TITLE: Spaces of Resilience: Reimagining Narratives of (Im)mobilities

NAME: Holly R. BARCUS, DeWitt Wallace Professor of Geography, Macalester College, USA

EMAIL: barcus@macalester.edu

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ABSTRACT:

Beginning in the early 1990s, Mongolia’s social, political and economic systems began a process of transformation from command to capitalist economies, from socialist to democratic governance systems, and from rural pastoral to urban-based livelihoods. Internal migration, particularly towards Ulaanbaatar, has reshaped livelihoods and opportunities in Mongolia (IOM 2018). Simultaneously, Mongolia’s land tenure system and pastureland management strategies have co-evolved, and herding, as a livelihood strategy, is becoming increasingly precarious, particularly in higher altitude environments experiencing rapid environmental or climate changes (Chuluun et al. 2017). In Mongolia, reseach related to adaptation and resilience strategies and narratives has largely focused on understanding rangeland management strategies (Xiaoyi and Fernandez-Gimenez 2012), land use and land tenure changes (Barcus 2018) and managing migration to the capital city (Shugatai et al. 2021). Less attention focuses on the cultural resilience or adaptation strategies.

This paper explores gendered practices of cultural resilience in both rural and urban households amongst a small ethnic minority population. Using data collected between 2006-2009 in remote western Mongolia, and data collected in 2016-2018 in urban households of Ulaanbaatar, this paper explores the perspectives of women and the roles they play in building socio-cultural resilience amongst and within a minority ethnic community. We explore the role of migration and (im)mobility as it intersects with gendered framings of household livelihood strategies and the intersection of modern lifestyles with traditional cultural practices. Specifically, we explore the role of mobility / (im)mobility choices and social location in understanding nuances in bringing together literatures on social-cultural resilience, migration, (im)mobility and gender.

KEYWORDS: Cultural resilience, rural women, adaptation, livelihoods, (im)mobilities

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