzükei’s theory with anthropological descriptions of a Mongolian cosmology, a range of everyday references to öngö, and pastoral customs associated with "highness" (deer).

It is compelling to explore pastoral musical aesthetics in relation to timbre, but the notion of öngö in Mongolian also has a compelling semantics of its own. Firstly, conservatory students and musical professionals use the term öngö in ways equally suggestive of "tone" when speaking of "high" (deer) and "low" (door) qualities of musical sound alongside "thin" (nariin) and "thick" (büdüün) ones, as Curtet himself notes. For these reasons, Bawden translates the term as “tone” (1997) instead of “timbre.” Secondly, öngö has a significant transnational conceptual history with roots in socialist musical pedagogy. In fact, öngö as a musical term is in all likelihood a socialist translation for tembr, Russian for "timbre." As Marsh writes,

Mongolian music schools adopted Soviet educational curriculum, methodologies, and organizational structures. While courses and lessons were taught in the Mongolian language for all students, Russian became a necessary language for all faculty and scholars, as this was the lingua franca of the Soviet world. Russian musical terminology even formed the basis of the musical language in Mongolia until Mongolian musical dictionaries were developed. (Marsh 2009:54)

Among those charged with translating Russian musical terminology into Xalxa Mongolian was the influential music researcher Badraa, discussed in Chapter Five, who published an official
dictionary of his own translations in 1956. Depending on the conceptual resonances between the Russian and Xalxa Mongolian terminology, he either imported the Russian word directly into Mongolian or attached its meanings to extant Mongolian words. For example, the Russian term гама (scale) remained гама. But музыка (music) became хөгжим, although the latter refers specifically to instrumental music or musical instruments to the exclusion of vocal genres, unlike the more general Russian term. As for тембр (timbre), Бадраа gave ᠠᠥᠩᠭᠥ. While this Mongolian term was conceptually suitable in its novel musical domain, in pre-socialist dictionaries it only referred to visual, not sonic, color (Ковалевский 1844–1849; Шаги 1994 [1937]). These dictionaries do not give a sense of how хөөмейих themselves may have used the word ᠠᠥᠩᠭᠥ at the time of their publication in prior centuries. But the above observations suggest that the Mongolian musical term, and perhaps any such term that directly reflects Euro-American musicological concepts, does so because of its conceptual dialogues and histories beyond Mongolia with internationalized or colonial discourses of music.

Indeed, in many ways there is a dramatic rift between Indigenous discourses of sound or music and musicological ones germane to socialism and ethnomusicology. Here, I am reminded of Süzükei's discussion of how she arrived at one of her timbre-centered theories:

The way I learned about timbral listening was indirect. The musicians I spent time with didn’t use any special musical terms. Everything was explained through analogy and metaphor using examples drawn from nature and from other sounds, rather than from music itself. (quoted in Levin 2006:47)

In other words, she identified a number of significant metaphoric statements by these practitioners. She then associated them with key musicological terms (e.g., timbral listening or timbre-centeredness) that seem to parallel the musicians' intentions with the metaphoric statements. But still, the metaphoric statements take the surrounding world itself as a semantic pretext while that musicological terms take up a formal analytical discourse of “the music itself”
with roots lie in Euro-American classical music scholarship as their pretext. Of course, this is standard theoretical practice in ethnomusicology. I am not suggesting that her theoretical move, or that of Levin or Curtet, is simply problematic. To the contrary, they are compelling ways of thinking anew about pastoralism, music, and nature. Instead, I am interested in these frictions, dialogues, and gulfs as further examples of entanglement rather than solely as pure markers of indigeneity. Mongol actors, whether pastoralists in Chandman’ district or professionals in Ulaanbaatar, navigate similar frictions, dialogues, and gulfs when pursuing their agendas of audibility or when living and sounding with baigal’ as the rest of this chapter shows in ethnographic detail.

**Getting to Chandman’ district**

In order to get to Chandman’ district, you must drive west out of Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia’s sole metropolis, until you eventually meet the Altai Mountains two days later. You must keep going when the asphalt ends after six hours and then crisscross a complex of dirt roads etched into the steppes by Land Rovers, Russian jeeps, and now Korean buses, too. International maps depict this loose braid of pathways as a single, curving line between point A and point B. But few traverse it without multiple flat tires and many encounter bigger problems, like sleepy, worn-down drivers. Passengers are usually transporting foreign goods to sell at their stores back home, visiting family in the countryside during vacations from school in the city, or on their way back to the countryside after visiting relatives in the city. In much rarer cases, they are xöömeich who are traveling to participate in a cultural event.

Arrivals in Chandman’ district usually take place in early morning. Out of the black night, a wall suddenly appears in the headlights. The road transforms into a destination. The driver turns left or right, drops passengers off at their homes, and the next morning one awakens, walks outside, and sees the district to be a small collection of buildings, fenced-in
households, and stores set against one of the Altai Mountains’ easternmost ranges: the Jargalant. Many pastoral households maintain an encampment near the center for convenience, while maintaining other encampments in the distances of the arid landscape.

Figure 7.1. Chandman’ district, Xovd province. The Jargalant-Altai Mountains stand in the background.

As anthropologist Morten Pedersen writes, it is these places, not the spaces between them, that matter more to pastoralists. In Chandman’, one is not exactly in "a space" or "a landscape," but amongst a network of "places." While spaces are abstract expanses, places are concrete centers. As Caroline Humphrey and Hürelbaatar write, "Nomads set up places—camps and ritual sites—that are imbued with spirit powers, but the spaces in between these places are 'empty'" (2012:164; cf. Pedersen 2003:246). While roads, the steppe, and other expanses are devoid of significance, encampments, sacred rock cairns, and geological formations are "full" of esoteric and social potentials. One only passes through spaces, like
when traveling on a road, in order to arrive at places, where life and community unfold through ceremony, social relations, and musical or sonic performance. As a district, Chandman’ may be an administrative unit originally set up during socialism in order centralize and settle pastoralists. But as a community of herders, who have long lived interdependently with the surrounding world, Chandman' is a network of significant places.

![Figure 7.2. Chandman’ as an administrative unit in Xovd province, western Mongolia.](https://mn.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%A4%D0%B0%D0%BB:Khovd_Chandman_i_sum_map.PNG. Last accessed: 03/13/17.)

While residents of Chandman’ regularly discuss the local origins of xöömei, they discuss less the origins of the district itself. Before socialism, there was no such district. Rather, the Manchu colonial government had placed the majority of western Mongolia into an

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220 Image taken from: https://mn.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%A4%D0%B0%D0%BB:Khovd_Chandman_i_sum_map.PNG. Last accessed: 05/15/17.
administrative unit called a “banner.” Only after the socialist revolution in 1921 did Mongolia’s Soviet-proxy government re-arrange these “banners” into “provinces” (aimag) and sub-units called "districts" (sum). As Orhon writes, “Mongolian space became organized, structured to yield an orderly society where population is subordinated to a clearly defined space” (2007:133). The new administrative system unfolded in the countryside during the 1930s and 40s to become a centralized hierarchy that minimized mobility, encouraged sedentarization, and facilitated state management of all social, cultural, or political matters in daily life. Before this time, as some residents noted, Mongolians would travel across much farther distances on a regular basis. Some Chandman’ residents even recalled ancestors who had originated in central or eastern Mongolia, or further away.

Figure 7.3. Tserendavaa and Tsagaantsooj prepare an offering to the family guardian spirit (saxiul).
Alongside this administrative history, residents articulate their communal belonging in terms of long-standing relationships to local sacred places, such as familial guardian spirits (saxiul), which have been in the family for generations or seasonal encampments that family members have returned to year in and year out. Accordingly, one must respect and interact with these lived places regularly to maintain proper relations with them by giving offerings in the form of libations, incense, candy, sound or music. Notably, it is not necessary that the music be mimetic although the music must certainly be saixan (wonderful, good, beautiful). For example, when conducting research with Tserendavaa, we visited the family guardian spirit on several occasions, each of which entailed a range of sonic, musical, or material offerings. In some cases, a silent prayer was given, at others a musical performance, one of which also incorporated various musical genres playing from a portable stereo. Even when one lives far away in another province it behooves them to pay a visit to the exact site of their birth when visiting.
Figure 7.4. Enxjargal and Tserendavaa give an offering to the former’s birthplace (*nutag*), the very site at which he was born.

This community of places, peoples, and spirits is what forms a *nutag*. Anthropologist David Sneath translates this term as “local homeland” (2010: 256). Sneath further writes how an emphasis on *nutag* arose in post-socialist Mongolian public life primarily as a permutation of the socialist emphasis on “the motherland.” While certainly germane, this characterization does not acknowledge how Indigenous attachments to place also inform the term’s social and political meanings. As anthropologist Ines Stolpe notes,

> This key term of Mongolian culture can refer to the territory of pastures used in a seasonal cycle, to the natural habitat, the cultural-historical, spiritual and/or administrative affiliation to an area or generally to the home (land). Attached to the Mongolian concept of nutag is the notion of belonging to an area with its natural and social characteristics. (2010:13)

Accordingly, in cultural events, such as sports competitions or musical festivals, this greater communal belonging subsumes the individuality of competitors or performers, as she
continues. Because these ties revolve around one’s place of birth, regardless of the term’s connotations of “homeland,” I have translated *nutag* as “birth-place” throughout this dissertation, noting whenever the term implies "homeland" in a nationalistic sense. But both Sneath and Stolpe’s discussions reveal how this term is as much a pastoral value as it is infused with of socialistic or nationalistic connotations.

![Figure 7.5. The Cultural Center and Xöömei Palace.](image-url)
These nationalistic and Indigenous meanings of nutag are evident in a variety of instances in the district. As but one explicit example, there are the portraits of state-recognized native sons and daughters at the newly built Xöömei Palace, a local cultural center that, in particular, celebrates xöömei as a local cultural heritage. Using photo-editing software, each consists of a formal portrait super-imposed across the specific place in which the performer was born. Three of them depict the state-recognized xöömeich Sundui, Sengedorj, and Tserendavaa. On one hand, these portraits laud the cultural achievements of medaled individual residents. On the other, they imply the grounding of these individuals in their birth-place. I suggest that these portraits act as visualizations of Chandman’ district’s plural inheritance as well as of the entanglement of Indigenous, socialist, and other discourses about music, nature, and belonging. The rest of this chapter describes various other such instantiations in various conversations, performances, and events.
A conversation with Tserendavaa

Tserendavaa (b. 1955) is a well-traveled xöömeich, state-recognized artist, and pastoralist who resides in Chandman’ district. He also figures deeply into histories, publications, and narratives of Mongol xöömei as perhaps the only professional xöömeich who also herds. Although not a music researcher, he has played a pivotal role in shaping the work of numerous scholars as a collaborator, research associate, or pedagogue as representative of rural xöömei performance. In my own case, I spent weeks living with him as we set off together to interview various residents, be they practiced or rusty "students" (shav’) of his, elders (ax nar) who could recall the far off past, or administrative officials invested in developing (xögjix) the district’s cultural heritage (soyolyn öv). But otherwise, we spent the days living and sounding with baigal’ as one day spent together demonstrates, in particular. While Tserendavaa is indeed a herder based in rural Chandman’ district, he has long maintained national and international relations with scholarly, governmental, or foreign actors. These relations, in turn, have informed his perceptions and practices of xöömei alongside how he promotes the vocal practice in Chandman’ district as director of the Xöömei Palace or throughout Mongolia as a renowned and influential xöömeich. The following conversation becomes an illustration of how Tserendavaa lives and sounds with baigal’ alongside his national or international engagements.

We were searching in the vicinity for Tserendavaa’s flock of sheep and goat by motorcycle, me sitting behind holding onto the rack. He seemed concerned, but was taiwan, or “calm,” as usual. We rode away from his son Gana’s summer encampment (zusland) towards the nearby hills, whose heights would give his binoculars a vantage point onto the surrounding steppes. I got off at the base of the hill, because the motorcycle could not take both of us, and then walked up. At the stop, a rock cairn (ovoo) for sacred offerings held up a massive and weathered wooden appendage into the air. Most of the other prominent hilltops in the area had
similar rock cairns. Tserendavaa got on his knees and took out his binoculars, surveying the steppes for any signs of his flock.

Figure 7.7. Tserendavaa searches for his flock, Chandman’ district.

There was a slight breeze, the sky was hazy, and it was cool. There had not been rain in a while and the winter had been dry. The steppes were not lush green, but rust brown. The hills were rocky with desiccated, leafless plants branching out between cracks. And it was remarkably quiet, despite being in the wide open. Sound could travel long distances here, unobstructed by flora, forest, or buildings. But little sounded at all, except for the occasional beating of a crow’s wings a hundred feet in the air above, clear and sharp as if nested in the ear. After no results, Tserendavaa decided to leave the hill and drive onto the steppes below. I got back on the motorcycle and held on. He put the bike into neutral to coast down the hill and save gas, turning on the motor only when we plateaued and began to lose speed.
Before us were the Jargalant-Altai Mountains, rising above everything else, cutting into the sky. As many locals had said, they emitted a drone (düngnex) whenever a storm was building up on the opposite side. But according to Davaajav, another established xöömeich and herder, only one outsider, a Japanese researcher, had been lucky enough to hear it. I came close one night when a storm’s winds picked up and Tserendavaa drove me close to the mountains to hear if it was sounding. But the drone didn’t come. The steppes rose and fell in waves in the distance as we continued the search. Tserendavaa’s flock might have been just beyond that nearby horizon, or another. Luckily, it was not long before he spotted them in the distance. I had only seen specks, probably bushes. We went to them and then entered into a whole spectrum of sounds: stomping hooves, clashing horns of rival males, human-like yelps, puttering farts, and a general cacophony to my lay ears. They all looked up and around with anticipation at their ezén, or “master’s,” arrival and the presence of another, unfamiliar human who did not herd well at all. Tserendavaa told me to get off and help send them along in the direction of his son’s summer
encampment. As he zig-zagged on the far edges of the herd on motorcycle, I walked behind, waving my hands, like how I had seen Tserendavaa’s family members doing before, screaming “haaa! haaa!” or throwing stones in the path of any animal that attempted to dart in a different direction. Once the herd seemed to be on its way home, Tserendavaa came back to pick me up and we drove to a nearby outcrop.

“This is a good time to talk,” he said, and we sat down on the hard, rocky earth for an interview (May 9, 2014) I had requested earlier.

It was astonishingly quiet again, as if in a music studio, with the herd bleating far away. I wanted to talk about herders’ usages of sound to call or communicate with their herds, Tserendavaa was more than obliging and seemed to have a lecture on sound, pastoralism, and xöömei already prepared. (He was quite used to being interviewed and having foreign researchers stay with him.) The TASCAM DR-40 stood on the earth, focused up at us, and recorded the gentle breezes, my stuttering questions, and our loose conversation in plein air. Certain points stood out over others, though he did not seem to make them in any particular order. Sometimes my impetuous thoughts and questions seemed to interrupt his train of thought. But he nevertheless outlined a range of issues and tensions that inform his life, thinking, and practice as a xöömeich.

"So," he began, “herd animals have their own sounds. In general, any living thing, be it a worm or insect, has its sound. Birds, wild animals, the five livestock—living creatures have their own given sounds. For example, when sent out to pasture in the morning livestock sounds are numerous: hoof sounds; quite fast, fast, quick, quick; rhythmic [ritmitei] chir chir chir chir, chur chur chur; like this they quickly tread. Around one, three, or four o’clock they return having eaten, the herds’ sounds are diminished. Full with grass, lying around, they snort. Their hoof sounds are few. For example, tur tur tur they say, grunting and cudding, one can hear a shir shir
A herder watching their herd may say to their goats, *chaa, chaa, xaiya, xaiya, xaxaaiya, xaxaaiya*. Because their herd is moving faster, faster, and then is made to gather and become calm, it as if they know language. The herds seemingly know their master's language and so they gather, eat, and sit. By screaming, *hoo-ing*, or *hay-ing* the herd is gathered. Harshly screaming *xüüye* or *xaiya*, they return, and these sonic feelings [*duu aviany medremj*] also lie between herds and people.  

Around this moment, I remembered how the wind came up on Erdene-Ochir, Tserendavaa's grandson, and myself when we were watching the baby goats. I whistled a tune for no particular reason and he turned around with a frightened look on his face, imploring me not to, lest a storm come. So, I asked Tserendavaa if people could influence the weather with their sounds:

"One can influence the weather with one's sounds. When *xöömei-ing* [*xöömeilöx*] or whistling from their own true character and the natural world (*baigal’*) is witnessed before one's eyes, the natural world's local deities [*lus savdag*] can provide and realize one's wishes if they can desire, dream, and pray from their true mind-spirit. One can cause the wind to rise. I think that..."
one can soften or break a greatly disastrous winter [zud]. These are my own thoughts.” But Tserendavaa is not alone in this belief. The music researcher Badraa writes about such shared beliefs among pastoralists (1998:55) and it corresponds to what Dillon, et al., refer to as a “super interrelation” with baigel’ (2009), as discussed above. The lecture took another turn towards other forms of interrelation with nature or animals through sound or music. “Ok, so each main herd animal has a different call when being coaxed [avaxauldag] to accept a rejected offspring. A sheep’s is different, a goat’s is different, horses, camels are different, cows are different. Beginning with a goat…cheeg, cheeg, cheeg, cheeg, cheeg, cheeg, cheeg, cheeg, cheeg, zuuzuu uu, zuuzuu uu, zuuzuu uu, zuuzuu uu, zuuzuu uu…melodizing like this other beautiful people’s melodies, such as beautiful long songs were made to sound [duu avia egshiglex] as people would melodize (ayalax) in remarkable ways following their own thoughts or feelings (setgel) during the activity of calling animals, making all kinds of melodies with all kinds of methods, techniques, rhythms and timing. These things are also connected to national art.” He then demonstrated what he meant with his own voice. For camels, one enunciates in a high, loud voice: “Toor l tooo… tor tor tor tor tor…” He transformed this call into a defined tone with
a slight vibrato, “toooo TOOOR toooo to xoO xoo toooooor,” then shifted it down a minor third, then back up, where the call became a “melody” (ayalguu).

This shift from call to melody, he implies, corresponds to an evolutionary shift from pastoral technique to national art. Here, Tserendavaa is likely drawing upon the work of music researcher Badraa, discussed in Chapter Four, with whom he closely collaborated in the 1980s. The latter, for example, employed socialistic theories of cultural development to locate the origins of xöömei in a far off past that was more Mongol and its ensuing development from whistling into a national or classical art.

In any case, through such calling, shouting, whistling, and “melodizing,” Tserendavaa continued, did herder children develop (xöögix) their voices, along with herder peoples their musical practices: "…The majority of Mongolian nomadic people’s vocal [duu xooloi] chords are able to sing beautiful long songs real loudly and calmly, their voice’s melodies are greatly pristine and good. Among herder peoples such beautiful voices can arise. Why? Because from two to three kilometers they saix, xüüs, or call to their herds from childhood on like this, screaming and making sounds from afar, and so their voices develop from an early age. This is also a foundation [of national art]. In contrast, people who live in buildings with two or three rooms don’t scream or call to their animals on the streets. Up there, they don’t scream loudly. The people of these sedentary places speak softly, have few sounds, and think it is bad not to be so [busdad muuxai]. That you must be pleasant and not sound is a socialist cultured custom [sotsialist soyoltoi zan ail]. And so, in this way the voices of city youth and children are less developed and worse than country people [xöööni ard tümen], as I evaluate from my own research. Of course. Of course, they are ‘worse.’”

And so, Tserendavaa notes a tension: on
one hand, pastoralism is valorized as a source of national art; on the other, agendas of national development in Mongolia frame pastoralism as a “backwards” lifeway (cf. Upton 2011).

We had reached a difficult topic. Tserendavaa fell silent, as he had done before when discussing the future of pastoralism in another interview. I decided not to press him this time. Despite Tserendavaa’s silence, the surrounding world remained audible. When a motorcycle rode off in the distance, it was clear and articulate across the steppe as if another animal on its way home. I noted its presence in my heavily accented Mongolian, “Now a motorcycle is sounding…” The politics of culture are always nearby, like the motorcycle sounding across the steppe. I am now reminded of how the parents of one wealthy young Mongolian discouraged him from sounding his voice "in weird ways" when he was trying to practice xöömei at home. Tserendavaa even mentioned once how the government requires him to own a xashaa (or a courtyard within which to set-up one’s yurt) in the district center, a means of further entangling herders with the state’s market-oriented policies. Also, relevant here is how only one of his children is still a herder. Two are professional xöömeich who moved to Ulaanbaatar in order to pursue their careers after growing up and first learning xöömei in Chandman’ district.

These various pressures and changes portend that pastoralism is a lifeway in risk of disappearing in Mongolia, as Tserendavaa has warned before. But in response he has still engaged the market as a performer and pedagogue in concert or tourism settings, both overseas and at home. In...
sum, this conversation with Tserendavaa demonstrates how he draws upon a plural inheritance when invoking both Indigenous and socialistic notions about sound, music, nature, or Mongolness. Less recognized residents do the same in other ways, as I now detail.

**Attribution**

The reference among many residents of Chandman’ to their district as “the birth-place of Mongol xöömei” does not only suggest a sense of cultural “ownership,” as I suggest, but also a sense of propriety, echoing Empson’s discussion above (2011:95). For example, resident xöömeich tend to frame the presence of xöömei in their district as stemming firstly from the musicality of the surrounding world of baigal’, and secondly from the creativity of the local human community. The literature notes various statements that imply this sense of propriety, not exactly ownership. Levin, for example, gives one explicit example when he quotes the renowned, native-born xöömeich Sengedorj who said, "[l]istening to the mountain sing is how humans first got the idea to sing höömii" (2006:39). In a parallel statement, Curtet writes that Tserendavaa told him how one can hear xöömei coming from a waterfall in the Jargalant-Altai Mountains from the yurts (ger) below, implying the capacity of this waterfall to sound xöömei (2013:113).

Many other residents have cited remarkable natural formations that inspired herders to imitate them, resulting in the localized practice of xöömei: sonorous mountains waters that herders listened to and admired over the centuries; the singing or droning (düngnex) of the mountains themselves, when a storm is building on the other side, passing its winds over the peaks like breath over the rim of a bottle; the sonorous, wind-swept reeds by nearby Black Water Lake (Xar us nuur); the development of complex herding calls, and thus their own voices, for “the five livestock” (tav’ xoshuu) that most Mongolian pastoralists are also familiar with (cf. Pegg 1992). But only some of these phenomena are possibly unique to the district, namely
Camel Rock or the mountain droning. Others are common to pastoral communities throughout Mongolia, such as complex herding calls (see Pegg 1992). To the degree that Chandman’ district’s xöömeich locate their originality in the surrounding world of baigal’, they must also employ a politicized rhetoric to define how their specific landscape is distinct from others, a topic I detail in the following section.

These statements are parcel to a contemporary politics of cultural ownership in Chandman’ district, attribution and propriety seem to be longer-standing conceptions of belonging. One elder resident’s perspective on the topic of origins and originality is particularly illustrative. In our interview, Darjaa Rinchin (b. 1936-2016), who has become a god (burxan bolloo) (i.e., passed away), discussed how he thinks residents “took” xöömei from the Altai Mountains:

Regarding origins, the reason why [xöömei] mainly originates from our region is that here in the Altai the rocks which flow below these cliffs make all kinds of sound. At the top of these mountains were places that sounded in all kinds of music-like [xögjim shig] ways. Now that the water is depleted, I have no idea what it's become, since I don't go there anymore as I'm old and lazy. These things might have been imitated [duuraix]. You know, there are things that make sound in this homeland [nutag oron] and some special people took [arsan] it. Not all can take it, only special people take it [ardag xin tusdaa]. So, it is the Altai Mountain’s sounding [dugarch baigaa yum] and so they also take from it.  

Darjaa is speaking from his own suppositions. To the degree that he uses the word duuraix he implies sound mimesis in Levin's sense. He also refers to how only “special people” ("not all can

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226 Salir болбол энэ,манай энэ бол болол энэ хадан доогуур урссан чуллун яна бур дуугарна.Хөгжим шиг яна бур,ээх уул нь оройд дуугардаг газар байсан.Одоо ус мус нь багадад өөр болж байгаав,алхаху болоод явагуй байна,хөгшин блоолд.Тийм дуугарна.Тэрийг ч дуурайсан байж болно,нутаг усанд бас тийн нэг юм байдаг щоод,нутаг оройд,тэрийг тэр тусгай улсусуд авсан байна.Аваад байх нь,авдаг хүн тусдаа.Энэ чинь нэг юм дуугардаг,Алтай дугарч байгаа юм болох юм байна.Тэгээд бас энэ юм авна.
take it”) in the past were capable of "taking" xöömei from the soundings of the Altai Mountains.

His discussion, especially the use the verb “to take,” further implies the imperatives of aesthetic propriety in Chandman’ district. Anthropologist Carole Pegg also writes that such acquisition of musical talent or capacity behooves a resident to reciprocate, “for, whether it is vocal reproduction of sounds heard in nature or using materials from nature in order to produce those sounds, something has been given that must be returned” (2001:97). And so, baigal’ itself becomes a musical moral authority: xöömei had already been sounding in the world before humans came along to hear, imitate, and practice it, indebting themselves to their birth-place.

Mongolian words suggest further affinities between natural sources and the sound of xöömei. One of the most well-known styles of xöömei, for example, is xarxiraa (Tuvan, kangyraa), a Mongolian onomatopoeia for "deep, growling" sounds like that of a waterfall, which is xürxeree. Both terms consist of a grammatical structure in Mongolic languages that is reserved
specifically for constructing onomatopoeia. *Isgereer*, meaning "whistle" and which also refers to the pitched, flute-like styles of xöömei, employs this same grammatical structure. In all three terms, the aligned suffixes -eree or -iraa attach to onomatopoeic stems *xar-, xür-,* and *is-*, all of which are meant to imitate the sound of their respective sources. Pegg writes that another sonic association is the black crow (*xar xeree*), which makes a similarly "deep growling" sound (1992:45) and the Unabridged Mongolian Dictionary gives an entry for a bird "that emits a big sound when flying" (*nisexdee ix duu gardag shuvuu*) called *xarxiraa togoruu*.

Notably, "taking" xöömei from these natural sound sources is not necessarily always a mimetic or timbre-centered performance. “Melody” (*ayalguu*) can also be an important, if pitch-centered, musicological dimension through which residents attribute xöömei to the surrounding world of *baigal*. In Chapter Four, I discussed the significance of the River Eev (*Eevyn gol*) as a legendary inspiration for mimetic performances of xöömei in various parts of Mongolia. As noted, Urianxai and Tuvans (whose histories are intimately linked)\(^{227}\) esteem this river as an ancient homeland that likely lies in present-day northern Xinjiang province (China). However, it seems that residents in Chandman’ district also venerated this river, as the elder Törbat Tseren Böö (b.1937) recalled of the elders he heard in his youth. These elders, Törbat said, did not refer to xöömei as "xöömei." Instead, they spoke of "the melody of the River Eev":

> So, this is what I know about the origins of xöömei. In this birth-place [nutag] our Deedee, Derem, Nadiadunai, Goo—among these people there was the even younger guy called Maxan Chuluun—these really, really old people would do xöömei at normal family celebrations. And so, when I was young, then, what were these people saying? Some would say how they didn’t know where this River Eev was, but when I was young they would talk about how the waters of this River Eev made a very beautiful sound [duutai duu avia]. They would show how to

\(^{227}\) See Mongush (2003) and Plueckhahn (2013) for more on these historical and ethnic links. I discuss this sonorous river and the literature on it in detail in Chapter Four.
imitate [duuraix] that River Eev’s currents as xöömei. They didn’t say xöömei in those times. Only in later times was it named xöömei.

When they were around we would say that River Eev’s melody, the mountain water’s melody, originating from mountain waters. Some would hold a cup before their mouth, waving it with their hand. They would do it like this at house celebrations. In those times, it was not something we would assemble for the sake of art or culture... However, those people would say that [xöömei] was connected to mountain water through melody [ayalguugaar]. It was like this. (Interview, August 26, 2013)

This River Eev is the legendary source of xöömei itself. Törbat seems to be referring to performances of xöömei that are mimetic via their melodic qualities (“connected to mountain water through melody”). His statement also resonates with counter narratives that xöömei does not originate in Chandman’ district, to the degree that the melody of the River Eev is strongly associated with Urianxai and Tuvan peoples. I discuss these counter narratives below. But it is also important to note that a politicized conception of cultural ownership was likely not on the minds of Törbat and his elders when performing “the melody of the River Eev.” Rather, they seem to have foregrounded the origins of this river-melody and xöömei in the surrounding world of baigal’ and its capacity for musical expression.
Notably, no one performs this melody anymore in Chandman’ district. When I asked Tserendavaa about this topic, he surmised that it had may have been lost over the generations, but could not say more (personal communication, February 15, 2015). As for timbre-centered sound mimesis, I have not witnessed any instances of resident xöömeich practicing it during any of my interviews and multiple trips throughout the last decade. When I asked a younger xöömeich, the son of an established xöömeich, whether he did forms of sound mimesis, he said no. Rather, he would sound the melodies of song genres like those that Curtet lists in his repertoire survey (2013:276-329). As he writes, the River Eev’s ”mention in the legends and imaginations of residents in the Altai is recurrent, but its place in the recordings is significantly less” (2013: 303). Instead of explicitly timbre-centered practices of sound mimesis, melodizing and performing songs are equally predominant musicological domains through which music, nature, and belonging unfold in Chandman’ district.

One less-renowned resident’s anecdote is compelling in this light. Chinzorig (b.1980) is not a recognized professional artist or people’s talent, let alone a knowledgeable elder like Darjaa or Törbat. Rather, he works as a janitor at the Xöömei Palace. As in all my interviews, I asked him how he had learned (August 4, 2013). His answer was unexpected in how he seems to attribute his capacity to perform a song melody with xöömei to a natural encounter:

“I didn’t know how my elder brother had learned before me, he just did xöömei, and I was interested when I heard him doing it a lot, you know. And so, when herding sheep on horseback I was interested [in trying xöömei]. And so, eventually I learned how to sound xöömei, but still I couldn’t make [a melody with] it. That went on for a while. And then one day,
I was herding sheep after having returned from herding camels. It was a windy day. And then suddenly a kind of xöömei melody [xöömein aya], a melodious sound arrived, just like that.⁴²²⁹

"From the wind?" I had to confirm. He affirmed. I was confused, and not only because of my language skills. I assumed he meant the *sound* of the wind inspired him in a mimetic fashion, so I asked him to clarify. He became nervous and awkward at my request. Our difficulty with words was shared. He stuttered through an answer that I pieced together via the help of several colleagues, resulting in this synthesis:

"A fresh breeze had arisen. There was that strong wind blowing and so one's xöömei sounded stronger when done against the wind, it arose [garday] via the wind's strength [salixny xючеер]. And so, I was doing xöömei against the wind, which makes my xöömei sound even louder.⁴³⁰ At that moment, I didn't understand how to study or render songs, but then suddenly, I could. It came just like whistling, you know."⁴³¹

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²²⁹ Би болбол урд нь манай ах бас яж сурсан юм мэдэхгүй, зүгээр хөөмэйлдөг байсан би тэгээд ахыггаа их хөөмэйлөөд байхаар нь их сонирхдог байсан байхгүй юу. Тэгээд нэр хөөрхөө мохий явж байгаад тэгээд л сонирхоод байсан. Тэгээд ард нь би ногоог хөөмэй дуугаргаад сурчихсан мөрөөсөө оруулж чаддагүй. Тийм учраас байсан. Тэгээд нэр өдрөө хөөр хөөртөө явж ирээд тимээнд ирээд хөөр хөөрхөө явж байсан салхийл байсан юм. Тэгээд л гээртээн хөөмэйний ая юу орно ирсэн дуу аялгутай ингээд л.

²³⁰ Чинзориг нь *Chandman*’ district of practicing xöömei while facing the wind in order to hear one’s self better.

²³¹ Сэнгэнэсэн тийм хөөр хөөр ирсэн дээ. Ногоог өг хөөхөө салхийл байсан үүрдаас нь яахаар хүний хөөмэй болоход зүгээр салхины хөөр гардааг байсан юм билээ. Тэгээд салхины омноос хөөмэйлөө явад урдаас салхий нь хөөрхөө орж ирээд хөөмэй улаам [идуу] чанг боловд тэгээд байсан чинь гэнэт дуу явж сурнаа вэ явж оруулаах вэ гээг байдалд төлөөгүй. Тэгсэн чинь гэнэт. Тэгээд л ногоог өгүүд шиг л ялгаагүй орно ирээ байхгүй юу.
"The first song I really tried to learn is one called ‘The Four Seasons of the Steppe.’ And then what happened, the wind came, right? That [song's] melody, without knowing, on that day while going out, suddenly I xöömei-d\textsuperscript{232} [xöömeildöx] ‘The Four Seasons of the Steppe’ melody. I myself did xöömei just as the wind came on strong, exactly that song came. That evening, once I'd come home, I saw my younger brother who did xöömei more than me and had already learned that song. We studied together. And I came and showed him. ‘Please show me,’ he said, and I said, ‘I'll show you today.' And he said, ‘Don't say anything dumb! Tsendjav also knows the song.’ And so, I showed him ‘The Four Seasons of the Steppe.’ That's how it happened. That's how I learnt. A curious thing [toxioldol] like that happened to me.”\textsuperscript{231}

\textsuperscript{232} Note the use the Mongolian noun’s verbal form here.

\textsuperscript{233} Би нөгөө дорвөн цагийн тал гээд дууг энэ дээр яг сурах гээд [сурахаар] аих үзээн байхгүй юм. Тэгээд яасан чинь салхинд орцов ирсэн байхгүй юу тэр аялгуу нь ягаад юм мэдэхгүй тэр одор тэгээд явж байсан чинь гэнэ тэр дорвөн цагийн аялгуу хоомэйлээд л би оороо хоомэйлэх салхий нь нөгөө хүчтэй орж ирэнгүүт хоомэйлсон чинь яг тэр дуу орсон. Тэр орой нь очихоод манай дүү надаас илүү өлөө хоомэйлж
Chinzorig is partly referring to singing against the wind in order to hear one’s self better, a learning technique that several resident teachers recommend to their students. But he is also laying heavy emphasis on the coincidence of the wind’s sudden surging and his capacity to finally sound a song melody. Throughout the discussion he seems to defer his own role in

234 For a performance of this song, see: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-lvtJ4yLyJo. Last accessed: 7/13/2016. I thank Simon Wickham-Smith for vital assistance with this translation.
learning the song melody. Here, I am reminded of how, in Xalxa Mongolian, things can happen in ways that the English language cannot always convey. The Mongolian even reserves a host of causative and passive voice suffixes to specify an action “that hasn’t been caused purposely but just happened” (Tserenpil & Kullmann 2008:117). More often one assumes the subject through familiarity with the context of discussion or the subject is not necessary to reference. But at other times, one cannot clearly ascertain how an action unfolded, regardless of one’s own involvement in the action. Chinzorig’s language also does not clearly demarcate to the English ear the seat of agency in producing the resulting vocal sound. Perhaps this is a linguistic necessity in pastoral places when both human and non-human agencies are considered to be mutually responsible for an outcome.

Put in other words, his statement reveals a particular sense of who or what counts as a musical agent and “what kinds of agentive subjects and acted-upon objects might be found in the world” (Keane 2005:191). He even implies the role of the wind in engendering his own sounding (“through the wind’s strength”), while deferring his own agency (“that happened to me”) in this “curious” case of auto-pedagogy. Notably, his last word toxiol is not only “a case,” as I translated to make the English sentence flow better. It can also mean “coincidence,” “occurrence,” or simply “happening.” His “curious case,” furthermore, is reminiscent of Tuvan distinctions between musicians who are “inspired by the spirits” as pastoral autodidacts and those who studied formally and play ”with notes” (Süzükei 2010:163; quoted in Beahrs 2015:132), a reference to professionally trained musicians. While Chinzorig does not refer to local deities or spirits, he does imply to a form of auto-pedagogy, as Beahrs put it. This is one possible interpretation of his anecdote that resonates with the prior discussion of propriety and impersonal subjectivity.
The audible result of Chinzorig’s experience, finally, was not a timbral representation of the natural world via a form of sound mimesis. Rather, it was a musical melody from a socialist-era composed (zoxiolyn) song called “The Four Seasons of the Steppe” (Dörvön tsagiin tal). Like other staples in the Mongol xöömei repertoire, such as “Dear Native Homeland” (Xaluun elgen nutag), this composed song blends romantic imagery of the countryside, socialist precepts, and nationalist sentiment via its anthem-like melody and poetic lyricism. In another case, the younger xöömeich Baasan Damdinsüren, when leaving his native Tes district, was obliged to perform a musical offering to the district’s guardian-spirit. Accompanying himself with a horse fiddle (a socialist re-construction of the ikel fiddle; see Marsh 2009), he performed “Four-Year-Old Bay Horse” (Dörvön nastai xaliun), a folk song common in the repertoires of Mongol xöömeich. Regardless of prior socialistic associations or origins, a song can play a role
in facilitating one’s interrelations with *baigal’* as along as it is aesthetically appropriate. These observations suggest that “pitch-centered” forms of music with non-Indigenous legacies can also be employed towards pastoral custom as long as it suits the criteria of aesthetic propriety.

**Maintaining originality: a natural theater**

While such attachments to the surrounding world of *baigal’* abound in Chandman’ district, many residents are also greatly invested in the international world. Through festivals, research projects (including my own), and television programs, among other formats, they have sought to promote the district’s positionality as “the birth-place of Mongol xöömei.” In these various formats, ways of living and sounding with *baigal’* (practices of aesthetic propriety, in other words) become evidence of cultural property. Indigenous pastoral customs and concepts then interact with internationalized discourses of “culture” and its ensuing politics. These Indigenous and internationalized discourses about music and belonging interact fluidly within the domains of Chandman’ district, but not without producing frictions as well, as the following experience shows.

In late spring of 2014, I came to the district to interview elders, professionals, and youth for my dissertation research. Tserendavaa had implored me to come at this time specifically, but I did not realize why exactly until I arrived: they wanted to enlist my recording equipment and foreign presence in a documentary on the origins of xöömei in Chandman’. They would then edit the footage into a television program to be aired on national television. My job as researcher was made surprisingly easy as performers, herders, and officials organized themselves into ethnographic scenes of their own making. In these rehearsed presentations, established performers and officials acted out conversations and scenes about the district’s musical past, often revealing little known facts, pictures taken long ago, or unexpected
revelations. The overall aim of the program was explicit: to counter recent claims by others that Mongol xöömei originated elsewhere.

Residents of Chandman’ are fond of referring to their district as “the birthplace of xöömei” itself, even though other districts and communities in Mongolia and Tuva also practice it. As one prominent performer put it, xaan ch baixgui, meaning "nowhere else." This is not the case, of course. In fact, Beahrs relates the work of Tuvan scholar Mongush regarding a village in western Tuva called Bazhyng-Alaak that has a similar attachment to xöömei as a local heritage based upon its proximity to the nearby Dugai Mountains (Mongush 2010:100; quoted in Beahrs 2014:96). Back in Mongolia, there are also arguments and evidence contradicting Chandman’ district’s claim, which raised the concerns of many residents. In 2004, the Mongolian scholar Enebish wrote an article in which he quotes two Chandman’ elders as saying that non-Mongolian, Tuvan traders introduced the practice to their district in the early days of socialism (2012a), a topic I further discuss in Chapter Three. More recently in 2010, Sandagjav, a xöömeeich and informally trained music researcher, published a book in which he discusses the recollections of his grandfather, Jigmed, whom the author says traveled frequently to Chandman’ district as a trader and supposedly performed and introduced xöömei at this time in the early 20th century. The district felt compelled to respond by asserting its own narrative of Mongol xöömei on a national scale.

The first day of filming began early in order to shoot at a large range of far apart sites: the elementary school's classroom, which displays the local heritage of xöömei to school children; the foothills of the Jargalant Mountains, where everyone performed "Altai praise-song" (Altai magtaal); the stone marking the birth-place of the great Sundui; the steppes just before the hill where Tsedee, who was first to perform xöömei on stage, grew up; a yurt (ger) where mother camels were separated from their calves so they would call to each other while
xöömeich sounded amidst the polyphony of non-human xöömei; the home of Davaajav, an established xöömeich who discussed how he learned xöömei as a child; and many others.

Figure 7.13. Community leaders and member shoot a scene for the documentary Xöömei (2014).

By midday, we had only one more shoot left. Project leaders amassed student youth, performers, herders, and officials into a caravan of cars in front of the elementary school. The caravan then headed out to the mouth of the crevice, where we waited for stragglers to arrive as elders played cards or got dressed into formal deel (robes). Once we reached a critical mass, we walked into the crevice and entered a radically different environment. Instead of open steppes and skies opening up to the cosmos, the crevice’s walls enclosed and concentrated perception. One wall was steep and craggy with two massive eagle’s nests jutting out from its walls, while the other wall inclined enough to allow people to climb upwards. This wall would become a stage of sorts for performances, while audiences would lean against the steeper wall. At the end
of the crevice was a sonorous rivulet of mountain water that was flowing with melting
mountain water.

Once inside, I turned around to see the elder Darjaa walking towards me. Darjaa was
one of the few who remembers what xöömei was like before its professionalization and
nationalization. Throughout my research I had seen firsthand how elders spoke directly about
xöömei's humble beginnings, before it became a matter of heritage politics. Amidst the
commotion, I turned on my recorder and asked him about the site for an impromptu interview
(May 15, 2014). The place was simply called saxchig, or "the crevice." Darjaa told me how the
community used to venerate it, but now herders had been throwing animal carcasses into it.
Youth no longer knew about it. Parents did not talk about it nor came to make offerings
anymore. Sometime during the socialist collectivization of herders’ pastoral encampments, the
nationalization of their expressive practices, and censorship of animist or Buddhist spiritual
practices in the 20th century, the crevice fell into neglect. But in the far off, past before
socialism, the crevice was known for granting women fertility because of its resemblance to
female genitalia. Other anthropomorphic sites in Mongolia have a similar reproductive
significance for local communities. The sonorous rivulet, furthermore, imbued the crevice with
musical significance due to the connection between xöömei and mountain waters, a topic that
the elders Darjaa and Törbat spoke of above.

But the idea for shooting in the crevice also had origins far beyond the district in an
experimental music festival called Roaring Hooves, which is run by the German composer
Bernhard Wulff. This festival is distinguished by its nomadic schedule, as performers and
audiences travel together to various urban and rural sites to experiment with each other and the
environment. A state-recognized actor, professional xöömeich, retired director of the Xovd
drama theater, and native-son of Chandman’, Sengedorj was invited one year to perform at the
festival. On that occasion, the festival traveled to an open theater in Dundgov’ province, which honors the great long song singer Norovbanzad. Sengedorj told me how much the site had impressed him. Years later as the project leaders began mobilizing for the television program, Sengedorj proposed creating a similar theater with the crevice. District officials, community leaders, and other performers, in turn, envisioned the theater as yet another way to reify the origins of xöömei in the local landscape before national and international publics.

This aim first required that project leaders demonstrate the link between place, heritage, and community. The performances within the crevice functioned towards these ends in the most literal of ways: by placing the entire xöömeich community inside the crevice—elders, children, and all—to index Chandman’ district, Mongol xöömei, and the local landscape with each other. The visually and sonically powerful footage would then naturalize and promulgate this index via national media. The performances themselves were a mixture of pastoral custom, socialist performance norms, and avant-garde experimentation. There were several arrangements that Sengedorj directed and experimented with: The largest consisted of everyone present sitting on the slope, with elders singing a long song heterophonically as everyone else sounded xöömei, producing a free-flowing river of harmonics. The result somewhat reminded me of nair, a house celebration in which participants typically sing long sings heterophonically and participant loosely follow a lead singer. But Stockhausen also came to mind due to the "spectral" qualities of the xöömei. In a very different scene more reminiscent of socialistic stage performance, a row of younger men aligned themselves in front of the rivulet, stood upright with hands on their waists, and sounded two short songs. 235

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235 See Chapter Three for a discussion of the folk song genre and official categories of music and culture.
We stayed in the crevice for an hour recording such performances. But only after everyone had left was there silence enough to really listen to the crevice itself. I lingered behind to record the sonorous rivulet and acoustics with Sengedorj. The crevice's performance was inconspicuous, a whisper, not an audible wall of humanity. Inspired by the rivulet, he came over and asked me if I would record him singing alone by it. The rivulet gurgled and murmured, while he "took" a melody from it, evoking the elders of the far off past that Darjaa and Törbat recalled. The melody meandered itself between Sengedorj's own phrases and some that seemed to belong to Narantsogt's version of "Altai Praise-song," an Urianxai tsuurch or open-ended flute performer, whom Sengedorj greatly admires. As for his sound, it was duly shingen or "fluid." The great Sundui, the first officially registered professional xöömei performer, popularized this necessarily loud, clear, and flowing aesthetic in the 1960s, while adapting technique for the stage, as discussed in Chapter Four.
Figure and Audio example 7.2. Sengedorj "takes" a melody from the crevice's rivulet.

When the shoot was over, the project participants disbanded and returned to their homes. I gave copies of all my footage and audio to Xürelbaatar, a Mongolian composer and videographer charged with the task of editing the program. After months of waiting, the program finally came out on national television. Quite appropriately, it was called Xöömei.

While most of the program contains scenes shot elsewhere, the crevice finally appears in the very last section. We see one of the documented crevice performances, but we do not hear the performance itself. The producer, instead, chose to overlay it with tracks taken from a commercial album release of xöömei. The wall of harmonics, the elder's long song, and the rivulet itself are mute, although the narrator is poetically describing the origins of xöömei in sacred mountain waters.

Another number of months passed and it was summer. The gray skies of Chandman' gave way to the bright blue skies that Mongolia is famous for. Green grasses and bush grew
between the steely crags of the crevice. And the Chandman’ community remained busy, building a makeshift stage of rocks on its sloping wall for yet another performance. This one, however, would take place during the 3rd International Xöömei Festival. Hundreds of spectators, several TV stations, and even foreign performers and researchers were in attendance. A large banner was hung over the crevice, which a fierce wind almost knocked down. As for the rivulet, it had gone silent after the spring thaw finished. A speaker system amplified the performances and provided a backing track for the soloists. Afterwards, Dogsom, the governor of Chandman’ came on stage, reached into his pocket, and read a letter from the provincial government. The crevice, it read, was now an officially recognized landmark for all the international world to see, visit, and listen to.

In such ways did Chandman’ district negotiate natural origins and sounding original by living and sounding with baigal’ while also engaging the international world through the politics of “culture.” Residents engage in performative strategies that depend upon Indigenous values alongside socialistic concerns with “culture,” “development,” and “heritage.” These dual concerns are partly in friction with each other, as the above discussion suggests. Aesthetic propriety and cultural property demonstrate a vast conceptual gulf between themselves. But these dual concerns are also an everyday aspect of life after socialism in a pastoral place, as I have sought to illustrate in prior sections in this chapter. Chandman’ district draws upon and is even animated by its plural inheritance as “the birth-place of Mongol xöömei.” This is the same plural inheritance that has animated discourses and practices of Mongol xöömei, as I hope to have showed throughout this dissertation.
Conclusion

In times of increasing economic and ecological uncertainty in Mongolia, I have observed an increased concern for the far off past, cultural heritage, and its many instantiations, only one of which is xöömei. With this dissertation, I hope to have provided perspective onto the dynamic and polyvalent tensions and relations that have animated Mongol xöömei as an original voice for yazguur. Parcel to this perspective is the sound recommendation that scholars "slow down" and not jump to conclusions about the global world, the human estate, and the cosmos itself, as I discuss in Chapter One. Anything is possible, my research associates also seem to imply with their aspirations to maintain both the origins and originality of Mongol xöömei, despite the distanciations of globalist discourse in Mongolia. My own performative strategy has been to listen as well as I can to the implications of their practices, performances, and perspectives.

The chapter discussions, nevertheless, have raised a number of tensions and problems that go beyond the scope of this dissertation but should inform any thoughts on its future directions. For example, I have invoked accountability to other senses of the world in various places. Accountability can mean many things, including my own accountability to my research associates. When I sat down with Hosoo at Ix Mongol, the German restaurant in Ulaanbaatar, he stated that critical (kritik) thinking amongst today's performers is direly needed. He saw in scholarly work a chance to alter the current situation of Mongol xöömei, which I described in Chapter Six. Indeed, I have shown how disciplinary notions and knowledge practices have participated in social transformations, projecting worlds of their own and even supplanting Indigenous ones. Here, I am reminded of anthropologist Marilyn Strathern's proposal that anthropology focus on producing knowledge “for” humanity in light of losing its heuristic of “culture" as an objective lens onto all other humans (1995:169). Yet some xöömeich wanted me
to use my knowledge practice to ascertain and clarify the Mongolian origins of xöömei itself for the world. I consciously refused to do so. Instead, I hope this work gives readers and listeners in Euro-American and Mongolian academia’s or publics an understanding of the diverse actors and places that have engendered the voice of Mongol xöömei despite some reductive narratives of nationalism and nomadism (the discourse, not the lifeway of pastoralism). I intend to explore the accountability of this work to the worlds of my research associates in future conversations, translations, and perhaps collaborative projects, depending on their wishes. I hope to include the results in any future publications.

Efforts to preserve heritage through institutional formats are key here, yet less prescient in my chapter discussions. Johanni Curtet provides much more detail on this subject (2013). However, I have observed misgivings and skepticism in Chandman' district that these registrations will not make the job of transmitting xöömei any easier, raising questions about what heritage-making really does on the ground. On the other hand, ecological change is a very pressing issue in an ever hotter and more arid Mongolia. On my last visit to Chandman' district, for example, some research associates were exploring agriculture as a more secure source of food since their herds were less and less stable in times of drastic environmental change. The resoursification of the environment, which has helped engender these global changes, has greatly hinged upon the separation of certain domains of human experience from those of non-human experience. I note how cultural heritage efforts continuously fail to put themselves in conversation with nature preservation efforts, as if nature and culture were separable domains. The audible problems to address here are seemingly endless, sobering, and yet critical, so I hope to explore them in-depth with pastoral research associates in the future.

Many research associates and friends warned me in secret that everyone thinks differently about what Mongol xöömei is. "No one agrees," they would say. For these reasons,
Mongol xöömei is a far more slippery subject than some would like to admit, unlike other genres like long song with far more codified narratives, terminologies, and perspectives among practitioners. Persons like Mishgee in Xövsgöl province, for example, spoke of remarkable experiences and memories only he could recount. Yet in private conversations, other research associates dismissed his statements, as I reported them, because they did not fit predominant narratives of xöömei. I am accountable to all of these perspectives, acknowledging this conflict of interests, which I take as a constituent dimension of entanglement, originality, and audibility. The edges of development remain difficult to research for these reasons as much as the logistical ones I discussed in Chapter Four. I can only presume that there are many other persons like Mishgee, residing far away from their critics, who have something significant to say on the matter but whom have received little attention in national or international discourses of "culture" and "heritage." Curtet and Nomindari’s new anthology acknowledges and presents audio recordings of many of these neglected persons (2016). I hope to return to Xövsgöl province, among other places, and conduct further research in this regard, too.

Another future perspective must come from the host of bands that have appeared in Ulaanbaatar since the success of Egschiglen. Khusugtun is but one of the more recent ones. Just as notably, Altan Urag made a name for itself long before Khusugtun by fusing Mongolian music with heavy metal. Taking cues from Slipknot as much as Chinggis Khaan, they conspicuously avoided sounding typically traditional in a Mongolia that is not as "traditional" or "nomadic" as it is often said to be. Indeed, half of the country's population lives sedentary lives in Ulaanbaatar. For such reasons, the band has refused to include "Altai Praise-song" in any of its albums, despite their respect and veneration for the praise-song and its natural inspiration. Accordingly, the band's most famous release is called Made in Altan Urag (2006), not "made in the far off past," as Khusugtun implies in its nomadic album covers. Another band that has
broken from the herd is Jonon. Others are catching on. These bands address issues of sound, source, and originality as they play out in Ulaanbaatar itself with lessening recourse to living and sounding with baigal'. Their originality also requires more audibility in any future manifestations of this research project.
Appendix A

List of Selected Interviews

All interviews were conducted by the author unless otherwise noted with an asterisk, which indicates that Tserendavaa Dashdorj and I conducted the interview together.


*Darjaa Rinchin. August 18, 2013. Chandman' district, Xovd province, Mongolia.

____________. May 15, 2014. Chandman' district, Xovd province, Mongolia.

*Dashdavaa Bat. August 24, 2013. Chandman' district, Xovd province, Mongolia.

Davaajav Rentsen. August 22, 2013. Chandman' district, Xovd province, Mongolia.


____________. August 26, 2014. Xovd city, Xovd province, Mongolia.


*Törbät Tseren Böö. August 26, 2013. Chandman’ district, Xovd province, Mongolia.


Tserendavaa Dashdorj. Interview, August 24, 2013. Chandman’ district, Xovd province, Mongolia.

____________. September 6, 2013. Chandman’ district, Xovd province, Mongolia.

____________. May 9, 2014. Chandman’ district, Xovd province, Mongolia.


____________. July 31, 2013. Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

Appendix B

The Program for the Mongolian Cultural Delegation’s Concert at the 5th World Youth Festival in Warsaw, Poland in 1955. Courtesy of Zangad Baartuu.
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Appendix C

The Program for the 1983 Authentic Folk Art Festival’s medalist presentation concert, called “Celebration of Melodious Sounds” (*Ay eghiig xurim naadam*). Courtesy of Tserendavaa Dashdorj.
Bibliography


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