

6 Changes in Local Administration and their Impact on Community Life in the Grasslands of Inner Mongolia, China

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During the past half century, the local administrative system in China experienced several fundamental changes. These changes were accompanied by the political movement for regime change, civil wars and efforts by the central government to penetrate the remote border regions. In 1911, the Qing dynasty was overthrown in a national revolution movement. Between this year and 1949 (the founding year of the People's Republic), different administrative systems prevailed in different parts of China, such as the Dalai Lama and Kashag government in Tibet, several Mongolian princedoms in Inner Mongolia, Hui warlords in Ningxia, Gansu and Qinghai, and Shengshicai warlords in Xinjiang, besides the People's Liberation Army under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and the Army of the Republic under the Nationalist Party. In the early 1950s, the People's Republic re-established its administration over the whole of China, except Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao. Inner Mongolia became an autonomous region in 1947 while north-eastern China was under the control of the Communist Party. Before 1947, the areas now under the administration of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region were under the control of several different regimes. In the southern parts of its agricultural areas, the Republic government had established three provinces: Rehe, Chahar and Suiyuan. In its northern areas, several Mongolian princes controlled the grasslands with a traditional league-banner system.

Until now, most studies of the grassland areas of China have focused on climate, animal husbandry and ecology, and a few studies have looked at the changes in social systems, administrative transition and policy implications in nomadic community life. Due to the strong administrative control on all aspects of Chinese society, reforms in the system and policy implications should be considered the most important factors in understanding the societal, economic and demographic changes in contemporary China. The Institute of Sociology and Anthropology at Peking University organised a series of field surveys in several locations in Inner Mongolia to study the system reform, local administration adjustment and their impact on local community in grassland areas. Hurqige Gaca in Eastern Wuzhumuqin Banner is one of these research sites.

Based on the case study of Hurgige Gaca, a former brigade, this chapter focuses on examining the reform process of the administration system, its impact on the ownership of animals, right of using pastures, management of animal husbandry, migration patterns and the subsequent impact on community life in the grassland areas of the Mongolian steppe.

Introducing Inner Mongolia

The Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region is located in northern China (see Figure 6.1). The area of this region is 1.18 million square kilometers. According to the 2000 national census, the total population of Inner Mongolia is 23.8 million. In 2000, among the total population of Inner Mongolia, 17.1 per cent were ethnic Mongolians, 79.2 per cent were Han, 5.1 per cent belonged to other ethnic minority groups. Grasslands in Inner Mongolia consist of 0.9 million square kilometers, over one fourth of the total area of grasslands in China.

The relevant literature on grasslands in the social sciences has been reviewed in one of the chapters of *Grasslands and Grassland Sciences in Northern China* (Ma, 1992: 121–32). A Swedish journal *Nomadic Peoples* published a special issue on ‘Pastoralism in Mongolia’ in 1993. This issue collected 17 articles that provided information on the nomadic life in grasslands.

Figure 6.1



According to these previous works and the author's personal field experiences in grasslands, the administrative system and ownership system have played a very important role in economic activities and in local community life. In order to study the changes in the local administrative systems in Inner Mongolia, some points need special attention:

- a) The native residents in the grasslands of Inner Mongolia have been ethnic Mongolians for centuries and their traditional economic activity has been animal husbandry (Jagchid and Hyer, 1979). However, from the beginning of the twentieth century, many Han farmers have migrated to Inner Mongolia and cultivated grasslands for agricultural production. This process was enforced by the Qing dynasty. The Qing emperor intended to increase the population density in the northern frontier areas in order to build up the national defense against Russian invasion (Ma, 1987). The Han population in Inner Mongolia has increased from 1 million to 18.5 million during the past century. The area of cultivated land in Inner Mongolia increased to 5 million hectare by 1991. Gradually, the Mongolians became the minority group in Inner Mongolia and the expansion of cultivation reduced the traditional areas of pasture of the ethnic Mongolians.
- b) The commune-brigade system was established in China in the late 1950s. The management of land use, cultivation and animal husbandry was carried out under the policies of the government administration (Liu and Zheng, 1979). The system reforms in the early 1980s brought tremendous systemic changes in grassland areas as well as in the other parts of China. The communes and brigades disintegrated and all cultivated land, animals and parts of pastures were redistributed among rural households. Nowadays, pasture use and management of animal husbandry in grassland areas are no longer under the control of the administration.
- c) The commune was the lowest tier of the government in the Chinese administrative system. The Chinese administrative system in general included the governmental institutions at four levels: the central government, provincial (autonomous region) government, county government and commune government. There is a 'prefecture' level between the provincial level and county level, but the governmental institutions at the 'prefecture' level are only the agency of the provincial government. In the 1980s, 'city' governments were established all over China; these 'city' governments were previously 'prefectures' or 'counties', therefore they are classified as 'prefecture-rank city' or 'county-rank city' in the administrative rank system. Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai and Chongqing are four 'municipalities' directly under the central government.

- d) In the past two decades, because of the government policy of opening the trade doors of China to the world, as well as the entry of Chinese pastoral products in the international market, the price of pastoral products (meat, wool and specially cashmere) have increased rapidly. Therefore, the income of herdsmen has also increased rapidly. Yet, many herdsmen intend to increase their number of animals and to exploit the pasture as much as possible (Ma and Pan, 1993). One of the reasons is to get a higher income. A second reason is that they were afraid that pasture and animals would be taken away from them again during future policy changes.

This brief review of the events of the past several decades brings to focus the chain of cause and effect that has been underway: first, government policies in China strongly regulated the local administrative and ownership systems. Second, these systems (the commune system or new 'household responsibility system') directly regulated and indirectly affected land use, agricultural and livestock production of local communities, which in turn had a strong impact on the life patterns and migration of local residents. The chain indicating the process of social-economic-cultural transition in contemporary China can be summed up thus—'Policy adjustment of the central government—the changes in local administration—the changes in ownership and management systems of economy—the changes in community organisation and people's life patterns'. This study has tried to answer the following questions: What were the major changes in the administrative system in the past five decades? What was the response of the residents to these changes? What is the result of these changes regarding migration, land use and peoples' lives? How were the community leaders selected? What have been the main functions of these leaders? What has been the relationship between administrative changes and local economic development?

Findings on these major aspects will provide important insights in understanding the changes in local economic activities and people's life and their relation to the changes of the Chinese administrative system.

The Research Site

Hurqige Gaca (a former brigade) is located in Shamai Sumu (a former commune), East Wuzhumuqin Banner (at county level), Xilinguole League (see Figure 6.1). The gaca is along the China–Mongolia border and is considered one of the best pastures in this region. The administrative boundary of this sumu and gaca has been stable since 1961. In 2000, the total area of Hurqige Gaca was 869 square kilometers (or 97,363 hectare).

By the end of 1992, there were 91 households and 516 officially registered residents in this gaca. But among them, 20 households and 109 residents no longer really live in the gaca or work in pastoral production. They had left the gaca after animal redistribution in 1983 and most of them now live in county town and are engaged in other economic activities as private *lobar* or businessmen. All residents living in the gaca in 1993 were native Mongolians. Among those who live in sumu or county town, about 30 per cent are Mongolian migrants and 60 per cent are Han migrants who moved into Hurqige in the 1950s and 1960s. A new phenomenon is that about 10 per cent of them are old native Mongolians who bought houses in the county town to take care of their grandchildren in banner schools because the sumu's primary school was closed in 2001.

The net annual income per capita of Shamai Sumu (including Hurqige Gaca) was 3375 yuan in 2001 (see Table 6.1), a little lower than the average level of the herdsmen in the whole banner (10,033 yuan).¹ By the end of June 2002, there were 1,478 horses, 1,185 cattle and 67,983 sheep and goats owned by the herdsmen of Hurqige Gaca.² Although this gaca has a lower than average income in East Wuzhumuqin Banner, it still represents a pure pastoral area with a relative higher income level in Inner Mongolia because this gaca has a large and better pasture per capita compared with other animal husbandry areas.

Table 6.1
Basic Statistics of Hurqige Gaca

Year	Number of Households	Population	Number of Horses	Number of Cattle	Number of Sheep/Goat	Annual Income Per Capita (yuan)
1962	49	253	–	–	–	126
1963	59	315	–	–	–	110
1972	85	438	–	–	–	180
1979	77	415	1,698	1,442	11,051	179
1982	74	406		4,191	21,113	295
1984	75	442		4,665	18,084	817
1989*	88 (63)	481 (369)	1,746	3,175	28,180	2,318
1990	88 (65)	486 (385)	1,707	3,553	29,017	1,503
1991	91 (67)	504 (408)	1,706	4,040	32,625	2,126
1992	91 (71)	516 (407)	1,852	4,356	31,948	2,679
2002	128 (113)	650 (542)	1,478	1,185	67,983	3375**

Note: * The numbers in parentheses are the number of herdsmen households and people.

** This is the net annual income for the whole sumu, the level of Hurqige Gaca's income should be higher.

Another important reason for choosing this gaca as our research site is that I had spent five years during 1967–73 as a herdsmen in this gaca. In the

summer of 1992, 1993 and 2002, my colleagues and I visited this community thrice. Many old people have already passed away; those of our age are going to have their grandchildren. Pastures, hills, valleys and sand dunes are still the same, but there are many new brick and tile-roofed houses instead of tents. People now own their animals and have the right to use assigned pastures, and their standard of living has also improved tremendously (see Table 6.1 for the increase of income).

We visited this community and interviewed 42 households in the summer of 1992, interviewed 110 households in 2002 and covered almost all the households in the gaca and sumu and banner town. From the local government, we also obtained the relevant statistics of population changes and livestock production.

Changes in Local Administrative Systems

The 1947–61 Period

The area of today's East Wuzhumuqin Banner was under the rule of the Mongolian prince Demuchukedonglupe until 1947. In that year, the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region was established. The prince's army lost in the battles against the PLA and some of his soldiers escaped to the Republic of Mongolia. After the establishment of the new banner government under the leadership of the Communist Party in 1949, the new government sent a work-team of communist cadres to Hurqige Valley in 1952. The team taught the herdsmen to read and write and established an administrative unit ('Seventh Bage') in this area. The bage was directly under the banner government in the administrative set-up. As an old herdsman recalled, there were about 40 households and less than 10,000 animals in Hurqige area at that time. The pastures were not fixed and native herdsmen still enjoyed nomadic life patterns.

The government then called to organise 'mutual aid group' among the herdsmen for the cooperative management of economic activities in the belief that this would help the poor herdsmen to improve their income by sharing the work. The poor herdsmen could take joint responsibility for the upkeep of their animals (sheep, goats, cattle and horse) to save labour. Again, six 'mutual aid teams' ('gaote') were organised in 1956 voluntarily soon after that the pastures became fixed. A fixed organisation needed a fixed 'territory'. One 'gaote' consisted of eight households and less than 800 sheep. Animals could be 'moved' within the 'territory' of the 'Seventh Bage' decided by the banner.

In 1957, the 'cooperative movement' was introduced in this area and in 1958 all animals became the property of 'cooperatives' by paying off their

owners in following years. In 1961, Shamai Commune was established, consisting of three brigades (Hurqige was one of them).

The Commune-Brigade System during 1961–83

During this period, the local unit of administration was the commune-brigade system. In Mao Zedong's opinion, the commune was the ideal organisation to carry out all socio-economic functions at the bottom level of Chinese society. Therefore, the commune authority was a combination of several key positions. Each key officer was in charge of one important function, such as party affairs, administration, management of economic activities, people's militia, the activities of three 'mass' organisations (Youth League, Women's League, Association of Poor Herdsmen), inspection of discipline (against corruption, crime, etc.).

The Association of Poor Herdsmen played a very important role in the land reform movement of the late 1940s. It became important again during the 'Cultural Revolution' in the 1960s when the formal commune and brigade authorities were criticised, but it lost its political influence when 'getting rich' became accepted in the 1980s.

The authority at brigade level also played similar functions, that is, political, administrative and economic management. The brigade cadres took orders from commune authority and organised meetings in the brigade to implement the government policies and the plans prepared by the authority. For example, the brigade enforced projects to protect grasslands, to improve the breed of animals, to prevent and control animal diseases and also enforced the family planning programme, collection of tax and so on. During the commune period, the brigade organised many economic functions as a collaborative unit. The brigade had its storage houses, dining place, tractors, carts (with four horses) and so on. The brigade also had a manager to take care of the storage houses, a cook to take care of dinner, a carpenter to repair brigade properties, two cart-drivers to take care of carts, two tractor drivers to drive a tractor and a book-keeper to take care of the accounting. The brigade at times also organised works assigned by upper authorities such as the construction project of local roads or some works of its own needs, such as the construction of new office houses, new sheepfolds and so on. The brigade also paid for the welfare of herdsmen (see Table 6.2).

Since Hurqige is located at the China–Mongol border area, border vigil was also a function of the brigade's people's militia. This was organised by the brigade authority and the brigade paid the herdsman work points for their duty.

One interesting phenomenon we observed in the 1960s was that, although brigade leaders usually had the authority to assign work to brigade members,

Table 6.2
Expenditure Structure of Hurqige Brigade (1978–82) (in yuan)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Livestock Expenditure</i>	<i>Sideline Expenditure</i>	<i>Others</i>	<i>State Tax</i>	<i>Accumulation Fund</i>	<i>Public Welfare Fund</i>	<i>Distribution among Households</i>
1978	8,445	16,279	5,738	6,073	13,221	4,958	90,450
1979	12,606	25,858	204	6,190	7,250	2,993	87,050
1980	11,670	31,389	5,797	–	9,636	3,576	94,009
1981	3,252	18,020	4,830	–	9,794	3,638	93,762
1982	1,369	14,351	11,656	–	20,970	10,485	119,782

the major decisions in animal husbandry management were made at the meeting of all household heads by the end of each year. In this meeting, household heads (usually old and middle-aged males) sat together to discuss the pasture assignment of the next year, animal adjustment, change in brigade cadres, brigade construction projects, etc. The party secretary and brigade chief joined this meeting as ordinary household heads. The atmosphere of these meetings was like that of traditional tribal meetings of nomads. This was very different from the brigade meetings I attended in agricultural areas.

The New Sumu-Gaca System Since 1983

In 1983, the commune-brigade system disintegrated all over China. This administrative reform resulted in several significant changes. First, the former commune-brigade system was converted into the sumu-gaca system. The new administrative system in other agricultural areas is called the ‘xiang’¹ (or town at the sumu level) -committee of village residents (at the gaca level) system. ‘Sumu’ and ‘gaca’ are the traditional terms in Mongolian social organisation, which were borrowed by the new system in the 1980s.

The officers at the xiang (town or sumu) level still have political and administrative functions, but have fewer roles in organising herdsmen’s economic activities. Although the names have been changed, people still use the old names for the local administration. They call sumu the ‘commune’ and gaca the ‘brigade’.

Second, all animals and pastures (cultivated lands in agricultural areas) were distributed ‘equally’ among all brigade members. But in some brigades such as Hurqige, the herdsmen decided to have different standards of animal redistribution for ‘native herdsman’ and ‘migrants’. Thus, 30 sheep, 3.5 cattle and 3.5 horses per capita were allocated to native Mongolians; and 10 sheep per capita, three cattle and three horses per household to the in-migrants (including five Mongolian in-migrant households who spoke the Mongolian language but came from an agricultural area far away).

Third, the pastures within the brigade 'territory' were distributed among herdsmen according to the size of their animals. In 1983, many migrants who received a small number of animals and small piece of pasture left the gaca and moved to nearby towns. In 1998, the pastures of Hurqige Gaca were redistributed again. Every native herdsman received 2541 *mu* or 169.4 hectare. The others (migrants and their children) received as 50 per cent of the total pastures given to the natives.

The procedure of cadre election at the gaca (brigade) level under the new sumu-gaca system is the same as that during the commune period. After the disintegration of the commune-brigade system, the brigade cadres no longer earn work points, instead they receive subsidies (300 yuan monthly) from the brigade. Hurqige Brigade still keeps about 600 sheep as brigade property. Some poor herdsmen take care of these sheep and submit a part of their earnings to the brigade. Now the brigade leaders do not have the responsibility of managing the economic activities of the brigade. If the banner and sumu authority do not call them for meetings, they may stay at home and take care of their own animals. The function of these community leaders is quite limited now.

The Election of Commune (Sumu) and Brigade (Gaca) Leaders

There has been a dual system in the Chinese authority system since 1949 with both the party system and the administrative system operating simultaneously. However, since 1949, the party has been leading the administration in all matters and this has been the major characteristic of the Chinese political system. These two systems are now joining to a high extent in practice.

The Structure of Commune Authority and its Election

A commune had a Communist Party committee (CPC) to lead in political functions. A commune CCP usually had seven to nine members. The secretary of this committee was the top leader in the commune. The other members of this committee took other key positions in the commune government. The second member (always the deputy secretary) was the chief of the commune management committee, which mainly performed the functions of administration and economic management. (Under the planning economic system, management of economic activities was a function of the government). The third member was the secretary of the 'commission for inspecting discipline', and the fourth member was the chief of the 'section of people's militia'. The other members took care of the Women's League, Youth League,

etc. All CPC members had a government position and all people working in a commune government were government officers (cadres) who received salaries and other allowances from the government.

In the normal procedure of selecting commune CPC members, the banner government nominates the candidates, and the party members of the commune cast their vote after which the winner of the election has to be approved by the banner government. Sometimes the banner government directly appoints a member of the CPC and this appointment is accepted at the next party member meeting.

Within the administrative system, the banner government can directly appoint or transfer any officers in commune government.

The Structure of the Brigade (Gaca) Authority and its Election

The cadres at brigade level are not government officers or employees. They earn their work points while receiving limited subsidies from the brigade. In the administration at a brigade level, there are usually five full-time cadres consisting of the party secretary, a chief of brigade, a commander of people's militia company, a bookkeeper and a manager. Two other cadres (a secretary of the Youth League and the chief of the Women's League) are 'part-time' cadres. A full-time cadre receives work points generally assigned to a strong male labourer (10 points per day in Hurqige). A part-time cadre receives his/her 'cadre' work points according to the meetings attended and period of training completed. Both full-time and part-time cadres at the brigade level participate in agricultural or pastoral work.

The cadres at brigade level are selected through a similar procedure. Based on recommendations of the herdsmen and party members in the brigade, the Commune Party Committee nominates the candidates. Party members elect the party secretary and herdsmen elect the brigade chief and other cadres.

During our stay in Hurqige in the 1960s and 1970s, we found that the brigade leaders enjoyed a high reputation among herdsmen. They hailed from poor herdsman's families, had joined the Communist Party in its early period and did not exploit the advantages of their positions. The brigade party secretary, Big Bandalagqi, was a monk from a poor herdsman's family. Since he had many children and earned only 10 points a day, the living standard of his family was obviously below the average level. But he joined us in hard work like an ordinary herdsman. By doing this, he earned the respect of the whole brigade.

When we went back later in the 1990s, we found that in the selection of the local leaders, father-son ties played a significant role. The son of the former brigade party secretary, Bandalakqi, became the vice sumu chief in 1992, and then became a vice leader of a banner government bureau in 2002. The current

brigade party secretary is the son of the former brigade chief and the current brigade chief is the son of the former commander of militia. The fathers' reputation helped the sons to win the elections. Because the older leaders were still alive, they could also provide advice to the younger leaders.

The Impact of the Changes in Administrative System on Community Life

Changes in Migration Patterns

Under the commune system, both the commune and brigade had to oversee the collective economic activities. They needed migrants labour for the non-herding chores. Therefore, several migrants entered Hurqige between 1962 and 1983.

In-migration (1962–83) Three Han farmers and their families moved to Shamai Commune to work in its repair and handicraft workshop in 1962. When the 'Cultural Revolution' disturbed the work order in the commune workshop (consisting of carpenters, cobblers, felt-makers, etc.) in 1967 and the workshop crashed financially, some workers from the commune workshop joined three brigades and became brigade members. This action was voluntary on the part of these workers and the commune government arranged it. Among them, three came to Hurqige Brigade.

During the 'Cultural Revolution', migration control in this remote region was loosened. The local cadres were made subjects of political charges and they were unable to enforce the relevant regulations. Further, the commune-brigade system organised some 'collective work' (drilling wells, building houses, mowing grass, transportation and farming production) under its work assignment system. The native Mongolians were not used to such work and communes and brigades had to absorb migrant labourers from agricultural areas. The migrants earned 'work points' like the other herdsman and shared the income of the brigade that was almost totally from livestock production.

In 1967 and 1968, 52 'intellectual youth' came to Hurqige Brigade from Beijing. They were middle-school students and were sent here for 're-education' under the national policy at that time. They were organised into 10 groups and each group was assigned a flock of sheep (around 2,000 sheep and goats), together with another herdsman household at the beginning. After some years, they became experienced herdsman. These students left Hurqige gradually for different reasons (such as illness, attending university, new job assignment, family reunion).

Both the farmer in-migration and the Beijing student in-migration to Hurqige were the results of the system and policies of that time. These in-migrants contributed to the change in political structure of the local community. For example, one of the Mongolian migrants became a chief of the Association of Poor Herdsmen and was very radical in politics. The 52 Beijing students also had a lot of influence on the dress, diet, language and customs of the native Mongolians.

Out-migration (1984–85) Except for the three Mongolian households, most in-migrants now live in the sumu or county town and are engaged in other activities. They left Hurqige in 1983 or 1984 after the animal redistribution.

There were two 'kinds' of households in Hurqige during the commune period in terms of their relationship with livestock production. One worked with a flock of animals (sheep or cattle). This group was composed of native Mongolian herdsmen. Members of the other group were engaged in activities such as gardening, cooking for the brigade office and school, carpentry, driving carts and tractors and engaged in other seasonal work assigned by the brigade such as drilling wells, building houses, mowing grass, etc.

The second group was of in-migrants whose in-migration became possible in pastoral areas only under the former commune-brigade system. The native herdsmen did not prefer hard labour or work that involved living in work sites far from their families. When under the commune-brigade system, the government requested the local pastoral community (commune and brigade) to organise some collective activities, the local herdsmen rejected this. Under the commune system, the commune and brigade cadres had the power to arrange official in-migration (to get residential registration), and thus, the in-migrants came in to undertake the government collective activities. The work point distribution system led to the in-migrants sharing the herdsmen's work. Therefore the herdsmen tolerated in-migration to a certain extent. Generally, most of the income of the brigade came from livestock produce (such as selling animals and wool).

After the redistribution of animals, however, in-migrants could neither live on the small number of animals nor could they get work assignments from the brigade to earn 'work points'. Therefore, they left Hurqige and moved to the sumu or county town for other opportunities. However, they all still register Hurqige as their official residence.

New Trend of Seasonal Migration Since each household now has a flock of sheep, a flock of cattle and some horses, the households with less labourers face problems in taking care of these different animals. One solution is to maintain a large family, which include the married children. This was contrary

to the commune system, where newly-married couples established their own households as soon as possible so that they became eligible to apply for a flock of animals and become 'livestock households'. If they remained with their parents, they had to participate in other collective activities to earn work points. The flock assigned to the parents only offered a certain amount of work points.⁴ But after the animal redistribution, we found some 'big' families in Hurqige. In 1993, there were eight households with eight to nine members, five households with 10 or more members. There was no big household such as this, before 1983. Big households had obvious disadvantages in the commune system but had their advantages in the new household responsibility system.

The second solution is for two or three kin-households to live together or near each other and combine their animals into one flock for more efficient herding. This is an effective way to save labour force, especially after the size of the flock became much smaller compared to labour size under the commune system. Combining their animals in grazing does not mean that the ownership of animals has to change.

A new phenomenon appeared in Hurqige and other pastoral communities recently. In 1993, in Hurqige, where labour is scarce, four households hired outsiders to take their animals to graze. In 2002, 80 per cent of Hurqige households hired migrant herdsmen to take care of their animals. Most of these employees live and eat in their own tent, earn 200 yuan plus an ewe and a lamb (or two sheep) per month. All these 'hired livestock workers' are Mongolians from poor areas in other banners or leagues far away from Hurqige. This new pattern can be called 'seasonal migration'. The earliest migrants came in 1986 and the trend became popular in the 1990s.

Impact on Pasture Use Patterns

The brigade 'territory' became fixed in 1956. After the commune-brigade system was started in 1961, the management of pastoral production and pasture use began a new pattern. Each household engaged in pastoral production only needed to take care of one flock of animals, either sheep or cattle. The brigade assigned two herdsmen to take care of horses. The community still followed the lifestyle of nomads.

After the disintegration of the commune-brigade system and all the animals and pasture had been redistributed among residents, several important changes took place in the people's life pattern in Hurqige: (a) Nomads became settled residents. Each household received a piece of grassland according to the size of its members (2,541 mu or 169.4 hectare per capita), so that a household of five could have a large area of 850 hectare grasslands. They built fences around

the lands, drilled wells, built houses and sheepfolds. This piece of land became its 'territory'.

(b) The animals of each household became diversified. Instead of taking care of only one kind of animal, each household now had four kinds of animals; cattle, horses, sheep and goats. This had several results (i) the size of the flock became much smaller; (ii) a household needed more labourers to take care of different animals. In order to save labour, some relatives started to live next to each other and to combine their animals into a common flock for grazing; (iii) each piece of pasture came under the management of a household. The animals of a household should not cross its border. In order to reserve grasslands for use in spring, all herdsmen fenced their grasslands as much as possible; (iv) they also built houses for their own residence and pens and sheds for their animals in the spring camp (see Table 6.3).

Impact on Family Size and Fertility

The new system of pasture management has had some impact on the fertility pattern of local herdsmen. In this purely pastoral area, the income of herdsmen is totally dependent on the number of their animals and the quality and small size of pastures limit the number of animals. There is no way for a newly-established household to obtain a piece of pasture from the gaca nowadays. When a herdsman's son gets married and establishes his own household, the father has to split his animals and pastures and give the young couple their share. The young couple will soon have their own children and then the pasture of one household will become smaller and smaller by generation. So Hurqige's herdsmen have begun worrying about their growing population.

Before 1990, there was no restriction on childbearing in Hurqige and the nearby pastoral communities. But since 1991, the local government has had a more strict regulation for 'family planning'. One couple now can only have two children within a four-year interval. In 1992, two families were fined (one for 3000 yuan and another for 4000 yuan) because the interval of their children's births was less than four years. In our conversation with these herdsmen, we had the impression that most of them accept the policy of 'two children', because they are worried about the problem of surplus labour force that might arise five to 10 years later in this community. The herdsmen worry about the future of their children, for their children do not speak good Mandarin, have less education and urban experience and so face difficulties in finding jobs in towns or cities.

The social changes in Hurqige Gaca in the past 50 years in terms of administration, ownership, herding patterns, migration patterns, fertility and cultural interaction are given in Table 6.4.

Table 6.3
Expenditure Structure of Hurqige Gaca (1985–92) (in yuans)

Year	Total Expenditure	Othmer										Tent
		Animal Medicine	Forage	Repairing	Productive Expenditure*	Grassland Fence	Pen/shed	Well	House			
1985	177,839	350	500	80	6,166	3,900	5,700	4,200	5,410			
1986	237,427	10,622	1,650	6,220	24,120	12,476	10,415	5,910	7,965			
1987	321,972	6,464	12,745	2,200	10,340	71,000	42,143	5,920	28,090			861
1988	398,598	12,364	23,670	6,572	49,085	56,100	11,186	500	79,810			12321
1989	446,199	22,668	15,100	13,210	62,380	22,500	27,670	–	189,943			5414
1990	580,183	21,775	21,960	11,480	199,200	–	37,100	300	149,600			1486
1991	383,015	20,198	35,700	26,440	22,680	–	12,470	–	126,700			4309
1992	624,068	20,385	20,650	17,321	21,090	–	47,165	2,100	188,087			5196

	Gaca Collections			State Tax
	Animal Prices	Pasture Management Fee	Gaca Management Fee	
1985		23,323		9,236
1986	42,299	15,725	–	11,180
1987	55,077	20,032	–	12,548
1988	41,929	8,730	8,354	5,500
1989	22,143	9,562	–	23,059
1990	34,796	14,157	9,559	36,310
1991	35,614	13,714	10,215	51,229
1992	16,110	6,440	5,194	60,959

Note: * A large proportion of this expenditure has been used to buy tractors, motorcycles, jeeps, generators and other machines.

Table 6.4
Social Changes in Huriqiige Brigade/Gaca, East Wuzhumuqin Banner,
Inner Mongolia, in the Past 50 Years

Year	Households/ Animals	Administration	Ownership/Tax Payment	Herding Patterns	Migration Patterns/ Channels to Sell Products	Family Formation and Fertility	Cultural Changes/ Education/Health Care
Before 1947	30-35 < 8000	Mongol price domination on traditional organisation	Private animal, public pasture/ taxes and labour duties paid to prince	Circulation within banner, by prince's permission, might circulate to neighbouring banners in periods of heavy snow	No migration allowed/a few seasonal Han traders came to banner towns to buy pastoral products	No marriage registration, most were co- residence and some single women with children.	Traditional Mongol nomadic lifestyle/ no school/ no clinic
1947-54	35-42 10,000 (1953)	Banner government established in 1947 by the CCP	Private animal, public pasture/no taxes	Circulation within nearby areas within banner	No migration/ products sold to ' <i>gong-xiao-she</i> ' (collective trade enterprises)	As above	As above
1955-56	42-45 12,000 (1956)	Local administration established at xiang and gaca level	Private animal/ 'new <i>suluke</i> ' system	As above	As above	As above	As above/xiang had school and clinic with private doctors

1957-60	45-49 18,000 (1960)	As above	Collective ownership of animals; collective pastures/tax paid to government	More restricted to local pastures	Residential registration started in 1959; two Mongolian-in-migrants made their entry/products sold to gong-xiao-she	Marriage registration started in 1960; only monogamy since 1961; still some single women with children	Some farmer's customs came with migrants (house, clothing, diet, etc.)/xiang had school and clinic, Private doctors
1961-83	49-74 25,300 (1982)	Commune-brigade established in 1961; 'commune period'	'class' division in 1964; collective ownership/members earnwork points	Herding within brigade; group works' need labour; the goal of 'grain self-sufficiency' prevalent	Entry of 7 Mongol migrants, ⁹ Han migrants, ⁵² Beijing students, 5 league students/products sold to gong-xiao-she	Small households for livestock assignment	Interaction among three 'cultures': Mongol non Han farmers urban students/brigade scho commune hospital 'barefoot doctors'

(Table 6.1 *co*)

(Table 6.1 contd.)

Year	Households/ Animals	Administration	Ownership/Tax Payment	Herding Patterns	Migration Patterns/ Channels to Sell Products	Family Formation and Fertility	Cultural Changes/ Education/Health Care
After 1983	74-91 (71) 38,000 (1992)	umu-gaca system established in 1983	Both animal and pastures are private/tax paid to government	Circulation within private pastures; animal size controlled; care taken of pastures	Former migrants left; some keep contact for service work; seasonal herders hired/ products sold in market; gong- xiao-she still exists	Larger household for labour division; reduced fertility	Less use of Mandarin, but retention of some Han/ agricultural customs (house, motorcycle); no Gāca school, private clinic

Summary

In Inner Mongolia, the policies for the ownership and management systems have gone through several significant changes since 1949. The first change was that the government distributed the animals and lands of landlords and herd lords among the poor farmers and herdsmen in the late 1940s. The second change was the establishment of collective productive units, step by step, in the 1950s, and the third change was the disintegration of commune-brigade system and redistribution of animals and lands among the residents in 1983. Such changes in the administrative system had a tremendous impact on ownership of animals and land, which in turn had an impact on economic activities and community life. The findings of this study has been summarised as follows:

- (a) Under the different administrative systems, officers and community cadres played different functions. During the commune system, officers and cadres not only carried out administrative functions, but were organisers and managers of economic activities as well. Under the new system, cadres in brigade manage only tax collection and other administrative functions.
- (b) Commune-brigade system fixed the 'territory' of each brigade and the new 'household responsibility system' fixed the 'territory' of each household. Now Mongolian nomads have acquired settled households, similar to individual farm owners in the Western countries.
- (c) The commune-brigade system organised some collective works, which attracted in-migrants, both Mongolians and Han from poorer areas to the grasslands. The disintegration of the commune-brigade system gave the migrants the opportunity to earn 'work points', for they could not live on the reduced number of animals they received in redistribution. The migration pattern has been closed related to the policy and system in this community.
- (d) The procedure of cadre election has been kept the same under different systems since the majority of local community members have been stable and close to each other. They are enclosed in a wide network by blood and marriages. The sons of old generation cadres often assume their fathers' positions by winning the election.

Notes

1. The highest annual net income per capita by sumu in East Wuzhumuqin Banner in 2001 was 9,405 yuan, the lowest one was 3,138 yuan. Shamai Sumu (where Hurqige Gaca is located) had an income of 3,375 yuan. The average level was 4,948 yuan for the whole

- banner. Generally, the residents living in a sumu site have a lower income than herdsmen in a gaca.
2. The difference between these numbers and the numbers by the end of 1992 indicates the number of survivors among the new born animals in the past spring.
 3. For the difference between xiang and town, please refer to the relevant literature (Ma, 1991: 90–113).
 4. Generally, 10 points for taking care of a flock of sheep at day time, eight points for watching over them at night eight points for a flock of cattle at day time and six points for watching over them at night.

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