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Equity in a Pastoral Commons: Bayan Mountain, Mongolia

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Abstract

Common property regimes (CPRs) have been embraced as a means to achieve sustainable use of resources. However, it is also claimed that these and other forms of communal resource management can allow for equitable access to resources, which is of some importance given the heavier reliance of poorer households on common resources. This view however appears to be contradicted by the existence of wealth differentiation among resource users, suggesting that the reality is more complex.

This case study of a local pastoral commons used by Kazak herders in western Mongolia explores factors influencing both access to resources and wealth differentiation, which has been considerable since the end of socialism, and attempts to evaluate the extent to which resource access in the CPR can be considered equitable. There is differential resource access in the study community, both in terms of rights of access, with some inequities linked to non-wealth-related household characteristics, and in terms of the ability to realise nominal access rights, which is chiefly affected by relative wealth. Although allocation of access rights is not discriminatory, the interrelationship between wealth and resource access thus serves to reinforce wealth differentiation. Wealth differentiation itself however depends on multiple factors including but not limited to resource access, and does not reliably indicate inequitable access to resources.

The case study indicates that CPRs cannot be considered inherently equitable, but that instead equity in resource access is affected by social differentiation in the user group. In addition, where factors considered necessary to successful collective action are wanting, equitable outcomes seem less likely. Thus most inequities in access rights date back to privatisation in Mongolia and the resulting institutional breakdown and lack of user participation both in allocation of resources and in devising appropriate resource access rules. Despite this, evidence from both the case study and other pastoral commons suggests that CPRs may still offer more equitable access to resources than do other types of property regime.

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Note on Transcription

Kazak and Mongolian alphabets

Both the Kazak and Mongolian alphabets are based on the Russian Cyrillic alphabet, with some differences in pronunciation and additional letters. Mongolian lacks letters 2, 6, 15, 19, 27, 31 and 38 of the Kazak alphabet. The Cyrillic letters have been transliterated into Latin script as shown below, and are generally pronounced similarly in both Kazak and Mongolian.

	<u>Cyrillic</u>	<u>Latin Script</u>		<u>Cyrillic</u>	<u>Latin Script</u>
1	А а	a (<i>ah</i>)	22	П п	p
2	Ә ә	a (<i>hat</i>)	23	Р р	r
3	Б б	b	24	С с	s
4	В в	v	25	Т т	t
5	Г г	g	26	У у	u
6	Ғ ғ	gh ¹	27	Ү ү	ou
7	Д д	d	28	Ү ү	ü / w
8	Е е	e (<i>ye</i>)	28	Ф ф	f
9	Ё ё	o (<i>yo</i>)	30	Х х	kh (<i>loch</i>)
10	Ж ж	j (<i>jump</i>)	31	Һ һ	h
11	З з	z	32	Ц ц	ts
12	И и	i (<i>kíwi</i>)	33	Ч ч	ch
13	Й й	i (<i>shorter</i>)	34	Ш ш	ch / sh ²
14	К к	k	35	Щ щ	shch
15	Қ қ	q	36	Ъ	(hard sign)
16	Л л	l	37	Ы	y (<i>brother</i>) ³
17	М м	m	38	І і	i (<i>hit</i>)
18	Н н	n	39	Ь	(soft sign)
19	Ң ң	ng	40	Э э	e (<i>eh</i>)
20	О о	o	41	Ю ю	yu
21	Ө ө	ö (<i>euh</i>)	42	Я я	ya

¹ Similar to French "r".

² In Kazak *w* seems to be pronounced "ch" in word-initial position, "sh" elsewhere. In Mongolian it seems always to be "sh".

³ Similar to the unstressed vowel here, but can be stressed in Kazak.

Transcription and language

It is difficult to transcribe languages which use 36 or 42 letters into an alphabet of 26, particularly when there is no international agreement on how this should be done (Sanders and Bat-Ireedui 1995:9). Nor is there even agreement on the original script - Kazak is written in a Cyrillic script in Kazakstan and Mongolia and an Arabic script in Xinjiang, China, and has also been written in a modified Latin script (Benson and Svanberg 1988:94-7).

For this thesis the transcription system used by the Lonely Planet Mongolian Phrasebook (Sanders and Bat-Ireedui 1995) has been adopted for both Mongolian and Kazak, with some reference to the Kyrgyz section of Lonely Planet's Central Asia Phrasebook for the additional letters in Kazak; Kyrgyz and Kazak pronunciation are very similar (Rudelson 1998:76,104). Anything not covered by this is the author's own transcription system of sounds as heard in the field.

Although some Cyrillic letters have a slightly different pronunciation in Mongolian and Kazak, such as з (like English z in Kazak but closer to dz in Mongolian), the same letter has been used to transliterate them in both languages.

Two points deserve special note. Firstly, the use of the English "s" to indicate the plural has been avoided since the original languages follow a different pattern. Since in most cases the correct plural form was not known, the singular has been used as both singular and plural in both languages (*aimag, kigizwi*).

The second point relates to the spelling of the name Kazak. The common alternative spelling "Kazakh" is a transliteration of the Cyrillic spelling introduced by the Soviets, *Kazax* (Benson and Svanberg 1988:2). Kazaks' own name for themselves is written *Қазақ* in Mongolia, which should correctly be transliterated "Qazaq". As this is not only unrecognisable but somewhat disconcerting for English speakers, the spelling "Kazak" is used here instead.⁴

⁴ Kazak translators were also very reluctant to use "q" in transliterating *Қазақ*.

Glossary

Terms defined here are Mongolian unless indicated as Kazak (K).

<u>Latin Script</u>	<u>Cyrillic</u>	<u>Definition</u>
<i>aimag</i>	аймаг	province (21 in Mongolia)
<i>aral</i>	арал	"the land"; local name for the open area of the Sogoog hayfields
<i>auyl</i> (K)	ауыл	herding group (1-8 households, in study area); Mongolian <i>khot ail</i>
<i>bag</i>	баг	subdistrict (8 in Ulaan-khus; <i>bag</i> #4 contains 240 families)
<i>khoshuu</i>	хошуу	"banner"; pre-revolutionary administrative division
<i>khot ail</i>	хот айл	herding group (Kazak <i>auyl</i>)
<i>kigizwi</i> (K)	кигиз үй	felt tent; Mongolian <i>ger</i>
<i>neg nutgiinkhan</i>	нэг нутгийнхан	neighbourhood group of several <i>khot ail</i> ; literally "people of one place"
<i>negdel</i>	нэгдэл	collective
<i>sum</i>	сум	district (12 in Bayan-Ölgii, higher than average)
<i>suur</i>	суур	smallest herding unit within collective; 1-2 households
<i>zud</i>	зуд	very deep or frozen snow making it impossible for livestock to find forage

Place Names

Place names are Kazak unless indicated as Mongolian (M). Meanings were supplied by translators in Bayan-Ölgii, with some assistance from a Mongolian-English dictionary while still in Mongolia.

<u>Latin Script</u>	<u>Cyrillic</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Aral	арал	land, area
Bakytjan Chappa	Бакытжан Шаппа	Bakytjan's hayfields
Bayan Zürkh (M)	Баян Зүрх	rich heart
Bayan tau (M: Bayan uul)	Баян тау (Баян уул)	rich mountain
Bor Burgas	Бор Бургас	willow thicket
Choqpar Tas	Шоқпар Тас	big rock
Iyq Jourt	Иық Жұрт	shoulder shape
Jumakhan Jailau	Жумахан Жайлау	Jumakhan's summer pastures
Khatuu (M)	Хатуу	hard
Kök Choqu	Көк Шоқы	blue hill / peak
Ölgii (M)	Өлгий	cradle
Orta Kharaghan	Орта Хараған	middle thornbush
Ospan Jailau	Оспан Жайлау	Ospan's summer pastures
Qara Jaryq	Қара Жарық	black gorge / cleft
Qara Saz	Қара Саз	black swamp
Qyzyl Bastau	Қызыл Бастау	red well
Qyzyl Kharaghan	Қызыл Хараған	red thornbush
Sogoog (M) / Soghaq (K)	Согоог / Соғақ	(translator unaware of any meaning)
Terekti	Теректі	forested
Tor Kharaghan	Тор Хараған	thornbush fence
Ulaan-khus (M)	Улаан хус	red birch
Ülken Kharaghan	Үлкен Хараған	big thornbush
Üsh Bulaq	Үш Булақ	three streams