

## A Comparative study

# India, Mongolia, Jordan Mobile Pastoralist Communities around the World

### Introduction

Approximately 32,000 people belong to the Bedouin and non-Bedouin mobile pastoralist communities of the West Bank. Mobile pastoralist communities in the West Bank are traditionally herders, migrating with their livestock to different locations according to the season.

The majority of Bedouin communities in the West Bank are refugees who were uprooted from their land following the 1948 War. These communities are uniquely vulnerable. They are classified as refugees, but are rarely included in the systems of aid that are granted to refugees living in refugee camps. Most of them live on land they do not own, and have been forced to assume a sedentary lifestyle, barring them from practicing their traditional livelihoods and restricting their access to income.

After countless meetings and conversations with men and women from dozens of communities, and as our understanding of the challenges faced by Bedouin communities grew, a need arose to understand how the experiences of mobile pastoralist communities in the West Bank compare to those of mobile pastoralists across the world. To what extent are local spatial planning regimes in other countries taking into account the needs and lifestyles of the mobile pastoralist communities under their jurisdiction? In what ways are local governments providing services such as health clinics, schools, and water and electricity infrastructure to mobile pastoralist communities? What lessons can be learned from the successes and failures of other countries in respecting and promoting the particular mobile pastoralist lifestyle, and how could we implement these lessons in different contexts?

With these questions in mind, we offer three case studies on the mobile pastoralist communities in Inner Mongolia, India, and Southern Jordan. Inner Mongolia's mobile herder community faces a series of challenges in the form of restricted land access, a growing coal industry, and climate change, and are the recipients of aid through the local government and through the UN. India's nomadic population continues to contend with discriminatory colonial and Indian policies and cultural stigmatization, but a series of government initiatives to understand and address the needs of the nomadic population show promise for improvements in the future. The Bedouins of Southern Jordan are the most applicable case to that of the mobile pastoralists in the

West Bank; Bimkom's fieldwork in Jordan showed that though coordination between the Jordanian government and the Southern Bedouin communities is not perfect, a foundation of respect for the Bedouin lifestyle enables the local government to provide these communities with effective services and an adequate settlement program.

In this report, we will detail our findings regarding these three cases, and offer a series of recommendations based on our research. We believe that these recommendations will improve efforts to offer mobile pastoralist communities in the West Bank the opportunity to practice their traditional lifestyle, and to receive better services, in the future.

## **I. The Nomads of India**

As of 2004, India's nomadic community constitutes 7% of its total population; today, that figures India's current nomadic population at over 96,000,000 people.<sup>[1]</sup> Historically, each nomadic tribe would practice a traditional occupation. They would craft, produce, and sell goods to sedentary communities across a set route, such as blacksmithed tools, animal by-products, and medicine, as well as trade animals and offering paid entertainment such as snake charming.<sup>[2]</sup> Tribes and sub-tribes would travel independent routes from each other, regrouping once a year for a customary meeting, and would be governed by a village council that would mediate inter-tribal affairs.<sup>[3]</sup> Because of their separate routes and services, little to no competition or conflict would take place between tribes.<sup>[4]</sup>

Prior to British colonial rule, nomadic communities in India constituted an essential, productive part of Indian society by providing sedentary communities around the country with goods and services. However, during colonial rule, nomadic communities began to suffer from state-sanctioned discrimination in the form of the Criminal Tribe Act of 1871, which classified nomadic or "notified" tribes as inherently criminal.<sup>[5]</sup>

During this period, the nomadic tribes were in many ways treated as a separate caste in Indian society. However, because their social status was not officially categorized into "Scheduled Castes" or "Scheduled Tribes" by the ruling power, they were uniquely restricted from benefiting from the legislative protections offered to lower-caste communities in India. British policies also served to sedentarize nomadic communities; the expansion of railroads and road networks made nomadic communities' trade of donkeys and pack animals obsolete, and nomadic and notified tribes were denied access to land ownership.<sup>[6]</sup> The impact of these policies is felt today--according to a 2018 survey, 91% of formerly nomadic communities have been living in their current house for over five years, although at least one member of every interviewed family had migrated as recently as the past year, primarily as a result of lack of access to secure housing.<sup>[7]</sup>

In 1947, post-independence, India's National Government underwent a process to remove the nomadic communities from the list of criminalized

tribes, thereby earning them the name the “denotified tribes.”<sup>[8]</sup> This improvement, however, was largely symbolic. As a result of the lingering effects of British colonialism, and of the lackluster efforts of India’s independent government to provide nomadic and semi-nomadic communities with reparative measures, India’s current nomadic community suffers from high degrees of poverty and underdevelopment.

## Challenges

Some of the challenges that the denotified tribes in India face are comparable to caste-based discrimination: nomadic children are excluded from attending some schools; nomadic families can be prevented from using local water sources or attending houses of worship through verbal and physical harassment; violence against nomadic tribes from settled communities and individuals often goes unreported due to media bias against nomadic and semi-nomadic populations.<sup>[9]</sup>

Other challenges that denotified tribes face stem from British and Indian policy. During British colonial rule, the 1894 Land Acquisition Act, which described the process of compensating landowners whose land is acquired by the state, excluded nomadic communities from land compensation because they could not prove “permanent occupation and ownership.”<sup>[10]</sup> Post-independence, the 1972 Wildlife Protection Act prevented nomadic tribes from hunting the animals that were once their main source of income, while the 1983 Indian Forest Act enabled the government to classify forest land as conservation reserves without consulting local tribes, preventing use of the land for harvesting, grazing, and hunting.<sup>[11]</sup>

Without a formal settlement policy for nomadic communities, nomadic tribes resorted to settling on vacant, state-registered land. These settlements are often near garbage dumps, roads, and rivers, and present a high risk of eviction.<sup>[12]</sup> Nomadic communities are denied access to information and representation or participating in village level meetings, and therefore from land allotment decisions.<sup>[13]</sup> There are even reports of nomadic tribes being given purposeful misinformation about times and venues of public information meetings.<sup>[14]</sup> Forced evictions of nomadic communities are known to happen at the hands of regular citizens, who face no legal repercussions for their actions.<sup>[15]</sup>

The living spaces that nomadic communities are able to maintain offer an extremely low standard of living. Nomadic settlements lack medical facilities, and are often inaccessible by vehicles.<sup>[16]</sup> Residential space may be shared with animals, with no system for waste management or water treatment; the water that nomadic communities use from hand pumps has also been known to carry viruses.<sup>[17]</sup> According to a 2018 government-funded survey, 53% of visited households had electricity, while 65% did not have a working toilet. While this statistic is relatively standard across different communities in India, this condition nonetheless poses a particular risk to women, for whom defecating in public spaces could put them at risk of violence.<sup>[18]</sup> Researchers

note significant instances of malnutrition, poor health conditions, and increased infant and maternal mortality rates in these communities.<sup>[19]</sup>

The denotified tribes are also limited in their economic mobility. Nomadic communities struggle to find employment beyond now-obsolete traditional vocations as a result of lack of training.<sup>[20]</sup> This challenge is compounded by high levels of illiteracy, and low degrees of education. As of 2018, 61% of interviewed women had never enrolled in school—a devastating statistic relative to the general population of girls in India, 85% of whom are still enrolled in school at the age of 16.<sup>[21][22]</sup> 13.4% of school-age students of all genders did not attend school at all.<sup>[23]</sup>

## **II. The Herders of Inner Mongolia**

The mobile pastoralist lifestyle serves as the social and historical backbone of life in Inner Mongolia. Rock paintings have been discovered throughout the areas of Helanshan, Yinshan, and Zhenzishan that indicate that nomadic pastoralists have been living in the grasslands for over 3,000 years.<sup>[24]</sup> Throughout Inner Mongolia's long history, the region has been ruled by many regimes, ranging from the Huns to the Mongolians to the current Autonomous Authority under the People's Republic of China. For hundreds of years, the nomadic herding communities of Inner Mongolia were untouched by the administrative policies of various empires. However, beginning with the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, and its switch in policy in 1996, the herders' lifestyles have been greatly affected by state initiatives.<sup>[25]</sup>

After the establishment of the PRC, Mongolians founded the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Authority (IMAA), which provides them with a limited form of self-rule and legitimization of the traditional Mongolian culture. In 1980, however, the IMAA initiated a new policy, which integrated people, livestock, and grasslands into one unit that fell under the responsibility of each herder. This economic policy encouraged herders to exponentially increase their herds. Livestock numbers throughout Inner Mongolia exploded, and peaked in 1996, when some counties' livestock inventories reached over 10 million. Livestock overstocking was followed by a quick decrease in livestock numbers because of the onset of desertification and grasslands degradation. Many herders' incomes fell dramatically and their families fell into poverty.

In response to the environmental destruction and socio-economic havoc caused by the integrative system, the government introduced new regulations that limited livestock capacity for the pasture lands. This allowed for herders to continue legally grazing their livestock, but the previously shared grasslands were split up by wire fencing, which were distributed to herding families by legal land contracts. Since 1996, this system of land contract and fenced stocking has evolved and become more stringent in order to ensure that pastures aren't overstocked by grazing animals. According to surveys given to local residents, many herders believe that the policy has evolved to focus on "demarcating pastures, forbidding free nomadism, adopting settled

residences, and controlling livestock stocking rates,” and that it “places a greater priority on the protection of grassland ecological systems than livestock output and income growth.”<sup>[26]</sup>

## Challenges

Overall, the land contract and wire-fencing based herding has dramatically changed nomadic pastoralism throughout Inner Mongolia. Inner Mongolia’s climate is dry, and there can easily be drought nine years out of ten. Nomadic herders can avoid the worst effects of drought by moving to wetter areas, but herders who have been forced to sedentarize must find a way to provide their flocks with water during drought years. This issue of water, as well as constant land degradation from overuse, keeps many herders constantly at the precipice of poverty.

In 2015, Inner Mongolia became China’s second largest coal producing region, the main global supplier of rare earths, and the site of large natural gas supplies.<sup>[27]</sup> One of the consequences of the shift in industry has been increased tension between the Mongolian pastoralists and the millions of Chinese Han workers who moved to the area to work in the mines; in 2011, these tensions peaked when a Han Chinese truck driver ran over a Mongolian herder who attempted to stop a coal mining convoy from driving across fenced pasture land, resulting in six days of street protests in cities throughout Inner Mongolia, a rare occurrence in the strictly policed region.<sup>[28]</sup>

Primarily, for local herders, the mines have resulted in increased pollution, displacement, and environmental degradation. From the outside, it appears that the discovery of minable natural resources has brought great wealth, development and industry to the rural region of Inner Mongolia. In reality, the mines bring “few tangible benefits to ethnic Mongolians” and mostly cause “environmental degradation and forced relocations.”<sup>[29]</sup> They release toxic smoke, dust, and pollutants, which are often not regulated by the Chinese government. These pollutants affect the pastoralists’ herds and the grasslands they rely upon. In one example, an aluminum smelter near the city of Holingol released toxic levels of fluoride into the air, which ultimately poisoned and killed thousands of herders’ sheep.

Following the destruction of their herds, the government forced the herding families to resettle in a nearby city and their original homes were destroyed.<sup>[30]</sup> In one example, the government sought to compensate one such affected family “in the form of cash, an apartment and a teaching job for his daughter ... [this] failed to approach the losses that the family suffered from being deprived of livestock and land.”<sup>[31]</sup> In the case of the aluminum smelter factor, many families were forced to give up their lifestyles as herders and move to nearby cities. Their connection to their land, the nomadic lifestyle, and their culture was utterly disrupted. In one interview, an older woman whose family lost their lands to the aluminum mine’s pollution stated that the psychological costs were even more significant. She used to live with her entire family and get all her life substance from their ancestral grasslands; now, she lives alone and must face the challenges of living in a foreign city.<sup>[32]</sup>

Although the case of the aluminum smelters effect on the local community was radical, mines' effect on environmental services are common. In most areas, the mining companies haven't taken into account the local lifestyle or its dependence on healthy grasslands. Many mining operations over-pump water, release pollutants into the air, pave roads for loud trucks on pasture land and generally disrupt the nomadic pastoralist communities of the area. In one area, a mine had such heavy water usage that the local water table fell by 100 meters.<sup>[33]</sup> The lack of water has led to a desertification, which leads to lack of grass for herder's stocks to feed on. Now, many herders are forced to buy pricey feed for their stocks, which plunges many families into unpayable debt.

### **III. The Bedouins of Southern Jordan**

The case of the Bedouins of Jordan presents the most comparable situation to the reality of the Bedouins living in the West Bank and the Negev.

2003 numbers from the Jordanian Department of Statistics show that Bedouins make up 3% of Jordan's population.<sup>[34]</sup> According to 2018 United Nations numbers, Bedouins make up 33-40% of Jordan's population.<sup>[35]</sup> The majority of Bedouin communities in Jordan live a settled lifestyle in villages in the North Eastern Badia; a 2010 report estimated that 5-10% of Bedouins in Jordan remain nomadic.<sup>[36]</sup>

An analysis of a 2009 Jordanian Department of Statistics survey, which featured 2,034 Bedouin families, showed that the "majority were settled, with over 90% having electricity, sanitation and running water."<sup>[37]</sup> In Mafraq, the governorate with the highest concentration of Bedouin communities, Bedouins constituted 66.9% of the population in 2008; 31% were under 15 years old, and 10% over 50 years old.<sup>[38]</sup> 48% of employed men in Mafraq worked in the army or in the public administration and 8% in education.<sup>[39]</sup> The two largest Bedouin tribes in Jordan are the Beni Sakhr and the Huwaytat—the entirety of both tribes' grazing lands is contained within Jordan's borders.<sup>[40]</sup>

### **Challenges**

Of the three communities that we discuss, the Bedouins of Southern Jordan have the closest relationship to the Jordanian government, and have been the recipients of the most government services. One report from 2011 notes that the Jordanian government has provided "roads, water supplies, schools, health clinics and other services" to Jordan's arid North Eastern Badia region.<sup>[41]</sup> Another report confirms that, in particular when it comes to newly settled Bedouin towns in the Badia, the government offered support for building infrastructure, medical clinics, education, and other related services.<sup>[42]</sup>

A 1988 Ministry of Planning report showed that water pipes and power lines reached "99% and 93%, respectively, of the Bedouin communities in that year."<sup>[43]</sup> In 1992, the Jordanian Government initiated the Badia Research and

Development Program, designed to “improve the educational, social, economic and environmental aspects” of the region.<sup>[44]</sup>

There are three public healthcare providers that benefit Bedouin communities in Jordan: the Ministry of Health, the Royal Medical Services, and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).<sup>[45]</sup> Health insurance for the members of the military was established in 1963, through both the Ministry of Health and the Royal Medical Services.<sup>[46]</sup> In 2008, the King mandated the Royal Medical Services to provide care to non-military individuals in the remote areas of the North Eastern Badia.<sup>[47]</sup>

However, many of these services are not adequately accessible to Bedouin communities. Many infrastructural services, schools, and clinics are located too far from the remote areas in which Bedouin communities are located, and are staffed by individuals from cities who are not well versed in the norms and needs of Bedouin villages.<sup>[48]</sup> Jordan’s overall unemployment rate hovers at almost 20%; for Bedouins not able to practice a nomadic or semi-nomadic lifestyle, the threat of unemployment and financial crisis looms large.<sup>[49]</sup> Bedouins’ economic stability is threatened by the conditions of government subsidies. Currently, while the government subsidizes herders’ wheat and barley, and even purchases the milk and meat that herders produce, it does not subsidize the products necessary for raising camels, under the false assumption that raising camels is profitable enough on its own.

Most significantly, with time, it has become more and more challenging for Bedouins in Southern Jordan to rely exclusively on livestock as a source of income, as was the case before the tourism industry in Southern Jordan took hold, and before Wadi Rum was classified as a Protected Area in 1997 and a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2011. Currently, only 1% of the Bedouins of Wadi Rum continue to rely on nomadic or semi-nomadic herding for income.

The most extreme case in which the Jordanian government made unilateral decisions in opposition to the needs of the Bedouin community is that of the B’doul of Petra. The B’doul are a semi-nomadic Bedouin herding community that traditionally lived in caves in the Valley of Petra, which is Jordan’s primary tourist site and one of the Seven World Wonders. Starting in the 1920s, the B’doul became heavily involved in the tourism industry: while women and children would continue their semi-nomadic lifestyles, B’doul men would travel with tourists and return to their families sporadically, or work as stall owners or tourism police.<sup>[50]</sup> Initially, none of the B’doul relied fully on tourism as their main source of income; up until the 1980s, the tribe balanced its income between small agricultural plots, work with tourists, and their pastoral lifestyles.<sup>[51]</sup>

After Petra was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1985, the Jordanian government began a process of forcibly transferring the B’doul from their historic homes, ultimately moving 300 B’doul families from Petra’s caves to what became known as the village of Umm Sayhoun.<sup>[52]</sup> Today, many of the B’doul are completely integrated in the tourism industry of Petra, and have

regular access to services such as water, electricity, education, and health clinics.<sup>[53]</sup>

However, those families who do not find easy access to the tourism industry struggle to return to subsistence farming or herding as a livelihood within their new urban context. And while increased education and healthcare are beneficial to the B'doul community, urbanization has also sparked its own issues. The decreased reliance on traditional sources of food has proved to be harmful to the health of Bedouin children; doctors have found that living in urban spaces indirectly correlates to Bedouins spending money on luxury items, rather than on food products.<sup>[54]</sup> Further, the schools of Umm Sayhoun have a high rate of drop-outs, as young men leave their education to work in tourism.<sup>[55]</sup>

#### **IV. What can we learn?**

Each case that we present offers a diverse array of ideas that address the particular challenges that mobile pastoralist communities face.

#### **Mongolia: International Attention and Implementation**

In Mongolia, the efforts to address the needs of Mongolia's nomadic herding population have been primarily led by international organizations. The United Nations has undertaken a series of projects that focus on raising awareness regarding the status of herder communities, on improving capacity for disaster relief, and on implementing initiatives to expand the social welfare of Mongolia's nomadic herders.

In 2017, the UN allocated \$1.1 million in emergency funds through its Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to help provide herders with food, fuel, and basic necessities for protecting herders' livestock.<sup>[56]</sup> A 2019 United Nations Development Program initiative brought together 100 groups and stakeholders within Mongolia to explore how the country's local cashmere industry could be improved upon and expanded in order to make it more profitable, sustainable, fair, and beneficial to the local herder communities, many of whom are ultimately responsible for the product and depend on the "healthy pastureland," free from pollution and the effects of climate change, in order to survive.<sup>[57]</sup>

After a UN Joint Program (UNJP) mission in 2018 to Mongolia, which focused on the challenges faced by "herders and rural children," the UNJP launched an initiative to implement the Sustainable Development Goals in Mongolia for the purpose of eradicating poverty among herder communities.<sup>[58]</sup> The initiative is still in progress, and continues to be implemented in partnership with Mongolia's Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, along with local Mongolian NGOs, trade unions, and the Mongolian Herders' Association. The objective of the initiative is to identify ways to provide herders with social and health insurance, to establish programs to protect herders from climate-related disasters, and to create financial stability structures for herder communities.



The expected impact of the project is the expansion of social protection, the decrease of levels of poverty among herder communities, and increased awareness and knowledge on the part of the government of the needs of this population.

Raising public awareness about the shared and unique struggles of mobile pastoralist populations can facilitate the funding and implementation of international assistance programs directed toward these communities. International involvement can serve the dual purpose of influencing local governments to better understand and address the needs of these populations, and providing services that local governments may not otherwise be able to provide.

### **India: Fact-Finding and Action through Local Government**

Since the conclusion of the British colonial presence in India, numerous government efforts have been commissioned to better understand the state of the nomadic communities in India.

After the repeal of the Criminal Tribes Act in 1949, a committee was assembled to address the marginalization and stigmatization of the nomadic and semi-nomadic population. Efforts such as the 1953 Kalelkar Commission and the 1965 Lokur Committee sought to categorize which communities were nomadic and which were settled, and to regulate the definitions of these communities across states.<sup>[59]</sup> The 2002 Justice Venkatachaliah Commission ultimately recommended that the Ministries of Social Justice and Empowerment and Tribal Welfare collaborate to provide education and economic development opportunities for denotified communities; the 2006 Technical Advisory Group suggested providing denotified communities with services and facilities that go beyond the programming already provided to other marginalized or “backward” classes in India.<sup>[60]</sup>

The Renke Commission was commissioned in 2005 and published a report in 2008 that revealed that 89% of denotified tribes and 98% of nomadic tribes did not own any land; that minors within those communities worked in order to pay off family loans; that these communities were not receiving welfare and were subject to police violence and stigmatization.<sup>[61]</sup> The Renke Commission recommended adding denotified communities to the national census, commissioning special campaigns to issue denotified communities ration cards and voter IDs, establishing awareness campaigns about the denotified communities, developing skill development programs for denotified communities, and increasing denotified tribes’ political representation by reserving seats in local governing bodies and government jobs for denotified tribes.<sup>[62]</sup>

The most recent national effort in India to understand and service the denotified, nomadic, and semi-nomadic tribes was the Idate Commission, which began in 2014. In 2018, after 300 field visits in all 36 Indian states and territories and interviews with thousands of members of the denotified communities, the Idate Commission published a report on its findings.<sup>[63]</sup> This

project also offered denotified communities with an avenue to register petitions with the government: throughout their project, the Commission received about 3,700 petitions from denotified communities asking for assistance for specific services.<sup>[64]</sup>

The main product of the Idate Commission was a series of recommendations designed to address the challenges that the denotified communities face. In recognition of the severity of the denotified communities' needs, the Commission suggested creating a number of government departments devoted to the denotified communities; increasing the political representation of denotified tribes; conducting studies on social stigmas and prejudices against the denotified communities and developing anti-bias programming in schools and workplaces; adding educational material on the denotified communities to school syllabi and offering university scholarships for denotified tribe members; drafting legislation protecting the rights of denotified communities to forests and green spaces; and promoting employment opportunities for denotified communities through micro-funding ventures, job fairs in rural areas, and specific programs in support of nomadic communities' traditional vocations.<sup>[65]</sup>

These measures have, for state authorities, been largely educational in nature, emphasizing the importance of learning about and documenting the experiences of nomadic communities. Although these efforts have not yet led to sufficient action, they demonstrate a vested interest on the part of the government in understanding its own mobile pastoralist population, marking a critical first step toward acting on their behalf.

### **Jordan: A Collaborative Settlement Process**

One of the main challenges that Bedouin communities in Area C face is that of forced sedentarization. Communities across the West Bank are involuntarily placed in settled villages, without the ability to pursue their traditional livelihoods or live in accordance with cultural norms.

In December 2019, the staff of Bimkom traveled to Wadi Rum in Southern Jordan to speak with members of the local nomadic and settled Bedouin communities to learn more about their relationships with the Jordanian government, the rights they are entitled to on their land, and the basic services they receive. One of the major discoveries of our fieldwork was the extent to which the process of settling Bedouins in Jordan into sedentary villages was carried out in collaboration with the Bedouin communities in question.

There are currently almost 150 settled villages in Southern Jordan, each populated by between 1,000 and 6,000 residents. The Jordanian government began its project of building Bedouin villages in the South in the 1970s, and concluded the initiative in 1990 with the construction of a village called Shakriya. Initially, complexes sprung up organically where local residents built, and the government retroactively recognized them as official villages.

Today, no new villages are being built, though existing villages are being expanded.

The state was partially motivated to build Bedouin villages in order to institutionalize a system of taxing the Bedouin communities. The primary purpose, however, of settling the Bedouins of Southern Jordan into established villages was to enable the government to better provide them with services.

Our interviewees in Jordan affirmed that the Jordanian government's process of building settled Bedouin villages was carried out with the approval and supervision of the Bedouin communities. One interviewee explained that, in recognition of interpersonal dynamics and needs, most villages were designed to house only one tribe, and that the government only places different families together if those families were known to have good relationships or were connected by marriage. The placement of infrastructure was also submitted for local Bedouins' input; we learned that the government would ask residents where they wanted electricity and water lines, and the two parties would then negotiate in accordance with the government's budget and reach a fair conclusion. One interviewee described how an offer from the government to found a village for the Bedouins of Wadi Rum 15 kilometers from their current place of residence was rejected because it would place one tribe on another's land.

Crucially, this settlement process did not restrict Bedouins from engaging in their traditional lifestyle in the desert. We spoke with multiple individuals who owned houses in government-built settled villages, where their wives and children enjoy access to infrastructure, while they as the patriarch would live in the wilderness with their herds. One interviewee described growing up in Hosseinieh, the largest settled Bedouin village in Southern Jordan, while also regularly living with his herds, 100 kilometers east of the village.

Today, even land that is not registered as private registered land within the Government Land Registry is still recognized by the state for its traditional tribal divisions. This means that the state only builds on traditional Bedouin land if the project is designated for the public good of that Bedouin community. Further, public projects that are carried out by the government on state land that is being used by a Bedouin tribe will hire local Bedouin laborers to carry out the work.

The settlement process carried out by the national government in Jordan proves that opening proper channels of communication between mobile pastoralist communities and local governments, and promoting respect for and awareness of the practices of mobile pastoralist communities among those in positions of power, can result in successful government projects designed to better service nomadic and semi-nomadic populations.

## **A Common Theme: Political Representation**

The experiences of each mobile pastoralist community, in each location around the world, are different, and therefore call for unique solutions. One theme, however, remains constant throughout the cases of mobile pastoralists in India, Mongolia, and Jordan: the importance of adequate political representation. Each case offers evidence of the impact that political representation, or lack thereof, has on the quality of life of disenfranchised populations.

Mongolian mobile pastoralists do not currently have sufficient political representation. However, during the period of time between the 1950s and 1980 when the Mongolian government invested in promoting the nomadic herder lifestyle, and prioritized promoting traditional herder culture, Mongolian mobile pastoralists benefitted.<sup>[66]</sup> With the help of political legitimacy, the majority of residents were able to live and procure income as nomadic pastoralists. When federal policies changed, herding communities suffered, and have since struggled to remain financially stable.

The denotified tribes of India also currently suffer from lack of political representation, on the local and federal level. Nomadic communities are denied access to information and representation in village meetings, and therefore from land allotment decisions. There are even reports of nomadic tribes being given purposeful misinformation about times and venues of public information meetings.

With this in mind, one of the key recommendations offered by the most recent government commission on denotified tribes in India sought to address the issue of political representation by passing legislation to nominate at least one member of the denotified tribes to the upper house of the bicameral Indian parliament, to the Legislative Assemblies, and to the District and Intermediate Panchayats, which are local governing bodies.<sup>[67]</sup> The commission also recommended creating a sub-quota for denotified communities in order to address their lack of representation in higher education and in professional spheres.<sup>[68]</sup>

The case of the Bedouins in Southern Jordan once again serves as an outlier. In Jordan, Bedouins are guaranteed 6 out of 71 seats in Jordanian Parliament. The Jordanian government employs a desert police legion composed exclusively of Bedouins.<sup>[69]</sup> In addition, a Bedouin always holds a 'ministerial-level post of advisor to the king for tribal affairs.'<sup>[70]</sup> The persistence of Bedouin representation within government structures is one of the key factors that enables Bedouins in Jordan to benefit from a successful, collaborative settlement process, access to services, and even the ability to abide by Bedouin law.

## **V. Conclusion**

Through this study, we explore the lifestyles of three nomadic communities, the particular challenges they face, and the services they receive from their local governments.

We discuss the experiences of the denotified tribes in India, the herders of Inner Mongolia, and the Bedouins of Jordan. We learned that each of these three communities have been negatively impacted by policies put in place by governing authorities, past and present, that sought to limit their ability to practice their traditional livelihoods. We learned that these nomadic communities suffer from lack of access to sufficient infrastructure and secure housing, and can benefit from improved mechanisms of communication with government officials.

We learned that political disenfranchisement serves to perpetuate the oppression of mobile pastoralist communities, and that genuine efforts on the part of the government to understand mobile pastoralists' unique status and needs can pave the way for better services and greater opportunities in the future. We learned that international efforts can succeed in supporting mobile pastoralist communities in ways that local governments can't, and we learned that positive, productive sedentarization processes can take place for nomadic communities when they are done with the full participation of the communities they seek to benefit.

The challenges we discuss, and the approaches we highlight for addressing these challenges, are applicable to mobile pastoralist communities in Area C of the West Bank. Like in India and Mongolia, Bedouin communities in Area C suffer from lack of legitimate channels of communication with the authorities that determines their fate. For example, in order to clear space for the settlement of Ma'ale Adumim and E1 development and expansion plans, residents of Jabal al-Baba, a Bedouin community in the Jerusalem governorate, have been forced to settle in close quarters to one another, barring them from maintaining the required privacy between families or accessing the grazing lands they need for their herds. This community could benefit from political and legal mechanisms for communicating with and petitioning the Israeli Civil Administration to improve their situation, with respect to their cultural and economic needs.

Unlike in the case of Wadi Rum in Southern Jordan, Bedouin communities in the West Bank are not seen as potential partners in running and maintaining significant historical or cultural sites. For example, in Khirbet Ghrwein al-Fauqa, a Bedouin community in the southernmost part of the West Bank, residents face threats of eviction from their homes due to the claim that their community is founded on an archeological site dating back to the Byzantine era. If the Civil Administration viewed this community--its knowledge and connection to the site--as an asset, rather than as a burden, it could collaborate with the residents to grow the site into a mutually beneficial tourism opportunity.

As has been the case with the herder community in Mongolia, international attention, pressure, and action regarding the case of Bedouin community Al Khan al Ahmar, located in the Jerusalem governorate, has succeeded in indefinitely postponing the village's demolition, which has originally been approved by the Israeli High Court of Justice in May 2018. And, as has been done on various occasions in India, we recognize the great need for not only civil society organizations, but governmental authorities, to develop a clear, more exact picture of the mobile pastoralist communities of Area C: where they live, what resources they have access to, and the relationships they have with relevant state bodies.

This research presents an opportunity to reevaluate and revisit the methods by which Bimkom, for over twenty years, has promoted Palestinian spatial planning rights. We offer these conclusions in the hopes of recommitting ourselves, creatively and energetically, to this work, motivated now by a deeper clarity regarding the implications of addressing the needs of mobile pastoralist communities--not just in the West Bank, but around the world.

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