Meadville, Mongolia and Vice Versa:

A Comparative Exploration of Globalization, Change and Environment

In Meadville, Pennsylvania and Mongolia

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To my loving family for teaching me to challenge myself, value the unfamiliar and always seek new experiences, even in the face of discomfort. And to laugh always.

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ARTIST STATEMENT

Mongolia, Meadville and Vice Versa

Studio Art & Environmental Studies Combined Project

Nearly four years ago I came to Meadville to begin my Freshman year at Allegheny. A year and a half later, I spent a semester in Mongolia. Geographically, culturally and historically, these places are not directly connected; however, their respective fluctuations in the last 100 years have resulted from a similar source: globalization.

Globalization has contributed substantially to the land and water quality degradation that effects Mongolia's nomadic herders, as well as to Meadville's post-industrial condition. Through this Senior Project I examine the connections that exist between two very different settings both desperately readjusting to the changing world.

ABSTRACT

Mongolia, Meadville and Vice Versa

Studio Art & Environmental Studies Combined Project

The word “environment” describes an individual or group’s surroundings, both natural and human-made. Ultimately, environment built or natural determines human lifestyle and wellbeing. Mongolian pastoralists and Northwest Pennsylvanians live very different lifestyles in hugely different physical environments. These groups are however, undeniably connected through global systems and through me as an individual. My artwork evokes the intricate web that connects each person to one another and to our environment. Tolerance, flexibility and endurance, characteristics used in my artwork, are integral components to establish effective and sustainable systems in Meadville and Mongolia and the world at large.

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1. Introduction

The word “environment” describes an individual or group’s surroundings, both natural and human-made. It describes forests, pasturelands, and mountains in Central Asia, as well as industrial buildings, chain stores, and fast-food restaurants in Northwestern Pennsylvania. Ultimately, environment built or natural determines human lifestyle and wellbeing. Culture and traditions are established largely based on available resources and a specific local environment. From the remote Mongolian steppe to the industrial buildings of Meadville, Pennsylvania, environment establishes lifestyle patterns of its inhabitants, and vice versa.

Environment is a constantly changing and vulnerable force. Global climate change’s broad and overwhelming impacts are testament to the natural world’s irregularities, caused both by natural and anthropogenic factors. Construction and destruction of buildings, resource extraction, and overusing the natural world are ways in which humans explicitly reshape their environment every day. Technology, transportation and globalization have also contributed enormously to the modern world environment, with significant ecological and social impacts. Environmental change forces local populations to adapt their lifestyles accordingly, and stray farther from traditions. These changes can occur gradually or rapidly and have intense impacts on the local population. Attempting to adjust to these changes as they are occurring is a major challenge throughout the modern world.

Through art-making and research, my Senior Comprehensive Project examines the conditions by which environments change (specifically in Meadville and Mongolia) and the consequential impacts on lifestyle of local residents. This is done by focusing on natural landscape in Mongolia, and built environment in Meadville.

The twentieth century marked substantial social, environmental and economic changes on the global scale. One overarching development in the 1900's was the advent of a truly globalized market, and what became known as globalization. Advancements in transportation, manufacturing, and communications enabled faster, cheaper and more reliable exchange of goods and information beginning most significantly in the 20th century (Hummels, 2007). These developments paved the way for the global economy that characterizes today's modern world.

Mongolian pastoralists and Northwest Pennsylvanians live in hugely different physical environments, with regard to climate, and terrain as well as architecture and industry. As a result of their different histories, access to resources, and means of interaction outside their immediate environments, these groups live very different lifestyles. However they are similar in the impacts and challenges that globalization has imposed on their lifestyle and environment.

I am interested in the relationship between natural and built environment and the role of culture and lifestyle within it. I am also intrigued by the individual lives and stories that comprise these narratives. Oral histories by senior citizens in Meadville and herders in Mongolia have been integral to shaping a meaningful and thorough study.

In conjunction with my research I have created artwork that explores visual similarities between elements of built and natural environment, both of which are compiled of intricate infrastructural systems. I am interested in the visual connections that link Meadville and Mongolia's respective circumstances. My artwork connects Meadville's industrial history to Mongolia's natural one through an exploration of common themes, and images. For example, empty storefronts in Meadville and abandoned grazing plots in Monglia, or the contours of Mongolia's mountainous skyline as compared to the structures of Meadville. Meadville and

Mongolia face similar challenges, primarily at the hands of globalization. While my research focuses on Meadville and Mongolia, the artwork and analysis reflect a broader context that is informed both by my research and personal experience.

In addition to my research and analysis, it is important that I consider my role within this project as a primary connection between Meadville and Mongolia. My decision to spend time in these places was founded in a similar sense of curiosity and a desire to learn from the unfamiliar. While globalization, and environmental hardships are common themes throughout my research, my personal development and process of adjustment to each place connects Mongolia and Meadville on a more intimate level.

2. METHODS

For this project I have explored how changes in built and natural environment have comparatively contributed to lifestyle change in Mongolia and Meadville. I have focused specifically on the experiences of two groups that I feel personally connected to: nomadic herders in Mongolia and senior citizens in Northwest Pennsylvania. In both cases I am comparing today's lifestyle to changes that have occurred within the contemporary population's lifetime.

This Senior Comprehensive Project investigates the conditions by which environments change, examines the consequential impacts on lifestyle in Meadville and Mongolia and explores the role of globalization in those changes through research, writing and art making. I have focused on natural landscape in Mongolia, and built environment in Meadville. Both settings exhibit fluctuating environmental, economic and cultural stability.

Mongolia's nomadic herding population is heavily reliant on a degrading natural landscape, while Meadville's degradation is manifested in empty storefronts and countless "for rent" signs on homes. The scale and impact of these degradations has a range of implications that affect the health and stability of thousands of Mongolians and Meadville residents. To gather information about environment and lifestyle changes in Meadville and Mongolia I have combined interviews, archival research and personal observation.

2.1 Methods - Mongolia

During my semester abroad in Mongolia during the Spring of 2009 I conducted independent research to observe the human experience of desertification, understand how herders are coping with desertification's challenges and assess the sufficiency of government aid being provided. Using a translator, I traveled throughout Mongolia's central provinces interviewing herders, politicians, professionals and Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) representatives in town and province centers as well as throughout the countryside and capital city, Ulaanbaater. I asked each interviewee to describe local environmental changes, assess the severity of desertification in the region, describe the adjustments they have implemented to cope with these changes and describe any outside aid they are receiving. I also questioned herders about government services, observed health changes, access to healthcare and knowledge of desertification's causes. Many of my interviews resulted in hours spent with families, sharing food and stories. This research experience was incredibly meaningful and a highly effective way to learn.

For my project I have built on my research from Mongolia. I have reflected on and reviewed my experience by rereading my journals and assignments and by furthering my archival research.

I interviewed the following people in central Mongolian provinces of Arkhangai, Bayanhongor, Dorn-Govi, Hentii, Hovsgol, and Uverhangai:

> Herders: Norjmaa (Hentii), Munck-Ochir and family (Hentii), Camel Herder (Dorn-Govi), Duujee (reindeer herder in Hovsgol), Enkhtuya (Shaman), Myagmarsuren (Hovsgol), Purevdorj (Hovsgol), Naranmandakh (Uverhangai), Altantsetseg (Bayanhongor), Natsagdorj (Bayanhongor), Delger (Bayanhongor), Bayaraa (Bayanhongor), Dorjdagea (Uverhangai)
>
> Administrators: Ministry of Environment Representative (Dorn-Govi), Oyunga (Murun),Dulamsuren (Environment Rep., Murun), Khovolaa (Doctor, Tsetserleg), Oyunsaikhan (Environment Rep., Tsetserleg), Gansukh (Bayanhongor town Governor), Enkhbold Sumiya (Swiss agency for Development and Cooperation, Coping with Desertification Project)

2.2 Methods - Meadville

As a Freshman, making the transition from New York City to Meadville, I felt a distinct need to break away from the bubble-like nature of campus life and supplement my academic studies with "real world" experience by getting involved off-campus. My primary involvement has been with Active Aging as a volunteer and, this year, a drawing teacher. Active Aging is a non-residential senior citizen center in downtown Meadville and throughout Crawford Country that provides a range of services to older adults including meals, medical and financial assistance, a variety of classes and workshops and opportunities for social interaction. At Active Aging I have built meaningful relationships with many of the patrons. For my research and

throughout my involvement at Active Aging I have utilized oral histories to bring Meadville's past to life.

During the last 100 years Meadville has undergone major economic fluctuations based on the presence of local industries. Numerous technological innovations originated in Meadville, including, perhaps most famously, the zipper. The city's economic decline reflects the difficulty of competing in a globalized market. I am focusing primarily on senior citizens because they have directly experienced the progression of local economic and industrial changes. I been involved with Active Aging since Freshman year and have utilized my connections and experiences there. I have held a small discussion group with five senior women in addition to four individual interviews.

The Crawford County Historical Society has also been an incredible resource. I have interviewed Anne Stewart, author of numerous publications on Meadville's history, multiple times as well as other visitors to the Historical Society. With Stewart's connection I have held a discussion group with four men between the ages of 50 and 85, and interviewed another 70 year old man individually. I also interviewed Meadville residents who are actively involved in Meadville's development to learn about the process and progress of local redevelopment.

I interviewed the following people in Meadville:

> Andy Walker (Pennsylvania Environmental Council), Amara Geffen (CEED), Eric Pallant (Allegheny College)
> Historical Society: Anne Stewart, Bob Ilisevich, Tom Barrett, Jim, Jim and Lee,
> Active Aging: Ann Domingo, June Walker, Barbara Henretty, Shirley Temple, Dorothy and Holly Hallobaugh

2.3 Methods - Artwork

The artwork for this project directly reflects my personal experiences and sentiments towards Meadville and Mongolia. I used layers of transparent papers and plastics to create a hanging installation that visually compares central concepts between the two places. I used the Mongolian ger (felt tent used by herders) and the Meadville Market House to symbolize each place repeatedly throughout the piece.

I did rubbings with a wax crayon as well as oil-based ink printing to repeat images throughout my work. These techniques refer to relief printmaking processes where areas are cut away to remain white when printed. The remaining surface is then covered thinly with ink or rubbed through paper, or any printing surface. These images were cut into linoleum blocks and can be used repeatedly. I used recurring rubbed and printed images of trains, churches, gers, goats and others to supplement drawings. Many of my drawings and prints were covered in a thin layer of beeswax to give them a softer color and texture.

My work is physically organized to visually reflect the concepts and lessons I explored in my research. There is a central section with two protruding arms that run parallel to each other from a common end. One arm is comprised of images that pertain to Meadville, and the other refers to Mongolia. The central portion has images that combine Mongolia and Meadville through images, color and concept. The installation is a sort of U shape that allows the viewer to walk between the arms to a certain point. I have created an environment that surrounds the viewer with images and shapes of varying sizes and media.

Meadville and Mongolia are spatially separated by the way they hang, and are also organized by color. I used reddish-yellow paper and ink to signify Mongolia and and black-white

for Meadville. The two sections meet in the middle where I have drawings, relief prints and paper cuttings of people and globalization, two overarching themes that connect the two places. The shape and delicate layers of my piece evokes the transient and subtle nature of the situations in Mongolia and Meadville.

I am attracted to the movement and sense of breath that comes from hanging work. I love the soft sound of the layers swaying and the shadows cast as they overlap. My artwork addresses complex and multi-faceted situations. Physically using layers to depict these settings is accurate to the complexity and subtlety I portray. The shape and texture of the work also reflects concepts within the traditions I have researched. My work is influenced by Eastern and Mongolian traditions as well as numerous contemporary and old master artists. The degree to which my work is Eastern influenced will be further discussed in my Mongolia section.

In concept and execution my work is influenced by numerous artists and experiences from a variety of backgrounds and sources. Julie Mehretu (Figures 1, 2), Shahzia Sikander (Figures 3, 4), and Mia Pearlman have been most relevant throughout this project and in my recent development as an artist. These three contemporary female artists utilize layers to build up images and concepts. Their imagery is unconventional and imaginative. Each woman connects concepts in unexpected ways, through highly energetic and complex techniques. Mehretu's use of marks, Sikander's layers and traditional imagery and Pearlman's complex paper cutting and use of space have been guiding examples of successful and inspiring works.

Julie Mehretu has been particularly relevant. Mehretu exemplifies variation of marks, and use of different surfaces. She explores concepts of architecture, urban grids and social behavior through layers of drawings on transparencies (Art 21). Mehretu's lines are highly dynamic, fresh

and compelling. Her drawings, prints and painting are thoroughly worked and built up, and highlight the inter-connected nature of all things. Mehretu's prints and drawings have captivated since I was initially introduced to them. She combines the quality and proficiency of master draftsmen like Rembrandt Van Rijn with contemporary curiosity and exploration.

In my exploration of texture and experimentation with paper cutting I am inspired by Mia Pearlman's intricate and energetic cut paper work (Figure 5). Pearlman uses cutting as a form of mark making and achieves beautiful line quality in this way. I am intrigued by the layers she creates of intricate cutting that build up incredibly dynamic sculptural surfaces.

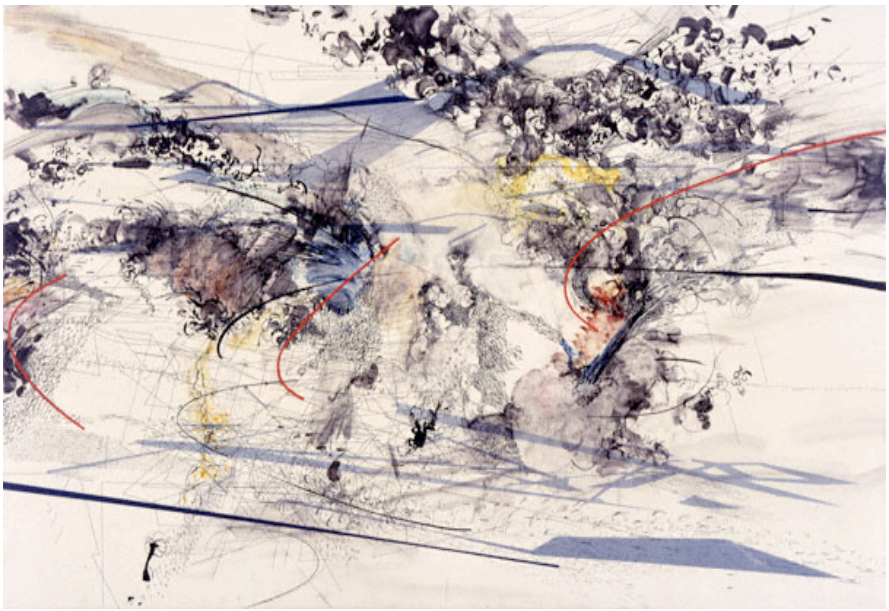


Figure 1
Julie Mehretu,
Excerpt (Riot), 2003
ink and acrylic on canvas
32 x 54".
http://www.artscenecal.com/ArtistsFiles/MehretuJ/MehretuJFile/MehretuJPics/MehretuJ2.html



Figure 2
Julie Mehretu
Atlantic Wall, 2008-09
Ink and acrylic on canvas
304.8 x 426.7 cm.
http://www.carliergebauer.com/artists/julie-mehretu/grey-area.html



Figure 3
Shahzia Sikander
Hoods Red Rider #2, 1997
Vegetable color, dry pigment, watercolor, and tea on wasli paper
10.125x7.125"
http://www.shahziasikander.com/essay01.html



Figure 4
Shahzia Sikander
To Reveal or Not to Reveal, 2004
Acrylic, gouache, and ink on tissue paper
Dimensions variable
http://www.shahziasikander.com/essay03.html



Figure 5
Mia Pearlman
EDDY, 2008
11' x 12.5' x 14'
Sears Peyton Gallery, NY
http://miapearlman.com/CUT_PAPER/cut_paper.htm

3. MONGOLIA

I arrived at my host family's ger in Bayanhongor aimag of Mongolia just before a severe dust storm. As dusk settled in, the winds violently churned the steppe and air, making one indistinguishable, painful blend of grainy wind. The sky was an ominous shade of whitish-brown and it was difficult to see beyond the 200 sheep and goats that had compacted themselves, with my host-father's herding, outside the ger. I followed my host parents' lead and distributed squirming baby goats to their mothers for nursing. By the time we returned inside the ger for steaming bowls of salted milk tea the wind was smacking the ger's roof flaps loudly against its curved surface. Particles of dust from the stove and outside were suspended in the brightness of the single light bulb, powered by a small solar panel hanging on the outside of the roof.

My family's ger stood alone just over the lip of a large hill. Once the dust settled I would see the breathtaking view; miles of steppe followed by vast and beautiful mountain ranges. I watched as my host parents began their evening routine. With a thick cutting board on her lap, my mother rhythmically chopped hunks of dried mutton and placed them into boiling water. I already perceived the scarcity of water in the region and in the following days would marvel at the size of the ice chunks my father balanced on horseback from a nearby stream. As my mother prepared the evening meal my father meticulously tallied the daily sheep and goat births in a thin white notebook. My parents had removed their deils (traditional robes and staple article of clothing for herders) to reveal denim jeans and short sleeve shirts. My host-father turned on a small red radio, listening intently to a crackling voice for weather updates and music. My new home was cozy in the warm aroma of the dung-fueled fire, as I settled into my first night as a Mongolian herder.

3.1 Mongolia - Introduction

Mongolia is one of the most sparsely populated countries in the world and rests between China to the South and Russia to the North, in Central Asia (CIA World Factbook) (Figure 6).



Figure 6
Map of Mongolia
image:www.topnews.in/files/mongolia_map.jpg

Mongolia has an incredibly long and rich history. It was the capital of the Mongol Empire, the largest empire in the history of the world, and the birthplace of the empire's founder, Genghis Khan, a national hero. Mongolia's vast land is primarily arid and dry steppe and mountains. The Gobi Desert constitutes the country's south and the Altai mountains occupy the country's West (CIA World Factbook).

Approximately 30% of Mongolia's population are herders (Mongolian Society for Range Management 2010). The herding lifestyle has been practiced for centuries and is the backbone of Mongolia's culture. Herders typically own any combination of goats, sheep, yaks, horses, camels and cows. Most remaining herders in Mongolia are nomadic or semi-nomadic, referring to the frequency with which they change location and the style of their home. Herders make their income from their animals. They sell skins, meat, cashmere and milk products from goats, yaks and cattle. Access to the cashmere market has had significant impact on herders in recent decades, and contributed substantially to increases in goat population and land degradation (Wachter, 2009).

Even in the modern world, the herding lifestyle remains largely self-sufficient. Ideally, herders survive on the money they make from their animals and the meat, milk and cashmere resources that their livestock provide. However, globalization, government instability, dzuds (harsh winter conditions combined with dry summers) and land degradation have contributed to rising poverty throughout Mongolia and made the herding lifestyle increasingly vulnerable to harsh weather, the changing environment and lack of aid.

Overpopulation of cities, particularly the capital, Ulaanbaater, is a direct result of herders being unable to maintain their traditional lifestyle. Thousands of former herders settle on the outskirts of Ulaanbaater in search of economic stability. Approximately 60% of Ulaanbaater residents live this way, disconnected from any semblance of sanitation, water or heating infrastructure (Lawrence, 2009). These settlements are known as ger districts and they extend for miles around Ulaanbaater, contributing to dangerous air pollution that is painful to breathe.

These “ger districts,” pose a number of environmental, social and medical hazards. They lack infrastructure for water and sewage and create dangerous air pollution from highly inefficient stoves which are used for heating and cooking. Fuel costs are high and winters are dangerously cold. These neighborhoods are frequently not monitored by law enforcement officials and are not accessible by most major bus lines.

The majority of ger district residents have moved from the countryside to the city in search of work, access to medical care, and an opportunity for survival. In the last two decades since Mongolia’s transition to capitalism, maintaining the herding lifestyle has proven impossible for many herders, and highly stressful for others.

3.2 Mongolia - Geography/Environment

Mongolia has a harsh and vulnerable natural environment, with a wide range of geographic and climatic conditions. The climate is desert and continental, with high variability in daily temperature change (CIA World Factbook). Mongolia’s high elevation, mountainous-steppe landscape, high evaporation rates, and harsh climate exacerbate the effects of environmental hardships like water scarcity and desertification (Desertification in Mongolia, 2009). Desertification is a major environmental challenge throughout modern Mongolia. Water scarcity and depleted availability of grass for livestock, among other impacts of desertification, have made it very difficult for herders to keep their animals well fed and maintain a stable income (Frisch ISP, 2009). Livestock and human population increases, and changes in climate, land use, and land management have imposed significant strain on the health of the land (Archer et. al., 1995; Walker and Abel, 1999; Christensen, 2003).

3.2.1 DESERTIFICATION

Desertification applies to land areas experiencing "land degradation in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas resulting from various factors, including climatic variation and human activities," as defined by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (Desertification in Mongolia, 2009). Globally, the scale and consequences of desertification vary depending on its severity in a given region; it is most threatening to dryland regions, like much of Mongolia.

Drylands compose 41% of the Earth's land surface, and are home to approximately 2 billion people (Mutter, 2006). Desertification is a particular threat to the drylands of sub-Saharan Africa and central Asia, where poverty rates directly reflect environmental conditions (GreenFacts). Drylands are highly susceptible to climate variations and harsh conditions, specifically droughts and dzuds (harsh winter and dry summer) in Mongolia.

Many of the world's dry land regions are reliant on natural environment-based industries such as agriculture or livestock. Therefore, residents rely deeply on the land to support their livelihoods. Ninety percent of the world's dry land inhabitants live in developing countries and struggle with the hardships of life in those conditions and in the face of growing environmental challenges (GreenFacts).

3.2.2 DESERTIFICATION IN MONGOLIA

The impacts of desertification are clear throughout Mongolia, and have increased in the last two decades since Mongolia's transition to a market economy as a result of impact on land management practices (Desertification in Mongolia, 2009; Greenmongolia. mn). Water sources

have dried, dust storms have increased, livestock are facing malnourishment and herding families who have been able to maintain their lifestyle thus far are sincerely concerned for their futures in an environment degraded by desertification.

Desertification poses a major threat to herders, and impacts their daily lives. It has increased respiratory illnesses, forced nomadic herders to resettle more often, caused animal and human deaths both from dust storms and from droughts, caused significant water scarcity, limited the health and growth of livestock, and stinted the income of herding families (Mongolian Society for Range Management, 2010; Frisch ISP, 2009). Certain NGO's have stepped forward to help herders cope with desertification by providing feed supplements, veterinary services, and blankets. However, much of the herding population remains in need of aid (Frisch ISP, 2009). The government's response has been severely insufficient, especially compared to the thorough services provided to herders during the decades of Soviet control (Nixson and Walters, 2006).

The struggle to cope with and combat desertification encompasses financial, cultural, medical and environmental contributors and factors. The health and well being of Mongolia's natural environment is essential to the country's financial and social stability, as it is directly connected to the health and well being of the population and Mongolia's national identity (Desertification in Mongolia, 2009).

3.3 Mongolia - History

3.3.1 INTRODUCTION

In 1911, after centuries of Chinese rule under the Qing Dynasty, Mongolia declared its independence. This achievement was almost immediately followed by decades of Soviet occupation, which strictly controlled the country's government, economy and society. The Red Army aided in establishing and protecting a Mongolian state and contributed to forming its Communist Party, known as The People's Party, which came to power in 1920. Soviet control provided a range of outcomes, both positive and negative. Urban and rural individuals and families were granted financial stability, cities were well cared for, and a highly functioning infrastructure was established to account for trash, resources, food, property (including livestock) and all other measures of daily life. On the other hand the Soviets violently attempted to eliminate the presence of Buddhism and religion in Mongolia and severely limited other social and political freedoms. Mongolia's communist party, in conjunction with its Soviet supporters, was most focused on collectivization of herds, industrialization and urbanization (Rossabi, 2005). Many older Mongolians who can compare the "socialist time," as it is known, to the current pollution and unstable infrastructure of today claim to desire a return to Soviet-style control, when basic services were available and well organized.

Mongolia gained independence from China in the early 1920's. It was then promptly taken under Soviet control where it remained heavily monitored until the early 1990's. Under the guidance of the newly established USSR, Mongolia became the second Communist country is the world's history (Rossabi, 2005). Leninism and Marxism were emphasized in schools, the Russian Cyrillic alphabet replaced traditional Uyghur script, industries and cities were

established and developed rapidly, and agriculture systems were implemented throughout the country, all resulting from Soviet implementation (Rossabi, 2005). The government encouraged migration from the countryside to urban centers, and provided jobs, urban infrastructure and housing opportunities. In 1956 less than 25% of Mongolia's population was urban, by 1978 more than 50% lived in towns and cities (Rossabi, 2005). In this time span, Mongolia's overall population grew substantially, nearly tripling in size between 1950 and 1989 (Rossabi, 2005).

In the late 80's and early 90's as the USSR began to falter and Mongolia could no longer rely on Soviet support. A group of young Mongolians formed a pro-Democracy movement and spearheaded the country's primarily peaceful government transition. In 1991 Mongolia officially severed its ties with Soviet Russia and formed a democratic government, operating within the capitalist market.

Mongolia continues to struggle with the transition to democracy and the impacts of its contemporary political situation. The shift to democracy has opened the doors to numerous freedoms that would have been unattainable under Soviet control. However, the scale and abruptness of the switch has also made the government and its people highly vulnerable to environmental, financial and political challenges including corruption and poor access to institutions (Rossabi, 2005). Mongolia became an open democracy from a heavily constrained Soviet state so quickly that it had little time to buffer its economy and infrastructure, the effects of which are still felt today.

3.3.2 TRANSITION

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of Mongolia's socialist government system led almost immediately to massive inflation, high unemployment and increases in crime (Humphrey, 2002; Nixson and Walters, 2006)). The order and organization that the Soviet Regime had maintained was exploded to make way for the freedoms of independence and democracy. The transition was a massive undertaking with an abundance of social, financial and environmental consequences including corruption and illegal money-making activities (Humphrey, 2002; Rossabi, 2005).

Liberalization of prices, access to an open market and lack of government support led to a sharp rise in prices and caused many companies to go bankrupt (Rossabi, 2005). The subsequent decline in production and rise in unemployment developed into a major crisis within the first decade of Mongolian democracy (Rossabi, 2005). Before the early 1990's Mongolians had little to no exposure to the outside world. Following the transition they had to establish new systems of managing the country's bountiful natural resources. As a result of the speed with which this took place and the large amount of existing resources like copper, exploitation and corruption became prevalent (Rossabi, 2005).

The transition significantly exacerbated and made more obvious the disparity between rich and poor (Humphrey, 2002; Nixson and Walters, 2006). By the mid 1990's the wealthiest 20 percent of the population had eighteen times the income of the poorest 20 percent (EIU Mongolia, 1995). Following the transition, poverty levels rose from nearly 0% in pre-transition Mongolia to one third of the population being defined as "poor" (Nixson and Walters, 2006). The rural poor no longer had the subsidized services to aid them in time of drought and dzud (harsh

winter and dry summer), which had been integral to the pastoral livestock sector's stability under Socialism (Nixson and Walters, 2006). These eliminated services and institutions included farming collectives, access to veterinary services, maintenance of wells for livestock, and access to rural markets (Nixson and Walters, 2006). The result of their collapse was a growth in a barter economy and increase in livestock hoarding, leading to overgrazing of pastureland and other negative consequences for the environment and culture. As of 2008, Mongolia had approximately 43 million head of livestock (Trachtenberg, 2009). Severe dzuds in 1996-1997 and 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 significantly reduced livestock populations and sent thousands of herders to the cities in search of better lives.

3.4 Mongolia- Herding

3.4.1 Introduction

Herding is a staple of Mongolian culture and has been for centuries. Under Socialism, herders operated under government-run collectives, known as negdels, which provided heavily subsidized support mechanisms. These institutions helped to ease the difficulty of herding, by providing services like well-maintenance, and veterinary care for livestock (Nixson and Walters, 2006). Under this system, animals were property of the state, livestock size and pasture use were heavily monitored (Fernandez-Giminez, 1997). One of the most significant results of Mongolia's switch to the capital system was the privatization of livestock which took place in from 1991-1993 (Nixson and Walters, 2006).

3.4.2 PRIVATIZATION OF LIVESTOCK

Following the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989 and Mongolia's switch to a Democratic state in 1991, came privatization of property. Individuals were permitted to own their own livestock for the first time in decades. At that time, the collectives distributed 25 million animals to their members through a voucher system, which was highly subject to bias and unequal distribution (Rossabi, 2005). The abrupt change in government system has led to a livestock population that exceeds the carrying capacity of the land. In non-dzud years, privatization of livestock has led to annual livestock population increases in the millions (Figure 7).

Livestock Numbers	
Year	Number
2004	28,027,900
2005	30,398,800
2006	34,802,900
2007	40,263,800
2008	43,288,400

Source: FAOSTAT

Figure 7. Trachtenberg, E. (2009). Mongolia Livestock Situation. *USDA Foreign Agricultural Service: Global Agricultural Information Network (GAIN Report)*, *MG9002*, 44.

Herding had numerous benefits under Mongolia's socialist system. Though there was little opportunity to make much profit, herders had a consistent income and received reliable services from the government, with Soviet support. In addition, the natural environment was more resilient during 1900's due to the smaller livestock population in Mongolia and the decreased effects of global climate change. The support services provided under Socialism effectively disappeared overnight with the government transition (Wachter, 2009).

Many herders prefer herding under Mongolia's market economy, because of the potential for bigger profits. However, herders are now facing bigger obstacles and more uncertainties than

ever before. The transition to democracy has opened the doors to numerous freedoms that would have been unattainable under Soviet control, however the transition has also made the government and its people highly vulnerable to environmental, financial and political challenges including corruption and poor access to institutions (Nixson and Walters, 2006).

3.4.3 CASHMERE

Access to the global cashmere market has significantly impacted livestock populations, the herding lifestyle, and land quality (Wachter, 2009; Trachtenberg, 2009). Mongolia's goat population has increased most drastically of all livestock sectors, causing significant degradation to the land. Of the livestock varieties, goats are most degrading to the land because of their grazing patterns and hoof shape (Wachter, 2009). In addition to their links to the cashmere market, the goat population has increased because they are resilient, breed quickly and can survive on sparser resources (Wachter, 2009). Since privatization, access to the global cashmere market has given Mongolian herders an additional source of income. However, cashmere prices are highly variable. Between 2008 and 2009 cashmere prices plunged 50% (Wachter, 2009).

Herders frequently respond to lack of profit from cashmere by increasing their herd size. This behavior degrades pastureland further. Cashmere has lead to overpopulation of Mongolia's goat population, which has grown more drastically in recent years than other livestock. In 2009, Mongolia's goat population alone was approximately 20 million in 2009, the highest ever recorded, as compared to 5 million during the Soviet period (Wachter, 2009; Trachtenberg, 2009).

Ineffective cashmere marketing is largely to blame for the industry's variability (Wachter,

2009). According to a New York Times business report on Mongolian pastoralism, China buys two thirds of Mongolia's cashmere exports, a third of which is smuggled illegally to avoid export taxes. Mongolian sellers frequently accept agreements for lower than market value (Wachter, 2009). An improved trading system would quickly and effectively help herders economically.

3.5 Mongolia - Discussion

Though the transition to a new political and economic system has been and will continue to be highly challenging, some amount of privatization was essential and inevitable (Rossabi, 2006; Nixson and Walters, 2006). Today, Mongolia possesses a promising future in numerous industries, particularly mining (Rossabi, 2005). In addition, tourism has grown significantly, particularly compared to the nearly complete isolation enforced during Socialism (Dulguun Batkhsihig). While large, Soviet style apartment buildings in Mongolian cities and town centers are reminders of a more isolated time, interaction with the outside world is now ubiquitous through pop culture, trade and access to numerous modern conveniences that make life easier for urban and rural Mongolians.

The contrasts between Mongolia's urban culture and the rural herding lifestyle provide major political and environmental obstacles. Environmental degradation is forcing many people to settle in urban centers, where pollution is high and the skills and values of the herder are largely unhelpful in earning an income. For the past two decades, Mongolia has undergone enormous change and is still settling into its new identity.

3.6 Mongolia - Artwork

My work is directly influenced by Eastern tradition in technique and presentation, in a number of ways. The overall shape of the work is reminiscent of landscape, mountain, Buddhist prayer flags (Figure 8) and prayer scarves (Figure 9). Prayer flags and scarves are hung at special locations throughout Mongolia and the world to spread "beneficent vibrations" (Tibetan Prayer Flags). Prayer flags and prayer scarves decorate Mongolia's numerous spiritual spots, sometimes a bridge, tree or location on the steppe.

Buddhist Thangkas (Figure 11 and Figure 12), which depict deities and aspects of the enlightened mind, use a similar definitive line quality. Thangkas are displayed in places of worship and meditation. They are generally highly saturated and colorful to encourage a positive and altruistic atmosphere for prayer. The act of creating a Thangka is in itself an act of spirituality and devotion (Tibetan Prayer Flags)

In addition to the influence of Eastern religious art, my work is also inspired by the line quality of Japanese and Eastern-style ink drawings and woodblock prints. For example, those of Katsushika Hokusai (Figure 10). The level of detail and control indicates meditative and highly focused nature of drawing in this way. I value the calmness and concentration that comes from this sort of work and greatly admire the subtle variations of marks, and values that make these works so compelling.

In "Mongolia, Meadville and Vice Versa" I used media, techniques and images that were challenging and intriguing to me, and also connected to the concepts of Eastern tradition within my research. As I worked I began to see more and more parallels between the methods by which I created the art and the themes and concepts I alluded to.



Figure 8. Tibetan Buddhist prayer flags on mountain outside Ulaanbaater, Mongolia
Paula Frisch, 3/2009



Figure 9. Buddhist prayer scarves on sacred tree in Mongolia
Paula Frisch 4/2009



Figure 10. Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849) Head of an Old Man, Japan
Head of an Old Man - Katsushika Hokusai - www.katsushikahokusai.org. (n.d.). *Katsushika Hokusai - The complete works*. Retrieved May 2, 2011, from http://www.katsushikahokusai.org/Head-of-an-Old-Man.html



Figure 11. Buddhist Thangka ink drawing of Tara done by artist in Ulaanbaater, Mongolia
Paula Frisch 5/2009



Figure 12. Painted Thangka by contemporary Mongolian artist, Soloymaa
Dreaming Of Danzan Ravjaa: . (n.d.). *Dreaming Of Danzan Ravjaa*. Retrieved May 2, 2011, from http://danzanravjaa.typepad.com/my_weblog/2007/05/index.html

4. Meadville

On one of the first snowfalls of the season I made my way to the Meadville Market House to celebrate local foods and Meadville spirit. As I approached, the outside of the Market House glowed warmly against the silhouettes of eager families waiting in line for carriage rides around town. Vendors lined the inside of the historic Market House building, offering delicious locally-produced foods and samples to entice visitors of all ages. College students, Meadville residents, local artisans, farmers, and business owners mingled and shared in the festive holiday atmosphere. The Market House's narrow aisles of daal, freshly crushed peanut butter, and unsulphured apricots were crowded in the bustle of greetings and taste testing. On neighboring streets other local businesses were open late and eager to accommodate that night's surprisingly large turn out.

On that night in December, Meadville's vitality shown through. The town was alive with community spirit and accomplishment. Walking home afterwards with friends, sharing discounted-Creative Crust pizza, I felt a sense of commitment and belonging.

4.1 MEADVILLE - INTRODUCTION

Meadville, Pennsylvania is located in the Northwestern corner of the state, close to the Ohio border, with the larger cities of Erie to the North and Pittsburgh to the South. The region possesses a number of scenic attractions, including lush nature and historical sites. This area is known for manufacturing a range of goods, primarily throughout the first half of the 20th century. Products included zippers, chocolate chips, boilers and corsets, and many more (An Industrial Magazine, 1912). Magazines from the early 1900's describe Meadville as a "famous

metropolis of one of the richest and most prosperous farming and manufacturing centers in the United States," and "one of the leading cities in the great state of Pennsylvania" (Meadville Daily Messenger, 1905; An Industrial Magazine, 1912). These publications came at a time when industry was building rapidly, jobs were plentiful, and high quality cultural and educational opportunities were available (Stewart, 2001). By 1912 Meadville's population had reached 13,000. It boasted numerous successful industries, 2 newspapers, 28 religious organizations, 2 hospitals, an active and progressive agriculture community, and an electric railway connecting Meadville to the surrounding towns of Linesville and Conneaut Lake (An Industrial Magazine, 1912). Throughout Meadville's history, from settlers to modern tool and die manufacturing, Meadville has been characterized by ingenuity and inventiveness. Its resourceful use of materials, and innovation have been integral to the town's success and development.

Particularly throughout the first half of the 20th century, Meadville was at the forefront of modern invention and engineering. Cultural, economic and political changes that occurred during the mid 1900's changed Meadville's activity considerably during the post-WWII era, the fall of the Soviet Union and the increasingly globalized market of the 1980's. As a result of these factors and their numerous implications, Meadville suffered significantly. The last remaining large-scale industries left Meadville in the early 1980's, leaving difficult conditions behind, including high unemployment, and lack of attention to downtown revitalization.

By the early 1980's,The expanding market and rapid technological advances overseas made Meadville unable to compete in the market in which it had once been at the forefront. Meadville's once booming economy has experienced substantial decline resulting from a growing, globalized market, changes in technology and transportation, increased role of

government and nonprofit institutions and growth of large corporations (Noyelle and Stanback, 1984). The need for self-sufficiency that once pushed the town to produce highly innovative products was diminished by globalization, leaving Meadville in a difficult economic, social and environmental position.

4.2 MEADVILLE - HISTORY

Long time residents of Meadville relish the opportunity to describe the city in its prime during the early to mid 1900's. Smiling, they recall busy Friday nights on Chestnut Street, the first pizza parlor in town, railroad passenger service, and a Market House brimming with fresh produce and local farmers (Active Aging Focus Group, 2011). Those were the days when activity, economic stability and community shaped the local lifestyle. Meadville's fertile land and proximity to French Creek made it ideal for settling and later, very conducive to trading and manufacturing (Stewart, 1993). In the early 1900's and throughout the first half of the 20th century Meadville was a prominent industrial city, equipped with numerous educational, cultural and financial opportunities (Meadville Daily Messenger, 1905; An Industrial Magazine 1912).

4.2.1 EARLY YEARS

In the summer of 1787 David Mead arrived in the French Creek Valley. He was attracted to the high quality soil, abundant wildlife, ample forests and proximity to French Creek (Luvaas and Stewart, 1976). The region served as a migration route for Native American groups, though it was no specific group's territory, which made it peaceful and favorable for trade and settling. In the following decades Meadville grew quickly. By the the first half of the 19th century the

population had exceeded 1,000 residents (Luvaas and Stewart, 1976). In the Fall of 1829 the first Canal was opened, an advancement that would contribute significantly to Meadville's progression into the growing market.

Canals brought prosperity to Meadville, ushering in a new level of tourism and trade. Meadville was a largely self-sufficient town at the height of the canals' activity. It boasted numerous merchants, tanneries, and cabinetmakers, a silversmith and a tin-and-iron worker (Luvaas and Stewart, 1976). Stores stocked a range of goods brought via canal or wagon from cities including Philadelphia. Canals marked the beginning of significant progress in transportation, an industry that would define Meadville's development in coming decades.

4.2.2 TRANSPORTATION ERA

The mid-1800's marked the start of the railroad boom, in which Meadville was a central component. Trains could transport more cargo than canals or wagons, and do it faster. By 1850 Meadville had begun construction on its first railroad. In the following decade, when the oil industry emerged in nearby towns, Meadville become the shipping center for local oil and the primary manufacturer of wooden barrels used to contain the oil. Within a few years of oil discovery thousands of barrels of petroleum passed through Meadville per week (Luvaas and Stewart, 1976).

Meadville's investment in railroad quickly became a major characteristic of the town's identity. By the late 1800's Meadville was home to one of the country's largest railroad depots, located close to McHenry Boarding house, a nationally acclaimed dining hall. Numerous lines passed through the town transporting passengers and freight (Luvaas and Stewart, 1976). The

presence of the railroad throughout the next century in America and Northwest Pennsylvania would substantially shape local activity and economic stability.

The early 20th Century brought unprecedented growth to Meadville through expansion of industry and transportation. The railroad network provided transportation of goods and people in and out of bustling Meadville, contributing substantially to social and economic activity. Electric streetcars emerged in the late 1800's to provide transportation throughout town and as far as Cambridge Springs, and later to Erie in 1917 (Luvaas and Stewart, 1976).

The first bus was introduced in Meadville in 1925, which would have significant implications for changes in the city in coming years (Luvaas and Stewart, 1976). Just as the canals had been replaced by the quick and powerful railroad, the trolley car system was made obsolete by buses which could operate faster and more flexibly.

The proliferation of individually-owned automobiles in the first half of the 20th century contributed significantly to the lifestyle of Meadville residents. Cars enabled people to live in bigger homes outside of downtown and commute farther distances to work. The American Interstate highway system grew significantly at this time. Thus began the slow decline of downtown's vitality, a phenomenon seen nationwide in the late 60's and 70's (Stewart, 3/1/11, Active Aging Focus Group, 2011). Interstate 79, large-scale shopping malls, chain stores and fast-food franchises all began to emerge after the 1950's and took a significant toll on the economic activity downtown (Luvaas and Stewart, 1976; Historical Society Focus Group, 3/5/11; Active Aging Focus Group, 3/4/11).

4.2.3 INDUSTRIAL ERA

The turn of the 20th century was a time of innovation and technological advancement. Numerous industries and local businesses were moving into Meadville, manufacturing a wide range of goods and employing thousands (Luvaas and Stewart, 1976). Based on its economic success and activity, Meadville entered the 20th century on a very high note.

By 1904 four major industries had settled in Meadville. Those were Champion Tool Company, McCrosky Reamer Company, Howard Stereoscope Company, and the Spirella Corset Company (Luvaas and Stewart, 1976). In the following decade Spirella Corset Company would rise to be the biggest made-to-order Corset Company in the world (An Industrial Magazine, 1912). At its height, Spirella employed over a thousand people and occupied 22 city buildings. In 1912 one out of every twenty seven local residents was employed by Spirella (Luvaas and Stewart, 1976).

Meadville's industrial growth has experienced considerable fluctuation as the pressures from the outside market, technology and trade changed. By 1929 the Spirella Company left Meadville to consolidate its operations in Niagara Falls (Luvaas and Stewart, 1976). At the time Meadville was so prosperous and economically stable that the departure of the major manufacturing company had little economic impact on town residents (Stewart, 4/1/11). Other industries like Keystone View Company and the advent of synthetic fiber producer, American Viscose, during the Depression Era, quickly filled the employment demand left by Spirella's departure (Stewart, 4/1/11). Meadville was known as "Depression proof," its employment and industries were so consistent and inventive that one of the worst economic depressions in American history had little impact on the town's economy (Stewart 4/1/11; Thompson, 1982;

Active Aging Focus Group, 3/4/11). In 1929-1930 Meadville's rate of new buildings increased by 13.6 percent, leading other Pennsylvania cities (Luvaas and Stewart, 1976). In the late 1920's numerous industries provided consistent jobs, Allegheny College had recently expanded and other educational opportunities were in full swing (Luvaas and Stewart, 1976).

4.2.3.1 AMERICAN VISCOSE

In the late 1920's, speculators representing the American Viscose Company, a synthetic fibers manufacturer, came from Virginia to Northwest Pennsylvania in search of a proper site for a new manufacturing plant (Stewart 4/1/11; Thompson, 1982, Luvaas and Stewart, 1976). At the time, synthetic fibers were an exciting and promising advancement that would be very useful for clothing and equipment during World War II. synthetic fibers quickly become popular in everyday attire as well. In 1927 Rayon outsold silk in the US for the first time (Shaffer, 1961). The manufacturing process would require ample amounts of water, labor and access to transportation. The French Creek Valley could provide all of those things, with plentiful water sources below French and Cussewago Creeks, a skilled and plentiful work force and active railroad network (Stewart, 4/1/11). American Viscose's decision to build in Vernon Township, across French Creek from Meadville area, was hailed by the local paper as the "greatest industrial news in Meadville's history" (Viscose company to locate new plant, 1928).

Within its first year of production American Viscose provided 500 jobs, and quickly began construction on its second plant (Stewart 4/1/11; Luvaas and Stewart, 1976). In 1938 Viscose completed another expansion, doubling the size of its plant. An additional unit was added in 1948 (Meadville FMC Outlet Has Its Banner Changed). The following decades saw

extreme rise and decline as the market and technology changed. In 1961 Viscose employed 1400 workers (Shaffer, 1961).

4.2.3.2 TALON

Talon was a major part of Meadville's industrial history and followed a similar path of rise and decline to American Viscose. In the 1930's Talon, American Viscose and the Railroad all employed approximately 1,000 people (Thompson, 1982). By the 1970's unemployment had reached 7% and Talon and American Viscose, which was known as Avtex by that time, began to feel the pressure of imported zippers and fabrics. By the 1980's unemployment hit 9.2%, reaching 11.4% in 1981 (Thompson, 1982). At the time that Talon and Avtex left Meadville, and in the decades leading up to their departure, the textile industry had been consolidating in North Carolina. Companies were also dispersing overseas to Mexico, China and elsewhere (Walker, 2011)

4.2.4 Post-WWII Era

The post-WWII era was met with changing industrial demands and new international trade opportunities which altered Meadville's role in manufacturing, and contributed directly to the local built environment and lifestyle of residents. The chain stores and fast food franchises that emerged in response to traffic from I-79 put substantial pressure on locally-owned small businesses (Luvaas and Stewart, 1976). The supermarket also emerged at this time to replace small grocery stores and suppliers (Luvaas and Stewart, 1976). Throughout the country, the post-

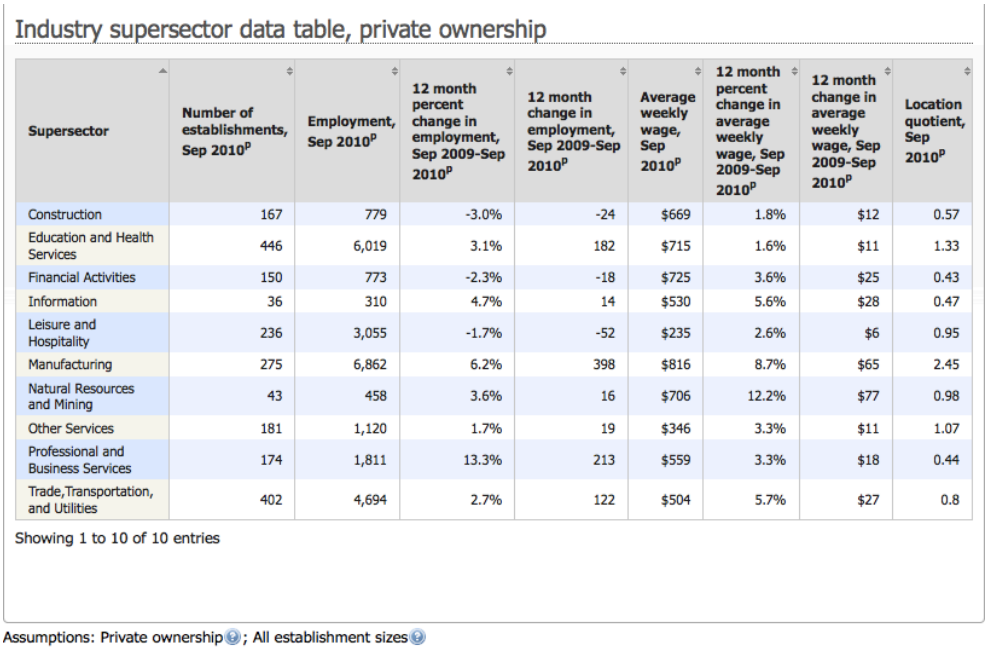
WWII era also gave rise to shopping malls (centralized, out of town shopping) and suburbia (Luvaas and Stewart, 1976).

Following WWII was a distinct change in American culture. Following the war there was increased interest in owning land and larger houses and individual property (Geffen, 3/10/11, Stewart). Attention shifted from downtown to suburbia and towards a new wave of consumerism. Before World War II Meadville industries had encouraged their workers to be involved in the community and assume leadership roles beyond their work. This sentiment disappeared after the war (Stewart, 1993).

4.3 MEADVILLE - REDEVELOPMENT

4.3.1 EMPLOYMENT

Employment in the US went through significant reform in the mid to late 1900's. Emphasis on manufacturing declined as jobs and production went overseas (Domingo, 3/4/11). Employment in the service sectors and corporate jobs increased while manufacturing stagnated in the 70's and then declined (Noyelle and Stanback, 1984; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010). This shift away from manufacturing impacted Meadville directly. Today manufacturing remains the biggest employer in Crawford County. Followed by education and health services and leisure and hospitality (Figure 13)



Industry supersector data table, private ownership

Supersector	Number of establishments, Sep 2010[P]	Employment, Sep 2010[P]	12 month percent change in employment, Sep 2009-Sep 2010[P]	12 month change in employment, Sep 2009-Sep 2010[P]	Average weekly wage, Sep 2010[P]	12 month percent change in average weekly wage, Sep 2009-Sep 2010[P]	12 month change in average weekly wage, Sep 2009-Sep 2010[P]	Location quotient, Sep 2010[P]
Construction	167	779	-3.0%	-24	$669	1.8%	$12	0.57
Education and Health Services	446	6,019	3.1%	182	$715	1.6%	$11	1.33
Financial Activities	150	773	-2.3%	-18	$725	3.6%	$25	0.43
Information	36	310	4.7%	14	$530	5.6%	$28	0.47
Leisure and Hospitality	236	3,055	-1.7%	-52	$235	2.6%	$6	0.95
Manufacturing	275	6,862	6.2%	398	$816	8.7%	$65	2.45
Natural Resources and Mining	43	458	3.6%	16	$706	12.2%	$77	0.98
Other Services	181	1,120	1.7%	19	$346	3.3%	$11	1.07
Professional and Business Services	174	1,811	13.3%	213	$559	3.3%	$18	0.44
Trade,Transportation, and Utilities	402	4,694	2.7%	122	$504	5.7%	$27	0.8

Showing 1 to 10 of 10 entries

Assumptions: Private ownership; All establishment sizes

Figure 13 Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2010). QCEW State and County Map: Crawford County: Industry supersector data table. United States Department of Labor. Retrieved April 6, 2011, from beta.bls.gov/maps/cew/PA?period=2010-Q3&industry=10&geo_id=42039&chartData=3&distribution=Quantiles&pos_color=blue&neg_color=orange&showHideChart=hide

4.4 MEADVILLE - DISCUSSION

Meadville has experienced a range of economic fluctuations. Local factors such as construction of Interstate 79, and the implications of Meadville's standing as the county seat as well as global factors like intensified globalization have made today's Meadville almost unrecognizable from the bustling small metropolis of the 1920's and 30's. These factors have taken the focus away from downtown and Meadville's local vitality. Globalization has effected rural America consistently by decreasing industry presence and job opportunities.

Only a few decades ago the streets of Meadville, Pennsylvania bustled with shops, pedestrians, and restaurants. The city's numerous industrial plants were in full swing, and natural gas and oil drilling were very lucrative. As a result of globalization, and finite natural resources, Meadville's environment today is quite different.

The process of change and development is gradual. In the last quarter of a century since Meadville's deepest economic slump, the town has undertaken numerous redevelopment projects including regaining use of the old Avtex facilities for new work spaces, the Impact Meadville project downtown, revitalization of the Meadville Market House and Chestnut Street, and introduced new local businesses like Tattered Corners Bookstore and Creative Crust Bakery, to name a few (Pallant, 2011). Dozens of tool and die shops and manufacturing plants are still in operation, the Meadville Medical Center and Allegheny College employ hundreds of educated individuals.

5. Conclusion

Global climate change and the impacts of modernization and globalization have significant impact on the presence and practice of traditional culture throughout the world. Previously isolated cultures, like Mongolia, have become influenced by globalization as well as by the changing environment. Globalization has forced small American cities like Meadville into economic and social decline and deprived them of the stability and stimulation they once possessed.

Mongolia is currently suffering from serious ecological changes that are posing incredible challenges to the 1.5 million pastoral herders who rely on their natural environment to support their families and sustain a traditional lifestyle. In Meadville, drastic change has occurred within the man-made environment, inflicting significant social, cultural and financial stress on the local population.

A culture is largely a result of its surroundings, both natural and built. Traditions form based on a group of people's experiences which result from locally available resources. The origins of most traditions are found in the geography of the people being investigated. As those surroundings change, which they inevitably will, the people must adapt their lifestyle. Change and adjustment are gradual processes. Both Meadville, Pennsylvania, and the vast steppe of Mongolia challenge their residents to survive and thrive in this time of incredible transition.

5.1 ARTWORK

Integrating the subtleties of Meadville's and Mongolia's situation into my artwork was a significant challenge. My goal was to draw attention to the specific situations and also encourage the viewer to create his or her own connections and explanations. In the glistening strands of fishing line I evoke the intricate web that connects each person to one another and to our environment. The delicate drawings of people and places hang in a way that enables them to move with the air flow of the room. My artwork reflects the tolerance, flexibility and endurance that can lead to more effective and sustainable change in Meadville, Mongolia and throughout the world at large.

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