Heritages in the Making
Social embodiment of cultural heritage objects and places in the multicultural Altai Republic

Thesis presented for the degree of Doctor of Archaeology
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Acknowledgments

The past three and a half years I had the chance to do research about the politics of the past in one of the world’s most unique places: the Altai Republic (Russian Federation - Siberia). This research was more than a research about the highly politicised nature of archaeological practice and heritage management. It was also a personal quest. Through discussing my research with colleagues, Indigenous Altaians, Russian archaeologists and trying to make sense to my friends I discovered more about myself and my role as a scientists in the world.

In this regard, this dissertation was not an isolated effort and would not have been possible without the help and many conversations that lay at the basis of this dissertation. Many people were important throughout the entire process. First I would like to thank mypromoter Prof. Dr. Jean Bourgeois. Despite his unfamiliarity with the topic, Prof. Dr. Bourgeois remained a critical voice and guided me as good as possible. The relative freedom he gave me throughout my research was essential to develop my own strategy, methodology and theoretical approach. Finding my own way and being embedded in an often challenging research environment ended up being very important: I learned to be reflexive about my research and be truthful to myself, enabling me to carve out my own niche. The feedback I received from Prof. Dr. Jean Bourgeois just before submitting was extremely valuable and helped me to crystallise my thoughts. Second, I would like to thank Erick Robinson. Erick started his post-doc at Ghent at the time when I started my PhD and since our first conversation he has always been of great influence to my research. Almost every month I would find books and papers on my desk with a post-it stating, “read this, E”. Despite the fact that he knew that I am not the most tidy person in the world and some books were already buried deep under heaps of paper, he kept supplying me with challenging literature that have changed my stance to archaeology and heritage (it is important to note that for Erick his books are probably the second most important thing in his life). He was also a big help during the last months of this PhD. Third I would also like to thank Dr. Keir Reeves, to whom I am very grateful for the internship at his heritage and tourism research unit at Monash University (AITRU, Melbourne). Keir has thought
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ASTER: Advanced Space borne Thermal Emission and Reflection Radiometer
CRM: Cultural Resource Management
GIS: Geographic Information Systems
GPS: Global Positioning System
IAE SBRAS: Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Science
ICOM: International Council of Museums
ICOMOS: International Council on Monuments and Sites
IUCN: International Union for the Conservation of Nature
LiDAR: Light Detection And Ranging
NAGPRA: Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act
NEP: New Economic Policy
NGO: Non-Governmental Organization
PGIS: Participatory Geographical Information Systems
RAIPON: Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North
UN: United Nations
UNESCO: United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WAC: World Archaeological Congress
WWF: World Wide Fund for Nature
Position of the researcher

In many regards the research presented in this thesis is very different from studies usually conducted in Flemish archaeology. While most scholarly work in Flanders are highly technical and empirical studies about certain historical events, this research neither uses innovative methods nor does it aim to better understand the past. On the contrary, this research is about the ‘present of the past’ in the multi-cultural Altai Republic. It investigates how different social beings perceive and appropriate heritage objects and places in relation with their own needs and interests. As with any appraisal of social phenomena, the presented research is inherently a personal observation, reflecting the interests and background of the researcher. In an effort to draw the reader to potential biases, before discussing the main objectives and chosen theoretical approach I wish to position myself in relation to the subject.

The politics of the past and the role of the own discipline in society is regrettably a topic that is not part of the curriculum at Flemish universities. When I started this research I had the ambition to develop a heritage management plan based on the study of remote sensing data and the development of cost-effective techniques to three-dimensionally document archaeological sites and objects. Already from the beginning this strategy was appreciated by the editors and reviewers of A-ranked archaeological journals (which have unfortunately become a standard for good research) and resulted in publications in major journals such as Antiquity, Rock Art Research and Journal of Archaeological Science. However, multiple encounters in 2010 with the people whose heritage I wanted to manage triggered me to reflect on my initial research question and strategy. The more people I spoke to, the more I began to understand that neither the application of new methodologies nor the study of remote sensing data would result in the sustainable conservation of the unique heritage of the Altai Republic. Instead of reading even more technical literature and process large amounts of data, I reflected on the interviews I did in 2010. I quickly established that not methodological problems but social
problems and diverging conceptualisations of the past were essentially undermining effective heritage policy.

Instead of further investigating the material dimensions of the heritage of the Altai, I started to look for ways to understand the social dimensions of cultural heritage. After being introduced into the field of material culture studies and social theory, I began to understand that heritage has nothing to do with the past, but is about people that attach cultural values and social memory to ‘things’. The more I started to understand the different processes that shape the Indigenous Altaians their heritage discourse, the more I reflected on the disciplinary identity of archaeology and its interconnectedness with policy and politics.

Although such an anthropological approach to archaeology and heritage is already well established in Anglophone archaeologies, both within the field of Flemish and Russian archaeology, a theoretical approach about the social dimensions of heritage are not seen as an integral part the discipline. As a result, for the heritage specialist experienced with interpretative theory, some of my points of discussion and theoretical elaborations might not be groundbreaking. However, this research needs to be framed in a context that is still dominated by archaeologists and heritage researchers with a strict positivist background. Therefore I believe that the straightforward approach advocated throughout this research has the potential to impact the heritage field in both Russia and Flanders.

At the end, besides my academic background I also wish to be clear about my ideological background since this research has many tangent points with post-colonialism, Indigenous politics and human rights. Indigenous people might have lost their traditional lifestyle; this does not mean that the needs and interests towards their heritage are less genuine. I believe that people that have become part of a country unwillingly, even if they have almost entirely assimilated, should have basic rights over their own culture and land. Although I do not wish to comment on the current discourses that are dominating the political field in Flanders, to my opinion nationalism and the interconnected nationalist agenda has a too negative connotation in much literature. I conceptualise it as a processes in society that has to be understood through case-by-case judgement. When nationalist demands are based on sound claims (i.e. cohesive sense of group membership and being native to the land), I believe there are no reasons to deny these.
Preface

As the snow that accumulated during the long winter months melts in the spring, rivers flood the Altai, and the many rivulets and streams carry the melt water through the entire landscape to the Katun river. The great river is not only carrying water in great quantity. It also carries every possible debris, twigs and leaves, which accumulated along the shores during the year. As a result the colour of the Katun is grey-brown, muddy. But by the fall she changes colour, becoming turquoise.

(Tyuhteneva 2009)

Altaian anthropologist Svetlana Tyuhteneva (2009) used this landscape-based metaphor to describe the turbulent transition of Indigenous culture in the Altai Republic during the last years of the Soviet Union and subsequent post-Soviet years (Federal Subject of Russia - figure 0-1). Just as numerous other Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in the post-Soviet world (Blazer 1999, Buyandelgeriyn 2008, Halemba 2006, Halemba 2006, Kaplonski 2004, Rogers 2009, Shnirelman 1996), the Altai people, or Altaians, were encountering a radically transformed social arena and new economic conditions. Across the post-Soviet world, this transformation not only impacted everyday livelihoods and basic subsistence with devastating results during the entire 1990s (Alina-Pisano 2008, Buyandelgeriyn 2007, Halemba 2006, Halemba 2008b), it also encapsulated an important context-dependent and historically (i.e. Soviet) imbued cultural transition. Ultimately after the turmoil of the late 1980s and 1990s a new Altaian culture was born, which is continuously struggling to negotiate its place in the Russian Federation (Tyuhteneva 2009).

These developments in the aftermath of the perestroika and glasnost provide unique insights in the reinvention, consolidation, and revitalisation of culture and identity in post-colonial transitional episodes. Often referred to as the ‘ethno-cultural revival’, ‘period

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1 In accordance with most international literature from the field of heritage studies and anthropology Indigenous will be written with a capital ‘I’ when referring to the group that is appraised or discussed (i.e. when talking about Altaians or Aborigines). When talking about Indigenous as a ‘general category’, ‘i’ will be used.
of ethno-national activism’, or ‘ethno-cultural renaissance’ (Blazer 1999, Broz 2009, Eriksen 2001, Tyuhteneva 2009), this period of sociocultural transformation enables scholars to understand the dynamics, historical trajectories, politics, power relations, and flexibility of culture and identity construction. The study of this transformation illuminates the value and use of tradition, heritage, religion, symbols, landscape, and language in creating and consolidating ‘a post-Soviet Indigenous culture’.

Figure 0 – 1: Map of the Altai Republic indicating the planned pipeline and the study regions where fieldwork was done (1. Uymon region, 2. Karakol park, 3. Middle Katun region, 4. Eastern Chuya region).

The research presented in this PhD dissertation is not an anthropological analysis of this momentous episode in recent Altaian and Russian history. It is however about how different groups in the same social arena commodfy the past, as objects or places embodying cultural memory (cf. Nora 1989), in a constantly evolving sociocultural context. Therefore, Tyucheneva’s metaphor and subsequent elaboration about the ethno-
The cultural revival might be confusing. However, I chose it as an opening to define the theme, context and particular perspectives of this PhD research. This research is not per se a type of archaeological study traditionally conducted at a Belgian archaeology department. At first sight it does not deal with archaeological methods, cultures or artefacts conventionally preferred by Belgian archaeologists, but in some way it does. On a more general level, this research is about the ‘present’ and how the past is created and ‘domesticated’ in a contemporary multi-cultural society (cf. Lowenthal 1996). It is about culture and the role of a multi-dimensional past and objects embodying this past in the process of creating, contesting, and consolidating cultural identity; how different groups and intertwined epistemologies and sociocultural contexts perceive, value, contest, create, and use heritage in a challenging and ever evolving sociocultural context like the Altai Republic. This research appraises heritage as a pluralist contemporary social process and will especially focus on both Indigenous perspectives and those of the homo archaeologicus (cf. Bourdieu 1988). This dissertation, therefore, also investigates how archaeological practice and theory evolves and collides with transformations of contemporary societies.

More specifically, this sociocultural investigation is framed within the context of Indigenous cultural heritage management and joint stewardship (Wylie 2005) over cultural heritage in a transitional settler society; it examines how an Indigenous Altaian society, Russian governmental institutions, and international nongovernmental organisations (NGO’s), each with their own particular epistemologies and conceptualisations of heritage, are struggling and failing to protect and manage the increasingly disintegrating tangible and intangible heritage of the Altai Republic. This research therefore investigates the multiple historically embedded social frameworks underlying the conceptualisation and commodification of history and cultural memory by the different stakeholders, and how these can be brought together to move towards collaborative stewardship over Altai’s interrelated heritage.

Opening with Svetlana Tyuhteneva metaphor of a changing river does not only define the particular topic and sociocultural arena of this research, it also outlines (1) the applied approach to culture, (2) the different post-colonial identities involved and (3) the Indigenous landscape-driven worldview and value for cultural heritage, which are three central themes throughout this work.

First, the representation of Altaian culture as a dynamic mountain river in relation with seasonal changes and the landscape invokes the image of culture and ethnicity in motion (Bourdieu 1990, Erikson 1993, Eriksen 2001, Tilley 2006). In this regard, a river

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2 Based on the definition of Rodney Harrison (2012: 22), in this dissertation a settler society refers to “the postcolonial reimagining of places established as colonies or outpost of Western European empires, in which existing Indigenous populations were dislocated by settler-colonists” (Harrison 2012: 22).
can not be understood by only looking to the water, the entire ecosystem of the fluvial basin determines how it flows, how much water it carries, and where and what it erodes. In this work, culture and interrelated epistemologies, traditions, values, ideals, and an array of social practices are similarly seen as a flexible and tightly context-dependent process. Using such a relational stance, cultural heritage is explored as a comprehensive sociocultural phenomenon evolving in close relation with changing post-Soviet structures. As such, Frederic Barth’s (1987) ‘Cosmologies in the making’, a momentous comparative study on local variation of the cosmology of different communities of the OK people in Inner Papua New Guinea, can be extrapolated to heritage: heritages in the making.

Second, the image of the melting water that carries debris, twigs, and leaves left from last year, resulting in a muddy and radically changed river, serves as an ideal allegory to introduce the particular transitional process of post-Soviet identity formation. On the one hand, especially within Tyuhteneva discourse, this relates to the ‘messy’, chaotic, and contested post-perestroika societal transitions in the Altai Republic, characterised by economic, social, and spiritual anxiety; on the other, not all debris from last year is transported to the Ob and subsequently to the sea and many sediments will be deposited in the next meander, slowly impacting the outlook of the river. In a similar way, many aspects of the Soviet period are ‘sediment’ on the cultural fabric and individual dispositions of Altai’s inhabitants. If we want to understand a river, we do not only need to look to the water and its contextual environment, but also to its formation process. Therefore, the contemporary valuation and employment of cultural heritage by various players will always be analysed through a broad historical trajectory, especially focusing on almost 70 years of Soviet economic, cultural, social, and educational politics. Such a contextual and ‘historically embedded’ approach correlates with Anthony Giddens’ insistence of the pivotal importance of contextual space and time in social studies (Giddens 1984: 286). Furthermore, a river cannot be interpreted without looking to other fluvial processes and landforms in other geographical areas. Therefore a comparative perspective will be employed. Not to generalise and globalise particular findings about heritage, but rather to contextualise and promote an understanding of the different actor’s actions and conceptualisations. For example, how Russian archaeologists reacted to Indigenous requests for repatriation of a contested Scythian burial (see below) is not different from the initial reactions of American or Australian archaeologists and anthropologists to Native American and Aboriginal claims (e.g. Burke et al. 2008, Smith and Jackson 2006). Their actions are not out of perversity, but are within their given context and historical trajectory understandable and expected.

Third, the metaphorical image of culture as a dynamic natural phenomenon not only tells us how culture and cultural heritage is ever evolving, but also introduces the particular worldview and stance of Altaians and various other Indigenous peoples in general towards nature and landscape (Byrne 2008, Gilbert 2010, Greer, Harrison and McIntyre-Tamwoy 2002, Halemba 2006, Hamilton and Townsend 2009, Khomushku
2008, Nabokov 2002, Ross et al. 2011, Tuhteneva 2009). As argued by anthropologist Agnieszka Halemba (2006) throughout her monograph “The Telengits of Southern Siberia: landscape, religion and knowledge in motion”, being Altaian is determined by the peoples intense relationship with the land - the Altai. Altaian identity is embedded in the land; people and the environment are so tightly bound up that they cannot be considered as ontologically separate. The venerated environment is a constant point of reference in everyday life; as a holistic structure (both tangible and intangible), the unique landscapes (figure 0-2) and the Altai in general are their heritage, their historical homeland linking them with the past and giving them meaning in the present. Similar to what Peter Nabokov (2002) argues in his “A Forest of Time: American Indian Perspectives on History” and Anne Ross et al. (2011) argue in their comparative study “Indigenous Peoples and the Collaborative Stewardship of Nature: Knowledge Binds and Institutional Conflicts”, as opposed to the compartmentalised and objective gaze of science and science-imbued institutional structures, Indigenous people comprehend time, heritage, place, and space in a different way guided by their attachment to land and environment. As common in Eurasia (Jordan 2011a, Pedersen 2009, Pedersen 2011) the world is seen through a holistic lens of nature; the 'land' is central in their myths and histories, often expressing an indefinite symbioses between people and land (Ross et al. 2011: 21) that is especially difficult to fathom for non-Indigenous scientists, managers, bureaucrats and heritage practitioners.

In short, this work is about the sociocultural dimensions of cultural heritage and collaborative stewardship challenges in the multi-cultural Altai Republic. Using social theory it analyses how different actors (i.e. Russian, Kazakh and Altaian inhabitants, archaeologists, government officials, media, and small and large scale economical forces) conceptualise and employ the past through different mediums in a post-Soviet society, and how such a multitude of values and ideals impede sustainable management. By examining the different viewpoints this work aims to present the different 'heritages' (cf. Ashworth, Graham and Tunbridge 2007, Graham and Howard 2008) in a nuanced way, ultimately hoping to find a baseline for future intercultural negotiation and collaboration.
Figure 0-2: Dominant landscape types of the Altai Republic. The most northern parts of the Altai are characterised by a low mountainous geography (top) and are intensively used for agriculture. The middle picture shows the Karakol valley, situated in the middle of the Altai Republic this is the most dominant landscape type and can best be described as an alpine landscape. The lower valleys that are flanked by high mountain peaks are relatively suited for marginal agriculture and the higher mountain pastures are intensively used for grazing during the winter. Another peculiar landscape type in Altai is the so-called steppe landscapes (below). Situated in the southeast part of the republic this environment is dominated by flat intermontane basins flanked by high mountain peaks. The three types of ecological zones know a different historical trajectory, economical organisation and ethnic composition.
Aims

This dissertation examines the different historically embedded conceptualisations of the past of the various communities of the multi-cultural Altai Republic. Through the application of social theory inspired by the structural constructivist and critical structuralist stances of Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1984, 1986a, 1986b, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1993, 1996, 2005) and Anthony Giddens (1984), I aim to investigate the social processes that determine how various groups within their historically evolved sociocultural and political context value and commodify the past and construct heritage. These insights will be critically linked with current debates in the field of archaeology, anthropology, and heritage management.

The overall goal of this dissertation is to deconstruct the different actors’ processes of meaning making of the past and gain insights in the different epistemological frameworks and dispositions that constitute the conceptualisation, utilisation, and maintenance of cultural heritage. In multi-cultural societies, and especially in post-colonial settler societies with Indigenous communities, there are always different ways of constructing and transmitting knowledge, but only one discourse is institutionalised in the official policy of that state. Different knowledge systems and inherent myopia of many actors, especially in contexts where valuable cultural resources (i.e. heritage) are at sake, often leads to misunderstandings and conflicts over ownership and stewardship. In the context of heritage management and archaeology this undermines effective heritage management and imperative community-based practice. Through appraising the different epistemological frameworks and dispositions I hope to disclose how the different communities value the past in contemporary society, how these values have evolved and eventually been polarised, and how they constitute contemporary politically engrained conflicts. I aim to lay a basis for intercultural understanding and define common ground between the different actors by appraising the various social processes constituting the different actors’ actions. The goal of this dissertation is not to set up practical heritage management initiatives (for example how particular sites or landscapes have to be protected and presented in a tangible way); based on old and new ethnographic data it rather aims to formulate a new vision and philosophical baseline for heritage and tourism policy in the Altai Republic, taking in account the conjunction between people, landscape, and the past.

different and innovative for two main reasons. First, these earlier studies have especially tackled heritage related topics indirectly through classic ethnological and anthropological themes such as kinship, personhood and being, cosmology, or religion. However, none of this work has explicitly investigated the use and conceptualisation of the past and its interrelation with the changing social environment, and framed it within existing theories from the cultural heritage field (for example Byrne 2008, Harrison 2012, Lowenthal 1996, Lowenthal 1998, Smith 2006). Second, following Peter Jordan’s (2011b) critique of anthropological research in Eurasia, most of these ethnographies (especially the Russian works) are too descriptive and rarely employ interpretative frameworks - which is characteristic for Russian social and human science (including archaeology and history). Many of these researchers investigate certain aspects of Altaian culture through a narrow and small-scaled perspective (ignoring other ethnic groups), focussing on the experiential and phenomenological dimensions of people’s practices and ultimately omitting the broader historical and contextual realities. Throughout his writings Bronislaw Malinowski (1922, 1994) insisted that cultural and social phenomena can only be understood if also the broader dimensions (contextual structures) of a society are included. Similarly this research insists on using a broad theoretical framework to investigate heritage as a comprehensive social phenomenon influenced by the different agents (ranging from Indigenous pastoralist to Kremlin appointed officials) that altogether influence social practice.

Thus, throughout this dissertation the above-described ethnographic insights, updated with new fieldwork, will be tackled from the heritage perspective through a comprehensive social framework. I aim to fuse this new data and information from existing (international and Russian) literature to evaluate current issues in the theory and practice of archaeology (more specifically public archaeology\(^3\)) and cultural heritage management. This will bring the issues faced in Altai beyond the current regional ethnographic debate into the global debate surrounding heritage, archaeological theory and ethics, Indigenous politics, public education, and intercultural stewardship of cultural resources. Second, although there will be a certain emphasis on the Indigenous Altaians, I believe that the success of cultural heritage management and archaeological ethics within an institutionalised multi-cultural society depends on a multi-actor approach. All too often in the field of Indigenous heritage research attention is placed solely on the Indigenous actors. Though they are amongst the most important players, I argue that the best way to find resolutions to existing polarisations depends on the recognition and

\(^3\) Public archaeology is a sub-discipline of archaeology that investigates how different groups in society perceive archaeological remains and the archaeological discipline an sich. Through scrutinizing this relationship it provides archaeologists with information how to engage with the broader public (see Matsuda and Okamura 2011).
understanding of all players in the interacting social space. Heritage and archaeology - both as disciplines and discourses - do not operate in a social vacuum and are negotiated throughout a highly collaborative dialogue between various groups of experts and non-experts (cf. Matsuda and Okamura 2011, Pyburn 2011, Waterton and Smith 2010). These different groups’ needs and interests should be communicated across epistemological boundaries, and more specifically towards the governmental institutions responsible for defining the policy for heritage and cultural resources. Through comprehensive analysis I want to translate the different conceptualisations and appropriations of the past, so different agents can move towards an intercultural understanding.

Although I aim to present a comprehensive investigation of the multi-dimensionality of heritage in the Altai Republic, it is impossible to include all narratives and events that enable us to understand the cultural heritage of multi-ethnic Altai. As argued by Thomas Hylland Eriksen (2001: 248), modern societies have become too complex and contain a vast number of actors making it impossible to study everything about everybody. Only conclusions drawn from particular case studies can enable us to understand phenomena within their broader social and cultural context (Eriksen 2001: 248). Within this dissertation two particular topics will be investigated, serving as analytical tools to unravel the different social processes surrounding cultural heritage. First, there will be an analysis of the conflicts surrounding the ownership of archaeological finds and the insights this provides into power relations in contemporary Russia. Second, there will be an investigation of the logic behind the heritage values of the associative cultural landscapes (see below) of four study regions that have strikingly different historical trajectories, which yields knowledge of how different ethnic groups under different contextual parameters develop a historically ingrained relationship with place and landscape. Throughout these studies my further aim is to explore, from a critical perspective, the current cultural and Indigenous politics of federal Russia and particularly the trade-off between archaeology and politics on the one hand and culture and neo-liberal sectors (i.e. tourism and resource development) on the other.

So in general, this dissertation’s overall aim is to provide the readers with intercultural insights on the complex process of cultural heritage creation and re-creation in the post-Soviet Altai Republic. The central thread throughout this work will be the embodiment of heritages in the making - cultural heritage as a pluralistic concept that is constantly reproduced and modified by multiple actors. My wish is to inspire both archaeologists and cultural landscape researchers with a western scientific value system (incl. Russian heritage researchers and officials) to critically rethink prior held notions of heritage and the particular hierarchy of expert knowledge. Though this thesis investigates an Indigenous context, the provided insights, employed strategy, and theoretical discussions are also highly relevant to for example Flemish archaeology, or other positivist west-European archaeologies. There are always different actors (for example a building contractor, local historians and private/public archaeologists) with particular
epistemologies, discourses, and interests, with ultimately different valuations of cultural heritage. These different heritages are often very difficult to align and can ultimately lead to conflicts from which the heritage itself does not benefit. In short, this thesis does not only aim to contribute to the heritage dialogue in the Altai Republic, it seeks to contribute to the broader field of public archaeology and cultural heritage management through appraising heritage as a holistic social practice within a multi-actor approach.

Outline of the dissertation

This dissertation consists of five parts. The first two parts introduce the topic, region, population groups and the strategy. Part III analyses the underlying social processes that define the perception of archaeological remains. Part IV analyses how different groups perceive the environment of the Altai and embody memory and a variety of cultural values to place and space that constitute the heritage value of cultural landscapes. Though Part III and Part IV deal with the same phenomenon, namely heritage and social memory, these parts were conceptualised as more or less separate entities. As a result both parts have their own discussions and conclusions.

Part I “When Frederik Barth meets Pierre Bourdieu - Heritage as a social practice dialectically in the making” introduces the Altai Republic and the central theoretical issues of this thesis. The first chapter provides some key details about the heritages of the Altai Republic: the archaeological remains, the veneration of the environment, the involved communities, and some of the problems faced today that impede heritage management. The second chapter critically defines cultural heritage, heritage management, and public archaeology, and their relation to social theory, archaeology, and material culture studies. Within this chapter existing discourses and institutional frameworks are critically examined in the light of the problems faced in the Altai Republic. Furthermore, some important topics and concepts like authorised heritage discourse, heritage and identity, Indigenous heritage, repatriation and community are elucidated. The third chapter of this introductory section focuses on the theoretical approach to heritage as a commodity. This chapter will elaborate on the social theory used to unravel heritage, its broader social arena, and different social agents. In this chapter the central theoretical framework employed, based on Pierre Bourdieu’s ‘The Logic of Practice’ (1990) and Anthony Gidden’s ‘The Constitution of Society’ (1984), will be fixed and linked to heritage. The last chapter of this part will focus on the strategy used to operationalise the chosen theoretical approach. This chapter is relatively short and will outline the general approach, materials, and study areas because the two topics (i.e. archaeological remains and landscapes) demand a different approach that is tightly interrelated with the different research questions. The chosen methodologies are presented in part three and four.
Part II “Peopling the field and uncovering the structures: ethnographic overview of the population groups of the Altai” will introduce the ‘information sources’ of this research, i.e. the different ethnic communities populating the Altai. This part consists of one chapter. Chapter 5 will discuss the different ethnic groups that were included in this study, their historical trajectory, and their general stance towards each other and cultural heritage. Presenting this overview will provide a background why certain study areas, methods, archival resources, and literature resources were chosen in relation with the main characteristics (livelihoods, worldview, kinship and history) of the different peoples that inhabit the Altai Republic. These insights will also serve as the basis for the analysis of the different heritages examined in parts three and four.

Part III “Archaeology as a social practice in a transformed neo-liberal field: archaeological conflicts in the Altai Republic” will investigate the different socioculturally embedded stances to the archaeological past. Through investigating the conflicts surrounding particular archaeological remains (i.e. the Altai Princess, a 2,500 year old mummy) the different processes that define the conceptualisation and commodification of the past will be appraised. This assessment will not only be valuable for understanding how heritage is constantly being reproduced in relation to its context, it also provides important lessons for the future of archaeological practice in Indigenous contexts. Before proceeding to the analysis of the conflict Chapter 6 will briefly introduce the Altai Pipeline, a prestigious project by Gazprom. The events surrounding this pipeline will be used throughout Chapter 7 and Part four to illuminate how economics, politics and geopolitics influence the archaeological practice and heritage policy. Chapter 7 examines the archaeological heritage conflict. Lastly, some potential solutions will be discussed based on a comparison with similar struggles in the United States and Australia.

Part III “Landscapes in the making: a social approach to a spatial phenomena” aims to uncover the processual logic that constitutes the associative cultural landscapes of the Altai. Based on a context-dependent understanding of social space and the everyday use of the environment this part/Chapter 8 basically tries to unravel how different groups differently perceive landscape and attribute heritage values and memory to particular places. This exercise was done as a response to a recent law that aimed to protect sacred places and the recent tourism growth that is affecting the preservation of the multi-ethnic sacred geography of the Altai Republic. At the end of this part a bridge is made with the sustainable livelihoods framework, which has recently been advocated in literature as a strategy to sustainably introduce tourism in peripheral rural contexts. This framework has the potential to overcome poverty and preserve tradition and heritage.

Part IV is the conclusion of this dissertation. Intermediate conclusions and discussions from the different parts will be coupled back to this preface and the overarching theoretical framework.
Part I: When Frederik Barth meets Pierre Bourdieu – Heritage as a social practice dialectically in the making
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The atrophy of the material and the ignorance towards the intangible: the threatened heritage of the Altai Republic

Although I do not intend to provide a complete overview of the archaeology and cultural landscapes of the Altai region (see Gheyle 2009: 39-56 and Parzinger 2006 for a complete overview), before discussing the social processes that lay at the basis of the conceptualisation of the past, I will acquaint the reader with the region’s main types of heritage. By discussing the uniqueness of its archaeological heritage I would like to emphasise the region’s scientific potential in solving some of the most fundamental questions in archaeology (for example, the colonisation of Asia and the Americas, the impact of climate change on human habitation, and the extent of long-range contacts in the past). However, this potential cannot be exploited because of a poor relationship between archaeologists and local communities. Besides undermining fundamental research, this stalemate is also impairing heritage management and stability in the region, ultimately affecting the heritage itself. The discussion about the region’s scientific importance and the conflicts that impede heritage management this chapter should stress the relevance of a pluralist approach to heritage, which is pursued in this dissertation. Unless steps are taken to solve the current stalemate, the unique assets of the Altai will be lost.

1.1 Overview of the unique heritage of the Altai Republic

For thousands of years, the Altai Mountains have been an important transitional region between the major ecological regions of Eurasia (figure 1-1). As a result of its specific
setting and particular preservation conditions (i.e. permafrost), the region is known as one of Central Asia’s richest and most varied archaeological regions. The different cultures that once inhabited the Altai left their permanent mark on the Altaian landscape by means of an extraordinary number of monuments and petroglyphs. Almost every valley comprises hundreds of archaeological monuments, ranging from 5000-year-old stone settings to recent rock-art sites (Gheyle 2009, Jacobson-Tepfer, Meacham and Tepfer 2010, Plets et al. 2012). The broad variety of archaeological monuments, both in its cultural attribution and function, is inextricable linked to Altai’s unique and varied landscape of high mountains, mountainous steppe basins and pristine mountain pastures.

Figure 1 – 1: Map indicating the major steppe regions of Eurasia and the location of the Altai Mountains. (Gheyle 2009: 39)

With some sites dating back 430,000 years and with at least 120,000 years of continuous occupation (Chlachula 2001, Rybin 2005: 79), the Altai Mountains are one of the regions key to understanding the prehistory of Eurasia. This is not only the region with the oldest sites in Siberia (Chlachula 2001: 147), but it also has the highest concentration of open-air and cave sites. Some sites (for example, the famous Denisova Cave) have unique preservation conditions and an almost continuous chronology stretching from the Middle Palaeolithic (120,000-43,000BP) to the Neolithic (6th millennium-4th millennium BCE) (Chlachula 2001, Kuzmin and Orlova 1998, Rybin 2005). As a mountainous region with rich and diverse landscapes, many people migrated to and from the Altai. It is commonly seen as one of the most important passages in the spread of the different ‘cultures’ that peopled Asia and the Pacific in prehistory (Chlachula 2001: 146). Recent findings by anthropologists from Pennsylvania University trace back the origin of the first Native
Americans (20,000-25,000 BP) to the Altai region, illustrating its significance in world prehistory (Dulik et al. 2012).

Whereas Stone Age sites have low visibility in the landscape (except for some rare petroglyphs), from the so-called Eneolithic period (3,200-2,400 BCE) onwards funerary monuments were constructed that remain preserved today (figure 1-2). With links to the Afanasievo culture⁴, metalworking and the domestication of livestock were introduced in the Altai during the Eneolithic period (Matyushin 1986, Parzinger 2006: 187-189). During the Bronze Age (2,400 BCE-800 BCE) agriculture and livestock breeding became increasingly important (Parzinger 2006: 299). The preferred economic strategy was nomadic pastoralism: the alpine mountain pastures were grazed in the summer and the lower valleys and intermontane steppes in the winter (Gheyle 2009: 42). This strategy is still practised today by the contemporary inhabitants of the Altai Republic. A variety of monuments (including monumental standing stones and vast ritual complexes) have been recorded from the Bronze Age. Petroglyphs from this period are also commonly found on rocky outcrops throughout Central Altai.

The Iron Age (800 BCE-400 CE) is by far the most represented and documented period. The Iron Age is commonly subdivided into the much-discussed Scythian/Early Nomadic period (± first millennium BCE) and the Hunic period (± 200 BCE-400 CE). During the first millennium BCE, the steppe region of Eurasia (stretching from the shores of the Black Sea to Inner Mongolia) was inhabited by various nomadic tribes who are often referred to as ‘Scythians’ (Alekseev et al. 2002: 143). As critiqued by different scholars (see Gheyle 2009: 44 for an overview) use of the term Scythian is not without its pitfalls. In reality, the tribes described by Herodotus (Historiae book IV) as inhabiting the shores of the Black Sea are hardly comparable with the Scythian tribes occupying the Altai Mountains. Nor did these groups consider themselves as belonging to the same ethnicity – there was no Scythian nation. Instead, the different groups that dwelled on the Eurasian steppes are often called ‘Early Nomads’ and have some similar characteristic: a highly nomadic lifestyle, a vast economic network, similar artistic expressions (so-called ‘animal’ style) and a comparable material culture (Alekseev et al. 2002, Gheyle 2009: 44). The Scythian period in Altai is traditionally subdivided into a wide range of ‘distinct’ cultures/ethno-territorial groups (see Kuzmin 2008). The most well-known and well represented is the Pazyryk culture (5th-3rd century BCE). One peculiar characteristic of this ‘culture’ concerns its burial sites that are found in almost any valley in the Altai Mountains. Pazyryk culture burial sites consist of multiple stone burial mounds (also

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⁴ In Russian archaeology, dividing people in cultures based on variations in material culture is still very popular. Almost every site is a culture an sich. In my opinion, the conception that ‘pots are people’ is outdated and the archaeological history of Altai needs to be reconsidered. However, because it is not my ambition to pursue this in this dissertation I will use some of the ‘cultures’ identified by the Russian archaeologists.
called *kurgan* in Russian) that are organised in north-south oriented lines. Most mounds are relatively small (5-10 metres in diameter) and sites can contain up to 20 individual burial mounds (Gheyle 2009: 175-186). Some monuments are extremely large (up to 60 metres in diameter and 2-4 metres high) and are related to the upper classes in Pazyryk society; a considerable number of these mounds can be found in the Ongudai *raion*.

Inside these burial mounds the dead are interred in a wooden sarcophagus inside a wooden grave chamber. The graves contain a variety of grave goods (linked with the status of the deceased), and remains of one or more horses are often found north of the grave chamber. This culture came into the international limelight when Sergei Rudenko (1960, 1970) excavated several large burial mounds that were located in the higher permafrost region (see below), yielding unique finds. Since Rudenko’s excavations, a large number of monuments have been investigated, resulting in the discovery of a wide variety of finds (ranging from weaponry to textiles) that give a unique insight into the societal organisation and long-range contacts of these Early-Nomadic tribes (Molodin 2000).

Due to pressures in Central Asia, the Huns ultimately displaced these Pazyryk nomads. Recent DNA investigations (Molodin 2000) suggest that the Pazyryks migrated northwards and are genetically linked to the contemporary Central Siberian Selkups (see below). Compared to the Scythian period, less is known about the Huns. This can be explained by the limited visibility of Hunic burial sites.

From the 5th century onwards, a conglomerate of Turkic nomads had an increasing influence on the Altai. Life was dominated by nomadism and the clan held an important position in the societal organisation. With the advent of the Turkic period, the first written resources also appeared; today, some epigraphs on polished rock outcrops still survive. Genetically, the Turks are commonly considered to be the ancestors of the contemporary Altaians (Forsyth 1992, Klyashtorny 1992, Potapov 1969, Molodin 2000). Numerous archaeological monuments can be found from the Turkic period, ranging from ritual sites commemorating warriors (who were an important class within Turkic society) to a variety of burial sites. Monuments from later periods are less well known. These more recent historical periods will be discussed in Chapter 5.

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5 *Raion* is a Russian term for an administrative unit comparable to a county, province or department. A *raion* mainly consists of dozens of villages.
Figure 1 – 2: (a) Afanesievo burial mound with its characteristics standing slabs - (b) Bronze Age petroglyph - (c) linear organised Iron Age burial site - (d) royal Pazyryk burial mound of Tuekta - (e) interior of a burial mound, the dead is placed in a sarcophagus in the south of the burial chamber, north of the chamber horse sacrifices can be commonly found – (f) Turkic epigraph of Kalpak Tasha – (g) 3D documentation of a Turkic stelae representing a warrior. ((e) Parzinger 2005: 593)
Many archaeological monuments from the above-mentioned periods are still visible on the landscape. These features present archaeologists with an extraordinary interrelated archaeological landscape witnessing roughly 6,000 years of occupation. The Altaian landscape is a unique cultural biography that enables scholars to unravel the spatial organisation, ontological framework and mobility of the many cultures that inhabited Central Asia. In addition to this varied landscape, in specific cases local climatic conditions have permitted the extremely good preservation of organic materials. For example, some burial sites (e.g. the mounds of Tuckta, Bashadar, Pazyryk and Ukok), dating back mainly to the Scythian period (800–200 BC), were located in the discontinue permafrost regions of the Altai. In some cases, this has resulted in the exceptional preservation of wooden objects, textiles, leather ornaments, the remains of sacrificed animals and, in rare cases, even mummified human remains (Rudenko 1960, Molodin et al. 2004). One momentous discovery that put the Altai region and Eurasian archaeology back into the international limelight was the discovery of an intact frozen mummy and numerous grave goods during excavation of a Scythian burial mound on the permafrost-rich Ukok Plateau in 1993 (figure 1-3)(Molodin, Polosmak and Chikisheva 2000, Polosmak 1994). The discoveries were made by a team of archaeologists from the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences (IAE SBRAS). The team called the mummy the ‘Ice Maiden’. In 1995, another frozen burial monument (Vergh-Kaldzin 2) was studied, which contained the well-preserved body of the ‘Man of Vergh Kaldzin’. TV documentaries, various reports and exhibitions quickly followed and brought both the Scythian epoch and Altai region into the international limelight. Rightly, the archaeology of the Altai ridge (including Kazakhstan and Mongolia) received a lot of scientific attention and its deserved status as one of the richest and most varied archaeological regions of Central Asia.
Next to their undeniable scientific importance, archaeological monuments also have a strong intrinsic meaning for the Indigenous population – which not surprisingly forms the basis of the conflict over privileged stewardship over the past. Almost directly after the initial Ukok discoveries, the Altai people, who were at the height of their national-cultural revival, were drawn to the almost 2,500-year-old findings and reacted with both marvel and displeasure. On the one hand, the rich grave goods were seen as proof of their rich glorious past. Replicas of the grave goods were used in religious festivals and various cultural events (Broz 2011). On the other hand, different Indigenous leaders, intellectuals and politicians were offended by the excavations and removal of bodies, clearly attaching supernatural meaning to the archaeological monuments, and voicing strong anti-archaeological feelings. The fate of the Ukok finds and archaeological monuments has been one of the most intensely discussed topics since the early 1990s, and in some isolated cases has already led to aggressive behaviour towards archaeologists (for example, the firing of shots). Finally, in 1997, the El Kurultai (state assembly of the Altai Republic) imposed a moratorium on excavations, making non-developer-led research dependent on local consent, thereby terminating numerous research projects. The heritage-imbued conflict ultimately reached its height after the 2003 earthquake near Beltir (Kosh Agach district), when links were made between the removal of the Ice Maiden and the destructive earthquake.

With respect to what in the Western heritage discourse is referred to as associative cultural landscapes and intangible heritage (see subsection 4.1. for a detailed discussion on the use of essentialist heritage categories), the Altaian cultural landscape, interlinked local livelihoods, narratives, customs and traditions are all of important historic and cultural value to the different ethnic groups that inhabit the Altai. As regards the landscape, Kazakhs, certain Russian communities and the foremost Indigenous Altaians have a distinct socio-cultural attachment to their historic ‘homeland’ (Bannikov 2008, Halemba 2006, Tyuhteneva 2009). The landscape is at the centre of the Altaian heritage and, as stressed throughout Agnieszka Halemba’s (2006, 2008b) work, the landscape of Altai is fundamental to the Altaian nation. The strong unity with the land connects all the Indigenous people inhabiting the land as one coherent nation. Various places in the landscape are considered sacred and are actively venerated and connected to a myriad of historic and mythological narratives (figure 1–4). These places are mainly prominent landscape markers or natural obstacles (mountain peaks, mountain passes and springs). Sacred places are subject to a number of restrictions and through a series of rituals there is active worship directed towards the spirits inhabiting these places and the surrounding landscape. As further explained in Chapter 8, these venerated places explicitly embody traditional cultural and memory values, underlining their strong heritage value for the different communities inhabiting the Altai.
Figure 1 – 4: Sacred spring (locally called *arzhan suu*) in the Karakol valley. Altaians often visit an *arzhan suu* either for their daily water supply or to heal particular ailments. When visiting such sacred places Altaians mostly tie so-called *kira* (ribbons of fabric) to a nearby tree, make some small offerings (coins, alcohol or food) and say a praying to the spirit of that place and the broader Altai. (© Ghent University – Altai Project)

### 1.2 Problem: endangered heritage and limited collaboration

Since the 1930s, pressure from agriculture, urbanisation and tourism has already impacted the integrity of the archaeology and venerated ecology of the Altai Republic (figure 1-5). Especially with the recent (slow) recovery of the Russian economy, many sites and pristine landscapes are increasingly coming under serious threat. Numerous cases are known of archaeological sites being destroyed by tilling, villages that have been built over sacred burial grounds, and sacred landscapes despoiled by tourists (figure 1-6). Planned mega-projects (i.e. pipelines, casinos and ski stations) and the state’s ongoing promotion of tourism is further endangering the future of Altai’s archaeology and landscape. Some international initiatives and research projects have tried to look into a sustainable development model for the Altai Mountains (Foley et al. 2006, FSDA 2006). Although all efforts to tackle the Altai’s development problems are to be applauded, most of these
projects have not included cultural heritage. Recent local initiatives (for example, the Karakol ‘ethno-natural’ park and the cultural board of the Telengits of Kosh Agach) are aiming to raise awareness of the vulnerability of Altai’s unique interrelated heritage and are actively promoting and protecting the various tangible and intangible cultural resources (for example, Mamyev 2008: 279-281). However, lack of money and scientific support and the government’s different heritage-related agenda are stopping these initiatives from going beyond the planning stage. Furthermore, this lack of economic resources and systematic guidance has forced many of the local heritage initiatives to participate in the highly competitive tourist industry to make ends meet. As a result, a common phenomenon in post-colonial developing regions (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009, Ross et al. 2011: 79-80) is that some heritage parks have simply become tourist camps or ethnic theme parks. Financial profit is the main driving force and the needs and interests of ordinary people are neither heard nor accommodated. Today, the status of some heritage parks is being contested, thereby undermining their effectiveness even more.

![Figure 1 – 5: Archaeological monument in the Karakol valley almost entirely destroyed by ploughing.](image)
Figure 1-6: The impact of tourism on the landscape is enormous. The top image shows the village of Uzenya (Chemal raion) as seen on a high-resolution satellite image from 2003. Compared to the situation in 2010 (see digitalisations), it can clearly be seen just how fast the landscape is being affected by the tourist-building boom – this applies to the entire Katun valley. Rescue excavations rarely precede constructions, and many burial complexes are being destroyed annually. The lower picture shows the impact of the high volume of visitors at Altaians’ sacred places. All types of ‘decoration’ (including traffic tape and socks) are being added to the azhhan suu and waste can be found in and around the spring. Because of this pollution and ‘misconduct’, sacred places situated in tourist areas are no longer places of active worship.
The outcome of ongoing successful collaborations between Ghent University, Gorno-Altaisk State University (GASU) and some local initiatives (Karakol park and Kosh Agach cultural board) through collaborative archaeological surveys and registration projects (Gheyle 2009, Goossens et al. 2006, Plets et al. 2011 and 2012) provide a potential structural basis for pro-active archaeological heritage management and integration into the Altai Republic’s maturing spatial planning policy. Although such initiatives have led to sustainable management initiatives in many other contexts, almost 10 years of producing maps and inventorying rock art – and many meetings, lectures and offers to develop management strategies – have only led to limited progress in the field, ensuring that the cultural heritage being fostered so much by the different parties in the region is disintegrating even further. This disintegration is both regrettable for the scientific value of the heritage and for its socio-cultural importance to the Indigenous population. In my opinion, three important problems form the basis of the current immobility and limited development of effective heritage management of both the archaeological heritage and the cultural landscapes:

1) Limited expertise and the existing heritage conflict;
2) The government’s preoccupation with the material dimensions of the heritage; and
3) Epistemological and institutional barriers.

First, the difficulty in integrating survey results and developing effective management initiatives can be partially explained by the limited capacity and awareness inside the Republic. International collaboration with international universities (including Ghent University) may already have resulted in capacity building at the local university and local management agencies, although it is still on a far too small scale and too limited in time to result in effective and inclusive heritage management. In December 2011, during guest lectures in Gorno Altaisk in the context of an exchange project, it became apparent to me that local professors, heritage managers and Masters students have a very limited basic knowledge of archaeological method and theory, and Altaian culture and management in general. Besides major financial investments, developing a matrix for heritage management demands a theoretical and methodological shift. However, enacting such a shift takes a lot of time and long-term assistance from experts. Unfortunately, international projects like ours are too limited and ad hoc to ensure the development of the required capacity and awareness. But the required expertise (for sustainable management of the physical dimensions of heritage) and possibilities for training and scholarly exchange are present in Novosibirsk (i.e. IAE SBRAS). However, collaboration between the Altaian heritage sector and the Russian Academy is undermined by the particular polarised relationship caused mainly by the conflicts surrounding the Ice Maiden and numerous other contested excavations. This conflict manifests itself at various scales and is preventing both parties from making an effort to work together. On the academic level, the deep chasm between academician Vachislav Molodin (IAE SBRAS)
and associate professor Vasili Soenov (research institute of archaeology, GASU) illustrates the refusal of the local university to work together with the excavators of the Ice Maiden. This particularly difficult relationship makes collaborative research impossible, being characterised by mutual disrespect and mistrust. In addition, local park administrators are refusing assistance from Russian archaeologists from outside the Altai Republic. During one of my conversations in July 2010 with Daniel Mamyev, director of the Karakol ethnobotanical park, he said:

“We [would] rather work together with people from GASU than with, for example, Vladimir Kubarev (deceased archaeologist from the IAE SBRAS); those types of archaeologists are only interested in excavating. They arrive, destroy our sites, take our artefacts to Novosibirsk and we get no benefit whatsoever.”

Another example revealing the problematic relationship at the level of local cultural agencies is the conflict that arose in 2009 during excavations in the Buguzun valley. These events also clearly show that there is a lack of mutual trust and respect and that the Russian archaeological establishment does not show any intention of working together with local heritage agencies. During 2009, a team of archaeologists from the IAE SBRAS, led by archaeologist Gleb Kubarev, investigated an early mediaeval (4-5th century AD) commemorative structure (Pustolyakova 2009). Although it did not contain any burials, local people, and especially the Indigenous members of the Kosh Agach cultural board, reacted by demanding that investigations cease. The archaeologists refused to accede to these demands, arguing that IAE SBRAS archaeologists have the right to excavate on federal lands according to Russian Federal legislation. They openly stated, both in the newspaper (Luchansky 2009) and, according to one of my interlocutors, to the Indigenous members of the local cultural agency, too, that the local 1997 law which stipulates that archaeological excavations are dependent on local consent, is legally subordinate to the 2002 federal law which regulates archaeological excavations and states that all archaeological sites are of federal significance and should be managed accordingly (Luchansky 2009). In short, a lack of methodological competences coupled with limited expertise to include or negotiate Indigenous needs are undermining the development of heritage frameworks that govern both the material and intangible dimensions of heritage.

A second interrelated reason why the heritage of the Altai is not actively protected can be easily explained by the fact that the intangible aspects of the Altaians’ heritage are not included in existing legal frameworks. In Russia, there is a preoccupation with the material and scientific dimensions of heritage, and no attention is paid to the socio-cultural dimensions that define the Altaians’ attachment to their land and archaeology. As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2, heritage should be seen as a commodity or a conceptual good that is only considered important because of its social values. Heritage is part of the material culture of a social group and is constituted through human actions. As observed by Arjun Appadurai (1986: 5): “Things have no meaning apart from those that
human transactions, attributions and motivations endow them with.” In this regard, archaeological objects or sacred places are a materialisation of intangible socio-cultural values that embody culture as well as personal needs and interests (cf. Hoffman and Dobres 1999), values that vary across space and time and transcend the strict material dimensions of the objects (see Chapter 2 for a discussion about tangible and intangible heritage). This is also one of the reasons why limited Indigenous stakeholders have not used our data for heritage management. As archaeologists, the meanings endowed to archaeological finds are its scientific dimensions, and our main priority is to study and preserve the materiality of the Altai archaeology for future study. In our knowledge system, maps and survey results are conceived as instruments for preserving the material/scientific integrity of these archaeological monuments. However, for many Altaians the priorities are different – it is not the physical preservation of a heritage object as such that is important (for example, ex situ preservation of the finds at an endangered site) but rather that a heritage ‘thing’ (archaeological site, traditional custom or sacred place) is treated in accordance with values bestowed upon it. In the case of the Altaians, the land-based cosmology, and not scientific imperatives, stands central in their interests towards place and archaeology, For example, preservation of the indefinite unity between people and land is perceived as more important than saving sites from global warming. The management and policy of the Altaian heritage should not be based on the material preservation of archaeological monuments or specific sacred places alone, but should also incorporate the value systems on which Altaian heritage is based. For Danil Mamyev, for example, in the first instance management is about negotiating Indigenous values and finding support for the traditional epistemologies embedded in heritage objects – the scientific and materialist dimensions of archaeological objects are only of secondary importance (see subsection 7.2.1.4. for an account of a particular effort Mamyev made to negotiate traditional knowledge regarding cultural heritage objects). Generally speaking, the deeply felt attachment to archaeological sites and landscapes are neither legally accommodated nor recognised. So, a mismatch and differing interests and needs are also impeding intercultural collaboration, which is essential when managing cultural resources in multi-cultural contexts.

Thirdly, socio-cultural differences between the various stakeholders and the government deter the Indigenous people from seeking official protection for their heritage discourse and from successfully negotiating with archaeologists. In their work concerning the problems native communities face with engaging in collaborative management of natural resources, Ross et al. (2011) define two types of barriers that impede Indigenous peoples’ collaboration in management policies and effectively asserting their needs and interests. Based on different case studies, Ross et al. (2011) argue that these barriers are both epistemological and institutional. Epistemologically, and depending on their socio-cultural backgrounds, different social actors can have divergent value systems, ways of structuring knowledge and ideals to what is considered to be best practice. Indigenous
people have a more experiential knowledge system; the world is seen through a holistic lens where everything is connected. Knowledge is constructed through everyday engagement with the environment and other people (Ingold 2000, Ingold 2007). Knowledge production is not strictly structured according to essentialist Western systems and does not follow the laws of ‘Western’ logic (Nabokov 2002, Ross et al. 2011: 21). Such an experiential mode of argument is difficult to fathom for many scientists, managers, bureaucrats and heritage practitioners who have an experimental knowledge system, which on its own is difficult for native communities to understand. Empirical data and logic lie at the root of this system of thought and determine how they see and engage with the world, defining their cultural values and ideals. There is a sense of validity of data, and the process of knowledge production is structured along the logical lines of deduction and induction (Ross et al. 2011: 48). In most cases, this ‘scientific’ epistemological framework is engrained in both governmental and private institutions and dominates the way most economical and political forces argue (Ross et al. 2011: 56). As a result, epistemological barriers also become institutional barriers, discouraging Indigenous people from taking part in heritage research and policy. In the field of heritage policy, this privileging of the scientific and inherently materialist stance to cultural heritage is a global problem. Besides the political advantages, the privileging of the scientific objectivist approach to heritage can be related to the fact that it is more easily integrated in legislation and frameworks that operate on a more supra-regional scale (while heritage is constituted locally). Cataloguing data based on scientific competences into black boxes in inventories is easier than a social approach to heritage whereby management would need to be context-dependent and demands dialogue, empathy and self-reflexivity. In his analysis, Randal McGuire (2008: 8) noted: “Engaging in praxis is difficult. Social relations, political struggle, and ethics are never so clearly and distinctly defined in reality as they are in abstract discussions.”

Because of the government’s more naturalist and unquestioned stance on heritage, native communities have difficulties successfully engaging with the written and unwritten rules, distinctions and language of the government and its agencies. In the end, people are unsuccessful in defending their needs and interests because they neither speak the ‘language’ of governmental institutions nor know how to successfully attain the rights they are often entitled to. On the other hand, Russian officials and archaeologists are unable to understand the Indigenous needs because their language and arguments are not structured on positivist principles, making it difficult to take their demands into consideration.

In Altai, the situation is no different and epistemological and institutional barriers affect the heritage policy. I would even say that Russia, with its known rigid bureaucracy and Soviet-inherited institutionalisation of science (Graham 1993, Graham and Dezhina 2008) is a classic example that proves the impact and existence of such epistemological and institutional barriers. Striking examples that illustrate the epistemological and institutional barriers which Indigenous Altaians must endure are the problems faced in
the context of land ownership (for further reading, see Donahoe and Halemba 2006, Halemba 2008a). With the ratification of the new federal Land Codex in 2001, for the first time in Altaian history, land (from the collapsed collective farms) could be privatised and transferred from the government to private individuals. In order to acquire this land, people had to prepare official documents, including topographical measurements made by an accredited surveyor. However, filling in these documents correctly and attaching the right information was difficult for many Altaians. For example, demarcations had never been made concrete and were loosely defined in relation to characteristic landscape features. Because many people did not fill in the documents according to the ‘rules of the game’, many people missed out on the opportunity to acquire land. On the other hand, tourist companies from Moscow or Novosibirsk who spoke and understood the language of bureaucracy were able to acquire vast amounts of land through intermediaries (Halemba 2008a: 138-140). This problem is still not solved today; the family I stayed with during fieldwork in 2011 had just submitted a new application to acquire more land. They were lucky that the head of the family had had proper training as a veterinarian in the capital Gorno Altaisk, and had few problems understanding and filling in the forms. When we visited his vast tracts of land, he explained that he and his family could acquire more land than other villagers because he understood what he had to write in the forms.

Basically, the overarching problem is that there is a mismatch between the Indigenous way of understanding the past and the particular stance of both the archaeologists and the government. Without appraising and comprehending the locally constructed pasts, we would not actually be managing the Altaians’ heritage but just what we as scientists conceptualise as significant historical references. The underlying problem is a cultural one, and the different parties need to come together, develop an intercultural understanding and subsequently manage the heritage of the Altai. In the following chapters I aim to address this problem by investigating the different ways people in Altai look at the past.

However, before this is possible, it is necessary to discuss what exactly heritage means, what it includes, how it works in society, what the common pitfalls are, and through which approach – both theoretical and methodological – heritage should be tackled? These questions will be evaluated in the next chapter.

1.3 Intermediate conclusion

The Altai Republic has a unique and diverse cultural heritage that is of both socio-cultural and scientific importance for a variety of stakeholders. The archaeological remains are of great importance for the scientific community and should be preserved at all costs. At the same time, they are a central aspect of the Indigenous identity. Because these different
stakeholders have different priorities, these issues have become hardly reconcilable. Ultimately, none of the actors is able to successfully deploy the region’s archaeology. Furthermore, despite increasing pressure from tourism and resource development, this has resulted in a stalemate making it difficult to move towards the basic management of the Altaian heritage. Within the context of the associated cultural landscape – which is basically the overarching framework through which the past is experienced – there is no official attention paid to the strong intangible dimensions the land has. Tourism developers are able to grab land and develop it. In the end, a lack of intercultural understanding based on the different stakeholders’ conceptualisation of the past isimpeding effective heritage management, which, in turn, is affecting the heritage that both actors are trying to foster.
Cultural heritages in the making: organically grown or selective references to the past?

The last 30 years there has been an important shift in approaches towards cultural heritage. Indigenous struggles, post-colonialism, multiculturalism and globalisation have deconstructed the authoritativeness of the Western approach to heritage, in which expert knowledge, a physical preservation ethic, materiality, objectivity, ‘authenticity’ and aesthetics determined the consensual view of the past. New definitions and conceptualisations of cultural heritage and heritage management have emerged, advocating for a context-dependent approach where heritage is not about ‘things’ but values attached to ‘things’, places and traditions (Byrne 2008, Tainter and Lucas 1983).

Within this section it is not my ambition provide a lengthy appraisal of heritage’s historical trajectory, its colonial legacy, the (contested) impact of international agencies like ICOMOS and UNESCO, the vast amount of charters, the dominance of expert knowledge in its discourse and its unmistakable economical and political dimensions. Such a discussion would take me beyond the scope of this work and put more weight on the introduction than on the interpretative part of this thesis. Furthermore, a vast amount of literature has already elaborated on these topics and provided important insights (Ashworth, Graham and Tunbridge 2007, Byrne 2008, Graham and Howard 2008, Harrison 2012, Harrison et al. 2008, Logan 2001, Logan 2012, Lowenthal 1996, Lowenthal 1998, Reeves and Long 2011, Schofield 2008, Smith 2004, Smith 2006). Instead this section attempts to formulate a concise definition of cultural heritage and heritage management, and to introduce some key concepts that will be used throughout this study. There will also be room for a critical discussion of the inherently dissonant nature of heritage and the nexus Indigenous people-heritage. Different definitions and discussions will set out the particular approach, agenda and nature of this research. In Chapter 3 the particular social theory that was chosen to analyse the cultural heritage(s) of the Altai Republic will be addressed.
2.1 Definition

During my annual guest lecture about public archaeology to master students in December 2012 I asked the class to define heritage. Not completely surprising the consensus of the classroom was:

‘Heritage refers to all remnants and objects inherited from the past.’

Some students also mentioned traditions and customs like the Belgian carnival of Aalst, which was recently enlisted by UNESCO. But the consensual message was: heritage is about material ‘things’! When I asked them to identify the privileged stewards of heritage, all agreed that scientists should set the agenda and determine best practice for future development and should ensure optimal preservation of heritage sites and places.

The students’ responses and underlying values and ideals are not completely unexpected. To be honest, at the beginning of my PhD research I also conceived heritage as something that was particularly tangible and that heritage management should aim at preserving material-scientific dimensions. In the initial grant application the values attached by Indigenous people to heritage were described as of secondary value. Attention for these values was only seen as a necessary evil to ensure collaboration of local communities. This aligns with the general trend in Belgium, mainland Europe and Russia where the approach to heritage is still dominated by a Western stance (Byrne 2008, Lowenthal 1998: 5) dominated by a material basis, need for physical preservation, and the validity of expert knowledge (Greer 2010, Smith 2006). The global prevalence of this discourse can be related to heritage’s 18-19th century origins, and its post-World War II institutionalisation and globalisation through a variety of charters and international associations (Hamilakis 2007a, Logan 2001, Smith 2006).

The attention to heritage and the interlinked discourse that dominates most countries finds its roots in 18-19th century Western Europe. Three key elements of that time were detrimental for the way most people in the world look to: (1) the preservation movement, (2) European nationalism, and (3) modernity. First, the industrial revolution was increasingly impacting the traditional European landscape and fabric of many post-medieval cities, ultimately fostering governments and historical societies to undertake action to preserve the vanishing material references to the past. The preservation movement’s ethic was basically dominated by the idea that things from the past must be physically preserved (Byrne 2008: 153). Second, 19th century Europe was drastically reshaped both territorially and ideologically, and new and existing nations were forced to strive for internal and external legitimation. Within this period of nationalism the past had a significant symbolic value and was a vital tool to consolidate nations and invent a new ethnic identity (Hamilakis 2007a-18, Trigger 1984). Third, late Enlightenment and
modernity rationalism influenced the philosophy of that time. Challenging the existing traditional world-view dominated by Christianity, Enlightenment thinkers and modernists established a new framework of ideas about the natural world, people and society (Hamilton 1992: 23). High priority was put on the promotion of objective science, universal values for practice and morality, and the unconditional quest for universal and objective ‘truths’, which also crystallised in the heritage discourse of that time (Hamilton 1992, Harrison 2012: 23-25, Logan 2001, Smith 2004, Smith 2006: 1-6). These positivistic Kantian ideals and ideas were ultimately fused with governmental practice. And throughout the following centuries, and especially in the 20th century, the Enlightenment mode of argumentation colonised the world, constituting contemporary governmental practices on many fronts (May and Powel 2008: 7-8). The *Zeitgeist* of that time constructed a heritage discourse dominated by objectivity, materiality, positivism, universalism, grandeur, taxonomic compartmentalisation and preservation.

Such an approach to heritage became increasingly institutionalised and was adopted by many people. During the course of the 20th century this particular approach to heritage became global. Especially in the aftermath of World-War II there was a general move towards economical, political and cultural globalisation through the creation of international institutions like the United Nations, World Health Organisation or the World Bank. Around the same time ICOMOS, ICOM and UNESCO were also founded. These organisations’ various resolutions and charters enforced member states to adopt a set of standards and principles, which were blindly incorporated and bureaucratised. Echoing objectivity and materiality, these charters were subsequently seen as universal standards, ‘the right thing to do’ and impossible to ignore or go against (Logan 2001).

Critique from the periphery and post-colonial world from the late 1960s onwards (Homilies 2007a: 18-25, Smith 2006), and the interrelated influence of cultural relativism and post modernism (Logan 2001: 54) challenged this western heritage discourse (Jameson 2008: 54, Logan 2001, Logan 2012, Smith 2006: 54). As argued by Laurajane Smith (2006: 28), an important element, amongst others, that contributed to the decolonisation of the heritage sector was the emotional reaction of Indigenous peoples to how archaeologists and museums dealt with human remains and artefacts. It exposed to the broad public that there were other sociocultural values to be attached to heritage than objective scientific imperatives. This initiated a manoeuvre towards a more subjective multi-vocal heritage, away from the essentialist Eurocentric scientific preservation ethos. Heritage was increasingly seen as a conceptualisation, *a cultural practice* subject to basic human rights (Gilbert 2010, Logan 2012), dependent on the broad economic, political and social context and historical trajectories (Ashworth, Graham and Tunbridge 2007, Byrne 2008, Graham and Howard 2008, Hamilakis 2007a, Harrison et al. 2008, Logan 2012, McGuire 2007, Schofield 2008, Smith 2006).

Though such a shift from a Eurocentric stance governed by objectivity and positivism towards a more relativist type of heritage may not have penetrated globally within
academia and politics, it has already radically impacted the heritage field in some countries (including archaeological method and theory). The slow decolonisation of the heritage sector has ensured that the cultural dimensions of heritage and the particular role of scientists and the government are debated. Nowadays within heritage studies it has become clear that heritage is not something we should take for granted but is multi-layered and context-dependent. Within this research we build on John Schofield’s (2008) definition that encapsulates the critique on the materialised discourse and proposes heritage as part of a larger social process:

It can be old it can be new. It is something valued [and used] by [contemporary] society, by specific groups within society, and by individuals. All these expressions and perceptions are valid, and all recognise the significance of heritage and the contribution it makes to the quality of life.

(Schofield 2008: 28 - emphasis added)

2.1.1 Heritage as a valuation and a valuation its materiality

In fact, heritage is not history at all; while it borrows from and enlivens historical study, heritage is not an enquiry into the past but a celebration of it, not an effort to know what actually happened but a profession of faith in a past tailored to present day purposes.

(Lowenthal 1998: x)

Lowenthal’s quote underlines that heritage is not about the past but what is done with it, which values are attached to it, how it is employed, perceived and conceptualised in present society. Something from the past is not heritage because it is from the past but because a heritage ‘thing’ embodies values and meanings that are conceived important to be remembered in the present. Heritage has to do with memory and sociocultural values; heritage is not something self-defining but the result of a social action through which dimensions of the past are valued and remembered (Harrison 2012, Harrison et al. 2008: 2). History, memory and meaning are not inherent properties of things or places, but are attributed by people, assigned by humans and subject to variation depending on the space and time (Tainter and Lucas 1983: 713, Taylor 2009). As put forth by Smith (2006: 2), heritage is the outcome of an act of meaning making and commodification. Something is not heritage but rather becomes heritage when people attach values. These values are not universal but individually held, context-dependent and a reflection of what groups of people appraise or repudiate in the present or future and is inextricably linked with their identity (Davison 2008: 33, Tainter and Lucas 1983). Attaching values to the past is the result of a social practice, conceived sociologically and semiotically, and inherently intangible. As one of the first to critically assess heritage values, William Lipe argued:
... value is not inherent in any cultural items or properties received from the past, at least not in the same sense as, say, size or colour or hardness. Value is learned about or discovered by humans, and thus depends on the particular cultural, intellectual, and psychological frames of reference held by the particular individuals or groups involved.  
(Lipe 1984: 2)

The values attached to sites, objects, places, traditions, customs, and livelihood practices etc. enable something to become cultural heritage. Valuing of a cultural heritage resource is however more than finding something from the past significant. Values are social and diverse, and foremost trigger feelings, emotions, and a sense of commitment or belonging. Values formulate consensual injunctions, sensitivities, and sociocultural meanings. They are in relation with the epistemological framework of the agents and the specific social arena (Schofield 2008: 23-26). When confronted with for example finds from a burial complex, archaeologists, with their academic scientific framework and setting will particularly articulate scientific values (cf. Greer 2010: 46). Non-Indigenous peoples, who have a Western imbued epistemological framework and education would also attribute scientific values, but might also add aesthetic, nationalistic and economic (i.e. what is it worth nowadays) values. Indigenous peoples on the other hand, with their particular worldview, epistemological framework and funerary practice will also add very personal emotional and symbolic values to such finds, to the detriment of scientific or economical meanings.

The concept of heritage is socially constructed and has to do with ‘intangible’ values, but these intangible conceptions, meanings and values are often effectuated/materialised through a medium, invoked and read through conceptual ‘things’/commodities. These values are defined by the actors’ context, identity, and historical trajectory. Although expressions such as rituals, songs or festivities are not strictly physical, they present themselves as a discrete ‘thing’ that embodies traditional values (for example the carnival of Aalst ‘materialises’ the tradition of the inhabitants of Aalst to mock current affairs). Remembering the past almost always happens through a ‘materialised’ medium. Sites, objects, landscapes, songs and tales are very often vehicles that invoke heritage and memory. Extrapolating Arjun Appadurai’s (1986: 6) elaborations about material culture and the underlying process of commodification, I argue that whether they are old songs, tales, traditions, places or objects, through cultural attributions and motivations tangible and intangible references to the past take on the character of cultural resources, conceptual goods, commodities, ‘things’, and structure. References to the past become heritage because they matter to people, and essentially become a heritage ‘thing’ or ‘commodity’ inside the minds of people, presenting heritage as a thing that is constituted through intangible values.

If considering heritage as something that is both a ‘thing’ with an inherent intangible dimension, in a way the creation and subsequent institutionalisation of the category ‘intangible heritage’ by UNESCO (see UNESCO 2003) is itself paradoxical and very
confusing. For the sake of clearness for the rest of the text and to disclose the dangers of the western institutionalised heritage discourse, intangible heritage will be critically assessed and repositioned. Within this thesis the word intangible will often be used in combination with heritage; by this we do not follow UNESCO’s description, but the immaterial values attached to cultural resources and the interrelated social system governing it. UNESCO defines intangible cultural heritage in its 2003 convention as:

… the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage

(UNESCO 2003)

More specifically, according to UNESCO (2003) intangible heritage manifests itself in the following domains:

- oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;
- performing arts;
- social practices, rituals and festive events;
- knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;
- traditional craftsmanship.

Compartmentalising these less tangible historically imbued cultural resources in one category, intangible heritage, discloses the clear taxonomic and institutionalised approach to heritage of UNESCO and the many nation states that incorporated it in their legislative framework. Though an effort to deal with the growing need to recognise the non-material dimension of the world, the intangible heritage concept discloses an inherent difficulty to deal with other value systems and is contradictory to the holistic system underscoring heritage and the conceptual nature of heritage proposed in this thesis and supported by others (cf. Byrne 2008, Gilbert 2010, Harrison et al. 2008, Ross et al. 2011, Schofield 2008, Smith 2006). Similarly, Graham and Howard (2008: 4) critically state:

While the debate on tangible and intangible heritage, particularly as expressed through international conventions, is important because of the implications of inclusivity and the recognition of the importance of the non-material world in representation and identity, it can nevertheless be argued that if the core content of heritage is defined by meaning, then it is probably something of a false distinction.

(Graham and Howard 2008: 4)

Heritage cannot be completely tangible, otherwise it would have no meanings and values attached to it, and would consequently not be heritage at all (Graham and Howard 2008: 4). Similarly, archaeological monuments an sich are attributed value through their multiple meanings and interrelationship within the landscape. Also ‘cultural landscapes’ without their associative and living cultural practices would become mere void concepts.
When evaluating the heritage value and increasing pressure of tourism on the Lao World Heritage Site of Luang Prabang, Keir Reeves and Colin Long (2011: 7) argue that ‘cityscapes’ as Luang Prabang needs an integrated management that preserves the meaningful connection between the unique architectural fabric and the ‘sense of place’ (cf. Casey 1996). It is the particular atmosphere and sensations that determine the significance of Luang Prabang. Only focussing on the tangible remnants would deprive it from its heritage status and ultimately it would “become little more than quaint, attractive, and historically tinged film sets stripped of the social and cultural practices that originally provided their meaning” (Reeves and Long 2011: 7)

Though inherent in our classificatory way of processing knowledge (Durkheim and Mauss 1963, Jones 1997) and easier to manage from a supra-regional point of view, taxonomic breakdown of heritage into void concepts such as intangible heritage and tangible heritage are false distinctions. Through deconstructing its interrelatedness, such taxonomy of heritage detaches places, customs or objects from their value, impeding conservation practices and further disintegrating the real heritage fabric of places and practices. Such compartmentalisation correlates with the Western scientific essentialism (Gilbert 2010, Ross et al. 2011) that has been governing heritage since the 18-19th century. Out of convenience and often unconsciously, scientists and agencies partition the matter they aim to study or manage in workable and uniform compartments. Such a taxonomic thinking is however difficult to align with an interrelated concept as heritage; the past can be experienced through many mediums, in many forms by different people (Gilbert 2010, Smith 2006).

Heritage as a conceptualisation demands a holistic approach where the tangible and intangible are inextricably linked. As noted by Laurajane Smith and Natsuko Akagawa Akagawa (2008: 6): “All heritage is intangible, not only because of the values we give to heritage, but because of the cultural work that heritage does in any society”. These values are intangible and is the result of a social process of meaning making. This underlines the importance of approaching heritage through an appropriate theoretical framework that considers the social practices that lay at its basis (Harrison 2008: 2).

2.1.2 Using heritage: the past as a resource

Memory is life, borne by living societies founded in its name. It remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived ... Memory, insofar as it is affective and magical, only accommodates those facts that suit it; it nourishes recollections that may be out of focus or telescopic, global or detached, particular or symbolic - responsive to each avenue of conveyance of phenomenal screen, to every censorship or projection.

(Nora 1989: 8-9)
Commodities (for example high-impact publications in academia) are valuable goods that thank their value to the meanings and values (other) people bestow in them, because of a more or less consensual value they can be used in society to pursue a particular agenda. As a commodity, cultural heritage is both a structure structured by society and a structure structuring society - *simultaneously a cultural product and a political resource* (Graham and Howard 2008: 5). It is marker of identity used to construct narratives about a group and enhance internal cohesion. It is also a powerful vehicle to negotiate with exterior governments for legitimation and cultural rights (Smith 2006: 288). As outlined by Pierre Nora in the above quote, heritage and memory is more than an ‘unconscious’ cultural driven valuation of the past, it can also be manipulated and appropriated. Groups of people are always struggling to improve their position in broader society (Bourdieu 1990, Giddens 1984), often to the detriment of others. The past has always been used within a political discourse as a useful tool for creating group identity, creating ‘ethnic’ distance, national prestige, claiming land or justifying nationalistic claims (Kohl 1998, Lowenthal 1998, Péporté et al. 2010, Schnirelmann 1996, Triger 1984, Triger 1989). Especially during nationalistic episodes (including post-colonial episodes in 1960s-1970s and post-Sovietism in the 1990s), references to the past are an important resource for revitalisation, creation, consolidation of a national identity, creating a combined sense of otherness and sameness. Ultimately heritage helps in constructing a feeling of group membership (Eriksen 2001: 267). It creates a feeling of familiarity, enrichment and escape, justifying a community’s legitimation in the present (Graham and Howard 2008: 6).

Ashworth, Graham and Turnbridge (2007: 3) stress this ‘resource’ dimension of heritage. Though also approaching heritage as a social practice, they present its social dimension merely as a form of politicised capital that can initiate social processes or mediated positions. Inclining that the whole process of meaning making is a selective one in relation with the challenges the society is facing in the present.

In this present context, we define the concept as the use of the past as a cultural, political and economic resource for the present our concern being with the very selective ways in which material artefacts, mythologies, memories and traditions become resources for the present.

(Ashworth, Graham and Tunbridge 2007: 3)

Indeed, when the past is used for identity politics this happens very *selectively* and is symbolically charged. As illustrated through different case studies in Philip Kohl’s recent ‘*Selective remembrances: Archaeology in the Construction, Commemoration, and Consecration of National Pasts*’ it can indeed be argued that certain strong narratives, symbols or remains are remembered more intensively and have a ‘strong’ cultural heritage value (Kohl, Kozelsky and Ben-Yehuda 2007). Returning to the title of this section “Cultural heritage and its management: self-defining or defined references to the past?”, heritage is indeed formed in accordance to the demands of the present and is selectively defined, based on present and future aspirations of a certain society. Clear-cut examples
that are illustrative for the use, invention, romanticisation, and selective materialisation of the past for identity politics are the appropriations of the archaeological past for constructing ‘founding myths’ of certain countries in 19th century Europe (Kohl 1998, Trigger 1989). Countries like Belgium and France employed the image of the heroic Gaul that heroically fought the Roman conquerors to create an atmosphere of national prestige and pride to consolidate and create a historically embedded national identity (figure 2-1).

Figure 2 – 1: Statue of Ambiorix in Tongeren by Bertin (1866). Ambiorix was the king of the Eburones, a Germanic tribe associated with the Belgae that put up fierce resistance against the Romans. The Eburones and Belgae were described by Caesar in his Bello Gallico as the bravest of all Gauls. During the 19th and 20th century the Belgae and Ambiorix were used to root the newly founded Belgian state in the past and create a glorious national narrative. (© Inventaris Onroerend Erfgoed)
Such practices are timeless and continue in many contemporary societies. Some sites where the heritage value was selectively constructed are even listed UNESCO’s World Heritage List. The research of Nachman Ben-Yehuda (2007) on the fraught trade-off between archaeology and politics during the excavations of the world heritage site of Masada (Israel) similarly shows how the past can be misused and glorified to form a strong national narrative of particular a social group. Furthermore Ben-Yehuda’s research shows how politics can impede archaeology’s often self-proclaimed objectivity. The Masada myth tells us how a group of Jewish rebels gave their lives during the unsuccessful revolt against the Roman occupier between 66-73 AD. Flavius Josephus described their heroic struggle and Masada stronghold, which was the scene of their last stand, in ancient literature. However, Josephus’ writings are open for interpretation and there is serious doubt if their last stand on Masada was so heroic. Furthermore there are serious doubts whether the rebels that resided at Masada really fought for the Jewish people or were ordinary thieves and assassins that killed more Jews than Romans. Because of the importance of this myth, newly founded state excavations were planned with a lot of international financial support and enormous efforts by the Israeli army. The excavation campaigns had to provide scientific data for the mythical national narrative. Finds were not falsified, but through interpreting and contextualising the finds through the mythical narrative and looking for far-stretched explanations, the excavator’s interpretations ‘supported’ the historical founding myth of Israel - ultimately serving to consolidate the contemporary links with the land and the Jewish persistence to maintain to fight for their land. This example does not only show how political appropriation of the past is timeless, it also illustrates how sciences that study the past are never neutral and are similarly influenced by the needs in contemporary society. The use of the past is also a social process. Discussing the interpretations of the excavators of Masada Ben-Yehuda (2008: 257)- similarly states: “Providing scientific credibility for a myth is not an act; it is a process ... [part of] the social construction of scientific knowledge”.

Though many similar case studies illustrate that heritage is selectively constructed and employed for contemporary socio-political and economical purposes (Ashworth, Graham and Tunbridge 2007, Kohl 1998, Kohl and Tsetskhladze 1995, Kohl, Kozelsky and Ben-Yehuda 2007, McNiven and Russell 2005, McNiven and Russell 1997, Meskel 2012, Schofield 2008, Shnielrelman 2007), I do not agree with for example Ashworth, Graham and Turnbridge’s (2007) and Lowenthal’s (1998) quite one-sided insistence on the merely selective and appropriative character of heritage. They present the valuation of the past and creation of heritage as a devised practice - a social process driven foremost by commodification of resources and political agenda’s. In my opinion this interpretation is too functionalist, and ignores the importance of individual agency in the process of heritage production. Many aspects of the past are valued just because people attach significance to it. Remembering the past gives meaning to people, or when engaging with
it, it invokes an unconscious and individual sense of attachment and curiosity (Nora 1989: 9). Indigenous people for example do not perceive their land as their historical homeland particularly because they are struggling for land rights and territorial legitimation. It is foremost a genuine sense of belonging to their land, interrelated with everyday use and presence. Similarly, local residents who I often encountered during excavations in my hometown did not value the remains that I was unearthing through an imposed political agenda. Many considered the remains important and called it their heritage out of interest for their history.

Valuing the past is both selective and spontaneous, shaped through governmental actions, and developed and manifested organically. On the one hand, certain remains from the past are appropriated in relation to the needs in the present serving a political agenda and identity related imperatives. On the other hand, some things from the past become commodities spontaneously and are not used for ethno-national purposes. Furthermore, politically constructed heritage things are still perceived individually. Things can only become heritage when people effectively have a personal sense of attachment. Thus, the process of meaning making that underlies heritage is multi-faceted, both resulting from specific needs of social groups in the present, but also as a result of those groups historically evolved dispositions, mindset and worldview - stressing the need to approach heritage as a process that only can be understood and managed using a broad relational framework to social practice that integrates the individual agency, contextual structures and the struggle between different agents.

2.1.3 Heritage is now

[History] is itself ahistorical. It offers not a concrete image of history but an abstract schema of men making history of such a kind that it can manifest itself in the trend of their lives as a synchronic totality. Its position in relation to history is therefore the same as that of primitives to the eternal past: in Sartre’s system, history exactly plays the part of a myth.

(Levi-Strauss 1966: 254)

Claude Lévi-Strauss argues in his “The Savage Mind” that history is not a product of the past but created through those who write it. As already stressed above, studying heritage has nothing to do with the past; it is rather the study of the specific conceptualisation and appropriation of historical references in the present (Ashworth, Graham and Tunbridge 2007, Graham and Howard 2008, Harrison 2012, Harrison et al. 2008, Lowenthal 1996, Lowenthal 1998). It is “present centred” (Graham and Howard 2008: 3) and the main importance of the past is how it has shaped the contemporary social, economic and political structures, and individual dispositions that determine how people construct heritage (McIver and Russell 2005, Smith and Jackson 2006: 312).
Clearly, heritage is in the first place about contemporary people, communities and different types of social groups, and how these value and give meaning to history. How people read the past, both selectively and spontaneously, is embedded in everyday practice, beliefs, value systems, and social context. The main ‘sources’ in heritage studies are not historical texts but the people that make meaning of the past. Furthermore, the used methodologies should not be archaeological excavations but ethnographic fieldwork (in its broadest sense – cf. Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). The locus of study is neither the site nor the repository of the museum but the community.

During a discussion at the ‘cultural heritage in a material world’ session at the annual conference of the Australian Anthropological Society (2012), chair Annie Ross rightly stated that since the decolonisation in the heritage field the meaning of the term ‘cultural heritage’ has moved closer towards that of ‘culture’. By emphasising the ‘cultural’ part of ‘cultural heritage’ great attention is given to how present communities perceive and use heritage. Through analysing cultural heritage as a sociocultural discourse, we do not analyse the past but the cultural processes, worldview, historical trajectory and social arena of the involved agents. Likewise, this presents cultural heritage as a tool to explore local communities’ ontological framework, societal organisation, and identity politics. This presents cultural heritage also a cultural biography of a group (cf. Kopytoff’s 1986 work on material culture), an instrument that enables us to understand a given society.

The fact that contemporary culture is the subject of investigation does not only mean that methodologies and theoretical frameworks from sociology and anthropology have to be used in heritage studies, it also tells us that the main properties of ‘culture’ also characterise cultural heritage. One of the core principles of culture it is not stable and constantly reproduced and revised in relation to both internal and external changes. Cultural heritage as a sociocultural driven valuation similarly changes in relation with the evolving social arena and interplay with human agency (Ashworth, Graham and Tunbridge 2007: 3, Davison 2008, Smith 2006, Tilley 2006). In the monograph “Cosmologies in the Making: a generative approach to cultural variation in inner New Guinea” Fredrik Barth explored the variations in cosmological traditions and rites amongst adjacent communities of the Melanesian Ok people (isolated non-literate Indigenous peoples). Interestingly, these communities with similar language, material culture, and ecological systems had striking differences (some hardly reconcilable) in their communal rites and ceremonies (Barth 1987: 1-9). Breaking with traditional anthropological theory to culture and tradition, Barth argues that all culture is constantly reproduced and consequently undergoes inevitable change. Based on his comparative research, Barth explains the variations and reasons for change through the inherent nuances between different human agencies that constitute creativity, which on its own springs from the interplay with the social arena (Barth 1987: 74-82). Following Barth’s stance towards cultural change and sociocultural expressions, one could state that heritages (see below) are also constantly in the making, as a result of the highly dynamic
interplay between human agency and social context. Thus as with any social practice change is inevitable, presenting heritage practitioners with a paradox to respond accordingly to the heritage of the future and the future of what is now considered heritage. What is remembered by a group today may have lost its meaning in 20 years. What is not important today can become central in the identity politics of our children.

2.1.4 Heritage and society: heritage and community as a plural

[M]emory is by nature multiple and yet specific; collective, plural, and yet individual. (Nora 1989: 9)

Each society or community consists of different groups, which on their own consist of a set of people that according to the scale have similar social, cultural and epistemological characteristics. As a result of different backgrounds and positions in society these different groups each construct their own ‘heritages’. Very often another group reads the same ‘material’ references to the past in a different way and attaches other, often irreconcilable, values to it (for example the archaeological commune versus Altaian ethno-nationalists). As a result, within a single society there will always be a plurality of heritages (Ashworth, Graham and Tunbridge 2007, Graham and Howard 2008: 1, Smith 2006: 80-82). Because not all nuances can be protected and recognised, and different communities each have their particular position in society (and often use heritage to maintain or ameliorate their position) this plurality creates a matrix for misunderstanding, contestation and conflict. Both for scientific and more practical reasons, within heritage studies a multi-actor approach is absolutely imperative. Heritage is a social phenomenon that can only be understood and subsequently tackled if the different conceptualisations and appropriations of the past and relations between the different communities within a certain society are identified and weighted. This makes an ethnographic strategy that gives sufficient attention for the contextual nature of heritage absolutely imperative.

If understanding the heritages of the different communities is important, it is similarly important that the right communities/stakeholders are assessed. As argued by Anne Pyburn (2011), and Emma Waterton and Laurajane Smith (2010) the loose use of the idea of ‘community’ in heritage studies and public archaeology can be considered as one of the important reasons why certain heritage conflicts are so difficult to understand or even be resolved. All too often heritage researchers employ a self-imagined conceptualisation and categorisation of communities and how they conceptualise the past (Marshall 2002, Matsuda and Okamura 2011, Pyburn 2011, Waterton and Smith 2010), which can often be related to the limited attention to ethnographic fieldwork. A lot of researchers ignore the real diversity within society and often employ a simplistic division between a monocultural group of experts and non-experts; the latter are often called the ‘public’, or the “inhabitants of the country” (Pyburn 2011-33). Just as heritage, communities are a flexible and highly dynamic product (Eriksen 2001, Marshall 2002, Waterton and Smith 2010),
they demand a comprehensive ethnographic-driven understanding, not only of the conceptualisation of the past but also about the community itself and the power-relations within a particular group and between the different groups that constitute the broader society (Greer, Harrison and McIntyre-Tamwoy 2002, Marshall 2002, Matsuda and Okamura 2011, Pyburn 2011).

2.2 Heritage conflicts: insight in the power relations of a society

Taking heritage’s main characteristics into account and considering it as a commodity constituted through social practice that operates on a broader societal scale as one of the many interrelated processes that constitutes a pluralistic society, it is inevitable that conflicts of interest will arise. Similarly David Lowenthal argues that

... heritage is intrinsically possessive, heritage is seen as our own, perceived and constructed as such, and we strive to keep it out of the clutches of others. Conflicts over who is the right actor to own and interpret it is endemic for the concept of heritage itself.

(Lowenthal 1998: x)

Such conflicts are often very politically and emotionally laden, especially in multicultural contexts where heritage conflicts are enframed within a broader social struggle of different groups for recognition and empowerment. Just as heritage tells us more about the internal and external sociocultural fabric of involved communities and social groups, contestation and conflicts over heritages provides important insights about power relations, dispossessions and injustice in the broader society.

David Lowenthal (1998) and Laurajane Smith (Smith 2006: 80-82, 2008) underscored the intrinsically dissonant nature of heritage, which is inherent for any social constituted commodity that is both unconsciously created and selectively appropriated for attaining social benefits. This inherent dissonance can first be explained by the big cultural differences and diametrically opposed value systems of the different groups. A cultural bias (see Douglas 1982) often makes it difficult for the different groups’ discourse to empathise with the other’s conceptualisations, leading to misunderstanding and fuelling a conflict. Second, as noted earlier, “the issue is control”, heritage is a resource and controlling this resource is imperative (Lowenthal 1998, Smith 2006: 288). But, it is a resource that can only be appropriated and capitalised on by one group. Graham, Ashworth and Turnbridge (2000) define this axiom as the “zero-sum characteristics of heritage”:

... dissonance arises because of the zero-sum characteristics of heritage, all of which belongs to someone and logically, therefore not to someone else. The creation of any
heritage actively or potentially disinherits or excludes those who do not subscribe to, or are embraced within, the terms of meaning attending that heritage.

(Graham, Ashworth and Turnbridge 2000: 24)

Though multinational settler states like Australia, the United States or New Zealand have made major efforts to find a balance between a plurality of heritages, in many states across the world, and to a large extent even in the above-mentioned countries, always one heritage discourse dominates the heritage arena. Laurajane Smith (2006) calls this particular discourse the ‘authorised heritage discourse’ and defines it as the discourse that “constitutes and legitimises what heritage is within a certain society, it also defines who has the ability to speak for and about the nature and meaning of heritage” (Smith 2006: 26).

Referring to the same concept, Rondey Harrison (2012) calls the privileged heritage discourse the “official heritage”. In most cases this official discourse is institutionalised in the legislative framework of a nation or administrative entity and determines whose value system is ‘more admissible’. The value system and ethos underlying this discourse furthermore defines the privileged stewards over the past. In most cases, even beyond the heritage sector, official agencies will always privilege scientific expert knowledge because its underlying epistemological framework correlates with that of the institutionalised agencies (Ross et al. 2011) and context-dependent management based on dialogue and empathy is difficult and time-consuming (we often forget that heritage is not the number one priority of the government). This ultimately makes scientists (i.e. archaeologists, architects and human geographers) both the legislators and interpreters of the past. Moreover, providing scientists with this institutional authority further reinforces their social and political authority. This ultimately creates the assumption that their value system is the right one, and does not enable scientists to reflect on their own ideals and practices. This magnifies the epistemological and institutional barriers (cf. Ross et al. 2011) with other less privileged groups, making it difficult for those people that do not speak the authorised language of science and bureaucracy to challenge the official conceptualisations of the past (cf. Smith and Jackson 2006: 313-322).

In short, not only is the process of heritage valuation and appropriation an important subject of study, but the legitimacy and status of a certain heritage discourse is also an important source of information disclosing the role of a particular group in society, and the particular policy of the central government towards minorities and their cultural expressions. This develops an understanding of heritage as an analytical tool that discloses power relations, taken for granted statuses, and deeply ingrained sociocultural conflicts.
2.3 Heritage management and conservation as a discourse: the perils of institutionalised stewardship

If conceptualizing something from the past is far from neutral, then neither is the act of managing, preserving and developing heritage places in multicultural societies. Similarly, in their chapter for the edited volume “The Heritage Reader”, Rodney Harrison, Graham Fairclough, John Jameson and John Schofield (2008) define heritage management not as something ‘given’ but as a socio-political imbued process;

... the process of heritage conservation and preservation can be seen to be far more than neutral activities, but ones which are charged politically. The ownership and interpretation of the past emerges as a key issue. Heritage conservation is more than the atrophy of decay, it is selective and taphonomic in nature, and could be profitably linked to a dorm of collecting practice. In this way, cultural heritage management should be seen as a discourse that is mobilised for different social and political ends.

(Harrison et al. 2008: 7)

Though over-emphasizing the selective nature of heritage, Harrison et al.’s critical assessment is of great importance. It underlines that heritage management does not take place in a social vacuum and any initiative to conserve or preserve somebody’s heritage should take into account the needs and interests of the different stakeholders (Chirikure and Pwiti 2008, Greer 2010, Greer, Harrison and McIntyre-Tamwoy 2002, Marshall 2002). Heritage management should first ensure that the meaning of heritage places is weighted before frameworks are set up to preserve its material aspects. The philosophy of any heritage management initiative should entail informed conservation (Clark 2001, Schofield 2008) and community-based collaboration (Chirikure and Pwiti 2008, Greer 2010) ensuring that both the intangible and discrete dimensions of a heritage thing survive. Expert-driven heritage resource management without understanding heritage and grassroots collaboration would be meaningless and would not respect the inherent conceptual basis of heritage.

This brings us to a challenging paradox I confronted throughout my research and also faced by many human geographers and archaeologists appointed to develop management plans (or conduct scientific research): what do we do as researchers when the scientists’ and different communities’ values and conceptualisation differ too much? In their ground breaking article about community involvement in archaeological research and heritage management Shadreck Chirikure and Gilbert Pwiti (2008: 474-476) argue that many collaborative initiatives all too often overemphasise the positive implications of community-based practice, while in reality it is not always that straightforward and is often very challenging to integrate a variety local needs. What should we do when local communities are not interested in preserving particular material references? Have very different ideas that are diametrically opposed to our own ideas and ethics? Oppose any
scientific involvement and resist collaborating as political statement? Or misuse particular references to the past? Unfortunately, Shadreck Chirikure and Gilbert Pwiti (2008: 476) only used this problematic reality to reflect on the limits of community engagement and multi-vocalism in heritage management and did not venture into exploring this puzzling conundrum.

I agree with Chicora and Pwiti that this conundrum is not an easy one and is very difficult to easily resolve. Reflecting on the Kennewick Man/Ancient one, a contested repatriation case in the United States, Edward Jolie (2008) provides a possible strategy to engage different publics with conflicting interests into a venture such as heritage management or archaeological research. Inspired by Alison Wylie (2005), Jolie emphasises that stewardship over the past should be tackled as a highly collaborative and negotiated joint venture based on intercultural negotiation. Through dialogue the different viewpoints are discussed and negotiated. In the case of heritage management the management is discussed and there is a quest for consensus. Through negotiations that are based on context dependent understanding, insights into the different heritages will enable the stakeholders to bite the bullet and decide which interests should be valued higher than others. The outcome of such a dialogue is not only a framework for heritage management, but also an instrument through which the different stakeholders learn to understand other viewpoints. In theory such an approach is feasible and is workable on a small scale (see chapter 7). But because this is based on context dependent and time consuming negotiations I question if such a type of negotiated community heritage management/policy will ever be introduced in centralised states as Russia. In chapter 7 I aim to further discuss this process of ‘joint stewardship’ and intercultural negotiation in the context of archaeological excavations.

### 2.4 Indigenous heritage and ‘cultural’ landscapes: belonging to the land and struggle for a colonised past

The heritage discourse and ways of perceiving and commodifying history in Western contexts is closely connected with its epistemological roots in the Enlightenment, whose discourse still influences many people - we are all to a lesser or greater extent children of the Enlightenment (Hughes 1979: 27). Different Indigenous groups did not undergo a similar historical trajectory of rationalism, empiricism, and Kantian Enlightenment, ensuring that they have developed completely different epistemological and ontological frameworks, resulting in divergent ways of structuring knowledge and looking to the past. As will become clear below, many Indigenous examples show that a specific animist cosmology and ontology impacts how the past is conceptualised, commoditised, and
communicated (for example the variety of contributions in Carmichael et al. 1994 and Jordan 2011a). Especially the environment as both a physical and spiritual entity plays an important role in many Indigenous heritages. In reality most Indigenous and traditional communities their environment and landscape is not only the physical matrix on which they organise everyday practices, but a historical ontological entity. It is their homeland that roots people’s practices in the present. Ancestry is not understood through genetics but connectedness with the land, on many occasions during fieldwork interlocutors would tell me “all ancient remains belong to our ancestors because we have always lived in this land”.

These diverging frameworks are obviously a matrix for conflicts, misunderstanding, and very often misrecognition of the other’s knowledge and legitimacy. Scientific insights are often not fully recognised by Indigenous stakeholders and vice versa. In this subsection I aim to illuminate some important aspects of the Indigenous ways of perceiving time and history, and how different knowledge and social systems are at work. This will provide readers with an introduction into a multitude of non-Western heritage discourses, crucial for contextualising the Altaian ways of conceptualising the past and understanding the conflicts that arise with the Russian mode of thought and philosophical ideals.

Because Indigenous ways of perceiving history, culture and the world are largely defined by the 'land', this section will first appraise the different approaches to landscape that currently dominate the heritage field. In the following subsections I hope to illuminate the particular Indigenous stance towards cultural landscape, and draw readers to the limits of the current ‘cultural’ landscapes concept. Whereas the above subsections are closer in line with the investigation in Part III about the divergent ways archaeological objects are perceived, this section rather looks to the nexus land-people, which will be scrutinised in Part IV.

### 2.4.1 Different approaches to cultural landscape

There is thus the landscape we initially see and a second landscape which is produced through local practice and which we come to recognize and understand through fieldwork and through ethnographic description and interpretation.

(Hirsch 1995: 2)

Throughout the 1980-1990s the notion landscape and place became a key concept in the broad field of cultural heritage and a variety of cultural studies; finally, after years of debate (Rössler 2006: 333-335, Taylor 2009, Taylor and Lennon 2011) UNESCO included landscapes in 1992 on the World Heritage Convention. The recognition by UNESCO ultimately served as an important vehicle for the international institutionalisation of the term cultural landscape and the recognition of the historical and cultural importance of
landscape and place. Bridging nature and culture (Taylor and Lennon 2011), the term cultural landscape needs to be seen as a broad *umbrella term* that in its most general meaning deals with the *ongoing* and *historically rooted* interaction between people and nature, and the diverse tangible and intangible manifestations this interaction can bring about. Time and cultural memory is an inherent aspect of a cultural landscape, crystallising its heritage value. There are many possible approaches to cultural landscapes, and usually, following the World Heritage Convention, cultural landscapes are divided in three main categories (Rössler 2006: 335-336, Taylor 2009: 20-21):

*Clearly designed and created cultural landscapes:* these types of landscapes are intentionally planned and designed by people and are often associated with representations of landscape architecture. Gardens and parks such as Versailles in France is a classic example of a designed landscape.

*Organically evolved landscapes:* this category of cultural landscapes refer to landscapes whose physical human components and structures constitute the heritage value of a particular geographical area. These marks are left behind by the different people that occupied a certain place throughout time and are generally seen as the outcome of thousands of years of close interaction between culture and nature. The compilation of these different layers can be seen as a biography of a place, enabling us to retrace the social, economic, administrative, religious, and cultural trajectory of a region. An organic landscape is mostly in the making, constantly changing in close relation with the sociocultural reality of a certain place.

*Associative cultural landscapes,* within this category, material human cultural elements do not dictate the heritage value and sociocultural significance of a place or region. Rather intangible, spiritual, aesthetic and powerful cultural associations by foremost local people determine the heritage character of a place. Very often such symbolic associations are directly made to natural places and distinctive markers and not to cultural objects. The particular sense of place is mostly produced through everyday interactions and is inextricably linked with people’s livelihoods. A clear-cut example is the Aboriginal sanctuary of Mount Uluru in Australia.

Though in reality any given cultural landscape is a ‘messy’ combination of these three types, the differences between each category are striking, and every category demands a particular approach and specialists. Designed landscapes are more the field of architects, organic landscapes of human geographers, archaeologists and historians, while associative landscapes are a popular study subjects in anthropology (Anschuetz, Wilshusen and Scheick 2001, Feld and Basso 1996, Hirsch 1995, Taylor 2009, Taylor and Lennon 2011).

As outlined in Hirsch’s quote (see beginning subsection), just as with other heritage ‘things’, landscape is both a physical *object* and a conceptualised *subject*. In reality this duality between object and subject is however dichotomised and according to the particular context and involved disciplines there will always be emphasis on one of the two
dimensions of landscape. Western societies will mostly focus on the objective spatial dimensions of a place (Rössler 2006, Taylor 2009, Tress et al. 2001), while the post-colonial and more traditional communities of Africa, Asia, Americas and the Pacific will attribute more importance to the associative dimensions of the natural environment and ‘spiritual’ dimensions of tangible cultural references (Gilbert 2010, Greer, Harrison and McIntyre-Tamwoy 2002, Rössler 2006: 343-346, Watkins 2006). Across the different contexts and disciplines the same term, cultural landscape will be used. Only seldom specific categorical names as associative, organically, or designed cultural landscape are used. Thus, across the globe, depending on the specific contexts, there are important nuances in the interpretation of cultural landscape, which often leads to confusion and misunderstanding.

My personal experience in Australia serves as an example to highlight the different and often confusing stances towards cultural landscape. My own schooling in landscape studies by Professor Marc Antrop, a renowned landscape scientist, mainly focused on the objective and structural dimension of a place. In Flanders the term historical landscape relates more to the tangible relics of a place, which are generally studied using empirical and quantitate techniques (statistics, GIS and remote sensing). Landscape is located in the domain of geography and archaeology, disciplines that in mainland Europe are generally characterised by strong empirical and methodological baselines. In Australia on the other hand cultural landscape is located within the disciplinary boundaries of anthropology, archaeology and human geography, disciplines that in Australia because of the importance of Indigenous people in the given context are more oriented towards interpretative theory and phenomenological experience. When I was talking about landscape and environment with Australian colleagues from geography and anthropology I felt that while we were both talking about cultural landscapes, we were talking about completely different things. They were talking about places of memory, sociocultural constructions that are passed down from generation to generation that are highly experiential. While I was talking about structured entities that are quantifiable, and ‘truths’ about landscape can only be derived using sufficient data and new methodologies.

Similar to the field of cultural heritage studies there are also two different approaches to cultural landscapes. On the one hand there are the positivist objectivists that focus on the material dimensions of place and the particular time-depth these embody (dominated by geography and archaeology). On the other hand there are the more relativist approaches that focus on the cultural dimensions of space and place. In order to understand the heritage dimension of landscapes and places I argue that both approaches are imperative. The cultural landscape may be intrinsically socioculturally constituted (Bender 2002, Casey 1996, Greider and Garkovich 1994); it is spatially constituted in relation to the physical arena and has an underlying logic, demanding both a more geographical and anthropological approach.
2.4.2 ‘Cultural’ landscape as a tautological conjunction for Indigenous people

Describing the worldview of the Siberian Iukairs, Rane Willerslev (2011: 49) nicely draws together how many Indigenous peoples in Eurasia embody memory and cultural values in the landscape. The Iukagirs are not familiar with the world as passive recipient of human action but rather see it as a living subject with which people should negotiate for their future well-being. For the Iukagirs and many other Indigenous people reciprocity is very important in the engagement with the historical homeland (Carmichael, Hubert and Reeves 1994, Ingold 2000, Jordan 2011b, Willerslev 2011). People believe that just as their ancestors did, through active worship and offerings the people inhabiting the land negotiate with the environment and hope to get future support in return. Offerings and worship happen on special places that for many Indigenous people embody cultural values and evoke a sense of memory (Carmichael, Hubert and Reeves 1994, Nabokov 2002). Thus, in Indigenous contexts, the label cultural landscape mainly relates to associative cultural landscapes. Ensuring that a flexible and ethnographic oriented framework is imperative.

However, as one of the many ethnic groups within a settler society, most Indigenous people are not empowered, and epistemological and institutional barriers (Ross et al. 2011) prevent them to advocate for their needs and interests. The authorised heritage discourse will be a ‘white’ or western one that is oriented towards tangible cultural manifestations or clear demarcated areas that are straightforwardly integrated in national registers and databases. Even in contexts such as Australia or the United States, associative cultural landscapes are not properly recognised and protected by the state (Byrne 2008). In those settler societies that are often presented as cases of best practice there is also an essentialist preoccupation of the government to ‘straightjacket’ values and conceptualisations of the land to specific bounded areas on maps. This inventory-oriented approach is a very dangerous practice, especially within contexts where local community members create the heritage significance of a place through everyday transitional activities. Once a place is inscribed on an inventory, the place can easily break free of their community context and the practices constituting it (Byrne 2008, Tilley 2006). Denis Byrne (2008: 157-158) argues that such an approach to landscapes can be explained by the deeply entrenched site-based and object oriented approach in heritage practice and bureaucracies. Deconstructing a landscape into discrete sites is misrecognition of the meshwork (Ingold 2000, Ingold 2007) (see part IV) and interrelations with everyday activity that creates the specific associations people make and constitutes their sense of place. Furthermore, such an approach is unable to cope with change and places can lose their meaning and particular places can become sacred overnight.

In the Altai Republic sacred places also have an uncertain position. The 2002 federal cultural heritage legislation does not explicitly recognise sacred landscapes and there is
only room for particular demarcated sites. Recent local legal efforts aimed at protecting specific sacred sites (Altai Republic 2012), but protection was limited to certain bounded landscape markers and there was only limited attention for the broader context and livelihood practices through which these markers get acquire their meaning. On the other hand, Altai’s inscription in UNESCO’s World Heritage List also raises questions if the (federal and regional) government is interested in restricting the economic development of land so the associative landscapes can be protected. Currently Altai’s inscription is limited to its natural characteristics. The application form submitted by the Russian Federation and Altai Republic in 1995 does not mention the local veneration of the environment and only refers to Altai’s unique natural characteristics (Russian Federation 1995). Despite its rich tangible and intangible cultural heritage, the world heritage status of Altai is limited to its unique biological diversity. In 1998 the advisory board explicitly suggested that the cultural dimensions of the Altai Mountains could also be recognised as world heritage and would make the case even stronger (IUCN 1998):

… one reviewer commented that the region’s important biodiversity is probably not due to purely natural factors but to the millennia of grazing. The Ukok Quiet Zone and Mt. Belukha have particular cultural and religious values for local people. Taking all this into account, there may be reason to consider the GMA on cultural grounds as well.

(IUCN 1998: 49)

Up to this day no concrete steps have been made by the Altaian Government to also pursue the protection of Indigenous heritage. This correlates with the overall Indigenous policy in contemporary Russia (see chapter 5 and 7).

Rich ecosystems or pristine landscapes with limited ‘authentic’ physical cultural remains are often categorised as natural landscapes (Byrne 2008, Harrison and O’Donnell 2012). Several scholars (Byrne 2008, Harrison and O’Donnell 2012, Taylor 2009, Taylor and Lennon 2011) have contested this dichotomy between natural and cultural landscape as one of the central flaws of the traditional western cultural landscape discourse and legal heritage policy frameworks. Exploring the cultural dimension of landscapes in Australia and South-East Asia Denis Byrne (2008) and Ken Taylor (2009) similarly argue that natural landscapes are also cultural landscapes, and each region in the world has a human land-use history and each landscape has humanistic meanings and values deeply ingrained in them. It is not the time-depth in an area that constitutes its heritage importance but the social engagement and memory in it. Landscapes are encoded with meanings, memory, and cultural values, which are read by local communities as a cultural biography that tells the history of a place and its inhabitants. For many non-western societies the conjunction between ‘cultural’ and ‘landscape’ is a tautology, because any environment has a cultural and socially constructed value (Taylor 2009: 16). In many Indigenous cases, as for example with the North Siberian *iukagirs* (Willerslev 2011) or Amazonian Arawete (Viveiros de Castro 1998), words as ‘natural’ and ‘cultural’ do not exist and distinction between people
and environment does not make any sense because they are formally valued as tightly connected and ontologically the same (Willerslev 2011: 60).

2.4.3 **Associative cultural landscapes as a cultural biography**

The full-bodied role of nonbuilt environments in American Indian history is more than painted canvas backdrops for human events. Mountains, canyons, springs, rivers, and trees often enjoyed the capacity for volition and intentionality. The demanded allegiance to and remembrance of their significance as full players in tribal passages through time. Regardless of when a group historically came to occupy a locale, it commonly felt compelled to construe some "primordial" tie to the topography it thereafter called home.

(Nabokov 2002: 132)

As implied by the title of Peter Nabokov’s (2002) monograph “*A Forest of Time: American Indian ways of perceiving history*”, the land and nature is a central theme in Indigenous traditional worldviews and permeates every aspect of their life (ancestry, funerary, livelihood,...). Constructed through a socially imbued system of meaning making, the venerated landscape is for most Indigenous groups their heritage, a trans-generational concept, transferred from ancestors but also to future generations (for example Glavatskaia 2011: 251). Central to this is the idea of continuity, landscape as a compilation of mnemonic references enabling us to root practices and our present being in the past, while providing a framework to evaluate the uncertainties of the future and potential action (Nora 1989, Tilley 1990: 14-19). Though researchers and Indigenous representatives commonly use concepts as 'sacred place', and ‘sacred geography’, land-based worldviews should not be labelled as a ‘religion’. Lacking dogma, the specific engagement with the land rather has to be seen as a philosophy, belief system, or lifestyle (Eriksen 2001: 212-213). ‘Sacred’ in many Indigenous contexts is different than the Western connections with Christianity, it rather refers to a place’s importance as a marker of cultural identity and ancestral ties (Byrne 2008, Nora 1989), its separateness with other places in the landscape, and the particular prohibitions and restrictions that apply to human behaviour on those places (Hubert 1994: 11).

This land-based worldview ties people to their land, links people with their ancestors, and tie the people that occupy that land together. In Altai for example the land is used as a national symbol that negotiates internal and external legitimation, it is used to tie people together and consolidates the contemporary links with the land (figure 2-2). A sense of place does not just happen but is created through time through years of interaction and use of the land (Tilley 2006: 16), explaining why the concept of ‘historic homeland’ is commonly used in Indigenous discourses. For many (former) illiterate peoples the land establishes a cultural allegiance to the region, land that was also the basis of the life of their ancestors and own subsistence (Eriksen 2001: 212-215, Gilbert 2010, Jordan 2011b,
Narrating history or worshipping the land mostly happens through specific places or objects. Peter Nabokov (2002: 130) links this place based stance and their particular oral history with Pierre Nora’s concept of *lieux de mémoire*, spots of cultural-historical significance, touchstones that link people with their past, memory, and historical narratives (Nora 1989). As stressed by Pit Péporté (2011: 13), it is a mistake to see a *lieu de mémoire* as merely a place ‘where one remembers’, they are rather things created through commodification that are made by places where memory has crystallised.

*Figure 2 – 2: Coat of arms of the Altai Republic. Land stands central in many national symbols of the Altai Republic. The central figure is a silhouette of a gryphon, referring to a famous wooden gryphon found during excavations of a Scythian burial mound. The blue background relates to the sky, the blue lines at the bottom are Altai’s major rivers (Biya and Katun) and the three-peaked mountain on top refers to the sacred Belukha mountain. These representations are symbolic for the historical connection between the Altaians and their venerated homeland. (© Altai Republic)*

*Loci memoriae* (cultural memory places) can be visible or invisible places that link the past with the present and stand as a symbol for ideas that enable a narration of the history of a region, and culturally embed people and identity. Places do not hold memory and cultural value intrinsically, but are socially constructed and derive their meaning through
actions and imaginations of people (Byrne 2008: 155). Associative landscapes and significance of places are intrinsically contemporary phenomena that are constantly revised and interrelated with all aspects of life, and through local practice constantly in the making (Hirsch 1995: 2, Nabokov 2002: 26). Change is inevitable, and together with the unverifiable nature of oral history, Indigenous histories and landscapes are often a bone of contention between Indigenous peoples and ‘white’ heritage legislators or other types of stakeholders (developers, politicians, farmers), and very often leads to accusations that Indigenous peoples are inventing their tradition to deliberately boycott non-Indigenous agendas (cf. Russian archaeologists vs. Altaian intellectuals). Anybody’s heritage is culturally strategized and situationally contingent; nobody should be penalised for revisiting what is considered as heritage. Indeed as argued by Peter Nabokov (2002: 146-147):

… no less in the New World than in the Old, sacred landscapes emerge as both culturally constructed and historically sensitive … far from being immune to developments in other aspects of human life [sacred landscapes] can reflect a very wide cultural and political milieu.

(Nabokov: 146-147)

Associative landscapes are the cultural biography of Indigenous peoples for two major reasons. First, the land is the medium through which history is evoked and told. Myths and (spiritual) historical figures are attached to certain places and passing through the land evokes associations to ancestors. On the other hand, the Indigenous cultural landscape is a social product, reflecting political and territorial realities (Humphrey 1995: 158). As illustrated by Pétorté et al. (2010) in their work about the role of space and memory in constructing the national narrative of Luxembourg, unravelling the social phenomena at the basis of a cultural landscape can disclose the different processes and structures that constitute it. These elements will tell a whole lot about the people that construct it, and how historical transformation shaped and influenced these structures. For example, places that are now important for Indigenous Altaians and how these places are worshipped is closely interrelated with peoples mobility in the landscape, which on its own still relates to the organisation and physical imprint of the former state supervised collective farms, and also discloses how a present practice is impacted by history.

As with any type of heritage, no matter which context or societal processes are at work, places, objects, and ‘traditions’ should be seen as metonymical traces of broader historically embedded sociocultural values held within society. Within an Indigenous context, worship or veneration of specific places (for example mountains or sources) or cultural objects (for example remains of ancestors) metonymically relate back to their land-based worldview and ontological unity between people and their homeland, and not to the inherent characteristics of an object or place itself (Greer, Harrison and McIntyre-Tamwoy 2002, Halemba 2006, Nabokov 2002, Watkins 2005, Watkins 2006). Though the Indigenous landscape is presented as a fragmented totality of sacred places (Pedersen
specific ‘sacred’ places relate to the entire environment, livelihood strategy and socio-political realities and cannot be detached from it. These latter aspects that constitute a cultural landscape are spatially organised, underscoring the importance of methodologies from both the natural and social sciences.

Territorial connections provide people with a sense of continuity, giving life and practice meaning. Activism against development of their ancestral grounds has to be read as a struggle for a sustainable future, and internal and external legitimacy (Gilbert 2010). The social process itself of creating heritage in indigenous context is not distinctly different from western ways of conceptualising the past, it is also based on people’s background and current contextual challenges. The major difference is that the social ‘parameters’ and medium are different, whereas the western stance towards the past is imbued by an objectivist Enlightenment stance that prefers old and tangible things, whereas Indigenous people perceive the past through their land-based epistemological framework that is constituted through transactional engagement with landscapes.

2.5 Intermediate conclusion

In this chapter I attempted to provide the reader with an overview of the core principles of heritage largely based on existing literature from the broad heritage field. As a commodity, heritage can be characterised by four core principles: it is a conceptualisation, it is a resource that can do a lot of work in society, it is created in the present, and it is plural. As an effect of these characteristics heritage conflicts can arise. Furthermore, because of its sociocultural significance heritage management is, especially in multicultural societies, not a neutral initiative and should always at the outset include an informed dialogue with all involved communities. At the end of this chapter I have discussed the Indigenous ways of looking to the past. Heritage is conceived and experienced through the lens of the environment and landscape. This ensures that the Indigenous knowledge system underlying their heritage discourse is distinct and should be taken into consideration when managing or investigating (i.e. archaeological investigations) the heritage of Indigenous peoples.

Throughout the appraisal of heritage I have cited multiple works that stress that heritage is intrinsically a social product and has to be conceived socially. The four core principles of heritage further underscore this. Heritage studies apply social theory and methods from social sciences. In Chapter 3 a social theoretical framework to social practice was chosen that takes into consideration these four principles of heritage. Chapter 4 will present the methodology used to investigate how the heritages of Altai were investigated and how the different communities were identified.
Rationalising the subjective and transcending the human agency and structuralist dichotomy: Bourdieu meets Giddens

As stressed by French philosopher Maurice Halbwachs and throughout the previous chapters heritage and cultural memory is about present society. One of the main threads throughout most heritage literature is similarly the appraisal of heritage as a conceptualisation and appropriation of the past by different social agents whose arena is society (Ashworth, Graham and Tunbridge 2007, Byrne 2008, Davison 2008, Graham, Ashworth and Tunbridge 2000, Harrison 2012, Harrison et al. 2008, Jameson 2008, Logan 2012, Logan and Reeves 2009, Schofield 2008, Smith 2006, Smith 2008). Presenting heritage as both the outcome of a social action and a social action itself, constituting social identity and constantly re-shaping the social space (Harrison et al. 2008).

As mentioned earlier, something that is considered as heritage can be seen as a commodity that is constructed through social valuation and use, and should be understood through the theoretical framework of material culture studies. Following Arjun Appadurai (1986) ‘things’ that are perceived and valued become cultural goods or commodities because both the people that create and value them attach meanings to them. As such, cultural goods embody people’s mindset, identity, social relations, and social arena (Hoffman and Dobres 1999). Without their social dimension, cultural goods would be hollow and meaningless and would not be perceived as important by human agents (Appadurai 1986). Cultural heritage is not different; it is about people and their value system. Heritage objects or places are not heritage because they refer to the past, they become heritage through human transactions, interpretations and motivations. However,
commodities are more than merely a product of a multidimensional social process of meaning making; because they are valued by others they also play an active role themselves, structuring life and social relationships of the people who use or own them (Wobst 2000). Cultural goods have the capacity to construct cultural projects, articulate self-identity, and establish relationships and hierarchies (Eriksen 2001: 190). In accordance with existing literature from material culture studies (Appadurai 1986, Hoffman and Dobres 1999, Tilley 1990, Wobst 2000), because meaning is vested in heritage ‘things’ and these ‘things’ give meaning to the surrounding social space they should be considered as part of the modern material culture of a particular community and need to be studied accordingly.

Material culture studies do not study things for the sake of it, but rather use cultural goods and commodities to examine the social world and the role of human agency within it. This is analogously related to the goal of this research, and just as many studies investigating material culture (Hodder 2003, Tilley 1990), social theory helps to understand the processes of meaning making and societal references vested into these sociocultural goods. Without social theory the social information attached to the objects cannot be distilled. In a certain way things from the past that are now heritage have come to a full circle; in the past they were also material culture that had social meanings invested in them and impacted social processes. Now, as noted by Christopher Tilley (2006: 17) “the heritage site itself are artefacts, or pieces of modern material culture, and require analysing as such”. Heritage goods embody memory and cultural values and through applying social theory one is not only able to understand the cultural dimensions of heritage objects but also the processes of meaning making underlying heritage. Through studying heritage as a semiotically constituted commodity, one is also able to unravel how people think about themselves and others, and the organisation of society.

In this chapter I wish to fix the theoretical framework used to understand the social processes constituting and instigated by cultural heritage in the Altai Republic. Many research papers and position pieces in the field of cultural heritage studies appraise cultural heritage and archaeology as a social process and underline the need for appropriate frameworks and methodologies. Unfortunately, many of these fail to systematically move beyond the disciplinary boundaries of heritage studies and archaeology into the vast arena of social science (cf. Byrne 2008: 149). Important scholarly work such as Ludomir Lozny’s (2011) edited volume “Comparative Archaeologies: A Sociological View of the Science of the Past” or Brian Graham and Peter Howard’s (2008) introductory chapter “Heritage and Identity” elaborate the social dimensions of heritage, the social significance of heritage places, its present-centeredness, and broader societal roots, yet fail to really uncover the broader processual logic defining the heritage/archaeology process. This is symptomatic of a lot of heritage literature. As a fashionable theme of enquiry there is much attention for the social-ness of heritage but
limited real efforts are made to systematically unravel these social relations and processes. Denis Bryne (2008: 150) largely stresses this by stating:

… it is characteristic of publications and reports produced in the field of social significance assessment [of heritage places] that the literature they reference consists almost entirely of other heritage publications and reports...[which] contributes to the undertheorised nature of the cultural heritage field.

(Bryne 2008: 150)

I agree with Byrne that there are still few researchers in the field of heritage studies that apply theoretical frameworks from outside the existing heritage field that explain the full complexity of the social processes underlying heritage. This lack of interdisciplinarity is at the basis of the lack of the undertheorised nature of heritage that has been recently critiqued by different prominent scholars from the field (Harrison 2012, Waterston and Watson 2013, Winters 2014). If there is attention for social and anthropological theoretical insights these are only applied on a small scale. They are used only to explain particular case studies, events and patterns and not for the overarching social system that heritage is part of. Ultimately, because of a limited scope and employing too specific theory many heritage studies fail to unravel the full time-space complexity of the social processes underlying cultural heritage and heritage places. Denis Byrne (2008) clearly underscored in his work when he noted that heritage has to be understood through the context where it operates; in sociocultural terms using concrete theoretical frameworks that have the entire social space as their scope and not ad hoc theorisation about particularities.

Understanding social phenomena and interrelated struggles is impossible when only looking and explaining what was said or happened during particular events. However, it demands a broader interpretation of the entire social space in which interactions and events occurred (cf. Bourdieu 2005, Malinowski 1994, Sahlins 1978). Taken-for-granted assumptions and the basic structuring components of society form the basis of any social product (May and Powel 2008: 1). However, these structures that seem logical are often ignored in heritage studies.

In order to overcome the theoretical shortcomings or vagueness of certain heritage studies, in this chapter I aim to establish my theoretical framework as transparently as possible. Through critically defining and applying analytical concepts that seem taken-for-granted, I hope to disclose the importance of assessing the very basis of society in studies about cultural heritage, memory and archaeology. As a theoretical framework I chose the relational approach to social practice as developed by Pierre Bourdieu and Anthony Giddens. Before discussing both thinkers and their respective theoretical approaches I will first introduce two general concepts of social science: agency and structure. These concepts dominate social theory but are hardly ever defined, making it difficult for the unacquainted reader to understand many theoretical works. During this short introduction to social science different schools will be discussed and Bourdieu and
Giddens will be positioned within them. The next sections aim to address both scholars’ thinking and cornerstones of their theory, and how I understand them in the context of my research. Though throughout my explorations I aim to employ both theories on the same level, Pierre Bourdieu’s *logic of practice* dominated my own epistemic logic more than Anthony Giddens’ structuration theory. My theoretical framework is one where Bourdieu is infused with Giddens, where Giddens is complimentary to Bourdieu and works to clarify and rectify Bourdieu’s theoretical underpinnings. As I interpret it, Giddens’ structuration theory and duality of structures clearly discusses the foundation of a society (i.e. structure, agency, power, time-space continuum, multi-layered knowledgeability of social agents), though in a more abstract way. Bourdieu on the other hand defines concrete and simple concepts that both explain and enable scholars to systematically approach and structure the different components and their relations that constitute society. When reading and applying Bourdieu’s work, one senses the strong empirical basis of his work. Bourdieu’s own theoretical concepts clearly steadily grew throughout years of ethnographic research and empirical studies on different scales and topics, making his concepts flexible analytical tools easily operationable on almost any social phenomena at any scale in different contexts. Though his writing style is a real challenge, his concrete concepts and anthropological background serve as important reasons why his logic of practice colonised my own epistemology. The last section of this chapter links the chosen theoretical framework with the discussion of cultural heritage in Chapter 2.

### 3.1 The foundations of social theory: agency and structure

The person is a social product, but society is created by acting persons

(Eriksen 1993: 73)

Before I proceed with discussing both scholar’s frameworks and their specific application in this PhD research, I wish to spotlight the two main cornerstones of any social theory: agency and structure. Both may form the rhetorical foundation of any social theory, they are paradoxically the most elusive terms in the vocabulary of current theory in both social and human sciences (Sewell 1992). They are often elaborately used without consistently defining them or addressing their pivotal importance. As a result, the understanding of a particular theoretical framework ultimately depends on how the reader conceptualises these cornerstones, potentially (and especially for non-native speakers) resulting in misunderstandings or paradoxical apprehensions.
3.1.1 Agency

A popular definition of agency is Anthony Giddens’ definition put forward in “The Constitution of Society” (1984): “agency refers not to the intentions people have in doing things but their capability of doing those things in the first place” (Giddens 1984: 9 – emphasis added). Though this definition might be clear cut one word —‘capability’—can be interpreted in a multitude of ways determining how agency is interpreted. Does capability entail merely the ability to act out of free will and to make free choices, or does capability also refer to certain capacities influencing the capability to be able do something? When adding William Sewell’s (1992) definition to this puzzling conundrum, the interpretation of ‘the capability to do things’ should also encompass a socially ingrained capacity, defined by ones social background. According to William Sewell (1992: 20) agents and their agencies are socially embedded and do not arise independently and in ad hoc fashion:

To be an agent means to be capable of exerting some degree of control over the social relations in which one is enmeshed, which in turn implies the ability to transform those social relations to some degree. As I see it, agents are empowered to act with and against others by structures: they have knowledge of the schemas that inform social life and have access to some measure of human and nonhuman resources. Agency arises from the actor’s knowledge of schemas, which means the ability to apply them to new contexts

(Sewell 1992: 20-21, emphasis added)

People have agency to act and influence phenomena, but agents’ actions itself are not entirely a result of their own whim; they are often collectively structured (Eriksen 2001: 85). Drawn together, human agency is indeed the capability to act in a certain way. Central to this stands capability, which relates both to the biological ability and feeling to be able to act and react (i.e. a pre-programmed feel for the social game), but also has a social dimension that determines if an agent is able to act in a certain way (alone or with others) within the context of certain social phenomena. In certain contexts a person will have difficulties to act, because he does not have sufficient power or is not accustomed with certain situations. Thus his social background can withhold him to act. Agency comes into being out of the social backgrounds of an agent and not only entails the ability to act but is intrinsically linked with how one will act. Agency is not inborn but acquired and learnt throughout life in relation to our contextual spaces. In my opinion one cannot talk about agency without talking about social context and structure. Agency is too often used as a buzzword to distance one from structuralist theories that often indeed focus on the processual regularities of life and ignore the human agent. However, detaching agency from structure is intrinsically wrong because agency is so interrelated with social context.
3.1.2 Structure

Just as with agency, social structure is also difficult to define. The famous Social anthropologists Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard (1951) underlined this by saying “such basic concepts cannot be given precise definition” (Evans-Pritchard 1951: 19) and only an indication can be given by what is implied by it. Evans-Pritchard stated that there must be regularities and uniformities in life, and society must have at least some order. Without patterns in society, we could not be able to coordinate activities together or anticipate, have a language, or speak as people of society itself (Evans-Pritchard 1951: 19). Evans-Pritchard crystallised his laud to structure by stating:

The use of the word structure in this sense implies that there is some kind of consistency between its parts ... and that it has greater durability than most of the fleeting things of human life. The people who live in any society may be unaware, or only dimly aware, that it has a structure. It is the task of the social anthropologist to reveal it. (Evans-Pritchard 1951: 20)

Semantically, the word structure can be used to describe the arrangement of and relations between the parts or elements of a complex entity (for example the structure of a building). But, it can also be used to refer to an entity that is constructed from several parts (for example a building itself that consists of different building materials and arrangements). Within social science, and especially within the work of Bourdieu and Giddens (and especially the works about/using Bourdieu and Giddens, including this work), both approaches to structure are often used together without clear distinction, which might cause confusion. Within this work structure embodies the core of both semantic meanings. When deconstructing both definitions of ‘structure’, the core of ‘structure’ is that it implies components and relations/order between components, which both need to be understood and to understand the whole. Within social science those components are often called social institutions and refer to a broad variety of abstract concepts such as rules, resources, and historically contextualised cultural schemas (for example religion, kinship and customs) that structure society. Social institutions can themselves be conceptualised as structures, shaped by different components. The semantic definition of structure correlates with Thomas Hylland Eriksen’s definition of structure, “social structure is the totality of social institutions and status relationships that make up society” (Eriksen 2001: 73).

Throughout most literature structure is perceived as external to human agency. The repositioning of structure is one of the central discussion points of the work of Bourdieu and Giddens, who stress that both the social space is structured by social structures and that the human agent also has an internal structure, which on its own is structured by external structures of society. The dialectic interplay of both internal and external structure ‘structures’ human action and practice. Bourdieu and Giddens stress that through the study of the human actions both internal and external structures can be understood.
3.1.3 **Structure and agency in cultural heritage studies and archaeology**

Closely interlinked with both concepts of structure and agency, there are commonly two main strategies within human sciences to investigate particular social themes (for example religion, economy, politics), namely the systemic structuralist stance and the actor-centred approaches (Eriksen 2001). For example, in the case of researchers that investigate aspects of the economy, the actor-centred approach argues that economical organisation has to be investigated and understood as something that is the result of the human agent and his agency. The systemic approach on the other hand defines the economy as mainly the result of external social structures and institutions (banks and governments), and argues that the role of the human agent is relatively limited; the agent in fact is relatively powerless. These two approaches can also be found in the field of cultural heritage and the politics of archaeology. First, there are the systemic studies that especially see heritage as something that is foremost constructed by society, only to a limited extent influenced by the individual agents. Studies that focus on the selectiveness of heritage (Hamilakis 2007b, Kohl, Kozelsky and Ben-Yehuda 2007) are characterised by such a structuralist approach. Second, studies that conceptualise heritage as something that is foremost a ‘spontaneous’ and organically grown independent development of the human agent are less common. Some studies in the field of cultural landscapes studies and folklore/oral history (e.g. Jordan 2011b, Nabokov 2002, Tilley 2006), where a more phenomenological and hermeneutic approach is generally more widespread, generally apply a more actor-centred approach.

Giddens' and Bourdieu's broad theoretical frameworks are unique in that regard that they carefully navigate between the strengths and shortcomings of the structure-centred frameworks of structuralism, historical materialism and functionalism, and the agency oriented approaches such as phenomenology, constructivism and hermeneutists (Barrett and Fewster 2000, Bourdieu 1989, Giddens 1984, Loyal 2003, Robbins 2012). Their relational approach underscores that agency and structure are not mutually exclusive and can be interrelated in a single framework. This old division within social science into an opposition of objectivist schools focusing on the importance of structure and social institutions (kinship, religion, norms, legislative contexts,), and the more agency oriented subjectivist schools (Bourdieu 1989), was seen by Pierre Bourdieu as ‘the most fundamental, and ruinous’ (Bourdieu 1990: 25). Through their complimentary theories Bourdieu and Giddens advocate a critical rationalist stance towards social practice and society, proposing an ontologically coupled duality of agency and structure. Through integrating highly interrelated concepts as human agency, knowledge systems, social structure, sociocultural contexts, official and unwritten rules, time, power, and change within one holistic social framework they successfully construct a toolkit for understanding society. In doing so they are successful in rationalising the at first sight
subjective aspects of human thought and giving the seemingly objectivity of the structured social world a human face.

Both Giddens and Bourdieu can be conceptualised to a certain extent as critical structuralists employing important themes of structuralism but inclosing a significant role for the impact of the social agent and interrelated agency, embedded in time and space. In Anthony Giddens’ structuration theory one of the main propositions is this duality of structure.

... the constitution of agency and structures are not two independently given sets of phenomena, a dualism, but represent a duality. According to the notion of the duality of structure, the structural properties of a social system [i.e. agency and external social structure itself] are both medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organise.

(Giddens 1984: 25)

Thus, the basis of this duality is the relation between agency and structure. Structural conditions define the internal structure of human agency, but through operating in the social arena an agent’s agency also remakes and transforms those external social conditions (Barrett and Fewster 2000: 27-28). In relation to other schools Giddens argues that:

This stress [on the duality of structure] is absolutely essential if the mistakes of functionalism and structuralism are to be avoided, mistakes which, suppressing or discounting agents’ reasons - the rationalisation of action as chronically involved in the structuration of social practices - look for the origins of their activities in phenomena of which these agents are ignorant. But it is equally important to avoid tumbling into the opposing error of hermeneutic approaches and of various versions of phenomenology, which tend to regard society as the plastic creation of human subjects. Each of these is an illegitimate form of reduction, deriving from a failure adequately to conceptualise the duality of structure.

(Giddens 1984: 26)

Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of practice is structured around the dynamic interplay between habitus, field and capital (see below), suggesting an interrelation between internal structure (related to an agent’s agency) and external social structure (field and capital). The quest to structure agency also characterises Bourdieu’s work, compared to for example phenomenological works by Martin Heidegger (1927) and Tim Ingold (2000, 2007) Bourdieu’s logic of practice is structuralist and over emphasises the influence of the social space. Bourdieu acknowledges this, and in describing his own work in Social Space and Symbolic Power (Bourdieu 1989), he states:
If I had to characterize my work in two words, that is, as is the fashion these days, to label it, I would speak of constructivist structuralism or of structuralist constructivism, taking the word structuralism in a sense very different from the one it has acquired in the Saussurean or Levi-Straussian tradition. By structuralism or structuralist, I mean that there exist, within the social world itself and not only within symbolic systems (language, myths, etc.), objective structures independent of the consciousness and will of agents, which are capable of guiding and constraining their practices or their representations. By constructivism, I mean that there is a twofold social genesis, on the one hand of the schemes of perception, thought and action which are constitutive of what I call habitus, and on the other hand of social structures, and particularly of what I call fields and of groups, notably those we ordinarily call social classes.

(Bourdieu 1989: 14)

The overly structuralist rendering of human thought, behaviour and feeling discloses an objective deterministic stance towards the inherent subjective experiences embedded in social practice (Throop and Murphy 2002: 197-198) Despite their structuralist bias, Giddens’ and Bourdieu’s quest to explicate structure and holism is not particularly a bad one. Giddens’ and Bourdieu’s duality of agency and structure allows us to theorise and internally structure the nature of agency without loosing ourselves in esoteric discussions that threaten to bring us too far away from the general picture. Giddens’ and Bourdieu’s frameworks provide the researchers with analytical instruments to define and understand the basic elements of the social system, which is a strong foundation for further actor-centred investigations into the cognitive and psychological schemas at work.

Social anthropologist Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard (1951) similarly defends a structured baseline of any social study. Evans-Pritchard stated that cognitive and psychological aspects of the human agent are very important to understand society and particular phenomena. If we want understand social processes of a certain society and compare these with other contexts, we first need to structure knowledge about society and understand the context and different institutions that are at work (Evans-Pritchard 1951: 19), otherwise we risk losing ourselves and work in a contextual vacuum. Especially in contexts as the Altai Republic where only few researchers have defined the most important structures of society, a basic understanding of social space is absolutely imperative before more phenomenological and hermeneutic questions can be addressed.

Furthermore, within the institutionalised context of heritage management and archaeology it is a structured social framework that includes agency that will be most productive and perceptible for most stakeholders. Not only the inherent compartmentalised western epistemologies that govern many heritage agencies and scientists are most adapted to structure, also other involved stakeholders (including Indigenous peoples) have developed through years of colonial encounters (see Comaroff and Comaroff 1991) an epistemological framework that is more attuned to objective structure, than to highly cryptic conceptualisations (that are often too specialised to be understood by people that have little knowledge of social theory). Although applying
Bourdieu’s and Giddens’ framework may not be able to disclose the full complexity of cultural heritage, they uncover the general processes that govern the different stakeholders actions and appropriations. Understanding the logic behind these general processes on their own enable us to better understand and contextualise specific events, actors and relationships. As opposed to most researches in cultural heritage studies, my goal is not to approach heritage through a keyhole perspective and only focus on specific processes or actors. First we will unravel the general processes and then unravel the logic of specific events or phenomena. Through applying both Giddens’ and Bourdieu’s broader frameworks, we hope to understand the full complexity of heritage related action in a more thoroughly comprehensible way.

3.2 Habitus

People do not stay the same person throughout their life; one constantly navigates through fortunes and misfortunes, gets pulled into a particular profession and encounters many different (constantly changing) social environments that shape the way we think and act. These diverse encounters constantly change people’s perspectives and shape a matrix whereupon future action is evaluated and reflected upon (Giddens 1984). This however does not mean that people are constantly re-created. Imagine seeing an old schoolfriend, whom you have not seen in years, the first impressions I often have is one of astonishment of how much this person changed and matured (especially in my case where a lot of peers started working, bought their first house or got their first kid). Though, after some time, mostly fairly fast, through the changes you start to see particular characteristics of the ‘old’ person, and you sense that in some way he changed, but also stayed the same. This is not only because one has a predetermined image of that person but also because he/she really stayed the same. This is not only applicable to individuals; also the dispositions (inherent qualities of mind and character) of groups of people constantly change in relation to particular events, while at the same time people always carry their history with them.

Whereas Anthony Giddens (1984) describes this process and interlinks it with the duality of structure and inherent reflexity of agents, Bourdieu explains and defines the agent’s evolving dispositions through the framework of habitus. Bourdieu himself defines habitus as:
… systems of durable transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function of structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of operations necessary to attain them.

(Bourdieu 1990: 53)

Being a subliminal concept that is impossible to define concretely, habitus refers to one’s dispositions; an internal structure defining the social capacities of our human agency, highly interconnected to our way of argumentation, ethos, feeling, being, processing and categorising knowledge (epistemic framework), conditioning how we will act in a certain way an not another and engage with the world around us (Maton 2012: 51). Habitus is a set of embodied behavioural regularities, an intuitive framework defining our social capacities that we bring with us to different situations and together with our biological capacities determines our practice, feel for operating in society, perception of the world around us (including references to the past), and engagement with other agents and the particular social arena (Howe and Langdon 2002: 215). It is not a set of ready-made solutions to deal with particular circumstances (Weiss 2008: 76-97) but a flexible intuitive framework that enables ‘regulated improvisation’ to both accustomed and new situations, enclosing the ability to fit to new circumstances and experiences (Hillier and Rooksby 2005: 13). Importantly, a habitus is not innate; it is developing along paths but generative, organically shaped through interaction with different social contexts and agents. It is not constantly re-created but durable, constantly in the making. We always carry with us experiences from the past, supplemented with new experiences. Our habitus does not only depend on our personal history. Because our habitus is shaped by the encounters with the contextual social space, which has its own historical trajectory, the past of our social environments also indirectly impacts our own mental framework. Anthony Giddens (1984: 284) describes this as the time-space continuum of social life, stressing the importance of history and geography in studying social phenomena.

Karl Maton systematically draws together all above outlined characteristics of habitus by stating:

Simply put, habitus, focuses on our ways of acting, feeling, thinking and being. It captures how we carry within us our history, how we bring this history into our present circumstances and how we then make choices to act [and think] in certain ways and not others.

(Maton 2012: 51)

Habitus develops in close combination with the social arenas we occupy, which Bourdieu defines as field(s) (see below). Fields represents the ‘external’ social space we occupy and where our interactions, events, and transactions occur. It is our multi-layered social context that has its own structure and consists of a myriad of overlapping fields (political field, cultural field, educational field, economical field...). The process of acquiring a certain habitus through interaction with different fields can be largely related
to the anthropological concept of socialisation. Socialisation is the process whereby one acquires thousands of bits of the knowledge that shape our internal social framework, enabling us to function as a member of society (Eriksen 2001: 60). Through socialisation/interaction with the fields we internalise the unwritten norms and rules of the contextual fields. Through movement across different social contextual fields (Kirby 2009) we come into contact with the structures reproduced by the field, that on their own are being reproduced in the internal structure of the agent in their habitus. So, similar to Giddens’ duality of structure, our internal habitus is structured by our external fields and our habitus through social actions also structures our field.

Agents might produce social action; practices are not simply the result of our habitus alone, but the interplay between our habitus and present contextual circumstances (Maton 2012: 51). The highly interrelated interplay of one’s dispositions (habitus), the structure of the particular social arena (contextual field), and our position and power relations within particular fields (capital - see below) give rise to practice and action. It is the interplay between the external structures of the particular field we occupy and the feeling and acquired knowledge for operating under certain social schemas (which is defined by of the sum of the socially constituted capacities ingrained in an agent’s habitus and ‘biological’ capacities) at certain moments that constitute our practice and explains nuances and creativity in social action (Bourdieu 1993: 76). Bourdieu crystallises this interrelation in his most influential book “Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste” through applying a formal formula:

\[
[(\text{habitus}) \ (\text{capital})] + \text{field} = \text{practice}
\]

(Bourdieu 1984: 101)

Because of the relevance for this research, I wish to elaborate on the nexus habitus and an agent’s knowledge system. Heritage is to a large extent related to knowledge production and communication of the past. Various systems of constructing, communicating and validating knowledge are at play when different actors (archaeologists, Russian entrepreneurs and Indigenous Altaians) are engaging with the same references past; often misconceptions and rejection of the other’s actions are a result of these differences. The way we structure, validate, and process knowledge (our epistemological framework) is to a large extent an aspect of our habitus. An important cornerstone of one’s system of thought is classification. Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss (1963) argue in their ‘Primitive Classifications’ that any society classifies thoughts, tangible and intangible concepts, and things into a system of categories and types. All people classify knowledge, but the way we classify is different and socially constructed (Durkheim and Mauss 1963). Different societies have different knowledge systems. Scientists employ strict essentialist taxonomic categories organised in relation to objective empirical ‘truths’. Non-institutionalised
Indigenous people have a more holistic worldview and their categorisation can be more fluid and based on subjective variables such as landscape and nature (which is unacceptable or seen as backward by scientists). There are no right or wrong epistemologies and systems of knowledge, all make sense within their particular sociocultural frame of reference (Eriksen 2001: 231, Winch 1964). Within one social arena, and especially in settler societies with Indigenous peoples and a broad variety of migrant communities, there are always people with a particular historically rooted *habitus* and way of engaging with knowledge. Very often, between different (groups of) agents there are epistemological barriers (see Ross et al. 2011), these fuel conflicts and misunderstandings, impeding cross-cultural collaboration. In order to move toward a successful cross-cultural understanding and dialogue, it is important that the different knowledge systems are understood and the different agents acknowledge their legitimacy. Thereafter, aspects of the other’s culture can be better understood in their own terms. Such an understanding offers a vehicle to communicate their particular thoughts successfully to different knowledge systems. This understanding and translation to other terms is exactly what anthropology and social science aims to do (Eriksen 2001: 228).

In short, *habitus* refers to embodied cognitive systems and dispositions, constantly *in the making*; it is a structured structure and a structuring structure, shaped by and shaping social practice (Jones 1997: 89). Through *habitus* Bourdieu provides a balance between the actor-centred approaches and systemic structuralists. It clearly underlines the impact human agents have on society, and how this external social arena structures a person. It is not deterministic or confines free will, creativity and the ‘capability to act’, but rather reconciles individual agency and external structure, providing a framework that structures the socially engrained aspects/capacities of human agency and explains nuances in human behaviour. People may feel that they are free agents but still make decisions that are intrinsically related to unwritten and written assumptions of our social environment (Maton 2012: 49). *Habitus* enables an understanding of how and why people act and think. In relation to heritage this tells us how people create and communicate knowledge about the past, make certain associations and engage with other agents in the *field*.

### 3.3 **Field and capital**

*Field(s)* relates to the structured social space(s) that is the locus of social practice. Capital is comprised of those tangible and intangible ‘resources’ that help agents in defining their status or hierarchical position in a particular *field* or society. Together they define the context of our actions and determine the operability of our agency. Both are evolving, and
various developments can impact the structure of our social space and through life we can appropriate various types of resources that can be used in future actions.

As often within social theory, its cornerstones are too elusive to be concisely defined by themselves and a metaphor needs to be used as a vehicle to disclose what is meant by it. By following Patricia Thomson’s (2012) comparison with a football game, the ‘Gordian knot’ habitus-field-capital can be explored:

A football field is a bounded site where a game is played. In order to play the game, players have set positions – when the football field is represented in visual form, it is as a square with internal divisions an external boundary, with the set positions marked in predetermined places. The game has specific rules, which novice players must learn, together with basic skills, as they begin to play. What players can do, and where they can go during the game depends on their field position. The actual physical condition of the field (whether it is wet, dry, well grassed or full of potholes) also has an effect on what players can do and thus how the game can be played.

(Thomson 2012: 66)

Similarly, a social field is also the locus of the game where agents occupy a particular position that predetermines their actions. Social practice is also regulated through knowledge of the rules of the particular social space, and skills determine how a player will play and which position he can have in a field. Furthermore, action by agents can also impact the schemas and rules of the field. The social field relates both to the locus of a social action and the structuring components (schemas, rules and positions) that regulate that action. It materialises and categorises the abstractness of Giddens’ (1984) conceptualisation of (external) social structures, social institutions, and relationships.

Patricia Thomson furthermore argues that “[f]ields are shaped differently according to the game that is played on them. They have their own rules, histories, star players, legends and lore” (Thomson 2012: 67). Football is indeed not the only game that is played in the world; there are different games that require different fields, rules, skills and gear. Field is something that is often used singularly in literature to refer to the entire society (as in the contextual field of human practice), but is in fact plural. There are different social fields we occupy, such as the economic field, education field, academic field, or political field, and each has its own rules and requires particular skills, capital and knowledge. Though there are major differences between the various fields, some share important similarities and are tightly interrelated (Thomson 2012: 68). This can be attributed largely to the universal characteristics of some types of capital, and to the criss-crossing inter-dependency of the multiplicity of fields (Bourdieu 1996). For example, politics tend to influence economics and the other way around, but the same can also be said about the academic and educational fields.

The position of the different agents in the field is very important when assessing particular phenomena. The position in the field is linked to status, status as in ‘a socially defined aspect of a person which defines a social relationship and entails certain rights and duties in relation to others’ (Eriksen 2001: 49). A particular position in the field can
privilege agents to act in a certain way, and through action one can change or consolidate the rules and schemas of the field. A particular position can also undermine action and impede groups to participate in certain activities or to employ particular resources. A privileged status does not only enable action, it also imposes certain socially enmeshed expectations (a professional sportsman needs to train and moderate on alcohol, a member of the royal family is not expected to have a relationship with a pin-up girl), which need to be respected in order to maintain a certain position (Eriksen 2001: 50). Similarly, a scientist is expected to tell and pursue objective truths, Indigenous people on the other hand are presumed to have a traditional authentic lifestyle. The position on the field is not only determined by skills and knowledge of the rules, also the availability and possibility to employ capital positions as agents on the field. Capitals are resources or auxiliary means that can be ‘invested’ by agents to acquire a certain position in their field. Capital also enables people to acquire skills and knowledge that can further improve their position in the field. Capital is a commodity, something that is capital is valuable and can be used to improve one’s place in society because (different) people attach a value to that thing; heritage is such capital.

Throughout his writings Bourdieu (1984, 1986a, 1990) describes four ‘types’ of capital: economic, social, cultural and symbolic. In his ‘The Forms of Capital’ he argues that capital can present itself under three fundamental ‘guises’:

… as economic capital, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights; as cultural capital, which is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications; and as social capital, made up of social obligations (‘connections’), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of title and nobility

(Bourdieu 1986a: 243)

In other words, economic capital relates to material and financial assets; cultural capital covers acquired skills, know-how, taste, (educational) qualifications, cultural goods (e.g. art, books, architectural masterpieces) and titles; and social capital comprises social networks and relationships (Bourdieu 1986a, De Clerq, Dumolyn and Haemers 2007: 4, Harrison 2010, Wacquant 2007). Symbolic capital can be any of the three types of capital that within a certain context has a distinct socially constructed symbolic quality; acknowledged, perceived, and recognised as such by its members (Bourdieu 1986a, De Clerq, Dumolyn and Haemers 2007: 4). Possessing and using symbolic capital is very important, and is directly correlated with prestige and class; it exerts authority, enabling actors to set the rules of the social space. Very often the ruling groups classify what within certain fields is perceived as symbolic capital (Eriksen 2001: 152-154) and how it should be used. Heritage is and such kinds of capital; it produces wealth, social networks and know-how and prestige. Also stressed in Bourdieu’s earlier citation, conversion of capital is possible and one type of capital (foremost economic) can be exchanged for another type of
capital. Education can be bought using economic goods, but education can itself be used to acquire more economic goods.

The value of resources is socially constructed and resonates with habitual practices and experiences of agents within their field (Jones 2007: 49). Throughout his work Anthony Giddens (1984: 16) closely interrelates power and action and similarly argues that “resources are the media through which power is exercised” and mediated. He defines two types of resources that can be used to exercise authority; allocative resources refer to natural resources and physical artefacts, including technologies and knowledge to produce these goods; whereas authoritative resources (cf. symbolic capital) refer to (mostly non-material) resources that assures other agents in the social space to entrust a particular group/agent to organise the social world and to bring other agents (and their allocative resources) under their ‘control’ (Giddens 1984, Kaufer and Carley 1993: 136). Though Bourdieu’s classification capital is more elaborate, Giddens’ distinction provides a frame of reference, another perspective towards the authoritative dimensions of capital, and particular interplay with power and rules.

3.4 Field mechanisms: Doxa, hysteresis and ethnicity

The above subsections explained the three major concepts that for Pierre Bourdieu define social practice and provide an analytical toolkit to comprehensively investigate social phenomena such as cultural heritage and archaeology. This subsection will investigate particular processes and mechanisms that through the interplay of one’s habitus, capital, and structural properties of the contextual field can occur in a particular social space. Though there are many important mechanisms at work in the social space that impact people’s position and dispositions, I wish to limit myself to three ‘operations’ or ‘mechanisms’ that describe processes that are especially important within the context of cultural heritage policy, archaeological practice, and sociocultural transitions (i.e. socio-political changes occurring between Brezhnev and Putin). The first mechanism, doxa, relates to a society’s non-questioned and taken-for-granted truths and schema’s, which in times of ‘structural crisis’ become questioned and radically challenge the structure of the field and position of its agents in it. The second mechanism, hysteresis, relates to the process whereby agents with a particular habitus that was in synch to the structural characteristics of a particular field is displaced into a completely different field. In many occasions periods of hysteresis are also the moment when the ‘doxa is broken’. Third, I will elaborate on ethnicity and identity and how different people with a similar habitus and position in social space can form a group. Though this last aspect is something that is tightly related to Bourdieu’s work on distinction, my conclusions will be especially

3.4.1 Doxa

Doxa includes all unspoken and unexamined presuppositions about the world, shared opinions and perceptions that are ‘pre-reflexive’. It relates to everything in the social world that is ‘taken for granted’ and the expectations, rules and structures they encompass are unquestioned and simply followed (Dreer 2012: 114-115, Holton 1997: 42-43). Doxa is related to everything in “the natural and social world [that] appears as self-evident. Doxa is the unsaid in the field of cultural possibilities, making it seem as if there are not multiple, but only a single possibility.” (Bourdieu 1977: 164). The earlier discussed answer of my students to ‘what is heritage and who are the privileged stewards of the past?’ is an example of a doxic presupposition. Something that has become internalised and self-evident through almost four years of education imbued with positivist axioms. Heritage as something material where scientists should be the only people involved because they have scientific knowledge; scientific knowledge as something that has a doxic status. Contrary to doxa stand ‘opinions’, which are conscious expressions about the social world that are made through discursive reflection and explicitly question existing structures and power relations (Holton 1997: 42-43).

Doxa or doxic presumptions are the cornerstone of any social field; they are enmeshed in the regularities of the field and reproduce themselves through the agent’s perceptions and value systems. Doxa is embodied in one’s habitus (Dreer 2012: 116, Holton 1997, Jones 1997). Through the process of socialisation, doxa can become so internalised in a person’s cognitive framework that we do not think about particular positions or phenomena anymore and it reproduces itself unnoticed across different agents and fields (Jones 1997: 94-95). Embodied in an agents’ habitus, these unquestioned rules and self-evident presumptions ultimately determine the stability of the social structures that shape the rules of a field (Dreer 2012: 116), and crystallises the interrelationship and the position of the agents in the field. Doxa does not only relate to a reproducing system of unquestioned set of beliefs and rules that exist outside the consciousness of certain agents. Though unnoticed, doxic opinions and rules also naturalise and reproduce a system of power, providing certain players with a privileged doxic status. People are mostly unaware of this status and are unconsciously acknowledged by other groups. As such they are in a preferential position to acquire more capital without really knowing it. For example, in many Western societies people agree that information or material remains that have a unique scientific value (for example a very old text or a rare type of animal) should not be privately owned but should become the property of the scientists who study it for the
benefit of the people. Both the people and the scientists do not question this special position of oversight and ‘natural’ right. It is clear that socialised doxic rules and knowledge is indirectly a vehicle of power that becomes engrained in ones habitus (Jones 1997: 89-90), through which people can unquestionably accept the domination of others without really noticing it. There are always groups of people that through a particular doxa are subject to others and do not question the legitimacy of those that exert power through it. On the other hand, people that through a particular doxa have power are not always aware of their privileged situation and will take their particular position of oversight for granted. As will become clear in part three doxa is pervasive and powerful.

If the particular doxa of a field does not remain something unquestioned, people can become conscious about certain patterns and a doxa can ultimately become challenged and replaced by another doxa. There are two major types of cataclysms that that might give rise to critical consciousness and reflexiveness about the unwritten rules and social order of a particular field. The first categories of ‘doxa breakers’ are episodes of social crisis that give rise to socio-cultural modifications and disruptions within a given field. During such epochs of crisis there is a tabula rasa in the social field (for example a repressive regime that is overthrown or implodes, for example the Soviet Union), or a particular event that incontestably exposes the sore points of a particular system (for example the institutional banking crisis). As a result, different groups with a particular habitus start to perceive the out-dated social order and schemes that dominating social space, triggering them to question the prevailing doxa (Dreer 2012: 118-119). In many cases a social crisis occurs synchronously across multiple fields, affecting their particular doxa and interrelated doxic statuses. At the end of his ‘Homo Academicus’, Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1988: 159-193) critically investigated and theorised about the social implications of the events of May 1986 in France, focussing on the academic field and doxa. In his analysis he appraised the process of reassessment and questioning of the traditional academic and social order, and the broader homologies with other social fields (political, economical, educational and cultural) in French society that similarly underwent serious transformations. This is something that broadly relates with the post- perestroika and glasnost developments in Soviet and Post-Soviet Siberia.

A second type of doxa breaker is when new actors are introduced in the field, or particular groups are drastically repositioned enabling them to engage in intercultural contact. These changes bring about cultural interaction between groups of agents with different habitus and embodied doxa, which ultimately engender reflexivity and give rise to critical consciousness about taken for granted assumptions, positions and structures (Jones 1997: 95). Anthropologists Jean and John Comaroff (1991), also influenced by the sociology of Bourdieu, present in their ‘Of revelation and revolution: Christianity, colonialism and consciousness in South Africa’ an analysis of the changes in the epistemologies and value system of both southern Tswana (Indigenous South-African peoples) and Evangelical missionaries after contact in the early nineteenth century.
Through interaction with the natives the evangelists did not only spread their Christian message, their messages also purveyed the axioms of their Enlightenment-rooted worldview and ethos. So not only was their religious message communicated to the Tswana, but also some key aspects of the internal structure of their Western habitus were metaphorically ‘seeded’ on the soil of the Tswana (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991: 312). This process was vice versa; aspects of the Tswana worldview were also finding their way into the worldview of the white priests. The Comaroffs called this process the colonisation of consciousness. Contact changed both actors’ habitus, and interrelated with this changed habitus also particular dimensions of their culture and organisation that previously formed part of the domain of doxa became questioned and were consciously reflected on.

3.4.2  Hysteresis

As outlined above, social space is not stable. Change is an inherent aspect of Bourdieu’s practical theory, a necessary consequence of the homologous interrelationship of habitus, field, and capital. Bourdieu’s foundation blocks of society are constantly being generated and negotiated through their particular dialectical interplay and constitute change in social relations and structures. This ongoing internal change is homeostatic, generational and hardly noticed, leading to a relatively stable interplay between one’s habitus and contextual fields; as Cheryl Hardy (2012: 126) puts it one feels as ‘a fish in the water’. However, some change is not always slow and can radically impact the entire social space. Doxa breakers addressed earlier illustrate that the social space can quickly change. Besides the fact that unquestioned positions can become questioned, radical change can also a mismatch between one’s dispositions (habitus) on the one hand and the (new/changed) regulated schema’s of the field on the other. In Cheryl Hardy’s words, external large-scale changes can ensure that an individual feels like ‘a fish out of the water’. In order to describe and study change in the social world, and especially sudden large-scale changes, Bourdieu develops the notion of the hysteresis effect (King 2000: 427). Semantically, hysteresis is a concept that finds his origin in physics, and according to The Oxford Dictionaries (www.oxforddictionaries.com) is used to describe ‘the phenomenon in which the value of a physical property lags behind changes in the effect causing it, as for instance when magnetic induction lags behind the magnetizing force.’ Similarly Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1990: 59) applies hysteresis as a technical term to highlight the dislocation of habitus and field, its consequences, and the characteristic time lag required to internalise the structures of the new social environment. Hysteresis can occur when the external social conditions (field schema’s) drastically change and the structure of the field is not in synch with the historically internalised structure of the habitus. On the other hand hysteresis can also take place when people are displaced (forced or voluntary migration) to other contexts. These idea about disruptions and change in society was not completely new, and Bourdieu’s notions can be closely interrelated with the Marxian notion of ‘alienation’, as
in being disconnected from society and work, and the Durkheimian concept of ‘anomie’, that describes the possible difficult relationship between the society and individual (Hardy 2012: 126).

Hysteresis deals with the relation between an individual and the changed conditions of his contextual fields, and the time it takes before a habitus is conditioned to the challenges of his new environment. As many of his other ‘thinking tools’ the idea underlying the concept of hysteresis grew out of empirical studies of changes occurring in his principal study areas: Algeria, rural France (Béarn region) and the French academic establishment. In his home region, the Béarn, Bourdieu investigated the impacts of modernity and opening up of the small-scale peasant society in on traditional village life. He described how local customs, social networks, and structural organisation of society became obsolete and no longer worked and changed, affecting the social fabric of the village (Bourdieu 2007). His work in Algeria included attention for the problematic trade-off between habitus-field-(symbolic) capital during epochs of colonisation and decolonisation (Hardy 2012: 132-133). In his Homo Academicus (Bourdieu 1988), he discussed the hysteresis in French academic establishment of the late 1960s, where academics were still operating with an out-dated habitus, which was anachronistic to the transformed realities in higher education and broader social reality, leading to instability and crisis in the academic field (King 2000: 427). These themes—modernity in traditional societies, social transformations in periods of colonisation and decolonisation, and power relations within academia and the social vacuum scholars are often situated in—do not only show the importance and power of the hysteresis concept, they also provide both an analytical and comparative framework closely related to problems faced in the heritage field of the Altai Republic and broader Russia (for example Soviet legacy of forced displacement, institutional power of the Academy of Science and pressure caused by modernity).

Bourdieu mainly uses hysteresis as a descriptive term to define the mismatch between field and habitus; the process of synchronisation and significant period the habitus needs to adapt to its displacement to a different social space. Though he describes the process, he remains rather vague about the how and why of the slow conditioning of the habitus, and only one-sidedly elaborates on the outcome of an epoch of hysteresis, namely how the changed field affects the habitus and status of the involved players. To a large extent I agree with the investigation of Anthony King (2000: 427-428) in his critical paper ‘Thinking with Bourdieu against Bourdieu’. Though King employs a too actor-centred approach towards the inherency of change in the nexus field-habitus, I agree with his critique that if habitus and field are ontologically one, it is inconsistent to state that in case of hysteresis individuals are represented as merely recipients of new objective structures. In periods of social displacement people are indeed removed into a new context that impacts their particular position and set of dispositions. Agents also carry with them their historical embodied habitus, and through actions based on their relative transformation
they can also impact their ‘new’ field of practice. For example migrants in Belgium are not passive recipients of Western culture, they actively struggle to ‘feel like a fish in the water’ in their new context, by setting up structures that creates affinity with their particular cultural background and subliminal dispositions. In Ghent for example, the Turkic population has his own shops, restaurants and cultural centres and within those contexts Flemish-Turkic cultural schemes and rules are at work. In periods of transition in the Altai Republic (i.e. collectivization or post-Soviet transition) this was not different. When Altaians for example were displaced into collective farms many aspects of their nomadic and shamanist ontology stayed preserved. Land was still worshipped and people tried to travel as much as they can. Through interplay with the Soviet structures this gave rise to unique situations where Party officials would take over the role of the clan leader in traditional celebrations (see Humphrey 1999).

3.4.3 Occupying similar positions in a challenging field: Identity, Ethnicity and nationalism

Individual people are the smallest entity in social space. On different scales agents often present themselves as groups/communities. People are seen as part of a particular group not only because the social scientist from a distance based on primordial cultural characteristics (for example race, religion and language) classifies them into a category, but also, and most importantly, because people identify themselves with other agents in the field as similar or distinctive. For heritage studies these groups are important. Heritage is plural and shaped in relation to the sociocultural background of individuals. However, because research on an individual scale would be too time-consuming, working with distinct groups of people is an imperative. In addition, heritage is also a tool to construct group membership. As such, it is absolutely essential to have a basic understanding of the processes that shape groups and underlie them. Furthermore many processes in the contemporary post-Soviet world are influenced by the so-called ethno-national revivals, which are determined by identity, ethnicity and nationalism. Because of the importance of heritage as a marker of ethnic and national identity, I wish to shortly introduce these concepts and link them with the above theoretical framework. Because these are exhaustive and complex aspects of the social space I will only shed some light on the basics of these concepts (for further reading see Balzer 1999, Barth 1969, Eriksen 1993 and Jones 1998)

Such terms that depend on a multitude of factors are very often unclearly defined in academic texts. In many ways the most basic definition in the dictionary is often the ideal starting point to introduce the concepts, academic definitions are mostly ideal for discussing the processes that define these concepts. Oxford dictionaries (www.oxforddictionaries.com) defines these concepts as:
Identity
noun (plural identities)
1. the fact of being who or what a person or thing is
2. a close similarity or affinity:
3. Mathematics (also identity operation) a transformation that leaves an object unchanged.
4. Mathematics the equality of two expressions for all values of the quantities expressed by letters

Ethnicity
noun (plural ethnicities)
the fact or state of belonging to a social group that has a common national or cultural tradition

Nationality
noun (plural nationalities)
1. [mass noun] the status of belonging to a particular nation:
2. an ethnic group forming a part of one or more political nations

Though these three concepts are not the same, they are inextricably interrelated. Translated to the social sciences, identity basically relates to the identification by a person about oneself. Ethnicity refers to belonging to a particular social group. A nationality is a special type of social group (ethnicity), which has territorial and political claims/aims.

Group membership and belonging to a social group, thus having a particular ethnicity, is neither given nor immutable. In her review of the concept of ethnicity in archaeology and anthropology, Sian Jones (1997: 88) calls such an approach where group membership is seen as something essentialist, defined by cultural differences and race, as a so-called primordial stance. Though cultural and biological differences often are parameters that define ethnicities, most scholars (Balzer 1999, Barth 1969, Eriksen 1993), including Jones (1997), prefer an instrumentalist stance; ethnicity as something in the making that is based on a social process of identification constituted by the actors themselves. This identification, as stressed by Frederik Barth (1969) and Thomas Hylland Eriksen (1993), depends on a sense of commonalities and difference with other people in the social arena. Ethnicity does not develop in a social vacuum and depends on other agents in the field and their background and the positions these occupy; the formation of ethnicity happens through identification based on interaction and contestation.

Nationalism is considered as a special type of ethnicity. It is a specific ideology of ethnicity that advocates that the culture-imbed boundaries of the ethnic group should correspond with the territorial and political boundaries (Eriksen 2001: 275-277).

Identity is related to the process of identification of how we ontologically see ourselves in the world. Part of the identification process is how we see ourselves vis à vis others, making identity a structuring principle when talking about ethnicity and
nationality. Based on social psychologist Henri Tajfel’s and John Turner’s (see Tajfel and Turner 1986) theory of social identity Davy Herremans nicely draws together how identity should be approached: ‘social identity refers to the process by which we define ourselves in terms and categories that we share with other people and not with others’ (Herremans 2013: 31). Identity is one’s ontology, who she/he is, and to which groups she/he identifies her/himself. Identity as used in literature (including this thesis) not only relates to the process of identifying oneself as part of particular groups and aligning oneself with a variety of other values, but also embodies, amongst other values, the values of all those groups one identifies her/himself with.

Both ‘ethnic identity’ and ‘national identity’ as inextricably linked concepts are the result of a social action of feeling commonalities or differences with other agents. As socially constituted they must be conceived through the social space, the individual’s habitus and the historical processes that shaped society (Barth 1969, Eriksen 1993, Jones 1998). As noted by Sian Jones (1998: 49) the habitus plays a central role in the feeling of commonality and difference.

The subjective construction of ethnic identity in the context of social interaction is grounded in the shared subliminal dispositions of the habitus, which shape, and are shaped by, commonalities of practice … Shared habitia dispositions provide the basis for the recognition of commonalities of sentiment and interest, and the basis for the perception and communication of cultural affinities and differences ethnicity entails.

(Jones 1998: 49)

Because identities are inextricably linked with our habitus all our actions also embody our identities and the ethnic groups we identify ourselves with.

Identity and ethnicity is situational, defined by the external structures and schemas governing the social fields of practice. Not only the presence of other agents is important, but the structural conditions of the field also impact the ‘identification’ process. Based on the important ‘Creating ethnicity: the process of ethnogenesis’ of Belgian scholar Eugene Roosens’ (1989), Thomas Hylland Erikson (1993: 41) argues that the expression of ethnic identity can be ‘stronger’ and more explicitly communicated when the distinction between the groups is stronger and the position of a particular group is challenged through existing structures in the field. As an example to underscore the impact of the structures of field on identity and ethnicity Eriksen used Roosens’ description of how ‘Flemish ethnic identity’ is different in Limburg (rural Flemish province that is predominantly Dutch speaking) than in Brussels (Belgium’s bilingual capital that is predominantly French speaking).

Identity, ethnicity and nationalism are inextricably linked and are related to the social identification process based on a sense of commonality or difference. This sense of being alike or different happens through an ethnic classification that is based on biological, social and cultural boundaries people share (or don’t share) (Barth 1969, Eriksen 1993: 23-42, Jones 1998). These ‘markers of identity/ethnicity’ or ‘categories of ascription and identification [chosen] by the actors themselves’ (Barth 1969: 10) also depend on the social context and individual dispositions. Some are actively used and created to establish
cohesion, to distance oneself from others, or to emphasise particular claims (for example legitimisation of territory in case of nationalism). As discussed in Chapter 2, one very important marker of identity is cultural heritage. Heritage objects and places, and the cultural memory they embody cultivate the idea of a shared history (Eriksen 1993: 70); they can be used to materialise or construct national narratives, which enforces a sense of similarity, a sense of ethnic distance and legitimates territorial claims. Heritage as multidimensional capital is very important as knowledge of the past or the ability to claim and subsequently operationalise it is imperative for any group. It enables a group to fashion their ethnic identity, strengthen their position vis à vis others in the social environment, and challenge or legitimise existing power structures (Eriksen 1993, Kohl 1998). Ethnic histories are often fabricated, reinvented, or slightly adjusted in accordance to the needs of the present, guided by an agenda of the group, their habitus, and particular schemas that define the social arena (Eriksen 1993: 88).

### 3.5 Intermediate conclusion: Heritage as a social action and structured discourse

Congruent with the dynamic nature of societies, the social significance of heritage places should not be thought of as a social fact. Rather, it is part of a social process.

(Byrne 2008: 167)

Dennis Byrne’s "Heritage as a Social Action" is one of the few papers in cultural heritage studies that attempted to unpack the social processes constituting cultural heritage. Much of the established heritage literature is rather a compilation of social facts, descriptions, narratives, personal impressions, and buzzwords borrowed from social science whose full complexity are never really explained. As a result much heritage literature is theoretically too restricted and very often only bits and pieces of established theoretical frameworks are ‘squeezed’ into interpretations, ultimately failing to effectively understand the full complexity of archaeological heritage and landscape’s sociocultural background. The condition of successfully using social theory, such as Bourdieu’s logic of practice, is the acknowledgement that it has to be applied in a holistic way. Social phenomena can only be understood if the full dimensionality and all the important players of the field are included. As outlined above when describing Bourdieu’s theoretical framework, everything in society is so closely interrelated that it is impossible to use bits and pieces to successfully understand social phenomena. Heritage is not different, a commodity that demands an approach that takes the entire society as the subject of study.
This short concluding subsection aims to establish the intersection between the theoretical elaborations about cultural heritage of Chapter 2 and the earlier discussion of Bourdieu’s framework of social practice. Through loosely highlighting the close interrelations between cultural heritage and social theory I hope to draw the readers to the relevance of the above discussed social theory, justify my methodology (see below), and ‘operationalise’ the discussed theory. This subsection serves as an intermediate recapitulation of the first three chapters of this dissertation and brings together the earlier theoretical writings before discussing the methodology.

Cultural heritage is largely created through the valuation of ‘things’. It is not the ‘things’ themselves that are important in heritage studies, but how and why different people perceive and capitalise those ‘things’ in a particular way. Similarly, public archaeology is about relations between people and archaeological ‘things’, and the different ‘publics’ (cf. Pyburn 2011) that are involved in and appropriate archaeology. In short, heritage and public archaeology is not about the ‘things’ themselves but about the processes of (1) appreciation and (2) appropriation, which together transform the ‘things’ into meaningful commodities.

First, in his critical assessment of social significance research in heritage studies and policy, Denis Byrne (2008: 166) argues that ‘[a]ppreciation of heritage places is not something people are born with, it is something acquired [through social space]’. Byrne explicitly links appreciation of heritage ‘things’ with an agent’s habitus. The ‘heritage schemas’ (what is an accepted way of thinking and dealing with the past in society) of his contextual fields socially condition this habitus. What is heritage or not, who is privileged to govern it, and what is the appropriate way to manage it depends on the socially generated value system, rules, and dispositions of a person and his context. Understanding why and how someone appreciates something as heritage is thus inherently connected with the habitus and structural regularities of the agent’s social arena. If we want to understand heritage as a product of social action, habitus and the impact of the fields of practice must be understood!

Second, heritage can also be appropriated. Heritage can be ‘invested’ as capital to improve or consolidate a group’s position in society or as an expression of a particular identity. Many researchers particularly identify cultural heritage as cultural capital (know-how, qualifications and cultural goods) that brings prestige and legitimation with it (Byrne 2008, Harrison 2010, Smith 2006). As noted by Rodney Harrison (2010: 245) “[b]eing able to connect oneself to the past, and to the collective past of others via the recollection or recreation of specific memories and histories is a form of cultural capital”. Being able to communicate and manage the past creates an illusion of legitimacy in the present. If we can learn something from 19th century European nationalism and the use of ‘national’ heritage and historical narratives, it is that the past is a resource that binds people together, but also ties people to their lands (Jones 2007, Kohl 1998, Kohl, Kozelsky and Ben-Yehuda 2007). However, because of its metaphorical tenacity as a commodity, heritage is also an
authoritative resource or symbolic capital (Hamilakis 2007a, Hamilakis 2007b). Heritage can be appreciated by people as a marker of ethnicity and identity, and because it very often serves as a vehicle that provides internal and external authority and directly positions actors in their social arena, it is often the subject of fierce societal struggles that supersede its value as cultural capital.

The fact that heritage is appropriated and formed through appreciation by people justifies the use of a social framework to unpack the structures that constitute heritage. I hope to go further than Denis Byrnes’s (2008) paper, and throughout the analysis of the heritages of the Altai Republic I aim to include doxa, field, hysteresis and ethnicity in a multi-actor approach. All these components shape everyday practice and are vital in any social research.
4
Methodology: Operationalizing theory and uncovering the structures of the field and habitus

This chapter will discuss the strategy, methodologies and sources used to uncover the dialectic interplay between the individual habituses, external field conditions and capital. Furthermore it will examine how these parameters constitute different cultural heritage discourses when found/put together in a multi-cultural society. In the following sections I hope to provide the reader with some insights on my view on heritage as a social phenomenon. One thing I learned the past three years by attending different scientific conferences is that just as in society, different countries very often have dissimilar scientific philosophies. These ensure that different people read the same problems differently. Similarly, for the reader that is acquainted with social theory, this study might be too data-oriented and descriptive. Readers that have a more positivist background, on the other hand, might find some aspects of my research too interpretative and introspective.

In this research, because the social arena is extremely nuanced and depends on a myriad of variables, I chose to walk a thin line between a data-oriented approach and a highly theoretical interpretative framework. Lack of statistical truths, however, does not mean that this research is not objective; I adhere that objectivity does not stand equal to abundant data. As noted by famous archaeologist Lewis Binford (1987: 392) “[objectivity] simply means that the rules for observation are made explicit so that another observer using the same rules for looking it (sic) would see the same fact if given the opportunity”. The goal of this chapter is to describe which ‘viewpoints’ and ‘instruments’ I used to investigate the commodification of archaeological objects and landscapes.

Before proceeding to a discussion of the methodology I will first briefly outline the general strategy, my own background and the dichotomy between data and theory in archaeology. Throughout this research I have often struggled with my own positivist habitus to set up a methodological framework to study a very disordered and extremely interconnected phenomenon. In many studies in the field of cultural landscape studies,
archaeology or anthropology, it is mostly one or the other: elaborate data collection to statistically prove a particular trend and let the data speak for itself, or a strong theoretical interpretation based on very little data. This dichotomy in human sciences is understandable. Getting acquainted with theory is time consuming, psychologically and emotionally demanding and requires particular language proficiency. On the other hand, some methods (for example GIS or statistics) are often very intellectually arduous and demand intensive training. Combining both is very difficult and only few researchers fully master theory and method.

Many researches in Flemish archaeology are foremost rigid data oriented studies with a focus on developing new methods that aim to increase the resolution of the image of the past. The focal point is on producing data that gives insights what happened or was present on a particular site, and not how the people that occupied the sited lived and were embedded in a socially and physically structured world. This is inherently dangerous and might prevent archaeologists from doing proper archaeology. As stressed by James Moore and Arthur Keene (1983: 6) through concentrating on the method and producing statistically correct data we threaten to allow the methods to determine the formulation of the research question and strategy. As a result not the processes we want to uncover are studied but only the parts that fit into the existing methodological frameworks. American anthropologists and material culture specialist James Deetz similarly argued that:

There is always the danger of a certain method or area of inquiry becoming an end unto itself. The true value of such influences would seem to lie in the direction of the ultimate benefit to general anthropological theory; the elucidation of system and orderly process in culture past and present. Until and unless this type of inquiry is joined in a systematic fashion to the main body of ethnological theory, the danger is always present of such reconstruction entering the realm of ultimately sterile methodological virtuosity. This should not happen, but it must be kept in mind at all times that such a pursuit must relate in some way or another to the attainment of a broader understanding of culture.

(Deetz 1968: 48)

On the other end of the spectrum one frequently finds highly theoretical studies that interpret phenomena through a loose use of (incomplete) data, which is often not explicitly described, making the theoretical interpretations seemingly unfounded and difficult to validate.

In both approaches the presented information are oft highly illuminating, but both types of studies are also again and again the point of serious criticisms. On the one hand studies lacking systematic data collection and processing strategies are repeatedly discarded as unjustifiable or ‘up in the air’. On the other hand, and especially in archaeology and anthropology, studies employing a too rigid methodological framework that pursue a statistical truth are frequently discarded as too empirical and are critiqued because they ignore the socialness of human action.
‘Method’, ‘data’ and ‘theory’ are not mutually exclusive, one cannot exist without the other. Especially in contexts where one aims to study interconnected social phenomena as heritage, without a balanced and structured application of each component, research would be ungrounded and redundant. Acquiring proficiency in a certain methodology or theory includes a long learning curve. Therefore I believe that in the context of a PhD research one has to accept that an elaborate theoretical study based on a scrutinously collected large data set is not attainable. During a discussion about social theory with a fellow PhD student, who was finishing his doctoral thesis about identity and material culture, I began to understand the relevance of the catch phrase ‘less is more’ in the context of my research. A little bit less data and a little bit less delving into the full theoretical nuances of social practice does not necessarily result in ungrounded or ‘biased’ research. A little less but carefully collected data, processed using a solid strategy, may not provide statistical truths. It does, however, provide insights in the complexity of social phenomena enabling me to make particularly advanced interpretations. Statistics should not be the end product of a research, as they do not always guarantee that the findings will be relevant to the initial research question. It is important to keep in mind that some patterns will indeed be disclosed with statistics, but not the entire holistic system! This fetishism to reduce social phenomena to their statistically validatable components was already critiqued in the 1950s by sociologist Charles Mills (1959): “Those in the grip of methodological inhibition often refuse to say anything about modern society unless it has been through the fine little mill of The Statistical Ritual. It is usual to say that what they produce is true even if unimportant” (Mills 1959: 72).

In the end, social theory cannot explain the full complexity of each type of heritage. Even when one considers that archaeology and cultural landscapes are part of a larger holistic system that cannot be categorised in disciplinary entities. In reality archaeological objects and cultural landscapes are still different and demand particular, additional methodological frameworks. Archaeological remains for example, are tightly interconnected with the funerary culture of a group. Furthermore objects can operate on a more national scale as markers of identity. Indigenous cultural landscapes, on the other hand, are spatial phenomena that cannot be understood without looking to the physical nature of the landscape and livelihood strategies of the people dwelling the landscape. Because both heritage types are different, after discussing the general strategy, the additional methodologies needed for understanding the sociocultural conceptualisation of archaeology and landscapes will be outlined in sections 4.2 and 4.3.
4.1 General strategy

This study followed the more or less classic outline of any ethnographic/anthropological study: (1) literature study – (2) short exploratory fieldwork – (3) extensive fieldwork – (4) comparative study – (5) interpretation. In this section the general strategy and curial steps of the research are discussed.

4.1.1 Literature review

As already stressed multiple times throughout the previous chapters, this research does not have the ambition to write a traditional thick ethnography of either the different actors that occupy the contextual fields of social practice. Albeit by using different theoretical frameworks, previous studies have already elaborated on the different groups, their habitus and current field conditions. Existing literature has already provided important insights in the organisation of society in the Altai Republic. Therefore, because of the vastness of existing anthropological literature, traditionally prescribed ethnographic fieldwork of one year (Eriksen 2001, Hammersley and Atkinson 2007) was not regarded as necessary. An elaborate literature study, that takes into consideration the biases and pitfalls of Russian anthropology (see next Chapter), is at the basis of the understanding of social space. The outcome of the critical literature study will be presented in Chapter 5, which will give an overview of the different agents in the field, their historical trajectory, worldview and current socio-political context.

4.1.2 Fieldwork

Between 2009 and 2012 multiple short and long visits were made to the Altai Republic and Novosibirsk6 for fieldwork. These personal experiences enabled me to ‘think with my head in the field’, critically evaluate existing literature and provided an updated understanding of current events in the Altai Republic (most ethnographies are based on fieldwork from

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6 In 2009 I participated as a master student in an archaeological expedition in the Karakol park (two months during the summer), which ultimately crystallized in a application for a PhD grant. In 2010 a long visit was made to different regions in the Altai during the summer (one and a half month). In 2011 three visits were made to the Altai Republic and Novosibirsk: three weeks in February (Gorno Altaisk and Novosibirsk), two months during the summer (different regions in the Republic) and three weeks during the winter (Gorno Altaisk and Novosibirsk). In 2012 I made a visit of two weeks to in February.
the 1990s). As an overall observation strategy I aligned myself with the general framework of ethnography as described by Martin Hammerley and Paul Atkinson (2007):

In terms of data collection, ethnography usually involves the researcher participating, overtly or covertly, in people’s daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking questions through informal and formal interviews, collecting documents and artefacts – in fact, gathering whatever data are available to throw light in the issues that are the merging focus of inquiry. Generally speaking ethnographers draw on a range of sources of data, tough they may sometimes rely primarily on one.

(Hammerley and Atkinson 2007: 3)

According to Hammerley and Atkinson (2007) and Eriksen (2001) this range of data sources is various: participant observation (i.e. observing how people live, make a living and react to certain events), standardised questionnaires, in-depth interviews, informal conversations or a hermeneutic reading of existing literary sources produced by the subjects of study. Concerning fieldwork, the ethnographic process mostly consists of two stages: exploratory research and standardised assessment (Eriksen 2001, Hammerley and Atkinson 2007, Heyl 2001, Van Maanen 2011).

**Exploratory fieldwork**

Short exploratory fieldwork is an essential introduction into the realities of the field. It enables a researcher to link existing literature with the situation on the ground, enabling the ethnographer to reframe his research question, develop a solid interview strategy and select study areas. In-depth key-informant interviews are preferred as a good starting point (Heyl 2001). Such interviews are mostly relatively unstructured, specific questions are not formulated beforehand and very general topics are discussed.

In the summer of 2010 exploratory research was conducted (end June – middle of August). Various regions with a different ethnic compilation and physical landscape were visited and a lot of informal conversations were made. Based on these talks key-informants were selected for in-depth interviewing, a total of 30 in-depth interviews were ultimately conducted. During these 1-2 hour interviews a myriad of topics were touched ranging from landscapes, archaeology, tourism and the system of Soviet collective farms. Because I was still in the early stages of my Russian language lessons a facilitator (Isabel Debruynyne) assisted me during these interviews (for synopsis of these interviews see annex).

**Systematic data collection**

Based on this exploratory research the initial research question was reformulated and a different approach and methodology was chosen. As noted in the preface of this dissertation, initially the research focused on the sustainable material development of the
archaeological heritage. It quickly became obvious, however, that before tangible heritage management could be possible, it would be beneficial that first the diverging meanings attached to cultural heritage objects and places would be understood and mediated. Ultimately, during the summer of 2011 (end June – beginning August) more standardised fieldwork was conducted. A delimited set of questions was compiled, a unit of measurement was chosen, a sampling strategy, a participatory mapping approach was integrated and four specific study areas were selected. In addition, previous fieldwork had proven that for many Indigenous people it was difficult to speak about culture related topics in Russian, so an Altaian interpreter assisted during the fieldwork (Sinaru Malchinova). The consultations consisted of set of open questions and participatory mapping and lasted on average half an hour.

Three specific topics were touched during the standardised interviews: landscape, archaeology and tourism. I did not choose for a multi-page multiple-choice questionnaire, as I wanted to acquire qualitative insights in the broader processes at work and understand contextual nuances. The few questions were very general (table 4 - 1) and relatively open-ended. As a result, participants could answer freely (if they were interested), giving me the freedom to anticipate to particular answers and ask additional questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General info</td>
<td>• Current livelihood strategy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Clan affiliation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Religious orientation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archaeology</td>
<td>• Describe importance archaeological remnants?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Do you believe in the connection between the earthquake and the excavation of the Ukok Princess?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Do you conceive her as your ancestor?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Do you make particular spiritual connections?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What is your opinion towards archaeological fieldwork? Which restrictions should apply?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape</td>
<td>(see participatory mapping)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td>• What is your opinion towards the growing tourism in the Altai?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Do you see it as a possible economic solution for the region?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Which restrictions should apply?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What do you think of current management initiatives (for example Karakol Park)?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 – 1: Overview of the general question questions asked during fieldwork in 2011.
As a unit of measurement I chose the household. As stressed throughout different anthropological and ethnographic works (for example Erikson 2001, Hamersley and Atkinson 2007) the household is the smallest and most easily accessible building block in society. It is the locus where knowledge is transmitted and people are socialised (Erikson 2001: 64-67). As a result, people from the same household tend to share the same ideals and. During fieldwork, in many cases different members of the household participated and engaged in an often-intensive discussion about cultural heritage, politics and tourism.

In order to understand the attachment and local veneration of the land, a participatory mapping technique was applied. In order to acquire insights in the spatial dimensions of the sacred landscapes, the involved households were asked to indicate particular areas of interest on a variety of maps. This mapping initiative also proved to be an ideal instrument to get people talking about the heritage value of their environment (see 4.3 and Chapter 8 for an elaborate discussion about the methodology and its shortcomings and advantages).

I opted for a random sampling strategy. So basically I entered a village and went from door to door and only moved to the next village after I had visited all homes. Although I aimed at a response ratio of 50% of all households, in most cases only 10-30% of the households of the village were willing to participate, others were not easy to assess (e.g. due to the fact that alcoholism is a serious problem in many rural villages some households had difficulties with answering to the question). Ultimately over 13 villages 195 different households were assessed (table 4 – 2). The so-called snowballing technique\(^7\) has been used in similar researches (Smith 2006, Smith and Jackson 2006) and has proven ideal in acquiring a higher response ratio than 10 – 30%. However, in a society where the symbolic importance of the clan and extended family is still strong, such a non-probability sampling technique could result in biases in the dataset. There is namely an inherent danger that the researcher remains with the same type of people. This was a problem I encountered in 2010 when working the Karakol Park. The director of the park, Daniel Mamyev, introduced me to some people, who also introduced me to some other people. It quickly came apparent that I was talking with the inner circle of the park. All interviewees were clearly ethno-cultural activists that made the public opinion in the villages of the park and were all very enthusiastic about the park. However the heritage agenda is to a certain extent defined by these local ethno-national activists. I also wanted to include the majority of ordinary people that are the public opinion and determine the success of the ethno-cultural activists.

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\(^7\) Snowballing is a technique where the researcher interviews one particular household, members of that household then select other potential respondents the researcher visits. This is repeated until one has sufficient respondents.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study region</th>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Estimated households</th>
<th>Assessed households</th>
<th>Participated mapping</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Karakol</td>
<td>Kulada</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boochi</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bitchiktu</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Karakol</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tuekta</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katun</td>
<td>Kuyus</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Edigan</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elanda</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uymon</td>
<td>Chendek</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Akobi</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kurundu</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chuya</td>
<td>Kokorya</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zhana Aul</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 - 2: Assessed villages and number of households that participated in the interviewing and participatory mapping.

Absolutely essential when trying to unravel the processual nature of social phenomena is contextual variation. As stressed by Frederik Barth (1987) and Anthony Giddens (1984), social practice has to be understood across time and space. Through varied processes that underlie social practice it can be uncovered and understood. Different social environments with a distinct historical background produce different variables that together impact the outcome of social practice. Ultimately choosing different study regions with slightly different parameters should enable the researchers to better understand the nature of the interplay between the different variables that together constitute particular phenomena. Based on the insights of 2009 and 2010, four study regions were chosen with a different physical environment, ethnic composition and historical trajectory – as will become clear this was especially important in the context of the appraisal of the associative cultural landscapes. The selected study regions are:

1. The Karakol Park, which is located in the Ongudai raion and is characterised by a classic alpine landscape. Comprising the Karakol valley and a small part of the Ursul valley, the region is predominantly Altaian and consists of six relatively small villages (200-300 inhabitants): Tuekta (Russian), Karakol (mixed), Kurata

* Because of the relevance for understanding the cultural landscape the different study regions will be discussed more elaborately in chapter 8.
(mixed – not investigated), Bitchiktu Boom (Altaian), Boochi (Altaian) and Kulada (Altaian). Except Tuekta all villages were founded during the Soviet Union. Despite the huge impact the Soviet Union had on everyday life, traditional culture and customs remained relatively well preserved. The area is also known for its rich archaeological heritage (for example burial sites of Nizhny Sooru, Bashadar and Tuekta). In an effort to protect the traditional customs and archaeological heritage of the region the ‘ethno-cultural Karakol park’ was created under the impetus of Danil Mamyev. Through impeding the free sale of land, the park management hopes to limit the acquisition of land by big tourist companies. Contradictory, the park has its own tourist base and many villages contest the park because its main activity is tourism and the park administrators do not communicate with the villagers.

(2) The middle Katun region, which is located in the Chemal raion and is characterised by a dry alpine landscape that is dominated by the wide Katun valley. Situated along the Katun and connected by a regional road with the tourist centre of Chemal, the region is frequented by tourists. For over ten years, hundreds of thousand tourists visit the region annually impacting the fabric of the communities and the fragile ecology of the environment. Much land has been sold to tourist companies, diminishing the socioeconomic well-being of the communities. This part of the Chemal raion is ethnically mixed (i.e. Russian and Altaian) and has four small villages (150-200 inhabitants): Kuyus (Altaian), Edigan (mixed), Elanda (mixed, majority Altaian) and Oroktoi (Altaian – not investigated). As one of the regions with the longest Russian influence (19th century) and recent impact of tourism, traditional culture is less preserved.

(3) The Uymon region, which is a region also characterised by a long Russian influence. Most villages are predominantly Russian and have a small Altaian minority, except two Altaian villages (Akobi and Kurundu), which were created during the Soviet Union to house the nomads that occupied the mountain pastures. Geographically the region is a mix of a steppe and alpine landscape.

(4) The eastern Chuya region, which is located in a totally different social and physical space. The region is dominated by a Mongolia-like steppe landscape that besides grass has little vegetation. Because of the different environment people have totally different economic strategies and engagements with land. Although collectivisation during the Soviet Union destroyed nomadism sensu strictu, in this region people are still relatively nomadic and cover vast territories with their herds. The ethnic composition of this region is also different, neither Alatains nor Russians are the majority but ‘Altaian Kazakhs’ (see below). Compared to the other study regions, villages in this region are much larger (800-1000 inhabitants) and have vast territories. The two villages located in the region were studied: Kokorya (Altaian) and Jan Aoul (Kazakh).
4.1.3 **Interpretation and contextualisation of the data**

In order to uncover patterns and interrelationships, after both episodes of fieldwork notes were carefully analysed and uniformised. Together with the metadata on the households (ethnicity, kinship affiliation, age composition, profession and religion) all quantifiable data was integrated in a spread sheet (see annex). As will become clear in the following chapters where together with a hermeneutic reading of the transcripts and analysis of the results from participatory mapping in GIS, existing ethnographic literature about Altai was evaluated and critically (re)interpreted. Ultimately the *habitus* and *field* conditions of the different communities could be understood. Furthermore, research from similar post-colonial settler societies (foremost Australia and the United States) was also extremely helpful in contextualizing the observed patterns.

4.2 **Understanding the social dimensions of Altai’s archaeology through mediating a polarised conflict**

Understanding the process of commodification that transforms ‘things’ into valuable archaeological heritage objects was accomplished through the analysis of the conflict over the fate of the Ice Maiden. Inspired by Laurajane Smith’s (2004) similar appraisal of archaeological heritage related conflicts in Australia and the United States, a critical discourse analysis framework was applied. Critical discourse analysis attempts to define and understand the discourse that underlies the actions of particular agents through a careful reading of events and actions. Basically, publications by the different actors, comments in newspapers (that were approached critically), a variety of other public statements about the Ice Maiden and my own conversations with different actors were used as the data to understand the actions of the different players (i.e. Altaian and Kazakh ethno-national leaders and leading scientists of the Russian archaeological community).

As noted by Bourdieu (1977), as an agent’s *habitus* and *field* condition constitute his practices, appraising the practices itself enables the social researchers to investigate the structures and conditions (*habitus*, *field*, *capital* and *doxa*) that define social action. Ultimately what has been said or done by the protagonists in relation to the Ice Maiden, enabled me to understand their discourse towards archaeological heritage and the societal and ideological processes that underlie it.

In this perspective, the way the people of the Altai stand towards archaeological objects was assessed through systematic fieldwork. As noted above, no formal fieldwork was done at the archaeological institute in Novosibirsk and at the university in Gorno Altaisk; I think in both cases neither of the institutions would have allowed me to critically
uncover the logic behind their actions. This however does not mean that I did not have any contact with Russian colleagues over the period of my PhD. I made three visits to the IAE SBRAS, where I worked together and had long discussions topics with different ‘ordinary’ archaeologists (both doctoral researchers and graduate students) of the institute. I gave several lectures at the Gorno Altaisk University in 2011, and worked closely together with different professors and PhD students since 2009. These experiences with Russian archaeologists (that can be compared with traditional participant observation in ethnography), combined with some good research about Russian science and archaeology (i.e. Graham 1993, Graham and Dezhina 2008, Kradin 2011, Klejn 2012) provided me with sufficient insights in the discourse of archaeologists and students.

Part III is a critical analysis of the events connected to the Ice Maiden and aims to disclose and explain the different discourses at work. Although completely solving the current stalemate is practically impossible as a ‘young’ foreign researcher in the very hierarchical Russian academic space, as illustrated by other works in the field of Indigenous archaeology and public archaeology (Atalay 2006, Matsuda and Okamura 2011, Smith 2004, Smith and Jackson 2006, Watkins 2003a, Watkins 2003b), initiating the dialogue and uncovering the doxa is a first important step that triggers both the protagonists and other agents in the field to critically rethink existing principles and past actions. In an effort to mediate the conflict, a summary of Part III is currently being rewritten in Russian in collaboration with Indigenous archaeologist Vasilii Soenov (professor at Gorno Altaisk University) and Nikita Konstantinov (PhD student at Gorno Altaisk University). This paper will be submitted to one of the leading Russian archaeological and ethnographic journals (i.e. Etnograficheskoe Obozrenie).
4.3 The associative cultural landscape: unravelling a spatial and social phenomenon\textsuperscript{9}

One has to consider that the conflict over the fate of the Altai Princess took place on a national scale influenced by the agenda of ethno-nationalists and geopolitics of the government. As a type of heritage that is formed through local transactional engagement and the particularity of the physical landscape, a different approach was absolutely imperative.

As will be more elaborately discussed in Chapter 8, as a spatial phenomenon structured by the physical landscape, information about the *habitus* and *field* conditions of the individual agents only discloses a small part of the logic behind heritage landscapes. Although the heritage value of landscapes is indeed largely constructed socially, it is ordered spatially and gets its meaning through engagement with the environment. Furthermore, invisible lines such as historical imposed administrative borders, existing settlement patterns and imposed land-use policies also define the mobility along which sheer physical terrain is transformed into ‘existential place’ (cf. Casey 1996, Tuan 1977).

In an effort to acquire an understanding of this spatiality of the heritage dimensions of the landscape, its interconnection with the physical reality of the region and the livelihood strategy of the community members, additional data and a GIS-supported approach was chosen (for more details see Chapter 8). As noted above, participatory mapping was conducted in all research areas. This is a popular technique from human geography where the researcher asks respondents to draw or indicate on an existing map the particular use and valuation of the landscape. After digitalisation in GIS the outcome of this application is a series of polygons that link different socioeconomic values (sacred, economic, leisure, aesthetic and historic) with particular areas in the landscape. The results of this participatory mapping were combined with a variety of old and new cartographic data (archival work was imperative), which together with an understanding into the social space helped me to define the logic behind the associative cultural landscapes and on which scale they should be managed.

\textsuperscript{9} Because of the methodological and theoretical complexity of cultural landscapes, this section will only very shortly introduce the used methods and overall approach. Chapter 8 will more elaborately discuss the used sources, strategies and theoretical underpinning.
4.4 Intermediate conclusion

I chose a combination of existing literature and fieldwork in order fathom the current processes that constitute the heritage dimensions of archaeological objects and heritage landscapes. Central stood an ethnographic approach that aimed at uncovering the different structures of the social space. These structures define the commodification process that lays at the basis of any type of heritage. This ethnography of the heritages of the Altai Republic was based on fieldwork mainly conducted in 2010 and 2011 in four different social and physical environments. Because each type of heritage is different and is shaped on a totally different scale, different approaches were imperative. The perception of the ‘archaeological heritage’ was studied through using the ongoing Ice Maiden conflict as an analytical tool. This enabled me to understand the different involved discourses and the social structures these were based on. As a spatially structured type of heritage, both social insights and cartographic data (both existing and new) were integrated to assess the cultural landscape.
Part II: Populating the fields and uncovering the structures: ethnography overview
This part consists of one chapter, which aims to introduce the different agents that define social practice in the social arena of the Altai Republic. There will be attention for the different ethnic groups that inhabit the Altai (Indigenous Altaians, Kazakhs and Slavic groups) and other players that are not native to the Altai but do impact social practice (Russian tourists, scientists and economic players (tourist companies and resource developers)). Each category’s historical trajectory will be addressed, geographical distribution, position in society, livelihood strategy, kinship system, social organisation and worldview/religion. Throughout this chapter I wish to populate the contextual social fields, define the different habituses, disclose some spatial and historical patterns and provide a basic understanding of contemporary life in the Altai Republic. This space-time understanding (cf. Giddens 1984) of both the agents and their sociocultural context will serve as a foundation to discuss the different heritages in the Parts III and IV.
In his review about ethnicity and nationalism, Thomas Hylland Eriksen (1993: 18-20) describes five standard types of ethnic relations that determine the social organisation in a given society, which to a large extent defines how a particular social environment should be investigated. His fourth category ‘ethnic groups in plural societies’ fits best with the social organisation of the Altai Republic:

The term ‘plural society’ usually designates colonially created states with culturally heterogeneous populations. Typical plural societies would be [post-colonial states] as Kenya, Indonesia and Jamaica. The groups that make up the plural society, although they are compelled to participate in uniform political and economical systems, are regarded (and regard themselves) as highly distinctive in other matters.

(Eriksen 1993: 18-19)

As a ‘post-colonial’ settler nation (see Chari and Verdery 2009, Forsyth 1992, Hirsch 2005), the Altai too is a multi-ethnic society, populated by different groups with different socio-cultural backgrounds, dominated by a centralised state that through a strict policy defines ‘the rules of the game’. When studying phenomena in such a society, a multi-actor approach that appraises the different ethnic groups and has considerable attention for the centralist state is absolutely essential.

So, if we want to understand the social dimensions of cultural heritage in the Altai Republic, the different actors and their specific relation with the government need to be understood and assessed (cf. Eriksen 1993). This chapter exactly aims to introduce the different ethnic groups, their cultural particularities and relation with the political structures defined by the Kremlin. In order to get these insights, considerable attention will be given to the recent historical trajectory of the various groups.

Both Anthony Giddens (1984) and Pierre Bourdieu (1990) insisted that social practice is not ahistorical and people carry their past (and indirectly the past of others through social relations) within them. Ethno-historical research, a common law marriage between
anthropology and history (Forsyth 1992: xvi), exactly aims to frame contemporary patterns in time. Momentous anthropological works about different regions in Eurasia such as Marjorie Balzer’s (1999) ‘The Tenacy of Ethnicy’ and Douglas Rogers’s (2009) ‘The old faith and the Russian Land: a historical ethnography of ethics in the Urals’ have underlined the pivotal importance of scrutinizing historical shifts in order to understand contemporary life in the post-Soviet world. In Russian ethnographies, this attention for the historical trajectory of ethnic groups stands central; in reality it is often the only dimension of society that is study. However, in their quest for ‘authentic’ aspects of contemporary groups (which is the core of many investigations), Russian ethnographies often only have attention for the pre-Soviet trajectory. As noted by Georgetown based anthropologist Marjorie Balzer (1999: 219), initial Russian (Tsarist) influence on Indigenous culture was important, but the real roots of present multicultural Siberia need to be related to the colonisation and brainwashing that occurred through the Soviet cultural and agricultural policies.

The overview of the past trajectories and present characteristics introduced below, represent a concise classic ethnography of the involved ethnic groups. In Part III and IV these insights will be used to study the processes that define the meaning of Altai’s pluralist heritages. This overview will be largely based on the existing ethnographies and ethno-histories by Svetlana Tyuhteneva (2011), Irina Oktyabrskaya (Oktyabrskaya 2006, Oktyabrskaya and Shunkov 2006), James Forsyth (1992), Agnieszka Halemba (2006), Nadezda Tadina (Tadina 2006, Tadina 2011, Tadina, Arzyutov and Kisel 2012) and Leonid Potapov (1964, 1969). Detailed information about the agricultural and cultural reforms during the Soviet Union and their particular impact on the inhabitants of Altai was derived from different Russian and Soviet-era works (Alshushkin et al. 1983, Ekeevoy and Ivantsovoy 2000, Edokov 1987). Census data and various statistics were derived from a variety books and reviews (Aksyanova 2011, Federal State Statistics Service 2010, Makoshev 1996, Makoshev 2010, Makoshev and Minaev 1994, Makosheva, Makoshev and Apenisheva 2006).

Most Russian works, and especially Soviet-era sources have to be approached with particular caution. A considerable amount of works tends to glorify or at least minimise the disastrous impact of Soviet policy and reforms. Ethnographers, historians and geographers, many of whom are still active today, worked for the Soviet state and were actively promoting and facilitating some policies, rather than critically evaluating them. For example, the famous ethnographer Leonid Potapov (1964, 1969, 1999), who dominated the Altaian ethnographical field from the 1920s until the 1990s, is known to have passed on information about fellow ethnographers and interlocutors to the secret police. The second sentence of the introduction of his major work about the historical roots of the Altaians is symptomatic for much work from that time:
The Great October Socialist Revolution brought many people of former Russia to independent existence, for the first time in history they were able to follow the road of national self-determination and had an opportunity to build an economy, culture and life in conditions free from national oppression.

(Potapov 1969: 4)

5.1 The Altaians: from a conglomerate of Turkic tribes towards a unified Altaian nation

As of the national census of 2010 (Federal State Statistics Service 2010) the Indigenous Altaians, also called ‘the Altai’ or ‘Altai people’, make up 34.5% of the total population of the Altai Republic. Although the 69,963 Altaians (2010) are a minority in their ‘own’ Altai Republic, their numbers have been growing exponentially since the 1990s. They are currently a majority in the southern mountainous region, making them an increasingly important and very vocal group in the Republic. Predominantly inhabiting the mountainous regions, these pastoralists have undergone a long history of displacement, near-extinction and cultural reform which has shaped a unique cultural identity that is a mix of traditional animistic beliefs, nomadic livelihoods, Christian Orthodox institutional frameworks, Marxist ideals and post-Soviet ethno-nationalism. Compared to other Indigenous groups in Siberia and surrounding countries, the Altaians are unique in religious, economic, political and cultural terms. This uniqueness can be attributed to Altai’s particular peripheral setting and the relatively late Russian colonisation (late 19th century). In addition, throughout recent history the Altai Mountains had been a refuge for different Central Asian tribes, resulting in a cultural identity that is an interesting blend of different Indigenous cultures.

The following subsections will discuss the historical social fields the different Altaian tribes and clans have traversed and their impact on contemporary culture. It will highlight the impact of the 20th century events and, more specifically, the effects of Soviet and post-Soviet physical and sociocultural displacements. The 20th century namely enacted a tabula rasa of Altaian physical and social space, drastically impacting everyday life and social organisation.
5.1.1 **Historical trajectory**

5.1.1.1 Second century BCE - 1756: historical roots and Russian encroachment beyond the Ural

Although many Altaians today perceive themselves as Altaian (Broz 2009, Donahoe et al. 2008, Halemba 2006) and the Altaian ethnic groups have a strong national identity, before the Soviet Union the situation was considerably different. People did not consider themselves as Altaian and the clan and tribal ethnic identity dominated the sense of group membership. Today, nationalists who want to create one cohesive nation, increasingly challenge these still lingering kinship-based differences. Understanding the historical background of this tribal organisation is important when considering the impact of current ethno-nationalism on the perception of heritage (especially in the contexts of the associative landscape).

The most noticeable difference still surviving today is the division between northern and southern Altaians. This subdivision was first described by Leonid Potapov (1964, 1969) and is still agreed upon by many anthropologists and ethnologists (for example Broz 2009, Donahoe et al. 2008, Halemba 2006, Kleshev 2011, Tyuhteneva 2009). Both groups have developed strong cultural differences. Northern Altaian tribes originally had a predominant hunter gather socio-economic organisation (Potapov 1964: 17). A long influence of Russian culture and interethnic marriages has however resulted in an almost total integration of the northern Altaians into the Russian culture. Southern Altaians occupy the higher mountainous regions and, to a certain extent, are still nomadic pastoralists. They occupy a larger region and are statistically more abundant. Almost all communities described in this thesis are southern Altaians.

The Altaians are divided in different ‘tribes’ or ‘territorial groups’, which consist of different sööks (clans organised along kinship relations). The northern Altaians are generally divided into the Kumandin, Tubalar and Chelkan tribes, the southern Altaians in the Altai Kizhi, Telengit, Teles and Teleut tribes (Potapov 1964). These subdivisions and tribal differences were explicit before the Soviet Union. However, today they lost their importance and are the subject for discussion as the Russian government uses them as an instrument to undermine the growing ethno-national identity and interlinked territorial claims (see below).

Like the Kazakhs, Uygurs and Tatars, the Altaians are ethnically labelled as ‘Turks’, whose roots can be traced back to the second century BCE when the Huns expanded their empire westwards (Forsyth 1992, Parzinger 2006, Potapov 1969). This spread of the Huns, their subsequent assimilation with local Central Asian tribes and periods of instability ultimately led to the emergence of the ‘Turks’. In the late 14th century, these Turks became dominated by the Mongolian Oirot Tribes (Forsyth 1992: 22-25, Potapov 1964, Potapov 1969). As such many aspects of Altaian tradition are permeated with Turkic (i.e. shamanism) and Mongolian structures (Buddhist frameworks).
In the 17th century the northern parts of the Altai came under Russian control and northern Altaians were included in the Russian Empire (Potapov 1969). However, because of the lack of easily extractable resources and the strong position of the Oirot tribes, southern Altaian clans and tribes remained throughout the 17th century vassals to the Mongolian khan (emperor) (Forsyth 1992: 37-38). In the 17th century the southern Altaian tribes covered large and independent territories. The Telengits herded their cattle in parts of Kakhasia, Tuva and Altai, whilst the Teleuts occupied regions along the Ob and Katun and the Telesy inhabited the lands south of Teletskoie lake (Potapov 1969: 85). During the 17-18th century, instability in the Oirot Khanate (empire) and growing Russian and Chinese influence forced these tribes into the mountainous areas of southern Altaian. As a result, the tribes that previously occupied their own large territories now dwelled the same lands10 (Potapov 1969). Eventually, facing Chinese annihilation, in 1756 representatives of the Turkic clans of Altai asked the Russians Empress Elizabeth the Great for protection in exchange for voluntary incorporation into the Russian Empire. Because of its mineral wealth, their wish was granted and the Altai was included under a special statute and became part of the private ‘cabinet lands’ of the Tsar. As private territory of the Tsar, full-scale colonisation was not allowed and only the lower mountainous regions along the Katun and Biya came under Russian influence (Forsyth 1992). Despite sharing a similar territory, the different Altaian tribes did neither syncretise nor identified themselves as alike; as a result clan and tribal divisions remained strong (Potapov 1964, Potapov 1969).

5.1.1.2 1756-1917: From limited Russian influence to full scale colonisation

Although the Altai was part of the Russian empire and zaisans (leaders of clans) had to pay tribute to the Russian treasury, because of its special status the southern mountainous regions remained largely uncolonised until the Soviet Union (figure 5-1). Despite frequent encounters with Russian traders and officials, traditional tribal organisation of society continued to dictate every aspect of everyday life (Forsyth 1992: 128-130).

Some Russian policies did however impact everyday life in southern Altai. A first influence was the institutionalisation of the tribes. Because the Indigenous people inhabiting the Altai were a mixture of different Central Asian Turkic tribes which were different to administer, southern Altaian clans were subdivided in four tribes: Telengits, Telesy, Teleut and the Altai Kizhi. The first three categories corresponded to existing tribes, the Altai Kizhi tribes, relating to all clans living in central and west Altai, was largely an artificial category comprising all clans that did not belong to one of the three ancient tribes.

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10 Although in some regions particular tribes are/were more common, during the 18th-19th century clans affiliated to different tribes would occupy in the same valleys and share the same mountain pastures.
A second Russian influence was the further reinforcement of the power of the clan leaders (*zaisans*). The Russian government only interfered with south Altaian life in a limited way and the native life was organised under a system of self-governance: the Indigenous *zaisans* were given official power over their subjects (Forsyth 1992: 183-185). Initially responsible for collecting taxes for their clan, during the Russian empire the clan leaders’ power grew further. Together with the administrative reorganisation of the tribes this ensured that the clan’s position as a socio-political entity became stronger and differences became more pronounced (Forsyth 1992: 183-185, Potapov 1969: 26).

Figure 5-1: Map of the Altai Republic indicating foundation period villages. Note, most villages in the northern part of the Republic were founded before the Soviet Union, almost all (nomadic) villages in the central and southern parts were founded during collectivisation (1930s).

From the mid-19th century onwards, Indigenous life came under increasing pressure with the arrival of Russian settlers. Large plots of land were confiscated for agriculture, to the detriment of the Turkic nomads who were displaced deeper into the mountains to
more marginal habitats. This Russian pressure was enormous, at the beginning of the 19th century one extended family would have a territory with a radius of 100 km; by the beginning of the 20th century this radius would have decreased to 10-15 km (Tyuhteneva 2009: 55-59). In tandem with the encroachment of Russian culture, the Christian Orthodox church started its missionary work in Altai, radically impacting the native shamanistic beliefs (Vindogradov 1999: 37, Znamenski 1998).

The real influx of Russian culture came at the beginning of the 20th century when Altai and broader Siberia saw its largest wave of colonisation. This mass migration into Siberia and Altai is related to a multitude of factors. Firstly, the construction of the trans-Siberian railway and the finalisation of the Chuiski Trakt (1850-1860) (a road through the mountainous parts of Altai) opened up large parts of Siberia and Altai. Secondly, the Stolypin Reforms (Stolypinskaia agrarnaja reforma) of 1905-1906 financially encouraged European Russians and Ukrainians to relocate to Siberia (Yaney 1964). Because of this large influx of settlers, by 1917, the number of Russians surpassed the amount of native inhabitants.

In the areas that had a long history of Russian influence (northern Altai and easily accessible regions along the Katun and Chuski trakt), natives would have settled down in permanent villages and assimilated by the end of the Russian Empire (Edokov 1987). Despite increasing Russian settlers that were occupying larger parts of the Altai, the southern nomads preserved their culture and were able to pertain their nomadic lifestyle that was organised on kinship links and seasonal migration (Forsyth 1992: 191). At the eve of the October Revolution in 1917, 70% of the native people were still nomadic pastoralists (Edokov 1987). Native people did not identify themselves as Altaians but according to the name of the clan and larger tribal origin. Backed by various researchers (Broz 2009: 51-55, Donahoe et al. 2008: 1000-1003, Halemba 2006: 16, Tyuhteneva 2009), Leonid Potapov’s remark about the social organisation of the Altaians, summarises the particular ethnic relationships and self-identification in Altai just before the Russian revolution:

Before the Great October Socialist Revolution the Altaians did not constitute a homogeneous nation, and had no common ethno-national name. They were divided into a number of tribal or territorial groups; frequently isolated, different in occupation, livelihood, and ethnic origin … they were identifying themselves by a tribal or territorial name.

(Potapov 1969: 14)

Although the category ‘Altaians’ did not really exist and was not used by the Altaians themselves, this does not mean that there was no growing ethno-national awareness. By the end of the Russian Empire, growing pressure by Russian settlers was creating a sense of sameness across tribal and clan divisions. An overview of Altaian history would therefore be incomplete without mentioning the ethno-nationalist religious movement Burkhanism, also called White Faith or Ak Jang, which had increasing support between 1904-1922 (Sherstova 2010, Tadina 2006, Tadina, Arzyutov and Kisel 2012, Vinogradov 2003, Vinogradov 2010, Znamenski 1998, Znamenski 2005). As noted by both Andrei
Znamenski (2005) and Andrei Vnogradov (2010), *White Faith* is more than a religious development, but a cultural-political liberation movement that has to be seen as a political reaction to the sociocultural crisis of that time, namely the Altaians’ fear of further displacement by Russian colonists, loss of land and tradition, taxation, mandatory conscription during World War I, and the growing influence of Orthodox missions. Such religiously founded political struggles for independence are common in colonial contexts where a growing pressure from both the colonial worldview and government apparatus trigger a sense of pan-Indigenousness. This process of revitalisation can be described as a deliberate organised group-level attempt to recapture an idealised past in order to construct a satisfying culture in periods of an uncertain future and difficult outlook (Balzer 1999: 97, Eriksen 1993, Eriksen 2001). Such nativist developments disclose frustrations and changing group awareness. Because of the introduction of a different group, across tribal boundaries people become increasingly aware of their connectedness and commonalities, in contrast with the non-Indigenous settlers (Eriksen 1993, Eriksen 2001).

So, at the eve of the Revolution, there was a growing sense of Altai nationhood caused by the growing impact of colonialism and interaction with non-Indigenous actors in the field. As described below, this growing Indigenous nationalism connected to *Burkhanism* was a central player in the short-lived independent Oirot Republic during the Civil War. Today the theme is much discussed in Altaian scholarly environments because of its tangent points with the current ethno-cultural revival and supra-tribal organisation.

### 5.1.1.3 1917-1985: Sovietisation; from nomadic clans to rural collective brigades

Apart from Marjorie Balzer’s (1999), Caroline Humphrey’s (1999) and Gail Kligman’s and Katherine Verdery’s (2012) careful scrutiny of the impact of the collective farm on contemporary religion, social organisation, kinship organisation, politics and epistemologies, the effects of the Soviet period on the rural population is often omitted in social studies about Russia and Siberia. The impact and transformations collective farming caused are often depicted as just a phase in the history of a particular group, something that just happened in the past and has been replaced by another system. In reality, collective farming was more than an agricultural institution: it was a political instrument for social, cultural and political integration, which has deeply impacted the *habitus* of all contemporary groups occupying the former Soviet space (Balzer 1999, Humphrey 1999, Kligman and Verdery 2012). Almost all social structures in rural areas like the Altai find their roots in the three generations of Soviet influence through the collective farms. Hence, social practice today and the interrelated *fields* and *habitus* can only be understood when looking at what happened during the Soviet Union. As will become clear below, how people perceive their past, their land and archaeology as a science is deeply embedded in their shared Soviet past.
At the eve of the Russian Civil War, Slavic groups started to replace the native Turkic population as the majority in the Altai Republic (figure 5-2). Movements as Burkhanism disclosed the growing anger to the Russian coloniser and a blooming self-awareness as ‘the Indigenous people of the Altai’. During the February revolution in 1917, the inhabitants of the Altai region, helped by anti-communist groups, instituted their own Altai Mountain Duma (parliament) (Forsyth 1992: 276-279, Znamenski 2005). This independent state, and especially the support of the ‘Whites’, was a thorn in the side for the Bolsheviks. As a result, the Altai became a war zone between the Red Army and counterrevolutionaries. In the spring of 1922, after numerous battles, the devastated Altai region became included in the Soviet Union. Many anti-Bolsheviks, Indigenous people and a vast number of cattle were annihilated and Altai’s economy and social fabric was destroyed (Edokov 1987, Forsyth 1992: 276-279) In order to stabilise the region, Altai became a superficial autonomous region symbolically called ‘Oirotia’ within the Soviet Union. Although its name later changed from Vitoria to Gorny Altai, Altai remained relatively autonomous during and after the Soviet period.

Figure 5-2: Census data Altai Republic. Note the growing number of Altaians since the 1960s. (After Aksyanova 2011, Federal State Statistics Service 2010, Maksheev 1996, Maksheev 2010, Maksheev and Minaev 1994, Maksheva, Maksheev and Apenisheva 2006)

Despite anti-religious campaigns (which were mostly oriented towards the Orthodox Church) and growing influence from the communist party on many aspects of everyday life, the 1920s were relatively similar to the pre-revolutionary period and by the end of the 1920s, nomadism was slowly restoring itself (Edokov 1987). Traditional clan life remained very strong and most Southern Altaians preserved their nomadic economical organisation and beliefs (Forsyth 1992: 278-289). With his NEP (New Economic Policy) Lenin did not
aim to create a state controlled economy, rather he wanted a form of market socialism where private initiative was allowed (Viola et al. 2005). As a result, the zaisans and the clans with them did not really lose their dominant socio-economic and political role.

The continuation of traditional lifestyle and the hierarchical socio-political clan organisation was however completely opposed to the ideas of the Soviet establishment. They saw collectivisation of agriculture (i.e. the process of consolidating individual farmers into big collective Party controlled enterprises) as a necessary step for the road to communism. According to officials, it would solve many of the problems Indigenous groups as the Altaians were facing: their ‘backward’ culture and beliefs, ‘patriarchal’ organisation of society based on kinship and nomadism. The Soviet party was especially against nomadism, as it saw the nomadic lifestyle as an obstacle to the elimination of bourgeois traditions that were holding back the political and cultural growth of the pastoralists. According to Soviet dogma, only agriculture, village life, education and ‘guidance’ by members of the party could save the native peoples and bring them from their pre-capitalist state into communism (Edokov 1987).

Mass collectivisation of agriculture eventually took place throughout the Soviet Union in the 1930s. Whereas in 1927 only 2.5% of all rural households were working for a state controlled agricultural enterprise, by the end of the 1930s almost all farmers’ herds, infrastructure, machinery and lands were confiscated and individuals were forced to form collective workforces. Throughout the Soviet Union two types of state controlled farms existed. On the one hand there were the sovhoz or state farms, where the farm was owned by the government and people were wageworkers paid by the state. On the other hand, there were the kolkhoz or collective farms (which was most common in Altai). Although in reality also strictly controlled and owned by the state, the farmers that formed a collective farm were all shareholders empowered to vote and make collective decisions about their lands and cattle; kolkhozniks were furthermore entitled to a part of the profit of the farm. The head of a collective farm was ‘elected’ by its shareholders and in many cases Party officials were attached to the farm to keep an eye on its organisation and especially the kolkhozniks.

Collectivisation was one of the main elements of Stalin’s first five-year plan (1928-1932). In December 1929, in only 14 days, the strategy, tempo and speed of collectivisation of the entire Soviet union was hastily planned and it was scheduled that by 1932 the entire Soviet Union should be collectivised (Millar 1974, Viola et al. 2005). Later than other regions in Russia, mass collectivisation started in the Altai Republic in 1931. Especially between June 1931 and February 1932 a huge number of peasants and nomadic herders were relocated to newly organised collective farms. In cases where farmers were living in a settlement, that settlement and its adjacent territories would become the locus for the kolkhoz. In nomadic regions, pastoralists would be forced to relocate to newly founded settlements and were forced to cultivate crops instead of herding stocks (figure 5-3). Because of pressure of the central government, many kolkhoz were founded in a fairly
short time without much attention for planning and sustainability. Collective farms were sometimes founded in less than 24 hours (Edokov 1987) or nomadic herders within a given locality would be forced to settle on seemingly dry grounds that would flood in the spring. Subsequently, all stock, fodder and machinery became ‘public’ property and farmers were forced to till land and adopt a sedentary lifestyle with a livelihood strategy based on agriculture (grain and fodder) and livestock breeding. During collectivisation, a large amount of Russians (both prisoners and farmers) were displaced to Altai while the amount of Altaians decreased. Food shortages related to the bad reorganisation of agriculture and purges lay at the basis of this fall in the number of Altaians (Edokov 1987).

Figure 5-3: The nomads of the Altai Republic during the first years of collectivisation. (a) Many collective farms were founded overnight during the winter of 1931, people were relocated to villages and had to live in their temporary summer dwellings because of lack of housing. - (b) Administrative building collective farm in the Chuya region, less visible on the picture, the sign above the entrance is both in Russian, Altaian and Kazakh, underscoring the multi-ethnic nature of the newly founded villages. - (c) Village meeting about new collective farm. – (d) Much land was ploughed for the first time. (©Fotofond Gorno-Altaisk)

This reorganisation of nomads into villages was based on locality (Balzer 1999: 104, Edokov 1987, Forsyth 1992), and for example all people within area A became part of kolkhoz A and people in area B became members of kolkhoz B. When nomadic clans were occupying a region where also Russian farms or a settlement were located, both groups
were brought together in one collective farm. As such, multi-ethnic collective farms were common and many mixed villages today find their roots in the 1930s. Although collective farms were founded based on locality, the different nomadic clans had no strict territorial borders before collectivisation. So clans of a different tribal affiliation occupied similar areas. When nomads were reorganised in settlements, they were not only living with Russians or Kazakhs, but also with other nomads from different tribes with whom they initially did not identify.

Furthermore, strict Party control effectuated through the collective farm radically changed Indigenous life; anti-religious campaigns became effective, zaisans and elders were eliminated and the traditional practices that constituted the associative landscapes were restricted. When appraising the impact of collectivisation across different native Siberian tribes, Forsyth (1992) stated that collectivisation was foremost a process of radical social engineering and argued that:

the real aim was to proletarianise [native groups] by binding them into collectives subordinated to the superstructure of the Soviet State. Just as the individualism and self-reliance of the peasants of European Russia had to be broken in order to bring them to the point of blind submission...

(Forsyth 1992: 290)

When Stalin died, the socio-cultural climate became slightly better and there was to a certain extent room for tradition and rituals (see Balzer 1999, Humphrey 1999). However, Marxist-Leninist ideology remained deeply ingrained in all aspects of life and Soviet structures were increasingly becoming embodied into the habitus of the new generations. New policies and further ethnic engineering (i.e. the creation of ethnic groups - see Part III) found their way into the dispositions of the different groups inhabiting the Altai. Caroline Humphrey (1997: 373) similarly states in her research about Buyriat kinship that through the collective farm and education programmes, Buyriat and Soviet consciousness were being interlocked.

This, however, does not mean that traditional and religious life was destroyed and that Indigenous people became exemplary Soviets. Rather, religion and tradition as a public happening became part of the private life and gradually evolved indoors. Contrary to popular views, still a considerable aspect of traditional culture and elements of the particular shamanistic/animistic worldview still found their way into public life through etiquette and small rituals (Tadina, Arzyutov and Kisel 2012). This survival of ritual in public life was also described by both Marjorie Baler (1999) and Caroline Humphrey (1999) who clearly give examples of continuation of animistic festivals and small food or coin offerings at sacred places. Party officials in the village tolerated this; some even attended or lead folk festivals and offerings.

After Stalinism, the economic organisation of the collective farm optimised and in the late 1940s and mid 1950s many collective farms were merged to create larger and more easily manageable entities. Investments in infrastructure, machinery and a better planning
policy resulted in increased production (Douglas Jackson 1956, Mills 1970, Nove 1970). Despite this growing production, by the late 1970s and 1980s, the years of stagnation, the future of Altaian countryside was in an unsustainable state: overexploitation was affecting the ecological system and infrastructure was hopelessly ageing, and ultimately agriculture and livestock breeding became difficult to maintain.

5.1.1.4 1985- ... : Post-Soviet Altai and the ethno-national revival

When Michael Gorbachev ultimately became head of the Soviet Union, he inherited an enormous and heavily institutionalised state apparatus with a crippling bureaucracy that was hopelessly out-dated. Gorbachev tried to save the Soviet Union through a social, political and cultural ‘renovation’ of many aspects of the Soviet Union. His two most famous policies were (1) the perestroika, literally meaning restructuring, or a reorganisation of the Soviet political and economic system. And (2) glasnost, meaning publicity and entailing a greater transparency of the government and more personal freedom. Whether or not his politics should be seen as a success (Soviet nostalgia remains strong in Altai), these efforts generally brought more freedom and were an important turning point. Just as the collectivisation was a moment of hysteresis, Gorbachev’s reforms similarly entailed a tabula rasa of the social fields.

Just as life in Altai cannot be understood without looking to the Soviet period and the deeper pre-20th century roots, the post-Soviet or ‘post-colonial period’ (cf. Chari and Verdery 2009, Forsyth 1992) is primordial for any study about social phenomena in the former communist world. This largely on-going process both explains and defines many of the contextual aspects of social practice in the contemporary Altai Republic. In the multi-ethnic parts of the former Soviet Union, this period is also often described as the period of ‘the ethno-national revival’, ‘ethnic nationalism’ or ‘ethno-cultural renaissance’. The term is used to refer to the processes of ethno-national activism and the struggle of ethnic groups for cultural, national and political self-determination (Balzer 1999, Halemba 2006, Laitin 1991, Tyuhteneva 2009). When speaking on the scale of the former Soviet world, the term should be used as a plural, as in ‘period of ethno-national revivals’ and not singular as Daniel Treisman (1997) in his ‘Russia’s Ethnic Revival’. Different contexts with different ethnic groups and particular historical trajectories underwent their own ethno-national process and can only be understood in a case-by-case judgement and through careful comparison.

Because many aspects of contemporary life are so deeply entrenched with this on-going struggle for legitimation and basic rights, this overview will limit itself to a short historical discussion of the main events of the last 25 years. The next sections will present the main dimensions (i.e. ‘religion’, economic organisation and social relationships) of present Altaian society, interlinked with the developments since the late 1980s. Finding its roots in late Soviet Union ecological protests, building on Svetlana Tyuhteneva (2009), the ethno-national revival in Altai can be subdivided in three separate sub-stages:
1998/1999- …: The struggle for consolidation of culture and legitimacy in Putin’s Russia

After almost 70 years of being practiced indoors, in the first sub-stage Indigenous culture and cosmology were rediscovered and found their way again into the public domain. The initial event that triggered this public revival of traditional culture was the polemic surrounding the construction of a dam on the Katun river (Filippov and Filippova 1994, Forsyth 1992, Tyuhteneva 2009). The ecosystem in Altai was facing an unbearable pressure: traditional landscapes would be destroyed, ecological niches eradicated, archaeological sites flooded and fish (an important livelihood resource) migration routes would be disturbed (Klubnikin et al. 2000). In 1982, grassroots opposition throughout Russia surfaced to this project and protests happened both in Altai and regional capitals throughout Russia (Saint-Petersburg, Moscow, Barnaul, Novosibirsk, …). The opposition to this particular project was part of a larger period of protests at the end of the Soviet-Union against the ecological degradation caused by mining, heavy industry and oil and gas extraction (Balzer 1999, Klubnikin et al. 2000, Schwartz 2006).

After increasing Indigenous, national and international protests, the construction was postponed (the plans are officially still on hold). Similar to what Marjorie Balzer (1999) argued about Khanty’s opposition to Soviet oil and gas extraction, the opposition to the dam has to be seen as the struggle of one broad native group for the preservation of their sacred ecology and, simultaneously, as a demand for legitimation over cultural, economic and ecological issues (Filippov and Filippova 1994, Forsyth 1992: 410-411).

Svetlana Tyuhteneva (2009: 25-54) compared this initial ecological struggle in the process of ethno-cultural revitalisation with the role of ‘yeast’ in baking (cf. Schwartz’ 2006 research about Latvia). All rough materials were there: many aspects of Altaian culture had survived indoors and particular Soviet policies had created social structures ideal for ethno-nationalistic activism (i.e. undermining the socio-economic importance of the tribes and creation of an Altaian ethnic group - see below). By adding the yeast to the metaphorical flower, water and sugar, the dough could rise. Ultimately the aftermath of the perestroika and glasnost provided ideal ‘temperatures’ (field conditions) allowing the dough to further rise. The protagonists of this first stage were largely the Indigenous (Soviet trained) urban intelligentsias, who became more publicly voiced and organised. In late 1980s they ultimately got support by many ordinary Altaians (Filippov and Filippova 1994). The new socio-political climate and initial successful protests against the ministry of energy challenged many people to reflect on prior held notions and criticise Soviet policies. People started to think in a different way, started to voice their needs and interests, but also returned to traditional culture and ethics as a reaction to faced economical and social problems.
The perestroika and the capitalist market economy it embraced quickly resulted in economic chaos and social uncertainty. Through reflection on the Soviet past and looking for guidance in the difficult new social space, traditional beliefs and practices were embraced as the solution to survive and ensure a sustainable future. Many people only had their land to survive and animistic ethics and norms were seen as the most appropriate lifestyle to overcome the faced ecological problems and social anxiety. According to many local leaders traditional lifestyle and ethics had historically proven to result in sustainable relationship with nature and a socio-economic stability (Tyuhteneva 2009). In this first stage, ethno-national awareness and culture awaked and grew. And for the first time public cultural events were organised that brought together people from across the Altai and aimed at raising awareness and revitalising culture and tradition - on the scale of the ‘Altaians’. An important example is El Oyin, a cultural festival with traditional games that was first organised in 1988 and was subsequently organised every two years (figure 5-4). Following Ekatirine Samushkina and Zbigniew Kosc (2008: 107-110), one could argue that the festival symbolised the revival of ancestral moral values as it aims to maintain the ideological continuity with Turkic traditions, bringing together different native communities and introducing young people to their ancestral customs.

![Figure 5-4: Images from the first edition of El Oyin (1988). Left: Jury member of a sports competition dressed in traditional Altaian outfit. Right: introduction of the participants of the different rainoni, all wearing in traditional Altaian clothing. (©Fotofond Gorno-Altaisk)](image)

Where the first stage was about intellectuals and ordinary people that rediscovered and revitalised their culture in relation to faced ecological problems, the second stage was about various leaders who used Altaian ‘religion’ and culture as a political commodity to pursue identity related agendas. Assisted by the newly founded local media, during the period 1992/1993-1998 the awakened culture and ethnic awareness was used to pursue territorial and political self-determination (Tyuhteneva 2009). This largely coincided with the establishment of the Russian Federation, in which Altai was an autonomous republic with considerable legislative power and scope for policy. Many of the local leaders, intelligentsia and elders (most were former Soviet officials) wanted even more political power and specific Indigenous rights over their traditional homelands. In order to stand strong and present oneself as a strong cohesive group to the outside world, many political
and Indigenous leaders tried to institutionalise many aspects of Altaian traditional life in order to create ethnic boundaries and constitute more cohesion between the different Altaian groups. As noted by Thomas Hylland Erikson (1993), existing kinship division (i.e. clans and tribe) undermine the development of a strong and acknowledged national identity, therefore the ethno-political elite’s actions are mostly directed at overcoming existing tribalism. Symbols and markers of identity were especially significant in this phase to constitute a cohesive nation (Halemba 2006, Tyuhteneva 2009). In this regard, the past and objects related to the past were of instrumental value (see Chapter 7), it is no surprise that the conflict over the Ukok Princess finds its roots in this period.

On a federal scale during the first decade after the Soviet Union there was a growing attention to accommodate Indigenous needs and interests. In 1990, the NGO Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON) was officially recognised. RAIPON is an organisation that represents the different ethnic groups of Russia and is in a constant dialogue with the Russian government and ministries; it monitors the compliance of existing humanitarian laws, laments injustice and lobbies for the ratification of existing international conventions (New city 2009: 365-366). Two elements however abstained the Russian Federation from acknowledging existing international conventions (for example ILO convention of 1957 and the 2006 UN declaration on the rights of Indigenous peoples – see part three for an elaborate discussion in the context of cultural heritage) and granting native Siberians real land rights: the threat of further ethnic upheaval and unrest (for example Chechnya) and the rich resources the historical homelands of many Indigenous peoples contains. In an effort to comply with international trends and grant rights to emerging ethnic groups, the newly founded Russian Federation set up some institutional models that walked a ‘thin line’ between international conventions and its own interests (Donahoe et al. 2008: 1009, Multicity 2009). Large territorial groups with shared historical trajectories were given their own regions in the form of autonomous republics (for example Altai) and oblasts (for example Tuva). These regions were initially independent, there were local elections and the Indigenous people had special socio-cultural privileges. Smaller groups (less than 50,000 people) that had a strong traditional organisation already had a special status in the 1920s, and through legal reforms in 2000 became known as the ‘Indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East’ (Donahoe et al. 2008, Multicity 2008, Russian Federation 2000). These small and thus manageable groups are the only groups recognised as ‘official’ Indigenous peoples and have special rights, privileges and frameworks for compensation (though no extensive land rights) (Donahoe et al. 2008: 1010, Donahoe and Halemba 2006: 1010). In Altai, in 2000 based on the pre-Soviet tribal divisions only the Kumandins, Chelkans, Tubalars and Telengits were granted such a native title.

The third period (1998/2000-…), is a continuation of the struggle for legitimation and basic human and cultural rights in centralizing Russia. According to Tyuhteneva (2009)
this last period is also the period where traditional culture is further consolidating across tribal boarders. Through this on-going process, a new Altaian culture and identity is created and the Soviet-Turkic culture is infused with the needs of the present. This new Indigenous culture is still in the making and is characterised by huge efforts to institutionalise and standardise different aspects of everyday life like language, religion and historical narratives (Broz 2009, Halemba 2006, Halemba 2008a). While continuing efforts are made to create a cohesive and relatively independent Altaian nation, political changes and economical developments in Russia are challenging the future of an autonomous and fully post-colonial Russia, undermining the efforts of Altaian leaders. President Putin has been slowly deconstructing the federal state into a centralised government and previously held Indigenous rights or privileges are being undermined by strict federal laws (see Goode 2010). Other cases that exemplify this decreasing attention for Indigenous needs and interests are: the federal reforms of late 2005 that stipulated that the Kremlin would now appoint the heads of the federal regions, the 2006 NGO law that impedes international funding and interference (Kamhi 2006) and recent efforts to dissolve RAIPON. Land rights, which are a central aspect of many Indigenous laws and struggles (Gilbert 2010), have proven especially difficult to defend (Balzer 2010, Donahoe et al. 2008). Corporate forces are increasingly putting more pressure on the Indigenous groups and their land. Not only NGO’s are silenced for economical imperatives, an increasing amount of republican responsibilities are transferred to the federal level. While the Altai Republic had a variety of instruments to set up local legal frameworks and govern sociocultural matters during the 1990s, in the 21st century a myriad of legal changes were created to undercut federalism and ethno-nationalist activism. Some striking examples are:

- The 2002 federal heritage legislation that has undermined the local moratorium on excavations (see Part III) and specific laws on the management of the Altaian sacred geography (see Part IV).
- The changed legal status of the vernacular Altaian; while the vernacular language was recognised as an official language in the 1990s, recent pressure from the Kremlin has ensured that Altaian is not part of the curriculum anymore.
- The abolishment of local elections and the installation of a trustee of the Kremlin in 2006 as head of the Altai Republic.
- The legal recognition of the pre-Soviet tribes as ‘Indigenous small numbered peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East’. According to Donahoe et al. (2008) the legal recognition of the pre-Soviet Altaian tribes has to be read as an effort to divide the Altaian groups, increase tribal boundaries and deconstruct Altaian national identity.

Although this centralisation is diagnostic for any region in Russia (Balzer 2010, Goode 2010, Lankina 2009) there is specific attention of the Kremlin for Altai related to the growing economic and geo-political importance of the region. Tourism is increasingly
encroaching over the Altai and has become an important economic sector; prestigious government funded mega projects such as a Las Vegas-style gambling zone are planned\textsuperscript{11} (Haworth 2008). Legislative frameworks that once protected traditional lands are also easily changed to ensure that state controlled companies like Gazprom can pursue their highly lucrative pipeline project (see Chapter 6). Marjorie Balzer’s (2010) comparison of contemporary Russia’s Indigenous policy with the Soviet period is not totally unfounded. Indeed it has become difficult to speak about Indigenous rights in contexts as the Altai Republic because there are none.

In the context of the central theme of dissertation: cultural heritage as a commodity, the last 25 years are important, as the past and cultural memory serves an ideal tool to consolidate and structure the ethnic identity, giving it a symbolic value. Furthermore, the political structures are also important to include in the interpretation of Altai’s different heritages as these govern and potentially legitimise the actions and discourses of the different actors, essential in the context of heritage management.

5.1.2 Livelihood strategy and economic organisation

The perestroika heralded a tabula rasa of the economical organisation of society. The main economic sectors of Altai, agriculture and rural industry (milk processing plants and butcheries), became dependent on the whims of the market economy and quickly collapsed. Once one of the main dairy regions of Imperial Russia, Soviet regulations and reorganisations had crippled the agricultural sector and only major subsidies and investments kept the economic system of the region working. When this subsidy based system ultimately was reorganised in the late 1980s, and farms were left to fend for themselves, agricultural production and profits slowly decreased and ultimately collapsed. The loosening of the role of the party in the countryside also meant that the system of collective farms was not compulsory anymore. Many local collective farm councils subsequently voted to disband the collective farm. All land, livestock and machinery was subsequently distributed amongst the households that worked on the collective farm. People (mostly Russians) that worked for the slightly more prestigious rural industry or administration did not get their share of land and even today still have almost no land. Public buildings, tractor maintenance stations and irrigation complexes were largely abandoned and quickly turned into ruins (figure 5-5).

This lack of economical perspectives and interlinked harsh social climate is diagnostic for many contexts across the former Soviet space (see Buyandelgeriyn 2007,\textsuperscript{11} A colleague who recently visited the region in 2013 told me that a lot of tourist infrastructure was constructed in 2012-2013. Large tourist complexes were finally built including several casinos.)
Buyandelgeriyn (2008). Agnieszka Halemba (2006: 54) links this socio-economic reality with the Russian term *razval* (meaning collapse), which is often used when talking about the problematic post-Soviet climate. *Razval* does not particularly relate to the economic downturn but rather to its outcome: the collapse of the formerly over-organised and fixed rules and structures that defined everyday life, interpersonal relations, morality, administration and ethics. Mongolian anthropologist Manduhai Buandelgeriyn (2007, 2008) relates this situation of economic and social anxiety with particular religious and spiritual anxieties, explaining the revival of shamans and mythical explanations for certain natural events. Because this is closely interrelated with the misfortunes connected with the Ukok Princess, this will be further discussed in Part III.

![Figure 5-5: Former buildings of the collective farm of Aktal. Every village in Altai has such ruins in the centre of the village.](image)

Besides some Altaians that work in Gorno Altaiisk, most Altaians have returned to what they call ‘nomadism’. Strictly speaking, from an outsider perspective, Altaians are not nomads anymore. A better name for their lifestyle would be sedentary pastoralism/transhumance. Why people call themselves ‘nomads’ has to be understood through the particular cultural and symbolic meaning of being a nomad and the cultural memory it embodies (see Chapter 7). For many native peoples in central Asia, nomadism should be understood as an umbrella term, it does not primarily relate to their economic strategy. It is part of their lifestyle and ontology, a link to their ancestors, cultural values, worldview and particular link with their venerated environment. From an economical point of view, the initial destruction of nomadism during the Soviet period does not mean
that people do not have particular aspects of nomadism preserved in their livelihood strategies. Throughout the entire year most farmers live in the village and have agricultural lands around the village on which they cultivate fodder crops to feed the cattle during the winter periods. People are still very mobile and cover large distances every year with their herds. During the winter, cattle are kept around the village. In the summer, larger herds are kept in the higher alpine meadows (which they call their *taiga*). On these meadows, cattle have a rather extensive grazing regime and farmers often visit this more or less communal *taiga* every few days to check their herds. In the village and on the adjacent communal grazing grounds, many cows, pigs and small flocks of sheep are grazing throughout the year; these are mostly animals that are kept close to provide people with their daily needs of dairy and meat.

When I asked interlocutors about their profession, only few would define themselves as farmers or livestock breeders. Even the head of the family where I stayed during fieldwork who had a large flock of sheep, hundreds of cows, horses, a large amount of reindeer and quite a lot of agricultural land did not consider himself as a farmer, but as an unemployed. Whether they consider themselves as unemployed to get welfare benefits or not, I think having a flock of sheep, a herd of cows and some horses is foremost an unquestioned aspect part of the Altaian ‘nomadic’ way of life and people do not consider it as a job in its most formal sense. Even people with a formal job (for example public administrators, shop owners and school teachers) also have a small stock around the village and have some cows in the *taiga*. Sometimes this is to make ends meet, but also wealthier persons still have some animals. While men take care of the animals and fodder cultivation, women would stay in the village and process the milk into a broad variety of dairy product. Men also do some fishing and hunting, while especially women (but also men) forage for mushrooms, berries and medicinal herbs.

This ‘nomadic’ lifestyle is of course inextricably interlinked with the particular ecological setting. Altaiaians living in the low mountainous and alpine regions mostly have a fairly sedentary lifestyle, with some movement between summer and winter pastures as outlined above. In the high mountainous and steppe regions of mainly Kosh Agach, a more Mongolia-like nomadism can occur. While most inhabitants live in a village and have a fairly sedentary lifestyle, some families are more. During the winter these families live in the village, and when most snow has melted, they set up different seasonal camps.
5.1.3 **A national Altaian religion or a traditional worldview?**

As largely outlined above, when discussing the associative attitude towards the environment, nature, and landscape, the Altaian homeland is the centre of the Altaian belief system. People and land are so tightly intertwined that they cannot be seen as ontologically separate. During my fieldwork, interlocutors often commented that everything in Altai is connected; all aspects of everyday life are lived and interpreted through the indefinite people-land prism (Halemba 2006). The venerated environment is a constant point of reference: it is the core of their heritage, their ancestral homeland linking them to their past. Disturbing the unity between both living and dead people and the land is met begrudgingly and is believed to result in misfortunes and even death. When asked how community members would describe their own religion, most did not refer back to an institutionalised religious framework, but would respond ‘Altai’.

Each object or phenomenon in the surrounding environment such as mountains, prominent hills, mountain passes, trees and springs are believed to have their own particular master, a non-human being that is merged with that particular natural object or phenomenon. The Altaians call the ‘master spirits’ that inhabit different places in the landscape *neme*, which means ‘something’ (Halemba 2006: 166). The belief that ‘something’ is in the sky, water and land is diagnostic for a shamanist cosmology. Shamanism is a particular type of animism that is based on the belief that various kinds of spirits inhabit the surrounding world and living beings (Eriksen 2001, Pedersen 2011, Balzer 2012, Znamenski 2007). People should behave in a submissive manner towards these spirits to avoid misfortunes. Reciprocity stands central in this worship and through respecting the spirits occupying the landscape (through offerings and active veneration), permission is mediated for future use and occupation of the landscape (for Altaian shamanism/animism see Halemba 2006, Khomushku 2008: 52-56, Kleshev 2011). A further trait of shamanism is the role of the shaman, a person that has particular gifts to act as an intermediary between the people and the spirits. Before the Soviet Union era, shamans were quite common in the Altai, nowadays in some regions shamans stand strong again while in others their importance and role is less clear (Halemba 2006, Vinogradov 1999, Znamenski 2007). Though the particular role of the shaman in Altai itself is still under discussion, the belief system, related ontology and worldview can be described as shamanistic; namely the supra-natural importance of the land and the spirits inhabiting it.

Places in the landscape connected with spirits that are essential for the well-being of the community are subject to certain injunctions and according to the lunar calendar, sacrifices (some food and alcohol) should be made and *kira* or *chalma* (ribbons of cloth) should be tied to a nearby tree or a stone is added to an *oboö* (ritual stone pile). These rituals mostly happen when people pass along such places during their transactional movement in the landscape. When people are unable to stop at a certain sacred place that
is important for them, for example when crossing a sacred mountain pass by bus they turn off the music, close their eyes and ask permission of that spirit to pass. Worshiped places are almost always mountains, mountain passes and (medicinal) springs (arzhan suu) (see Chapter 8 for a careful analysis of this phenomenon).

As underlined by both Olga Khomushku (2008), Agnieszka Halemba (2006), Ludek Broz (2009) and some interlocutors, the worship of specific places should be understood as a metonymical reference to the whole Altai. The sacred place as a ‘hub’ for all spirits in Altai (Tadina, Arzyutov and Kisel 2012). Venerating specific local mountains is not merely a worship of these master spirits, but a reference to the broader Altai, the entire ethnic homeland and all its master spirits and ancestors it contains.

Places are mostly worshiped individually or in small groups and the entire process of venerating the land is largely unplanned and open to variation. Throughout her meticulous analysis of the Telengits, Agnieszka Halemba (2006) stressed that because the land is part of people’s personhood, veneration and engagement with the land is something that happens through everyday practice and when people feel ‘they are up for it’. Rituals are occasional and depend from context to context and the people that execute them (Halemba 2006: 166-167).

In the current context of the ethno-national revival, this lack of dogma and fairly individual veneration of the environment is a thorn in the side for many intellectuals and local leaders who want to create a cohesive and internally and externally legitimised nation. Many of these leaders since the 1980s have been defending the idea of an institutionalised national religion (Halemba 2003, Tadina, Arzyutov and Kisel 2012, Tyuhteneva 2009, Vinogradov 2003), which should be acknowledged by outsiders as a proper legitimate religion. In the chaos and ethno-national developments of the late 1980s and 1990s, a religious movement well suited to serve this role was re-emerging: Ak Jang (Burkhanism). Though still in a very chaotic state (Vinogradov 2010: 251) ‘modern’ Ak Jang is not the same Ak Jang as that of the beginning of the 20th century; it is rather a dynamic infusion of early 20th century Burkhanism and Turkic-Mongolian shamanism developing within the context of an ethno-national revival (Tadina, Arzyutov and Kisel 2012). An important element of modern Ak Jang is the seasonal communal prayers at an Ak Jang altar (also called kurée or murgul – figure 5-6). The idea of communal gatherings and rituals, across tribal boundaries is a particular interesting aspect for nationalistic purposes. Before the 1930s communal gatherings at such altars would also take place but at the scale of the clan and tribal level. In the post-Soviet period, the village overtook this place (see Part IV).

Despite some characteristics and potential to become a unified religion with communal worship of the Altai, today Ak Jang still does not represent the ‘Altaian religion’. It is not clear if all people identify themselves as Ak Jang followers. During fieldwork many interlocutors would not explicitly say if they follow Ak Jang, but put more emphasis on the importance of land and their sacred placed. Even if Ak Jang would
embody the typical Altaian shamanistic-animistic ways of engaging with the environment, the reality is that people still see it rather as a way of life than a real religion. In short, to answer the title of this subsection: Altaians do not have a religion, the veneration and worship to the land is not a religious act sensu stricto but rather part of their worldview and nomadic habitus. Efforts to institutionalise this religion have to be seen as an outcome of the particular post-Soviet field conditions and struggle for resources in order to optimise its position in the field.

**Figure 5-6:** Ak Jang altar of village of Boochi. Communal prayers (by people from the same village) and sacrifices are seasonally held near these oboo-like stone piles. Most altars are situated on a hill overlooking the village.

### 5.1.4 Group membership and kinship: the tenancy of ethnicity

Today, after years of ethnic engineering and interaction with different cultures, the Indigenous inhabitants of the Altai have developed a multitude of ethnic identities; they are Russians, Altaians, Turks, member of a particular tribe, clan member and inhabitants of particular groups. Having multiple ethnic and cultural identities is not abnormal. It is diagnostic for any post-contact society that has undergone various episodes of externally imposed social reorganisation. Membership of a group is situational, depending on the context and the involved actors. In Altai this is not different. If I would ask Indigenous people to introduce themselves they would almost always tell me that they are Altaian. When an Altaian foreign exchange student visited Belgium, he would not introduce
himself as Altaian but as Russian. Amongst Altaians, people would emphasise their kinship (clan) relations.

Through more than a half a century of socialist policy, people have become Altaian, and nowadays the sense of being Altaian is both strong and important. How this has come about is very complex and is essentially one of the underlying baselines of this research; ethnicity and group identification is constructed and strengthened through the application of symbols and these symbols are selected in relation to the particular mode of argumentation and needs of a particular ethnic group (Eriksen 1993, Eriksen 2001). Heritage is such a symbol, rooting an ethnic group and instigating internal and external legitimation. Throughout this dissertation, bits and pieces of the notion of being Altaian and the construction of Altai-ness (cf. Broz 2009), which is constantly in the making, will be provided and further synthesised in the discussion of part three and four.

I do not agree with statements that the ‘Altaian national identity’ is simply the outcome of Soviet ethnic engineering (cf. Broz 2009, Halemba 2006). As I will discuss in the next paragraph, Soviet policies did indeed seek to create an Altaian national group as some kind of necessary evil to create a stable federal state. Throughout the Soviet period administrators and state ethnographers and historians (for example Leonid Potapov) did indeed promote policies that aimed at consolidating the different tribes into one nation. But there is a difference between promulgating a policy and actually successfully establishing an ethnic nationality. As underlined by Balzer (1999: 6), ethnicity is about self-awareness; it is foremost defined ‘from inside’ by the members of the group themselves (Eriksen 2001-262). Throughout this research, I also hope to provide additional insights in how the Altaians themselves ultimately adopted the Soviet political structures through the system of collective farms.

It may seem paradoxical that during the Soviet Union, ethno-nationalism was promoted, especially because traditionally Marxist-socialist discourses see nationalism and federalism as a ‘philistine’ and ‘bourgeois’ fiction that damages and undermines the proletariat rather than helping it to escape class inequality (Slezkine 1994: 417). However, many soviets understood the economic and political usefulness and importance of the ‘nation’ and its stabilising properties. Stalin, throughout his reign and especially after World War II emphasised this importance in one of his popular definitions: “A nation, is a historically evolved, stable community based on a common language, territory economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture”. (Stalin 1950 emphasis added, reference taken from Slezkine 1994: 415-417). Especially in the aftermath of the Civil War this stability was paramount and in the early years of the Soviet Union structures were set up to give different ethnic group limited rights. When during the first Soviet census in 1926 the inhabitants of the Soviet Union were asked to define their ethnicity, 190 different identities were defined (Tishkov 1997: 31). Such an amount of ethnic groups was too much to manage and ethnographers, linguists, archaeologists and historians (for example Potapov) were to redefine this list and group all people into more
workable units of *nadodnosti* (people) (Shnirelman 1996, Tishkov 1997: 31). Different tribes and clans were reorganised based on territorial, linguistic and biological parameters. In the 1930s Stalin ultimately stated that the Soviet Union comprised about 60 nations (Tishkov 1997: 31) and not 190, the newly created national categories ultimately found their way on the people’s passport.

National groups were largely created because the Bolsheviks understood that consolidating communism in the highly heterogeneous post-Imperial space demanded a context dependent strategy. Only through neatly categorised ethno-national territorial administrative units, socialist ideals could be spread and consolidated. Yuri Slezkine’s (1994) compares the USSR with an apartment building that consists of different apartments (ethno-national territories). Each apartment in the building has its own design, outline and inhabitants, and in order to successfully manage the entire building, policy has to be operationalised in relation to the outline of the apartment and the people living in it. Only when people with particular similarities are grouped in manageable ‘housing units’ and the structures of that unit are understood, then, through a context-dependent strategy, new socio-political Marxist structures can be successfully initiated.

In the Altai Republic, the different tribes with a shamanist cosmology were grouped in one apartment. As the Party understood that communism could only be promoted when socialism was aligned with the Altaian life. Throughout the first years of the Soviet Union there was considerable attention for tradition and the vernacular language (a newspaper in Altaian appeared). However, although there was some attention for some basic independence of the different national groups in the 1920s, this changed during the 1930s and more and more Russian dogma was imposed on the different nationalities. It was clear that the Russians were the bosses in the apartment block and that they would ‘decorate’ and reorganise the different apartment units (Slezkine 1994).

According to Thomas Hylland Eriksen (2001: 289-290), revitalisations and ethno-national activism in times of a cultural revival can only occur when the different members of that particular group genuinely have become more integrated, and that prior fragmentising institutions that divided the group, have become deconstructed. Throughout his important writings about ethnicity and nationalism, Eriksen (1993, 2001) explicitly relates such fragmentary institutions to organisational structures such as clans and tribes that are organised based on kinship. He stresses the changed role of kinship in society as a prerequisite or nationalism and states that nationalism can only occur when the tribal and clan organisation has become less powerful or obsolete - as a result the nation becomes the metaphoric kin group (Eriksen 2001: 277). This is not different in Altai, the dominant role of the clan and *zaisan* was undermined (new socio-economic organisational forms were created making the clan organisation obsolete) enabling the rise of the Altaian nationality throughout the Soviet Union. Just as in other regions in Siberia (Balzer 1999, Humphrey 1999) clan differences became less explicit and the village became the new metaphorical kin-group.
However, this does not mean that membership of a clan has become meaningless. Nadezda Tadina (2005) nicely illustrates that clan membership is still important and has a considerable role in the sociocultural life of the Altaians. Although compared to the pre-Soviet social space, membership of a clan or tribe has become something symbolical and historically embedded. It is my impression that the political power of the clan and tribe level is less pronounced.

In short, the social and ethnic organisation of the Altaians nowadays is characterised by an integrated sense of Altaian national identity, depending on markers of identity such as language, cosmology and a shared past. The traditional clan and tribal divisions that used to dictate the organisation of society might have become less powerful, their cultural, historical and social relevance remains. Impressions from fieldwork and statements of different researchers (Broz 2009, Donahue and Halemba 2006, Halemba 2006, Tyuhteneva 2009) suggest that Altaians identify themselves as one cohesive nation, a nation with explicit cultural, economic and territorial claims. Legislative changes and reorganisations under the presidency of Vladimir Putin are however challenging the integrity and efficacy of the Altaian nation. These changing Indigenous and federal policies in Russia will be further investigated in the follow parts when analysing conflicts over traditional lands and sacred burial grounds.

5.2 **Kazakhs**

Compared to the Altaian population, whom as Indigenous populations are traditionally more subject to ethnographic and historical scrutiny, information about the history and societal organisation of the Russian and Kazakh groups is less extensive. Little research deals with these diaspora communities and the particular effects of displacement and interrelated interethnic contacts on their identity, perception of the past and their *habitus*. Only recently some interest was shown into the Turkic Kazakh populations of the southeast Altai, and researchers such as Irina Oktyaberskaya (2003, 2006) Konstantin Bannikov (2008) and Agnieszka Halemba (2006, 2011) have investigated some aspects of Kazakh life and, more particularly, the often fraught relationship with the Altaians.

5.2.1 **Ethno-history**

In the late 18th century, Kazakh tribes from the Kazakh steppe region started to explore the southern foothills of the Altai Mountains and the headwaters of the Irtysh. In the early 19th century, a considerable number of extended Kazakh families were dwelling the high
mountainous grasslands of the southern Altai. Especially from the mid-19th century onwards, the number of Kazakhs increased and the lands south of the Chuya river became an important region for mass migration (corresponding with the present-day Kosh Agach region). In other areas too, including the predominantly Russian dominated north-western parts of the Altai (part of Shebalino and Chemal raion), Kazakhs started to occupy lands for pastoralism. Besides pastoralism, the Kazakhs in Altai also occupied important positions in the trans-boundary trade, helped by their connections with fellow clan members in Kazakhstan, China and Mongolia (Oktyabrskaya 2003, Oktyabrskaya 2006).

The number of Kazakhs further grew throughout the 19th century, and especially in the southern parts of Altai this led to conflicts with the Altaian population. After fierce inter-ethnic conflicts over pasturelands, the Kazakhs were officially allotted all territories south of the Chuya river. During the Soviet Union era, the number of Kazakhs in the Southern border regions gradually rose. At the end of the Soviet Union period, 54.4% of the inhabitants of the Kosh Agach district were Kazakhs, while the proportion of Telengit/Altaian population was only 39.6% (Oktraberskaya 2003: 144). During the Soviet Union the Kazakh nomads were forced to settle in villages together with Indigenous Altaians. Little by little the few dispersed Kazakh families living in the northern Altai assimilated with the Russian and Altaian population (Oktyabrskaya 2006). The Kazakhs living in the most remote parts of the Altai (i.e. Kosh Agach), evolved into a unique Kazakh identity. Limited contact with their Kazakh ‘homeland’ throughout the Russian Empire and Soviet Union ultimately resulted in a distinctive Alaian-Kazakh culture. This became apparent in the events that followed the independence of Kazakhstan. In the period from 1991 and 1996, encouraged and attracted by the newly founded mono-ethnic Kazakh state, many Kazakhs largely inhabiting the Kosh Agach district migrated back to eastern Kazakhstan. However, by 1994 some of the early emigrants returned to the Altai, disillusioned by life in Kazakhstan (Halemba 2006: 40-41, Halemba 2008b). Many of their customs, traditions and a variety of internal social structures had become obsolete and did not align with the realities of modern Kazakh social space. Almost 150 years of isolation from the Kazakh heartland resulted in the Altaian Kazakhs becoming a different ethnic group whose homeland was not Kazakhstan but Kosh Agach and the Altai Republic.

The emigration to Kazakhstan and subsequent return to the Altai was not perceived well by the Indigenous Altaian population who saw it as a betrayal to the Altai, as if the Kazakhs were “spitting on our Altai, on the land which had accepted them” (Halemba 2006: 41). Kazakhs were not welcomed back with open arms, and after their return to the Kosh Agach Region, many moved into mono-ethnic villages or the district capital of Kosh Agach. This ultimately resulted in a spatial segregation between Altaians and Kazakhs (Halemba 2006: 40). The failed emigration, Altaian nationalism and, in particular, the socio-political instability of the 1990s resulted in a growing ethnic consciousness amongst the Altaian Kazakhs. Increasingly the need was perceived to express and strengthen their
identity, in which the role of their religion (Islam) played an important role. Reacting to the titular rights of the local Altaic Telengits and the need to pursue their own rights, local Altaian Kazakh congresses declared the intention to obtain Indigenous status and self-government (Badenkov 2002, Oktyaberskaya 2003: 145-146). This declaration included political, economic, social and territorial claims (Oktyaberskaya 2003: 145-146), disclosing a similar ethno-nationalistic stance as to the Indigenous Altaians. Though violent conflicts have not yet occurred (both Altaian and Kazakhs are peaceful people), polarisation between the two groups increased throughout the 1990s. Whereas during the Soviet Union era both parties got along fairly well, relationships have now become tense and are deeply ingrained in various aspects of society.

5.2.2 Livelihood and economic organisation

As discussed earlier, Kazakhs are mainly active in international trade, extensive pastoralism and large-scale forestry. The market-oriented and flexible mindset and good relations with other diaspora Kazakhs in Mongolia, China and Kazakhstan make the Kazakhs very successful in trade. Kosh Agach has a special trade status in Russia and since the 1990s inhabitants of Kosh Agach are subject to special visa regulations that means they are able to cross the border with Mongolia more easily, making the district centre Kosh Agach a fairly prosperous city. Wages are higher than in the rest of Siberia. Especially Kazakhs generate large amounts of cash through importing cheap low quality Chinese electronics and clothing (Badenkov 2002).

Most Kazakh families who are not engaged in trade make a living as pastoral nomads. Some extended families are very mobile and dwell large territories with their large stocks. In the Chuya Steppe these mobile Kazakh families are particularly well organised and can be considered as successful ranchers. The Kazakhs living in the high Chuya range (mainly the village of Dzhazator/Belashi and surrounding valleys and pasture lands) still have a mobile nomadic lifestyle and use vast tracts of land for pastoralism (Bannikov 2008).

5.2.3 Religion

Before the 16th century, just like other Turkic people, the Kazaks had a shamanistic-animist worldview where the spirits of places and the power of landscape and nature stood central. In the middle of the 16th century, many Turkic tribes and territorial groups converted to Islam as a reaction to the growing presence of Russians in Siberia. Especially Tatar and Kazakh elite adopted Islam. Although Islam also reached the other strata of Tatar and Kazakh society during the following centuries, the mass of the people remained truthful to their old pagan beliefs. Even during the 20th century animism was still strong and interwoven with Islamic elements (Forsyth 1992: 26-27).
Konstantin Bannikov’s (2008) ethnographic research in the remote Argut valley shows that most Kazakhs still practice animist rituals. Just as the Altaians, they bind *kira* and make small offerings at mountain passes, mountains or springs. On the other hand, research of Irina Oktyaberskaya (2003) in the more accessible villages in the Chuya steppe, shows that since the 1990s religious life has become more institutionalised and Islam dogma has found its way into the everyday life. Growing ethno-nationalistic awareness and increased contacts and donations from other Islamic countries led to an increased presence of Islam in everyday life in the villages of the Chuya steppe. Irina Oktyaberskaya (2003: 145) notes that in the late 1990s mosques were built in Altai for the first time.

This recent change in the religious life, conjoined with their growing ethnic awareness does not mean that Kazakhs are ‘traditional’ Muslims. As will be further discussed in Chapter 8, many Kazakhs still have a strong attachment to landscape, disclosing shamanist structures in their *habitus*.

### 5.2.4 Group organisation: ethno-national awareness and clan affiliation

As outlined above, the events following the collapse of the Eastern Block also sparked ethno-national awareness and activism amongst the Kazakhs. Religion in particular served as an important vehicle to communicate and consolidate Kazakh identity. The origin of the ethnic boundary that defined the Altaian Kazakhs as a distinctive group, as opposed to other Kazakhs, should be seen through the events following the independence of Kazakhstan, and the failed migration of many Altaian Kazakhs in the 1990s. Identification as a member of an ethnic group happens through self-definition and self-awareness of socially selected cultural differences with other groups (Barth 1969). Through *contact* in Kazakhstan they understood that they were different, not Kazakhs of Kazakhstan but Kazakhs of the Altai. A new ethnic consciousness arose in which they took great pride of being an Altaian Kazakh and actively communicated their particular identity.

Their particular nationalistic discourse (i.e. territorial political self-determination) should be related to the ethno-national activism of the Indigenous Altaians and their quest for native title and territorial rights. The Kazakhs who were a majority throughout the 20th century in the Kosh Agach region accordingly held important political positions (for example some Kazakhs were directors of the collective farms). With the contested recognition of the Altaic Telengits as ‘small numbered peoples’, more and more power was granted to the Indigenous Altaians and the Kazakhs became a political minority (Oktyaberskaya 2003: 145). Irina Oktyaberskaya (2003: 145) sees these changed power relations and Altaian nationalism as one of the most important driving forces for a growing ethnic awareness and ethno-national activism. Affirming this ethno-national activism was the intention to pursue such official native title as ‘small numbered peoples’. Their statements in 1999 during the ‘national’ Kazakh convention in Zhana Aul...
underlined their territorial and political agenda, and furthermore their self-identification as a distinct and Indigenous group with the Altai as their *homeland*:

We, Kazakhs of the Altai Republic, have been living in the country for two centuries. During this time we have maintained friendly relations with the Indigenous population, Russians, and representatives of other nations. Currently, the Kazakh population in the Altai Republic totals approximately 12 thousand. In full accord with the Law “On the rights of Indigenous nations of the Russian Federation,” we identify our nation as Indigenous because we live in a territory traditionally populated to our ancestors, maintain a traditional way of life, the total number of our people is less than 50 thousand and we realise our ethnic originality. ... Our *nation* is [currently] not represented in the government of the Republic, nor in the official boards of the Russian Federation. ... We are sure that it is time for us to announce the desire of the *nation* to realise our rights for social, economic and cultural development under the current conditions, which are arduous for our people and for other peoples of the country.

(Oktyaberskaya 2003, quoting the 1999 statement of the national Kazakh council)

Through generations of Soviet policy and frequent contacts with Altaians the Altaians and Kazakhs have developed a distinct identity. Ethnic awareness especially grew in the aftermath of the Soviet Union and the failed migration back to Kazakhstan. Consciousness grew that their current homeland is not Kazakhstan but that they are native to the Altai Republic (i.e. Kosh Agach). Their ethnic identity became publicly voiced and politicised when Altaians were granted special rights. So, instead of seeing the Altaian Kazakhs as merely settlers, one could say that they perceive themselves as native, Indigenous people of the Altai Republic.

5.3 **The Russians: a simplistic umbrella term for all ‘white’ inhabitants**

Compared to the Kazakhs and Altaians almost no research has examined the socio-cultural dimensions of the non-Turkic population, who are by far the majority in the Altai Republic. This is symptomatic for any post-colonial settler context. While the ‘white’ majority have the political power and, through their institutionalised epistemology, set the public opinion, they are treated as a unified group. However, their ethos, socio-cultural values, mode of argumentation and worldview is all too often simply connected with stereotypes. A view in which all the white people of the former Soviet space are seen as the same: chauvinistic, Christian Orthodox, racist and apathetic to other cultures and values.

Indeed, the ‘Russians’ talk Russian, have a typical Slavic outlook, are devout Christians and have replaced Indigenous peoples in many parts of Siberia. However, they are not one
group with a similar *habitus* and power relations. Because heritage and inevitable heritage conflicts are social phenomena taking place in a social arena with different social agents, the different agents need to be correctly identified and understood. It would be wrong to lump all white stakeholders together in the heritage field and treat them under the same name; Russians. The *Russian tourist, Russian archaeologist, Russian project planner, Russian politicians, or Russian peasant* are hardly comparable and each group has a historical trajectory and was/is influenced by a particular social *fields* that defines his worldview, mode of argumentation, and needs and interests. In this short overview I aim to address two important categories\(^\text{12}\) that, in much other research, are usually treated alike. Because of a lack of research into these groups, I hope to introduce the different categories and highlight some relevant characteristics. Aspects of the different Russian groups’ *habitus* will be further illuminated throughout the case studies. The Russian inhabitants of the Altai will be discussed in the same way as the Altaians and Kazakhs. The tourists and tourist companies will be discussed very briefly, archaeologists and resource developers and will be further discussed in Part III and IV of this dissertation.

5.3.1 **Russian settlers: old and new believers with a pagan background**

5.3.1.1 Ethno-history

The current non-Turkic population of the Altai can be subdivided in two distinct groups. Firstly, there are the so-called Old Believers, who settled in the Altai from the start of the 18th century onwards. Secondly, there are the late 19th and early 20th century diaspora groups. In many parts of Siberia, including the Altai, the Old Believers are considered as the first European settlers. The term Old Believers (*staroobryadchestvo* or *staroveriye*) is the general name given to a particular group of Christian Orthodox believers who became prosecuted in the late 17th century when the Orthodox Church was reorganised (Scheffel 1991, Vorontsova and Filatov 2000). Many fled to the outskirts of the growing Russian empire and into inhospitable areas such as the Ural and Altai Mountains (Oktyabrskaya and Shunkov 2006, Vinogradov 1999: 37). In Altai many Old Believer enclaves appeared, especially in the Uymon steppe. In this region, which is one of Altai’s most fertile areas, Old Believers’ agricultural villages were founded as early as the 1730s (Oktyabrskaya and Shunkov 2006, Vinogradov 1999).

\(^\text{12}\) Because there is only limited specific literature about the other ‘Russian’ groups occupying the social arena, and the full complexity of their societal organisation could only be understood when investigating their particular role in the cultural heritage field. The social processes that define the actions of the Russian archaeologists, government officials and resource developers will be scrutinized separately in part III and IV when investigating the divergent heritages they produce.
Since the 1860s and especially after the Stolypin reforms (1905-1906), the northern parts of the Altai Mountains saw a major influx of foremost European peasants, many of whom were Ukrainian and Russian. Many new settlements were founded and large tracts of land were confiscated for agriculture. The first 20 years of Socialism witnessed another mass arrival of farmers from different rural regions across Eastern Europe; many were political prisoners or ethnic groups (for example Germans who lived along the Volga) who had fallen into disgrace with Stalin.

Privileged by the state (because of their European epistemological and cognitive framework) and their numerical prevalence, most important positions in society are and were held by this Russian majority.

5.3.1.2 Livelihood

Besides the large amount of people working for a broad variety of governmental agencies and institutions, a significant number of Russian settlers are farmers or livestock breeders. During the winter, stock is kept close to the village and in the summer, herds are grazing on the high alpine meadows. Families would often go to these meadows (which they also describe with the word taiga) for a couple of days to have a rest or to take care of the herds. Just as the Kazakhs and Altaians, fishing, hunting and gathering are important supplementary livelihoods. These latter activities do not really have an economical finality; they are more about being in the nature, being able to provide for themselves in the wild and engaging with the plants and animals.

5.3.1.3 Worldview and religion

Besides the Old Believers, almost all other settlers from European origin in the Altai were peasants from humble origin who came from rural areas and were largely uneducated. Society in Eastern Europe was very stratified with a strong and educated urban elite and poor and ‘backward’ peasants. Compared to the official views that portray the European migrants as pioneers, which opened up the vast territory of Siberia and brought culture to the Indigenous ‘savages’. James Forsyth (1992: 155) strongly states that the Russians that migrated were simple unrefined farmers. They were far from comparable to the urban elite and had almost no knowledge of the Orthodox faith and dogmas. The following quote of James Forsyth effectively captures the worldview and sociocultural organisation of ‘Russian’ peasant life in the more remote parts of Siberia:
The cultural level of many Russian peasants who settled in Siberia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was little higher than that of the native people among whom they lived. Many Russian Siberians of the north are as ignorant and savage in their ways as the Khantys and Nenets, eating raw flesh (which was an anathema to the Orthodox Church) and not infrequently adopting shamanist beliefs. So far as Christian theology was concerned, the Russian settlers had only the most rudimentary knowledge of their own religion, and if asked who were the three persons of the Trinity, might well reply that they were, of course, Jesus, the Virgin Mary, and St Nicholas.

(Forsyth 1992: 155)

As illustrated by Nicholas Pokrovskii (2010) and especially Linda Ivanits (1992), in many of the relatively simple and largely uneducated Slavic communities that inhabited the large countryside of both Siberia and the European parts of Russia, traditional pagan folk beliefs were still strong. Although paganism was officially replaced at the end of the first millennium CE by the Christian Orthodox faith, because of the isolation and limited education, traditional folklore and spiritual beliefs remained relatively well preserved amongst the peasants, including those that would migrate to even more desolate places in Siberia.

In recent years, there has been a revival of paganism and nature related beliefs in contemporary Russia that relates to old Slavic beliefs (Lindquist 2000, Lindquist 2002, Shnirelman 2007). During interviews, non-Turkic interlocutors would sometimes openly talk about the special powers of particular places and the spirits that inhabit them (see part three and four).

Though this topic will be discussed throughout this dissertation, I would like to position the idea here that there exists a ‘traditional’ paganist foundation in the mindset of many 19th and early 20th century migrants. Such an ontology and epistemology that is influenced by traditional nature beliefs makes them susceptible to the Indigenous animistic worldview, explaining the many examples of syncretisation with Indigenous modes of being. The possible colonisation of the settlers’ consciousness by Altaian nature beliefs might explain their remarkable perception of archaeological objects and landscapes (see Chapter 7 and 8).

5.3.1.4 Group organisation

Despite some similarities with the Indigenous people and a shared Soviet history, today, the white European migrants consider themselves as one group and describe themselves as ‘Russians’. There is a consensual view that they are ‘Russians from Altai Mountains’. During fieldwork, ‘Russian’ interlocutors often told me that, just as for the Altaians, the Altai is their homeland.

Compared to the Altaian Kazakhs however, attachment to the broader Russian state is more pronounced. Pictures of Putin and Medvedev are often found and, especially in mono-ethnic villages, people are clearly more chauvinistic and nationalistic. Relations
with the Altaians are not always optimal, but in mixed villages there is generally an understanding and respect for the Indigenous viewpoint and culture. In mono-ethnic Russian villages on the other hand, the Altaians are less understood and are often stereotyped as violent nationalist alcoholics that have lost their authentic lifestyle.

5.3.2 Tourists: the Naturalist gaze and the quest for spirituality

Since the late 1990s an increasing number of tourists visit the Altai. As a result, the tourist infrastructure is encroaching deeper into the pristine valleys of the Altai year by year. The initial focus areas of the tourist industry were near the city of Chemal along the Katun and at the Teletskoye lake, where official tourist camps were established during the Soviet period (Breidenbach and Nyiri 2007). Nowadays, these areas are still the most important touristic zones of Altai, but tourist infrastructure has exploded. Especially in the Katun valley there has been an enormous growth in the number of tourists and infrastructure. Where 20 years ago, there were some camping grounds and lodges near Chemal, nowadays, the whole Katun valley (150 km) between Gorno Altaisk and Edigan is occupied by tourist infrastructure.

With the area along the Katun nearing its full capacity and owing to the recent improved accessibility to the Altai Republic (i.e. renovated airport and improved road infrastructure), tourism is encroaching all over the Altai, following the Chui Trakt (Altai’s main road) deep into the heartland of the southern Altaians. As a result of the recent privatisation of land and extreme promotion of tourism by the state, land value has skyrocketed and many poor farmers are tempted to sell their land. As a result tourist companies have already overrun many villages and, because of the attraction of ‘easy money’, important tracts of land have been lost and traditional livelihoods have been left behind.

Especially Altai’s unique nature with majestic mountains, pristine glaciers, wild streams and unique fauna and flora has always attracted visitors looking for an extraordinary experience. Already in the 19th and early 20th century, both Russian and international travellers frequented the Altai (figure 5-7) and some even elaborately wrote about the people and nature of the Altai Mountains in their travelogues (see Collins 2002). Although there were no typical large government owned sanatoria, Altai remained an important tourist destination for hiking, skiing, kayaking and camping during the Soviet Union (Ovcharov 2008).

Just as other economic sectors, tourism in Altai witnessed a considerable decrease in the 1990s. In 2002, the tourist sector finally slowly recovered and more and more Russians planned vacation trips. As one of the few regions in Russia, the area along the Katun was granted the status ‘special economic zone for tourism and recreation’ in 2006. This meant that the region got support from the federal government through subsidies and special regulations for international investments (Ovcharov 2008) - even allowing the opening of
casinos (Haworth 2008, Nyiri and Breidenbach 2008: 132). In 2002, the Altai Republic (population ±200,000) welcomed around 450,000 tourists, 800,000 by 2007 and over 1.5 million tourists in 2012 (Braden and Prudnikova 2008, Broz 2008, Gotoaltay 2013). According to the latest statistics of the government, occupancy rate was close to 100%, fuelling the construction boom even more. Projects in the pipeline include ski stations, a casino complex and a variety of different luxurious complexes.

Figure 5-7: Russian tourists near a waterfall in the Chemal raion at the beginning of the 20th century. (© Museum of ethnography and history of Barnaul)

Almost all tourism is domestic and most visitors come from the large regional centres of Siberia and the European parts of Russia. Important anthropological research by tourism researchers Joana Breidenbach and Pal Nyiri (2007) gives important insights in the motifs and social organisation of Russian tourists and tourist companies. Although their research only very briefly investigates tourism in the Russian Altai as a comparative case in their appraisal of tourism in the Chinese Altai, their 2007 Current Anthropology paper very is valuable and provides many insights in the motifs and interests of the tourists that visit the Altai. Breidenbach and Nyiri’s study is largely inspired on sociologist John Urry’s work about the tourist gaze (Urry 2002).

Tourists have a variety of individual motifs, perceptions, needs and experiences, which are structured by a person’s background. Based on the structuralist work of Foucault, Urry’s work explores the tourist as a contextual social agent and provides an analytical framework to understand the needs, interests and perceptions of a tourist. According to Urry the gaze is the most important tourist activity and places are consumed
through perception; “the other services provided are in a sense peripheral to the fundamental process of consumption, which is the capturing of the gaze” (Urry 2002: 42). When a person engages in a multi-sensory way with a place, his perception is always influenced by his cognitive framework and experiences in the past. Thus, the socially constructed gaze of tourists embodies a set of pre-programmed expectations placed on both the environment and local population. These expectations define what tourism is for a particular group, and it is the task of the tourism industry to respond to the expectations of a particular group in order to benefit financially. Gazing constitutes tourism, gazing is inextricably linked with socially constructed expectations, thus every tourist has a different gaze, defining his way of tourism.

Returning to the application of John Urry’s analytical tool by Joana Breidenbach and Pal Nyiri (2007) on the Russian tourists that visit the Altai Mountains, important trends can be disclosed that give imperative insights in the expectations and behaviour of the tourists, and how subsequently tourist companies try to accommodate these expectations. According to Breidenbach and Nyiri (2007: 324), contemporary tourism expectations and behaviour need to be understood through the Soviet Union-inherited ‘proletarian tourism’. This type of tourism was on its own inherited from Imperial Russia, which was inspired by the tourism in the Weimar Germany where the authentic nature experience stood central. During the Soviet Union, it was believed that this type of amateur tourism in which people would camp in the wilderness, self-cater, hike and make themselves useful in the nature through hunting and fishing would steel the women and men of the Soviet Union (Breidenbach and Nyiri 2007: 324-325). Breidenbach and Nyiri (2007) described this socially constructed tourist gaze and intertwined expectations as a ‘romantic gaze’. Breidenbach and Nyiri characterised this gaze as “the cult of the sublime, to be found in the untamed wilderness, the positivistic appeal of exploring nature and culture” (Breidenbach and Nyiri 2007: 324). Today the term authenticity stands central and the idea of exploring and surviving in the roughed landscape of the pristine Altai Mountains. Feeling free and individually exploring the rugged landscape is very important, which is diametrically opposed to the Altaian worldview where the land is connected with a series of injunctions and restrictions. The Soviet-style tourism has however adapted itself to the new economic conditions of Russia. Although the authentic nature experience is still important (free is sometimes taken very literally and nudism is not uncommon), new technology such as hifi-installations, jeeps and supermarket products that produce huge amounts of trash are now an integral part of the tourist experience. Visitors want to be free, and because of a lack of organisation and management, they are relatively free to do what they want and camp where they want. Such a type of tourism might have been relatively workable during the Soviet period, but the explosion of the tourist sector (almost eight times more tourists than inhabitants visit the Altai annually) and absent ancillary infrastructure have put pressure on the carrying capacity of the local community and nature.
Besides the tourists that are looking for a unique natural experience, there is also a considerable amount of tourists whose expectations can be related to spiritual and cultural interests; so-called energy tourists that are seeking for spiritual experiences (Broz 2008). As mentioned earlier, there has been a growth in neo-pagan and new age-style religions since the 1990s, especially amongst the inhabitants of the Russian big cities. Many see Altai as a place with special energy and mythical powers. This can be linked back to the shamanistic beliefs of the Indigenous people and to the writings of Nicolas Roerich, a famous Russian philosopher, writer and painter. Roerich is very popular among the various Russian neo-spiritual groups. Roerich was inspired by the Altai and saw its territory and the Belukha mountain as a gateway to *Shambala* (mythical Buddhist kingdom). For those reasons many ‘energy tourists’ visit the Altai to pray, meditate and preform rituals to the land. When I was based in the Karakol valley for fieldwork, I often saw busloads of energy tourists that would stay overnight in the tourist base of the local ‘ethno-natural’. They would visit the parts of the park, collectively pray to mountains also venerated by the Indigenous villagers, preforms rituals and engage in conversations about spirituality with the villagers. Villagers are not always happy with the tourists arriving and sometimes feel intimidated (Halemba 2006).

### 5.4 Intermediate conclusion

This chapter aimed at introducing the different ethnic groups that live and visit the Altai. The different groups, their economic organisation, sense of group membership and worldview were discussed both in light of the groups’ history and the impact of external socio-political structures.

The Indigenous Altaians have evolved over the past millennia from a heterogeneous conglomerate of Turkic tribes into a cohesive nation. Although division among clans and tribes is still important, through Soviet and post-Soviet ethnic engineering and activism a sense of national awareness - ‘Altaianess’ – was constituted. Altaians have a shamanist/animist ontology that defines every aspect of their life. Despite the transformation from a nomadic lifestyle into sedentary transhumance, the landscape, the past and the people inhabiting it are seen as inextricably one. Since the 1980s the Altaians have been striving for territorial and cultural legitimation. Although recent de-regionalisation politics are undermining this struggle, as a growing group their influence will continue to grow in the Altai Republic.

The ‘Altaian Kazakhs’ also have a long history in the Altai Mountains. Being isolated from their ethnic homeland during the Soviet Unions, the Kazakhs have developed their own culture. After a failed migration back to Kazakhstan, many of the Altaian Kazakhs
started to identify themselves as a distinct group. Through asserting Indigenous rights, the Kazakhs communicate that they see themselves as Indigenous to Kosh Agach. The Kazakhs are active in trans-boundary trade and are relatively well organised. Both this economic prosperity and their search for Indigenous rights are not well received by the Indigenous communities and a conflict is looming.

The last important group are the Russians. It is wrong to consider all Slavic groups in the Altai alike. Russian archaeologists, peasants, government officials and tourists are different and have divergent agendas. In this chapter only the Russian settlers and tourists were investigated. Although the contemporary Russian settlers arrived relatively late in Altai, many have developed a strong attachment to the Altai. Preliminary insights suggest that Russian communities have paganist elements in their worldview. This might explain in some cases the Russian-Altaian syncretism. With 1.5 million tourists visiting the Altai every year, tourists and tourist companies are important players in social space. Tourists have a totally different historically constituted mindset, not respect for the environment stands central but conquering and feeling free in the landscape is important. Tourist companies try to accommodate the tourists’ needs, which is unfortunately diametrically opposed to the interests of the local population.
Part III: Archaeology as a social practice in a changed neo-liberal field: archaeological conflicts in the Altai Republic

Gertjan: What is your opinion about excavations?
Jakov: Just for science, archaeological research is ok, however, local Altaian people should never disturb burial places. The excavations on the Ukok Plateau were particularly bad, especially when she was taken away from Altai. The archaeological finds should always stay in Altai … they belong to this land!

(UK-KU-01)
Different groups produce different heritages and perceive and employ ‘things’ (cf. Appadurai 1986) connected with the past in close relation with their own values and agenda. In many post-colonial settler societies, these different valuations and competing appropriations of heritage, conjoined with epistemological and institutional barriers, often lay at the basis of conflicts that encompasses a broader socio-cultural embedded struggle for recognition and legitimation (Nicholas and Hollowel 2007). Besides creating tensions and undermining the stability of the intercultural society, these conflicts undermine effective heritage management.

Such a situation is especially exemplified in the conflict and polemic surrounding the Altai Princess. This particular conflict clearly shows that different groups with a considerably different social background create divergent ‘heritage resources’. In the case of Altai, the often conflicting values connected to archaeological remains are inextricably interrelated with concepts such as 'homeland', cultural identity, ancestry and the current socio-cultural climate. The Altaians with their animist worldview that is permeated with Soviet structures and a post-Soviet ethno-nationalist discourse, perceive and appropriate archaeological remnants differently than for example the Muslim Kazakhs, who also seek recognition as Indigenous people. On top of that, there are the Russian archaeologists, driven by positivism and a hunger for archaeological data, is struggling to re-consolidate their position in a radically changed post-socialist space.

Within this part, through applying social theory and a comparison with settler societies such as in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United States, I hope to analyse and contextualise the heritage conflict that has been undermining effective archaeological heritage management and the development of local expertise in the Altai since the 1990s. This heritage contention will be used as an analytical tool to define and understand the different discourses related to archaeological objects and sites. Based on these insights, a way forward for archaeological heritage management will be discussed.

Corresponding to the theoretical framework discussed in Chapter 2, archaeological heritage will be approached as a commodity; i.e. a product of a social process constituted by different agents’ dialectical interplay between their habitus and fields of practice, which because of its communally held value also triggers people to communicate and seek legitimation of their cultural identity. Besides investigating the pluralist process of commodifying cultural goods, I will also pay attention to existing discussions in archaeological method and theory.

This central component of the thesis consists of two different chapters. The first chapter “A line through the sacred landscape of the Altai Mountains: Perspectives on the Altai Project” is a short contribution that introduces a project of Gazprom: the so-called Altai Pipeline. In this chapter the potential impact on the material dimensions of the heritage of the region will be appraised as well as the underlying neo-liberal politics and contestation surrounding the project examined. This short chapter is a reworked version of the following published article:

The text presented below is an updated and personalised version of this paper and a comparison with other contexts in Siberia has also been included. The project of Gazprom is particularly important because it is interconnected with the much-discussed repatriation of the Altai Princess. In addition, the contestation surrounding the project provides unique insights in the structures governing the current political field. Apprehending the discourse of the government is absolutely imperative if we want to understand the political status of the different heritages (cf. Harrison 2012, Smith 2006). The second chapter “When Scientific, Indigenous and Capitalist Epistemologies Collide - Investigating heritage conflicts and repatriation in contemporary Russia” describes and analyses the events surrounding the excavation, removal and repatriation of the Altai Princess based on the earlier ethnographic overview presented in Chapter 5 and on fieldwork. A central thread in this chapter will be the thinking tools of Pierre Bourdieu (1977) and the general principles of public archaeology as re-defined by Akira Matsuda and Katsuyuki Okamura (2011) (i.e. the sub-discipline of archaeology that investigates the relationship between archaeology and different publics). Annie Ross et al.’s (2011) ideas about institutional and epistemological boundaries will also be critically applied.
This short section aims to introduce and discuss one of the most relevant and ‘hot’ issues of the Altai Republic: the construction of one of the world’s largest and longest gas pipeline that is scheduled to cross the sacred Altaian lands. In 2006, during a visit of President Putin to China, plans were made public showing that Gazprom intended to construct a pipeline through the Altai Republic. Unfortunately, it became obvious from the start that there was neither attention for the conservation of cultural heritage into the planning of the pipeline nor for the needs and interests of the local population, despite the fact that Altai is well-known for its rich cultural heritage and that earlier building projects had resulted in fierce ethno-national activism.

Connecting the northern Siberian gas fields with the increasingly energy-hungry Chinese economy, the planned pipeline is of major economical and geo-political importance for the Kremlin and will strengthen Russia’s position in Asia. Although only a small part of a much larger project, the construction of the pipeline in Altai is especially contested and provides important insights in the current socio-political discourse of the federal government and the different governmental institutions involved in the project (ranging from the ministry of regional development to the Russian Academy of Science, different institutions imperative for the heritage field). The intentions to construct this pipeline through UNESCO protected areas (i.e. Ukok) and the political polemic surrounding the project, furthermore discloses the current stance of the government towards regional development, Indigenous rights, ecology, heritage, international and national NGO’s and political freedom in general.

I believe it is worthwhile discussing the events surrounding the Gazprom project separately in this dissertation because many of the Indigenous related issues impacting the ‘heritage field’ are largely connected with the federal government’s relentless efforts to quench their thirst for economic development (including ‘bribing’ the local population using symbolic capital). The government defines a significant amount of the structures of
the social arena that impact the actor’s heritage-related actions. Through discussing the impudent changes the Kremlin imposes on legal frameworks and a variety of federal and local laws, I wish to draw the reader to some important obstacles regarding cultural rights and heritage protection in contemporary Russia. Certain privileges may exist on paper, but as soon as they undermine economic progress, rights are violated and legal frameworks for the protection of culture, nature or heritage (for example parks) are changed.

This chapter consists of three sections. First I will present an overview of the different stages of the pipeline project. This is based on ‘fieldwork’ at the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Science (IAE SBRAS) and a critical analysis of a broad variety of newspaper articles and official statements. After this descriptive overview, I wish to present an estimate of the potential impact of the project on the interrelated heritage of the region, based on a detailed study of a small segment of the route. This assessment underlines the need for a well-thought-out heritage policy, required if the promised sustainable integration of heritage conservation into the construction plan (see Gazprom 2012) is to be realised. Starting from a comparison with similar events in the Siberian north, in the third section, I wish to critically interpret the pipeline-related events and define some of the most important ‘rules of the game’ in the contemporary fields of social practice in the Altai Republic.

6.1 When geopolitics and culture collide: ‘convincing’ the Indigenous population and re-creating political structures

In March 2006, during an official visit to Urumqi (China) President Putin put forward his intention to construct two direct pipeline connections to China, one via Manchuria and one via the Altai. There is no doubt that the plans for the construction of the so-called ‘Altai Pipeline’ were already in an advanced stage when Putin voiced these intentions. In October 2004, Gazprom and China National Petroleum Corporation had already signed an agreement of strategic cooperation, stating that both companies would explore the possibilities of natural gas delivery from Russia to China (Gazprom 2012). Most likely the plans for a pipeline through Altai go back many more years because, directly after Putin’s initial declarations, preparations for the construction quickly gained momentum (see Shoichi 2006). In June 2006, the newly ‘elected’ leader of the Altai Republic was quick to voice his unconditional support for the project and discarded ecological critique as ungrounded (Regnum 2006). In July 2006, the coordinating committee for the Altai Pipeline was established and by September 2006, an agreement between Gazprom and the Altai Republic was signed that fixed the timing and route of the project (Altai Republic
The initial goal was to start with constructions as soon as possible so deliveries could commence by 2011. The pipeline aims to transport 30–40 billion m$^3$ gas annually to China, making the pipeline one of the longest and largest energy transportation infrastructures of Siberia (Shoichi 2006: 8). The pipeline is scheduled to be 1.5-1.8 meter in diameter, constructed above ground, impacting the outlook and free movement in the landscape.

While in 2012 it seemed that construction could start any moment, in April 2013, Valery Golubev, deputy chairman of Gazprom, stated that on-going disagreements with China and their option to import cheap gas from Turkmenistan instead, had ensured that Gazprom had to postpone the project indefinitely (Gorno Altaisk 2013c). This, however, does not mean that the project will not be executed in the future. Despite the economic crisis, China is still growing (especially the area around Urumqi) and at a certain point it will need Russian gas. Gazprom and the federal government will do everything it can to get the project back on track because of the financial and geo-political implications. For example, in May 2013 the local Altaian government stated that they hoped that China and Russia could come to a quick agreement, as the project is very important for the economic development of the Altai Republic (Gorno Altaisk 2013b).

This pipeline is part of a larger transportation infrastructure project finding its roots in the mid-1990s aiming to directly connect central Siberia with China. Today the only way to transport goods from central Russia to China is through Mongolia or Kazakhstan. However, the absence of concrete trade agreements between the different countries makes indirect trans-boundary trade very costly. Furthermore, the conflict with Ukraine over the gas deliveries to Europe uncovered the importance of direct connections to overcome the potential impact of external political developments. In 1996, plans were proposed to connect China and central Russia via a direct border crossing on the 2,200-2,500 meters high Ukok Plateau. The first (Chinese) plans wanted to connect the Trans-Siberian railroad with the Chinese network of northwest China (Badenkov 2011). At the turn of the millennium, the idea was launched to construct a highway between the countries. Initially both projects, and especially the road, were well received because they could boost the already profitable trade in the region. Although the Chinese quickly constructed their part of the road, there was reluctance from the Russian side (including the government) to directly connect Russia and China via the Ukok plateau. Not the oppositions of ecologists and NGOs have halted the railway and highway, but xenophobia in Russian and the Indigenous society towards the Chinese people. Across Siberia, many people are anxious that Chinese immigrants will take over large parts of the sparsely populated Altai and South Siberia. While transportation over land was a major problem, pipeline transport on the other hand was not perceived as a problem by the political establishment (Nyiri and Breidenbach 2008).

When the preliminary plans of the Altai pipeline were made public in 2006, opposition from scholars, the local population, and ecologists quickly followed (Nyiri and
Breidenbach 2008: 138-139). One of the major discussion points was the planned crossing of the nature reserve ‘Quiet Zone of Ukok’, a UNESCO-protected area rich in permafrost, cultural heritage and endangered flora and fauna (for example the snow leopard and argali mountains sheep). Ukok’s regional legal status as a ‘quiet zone’ stipulates that besides traditional agricultural techniques like grazing and foraging, no other economic activities are allowed (Greenpeace 2007, Schwartz 2008). When it became clear that both the federal and local government would not comply with the official restrictions (imposed by themselves some years earlier), many NGO’s and Indigenous intellectuals reacted.

Despite the legal jurisdiction to oppose such invasive projects and prior antagonism from politicians from the Altai Republic to large construction projects (i.e. hydropower dam on the Katun), objections from the public opinion, NGOs, Indigenous groups and international associations (i.e. UNESCO, Greenpeace and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)) were not heard. The surprising support for the pipeline has to be framed in the broader de-regionalisation in Russia since Putin’s presidency. Especially the 2004 reform that abolished regional elections was particularly important. In the Altai Republic, these reforms were operationalised in late 2005 (months before Putin made the pipeline plans public), when the Kremlin-controlled State Assembly of the Altai Republic approved Putin’s appointee Aleksander Berdnikov as the new head of the Republic. In the earlier free elections of 2001, Berdnikov only received around 10% of the votes, coming in sixth place. After being appointed as the Kremlin’s figurehead, he subsequently declared his unconditional support for all plans of the President in 2005 (Nyiri and Breidenbach 2008: 139). After Putin made his pipeline plans public, and some critical voices started to oppose the project, the reorganised government was quick to declare its support for the project:

... [on] June 6 representatives of government and non-governmental organisations of the Republic of Altai issued a statement in support of the construction of the pipeline. The authors of the statement strongly condemning all attempts based on ecological and historical grounds to prevent the construction of the ‘Altai pipeline’. The government further stated: "All criticisms of the opponents is unreasoned vulgar actions of [political] opponents. Under the guise of environmental concerns opponents want to stop the development of our region and prevent the advance of Russia on the Asian markets."

(Regnum 2006)

As well as unconditionally supporting the project and discarding critics as people who want to undermine the economic progress of the region, the government skilfully, and not always subtly, changed legal frameworks to ensure that the construction could go ahead. During the Soviet Union, different legal types of nature parks and cultural or ecological reserves existed, who served as small safe havens for ecological and cultural survival (Anderson 2002: 103). The book of Douglas Weiner (1999); “A Little Corner of Freedom: Russian Nature Protection from Stalin to Gorbachev” clearly illustrates the particular role they had during the Soviet period and the unique possibilities they provided to ecologists and Indigenous peoples inhabiting protected areas. Indeed, national, regional and local nature parks were ‘little corners of freedom’ where people could practice their traditional
livelihoods. So, parks and reserves were important instruments to oppose economic development and resource extraction.

Nowadays on-going political reorganisations throughout Siberia have increasingly undermined the status of legally protected land. Local governments are forced to change laws that govern the nature of protection or protected areas, and park administrations are being dissolved. On the federal level, the fact that environmental oversight is a responsibility of the ministry of regional development already says a lot about the true nature of environmental and traditional land-use protection (Balzer 2010: 29, Habeck 2002: 138). Similarly, the Ukok Quiet Zone and the Karakol Park (who are on the planned route of the pipeline) were originally designed as regional nature parks under the jurisdiction of the Altai Republic. The local government is obliged to take measures to protect traditional land use and counter any form of invasive economic exploitation. However, on the 2nd August 2012, the government of the Altai Republic passed the decree “On amendments to some Decrees of the Government of the Republic of Altai”. This amendment stated, without explicitly referring to the pipeline, that the construction of 'linear objects' should be allowed in certain contexts in the nature parks of the Altai Republic (i.e. Karakol Park and the Ukok Quiet Zone). Head of the Republic Alexander Berdnikov stated that protection of the sacred places of the region is important, but this should not harm the economic development of the country (Gorno Altaisk 2012).

Because of the activism of different national and federal NGO’s and constant legal changes of the status of different nature and heritage parks, the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) sent a monitoring mission Altai to investigate the potential impact of the Altai Pipeline on the UNESCO recognised Ukok Plateau. Their report of 2013 stated:

The World Heritage Centre and IUCN recall that in accordance with Paragraph 180 b) i) of the Operational Guidelines the modification of legal protection status of an area included in a property is considered as a potential danger to its OUV and a reason for inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in danger. They therefore recommend that the World Heritage Committee urge the State Party to ensure that Government of the Altai Republic restores the legal protection status of the Ukok Quiet Zone in line with the protection requirements of the Convention. They further note that this again highlights the weak protection status of regional parks in the Russian Federation and recall the recommendation of the World Heritage Committee to establish a comprehensive national legal framework for the protection and management of natural World Heritage properties in order to ensure the fulfilment of the State Party’s obligations under the Convention.

(World Heritage Centre 2013)

Despite the clear finagle of both Gazprom, the federal government and the Kremlin-controlled local governments, all parties persist that they mean well and want the best for the Indigenous population. The Gazprom website even states:
The environmental aspect will be a priority for Gazprom when constructing the Altai gas pipeline ... The Altai project will pass the corporate and state environmental evaluations. Maximal transparency will be ensured during the project development and execution with an input from research and ecological communities and mass media. (Gazprom 2012)

To win over the hearts and minds of the inhabitants of the Altai Republic and convince the broader public opinion of these ‘best intentions’, a promotional campaign was set up. Gazprom invested billions of rubles in Altai’s infrastructure: a new football stadium, schools (with swimming pools), an airport and a new national museum were constructed. In addition, as one of the few rural regions in Siberia, many villages and regional district centres were connected to the existing domestic gas network. This was a big step forward for the local population, who long depend on wood, dried dung and coal to get through the Siberian winters (deforestation is a serious problem in the Altai Republic). This ‘ecological advantage’ of gas for the region was strategically used to underline the ecological imperativeness of the project (RIA Novosti 2012b). Costing more than three billion rubles (Gorno Altaisk 2013a), the relatively few rural inhabitants of the Altai applauded this gesture of Gazprom, genuinely impacting the public perception of the project. Zhinia and Irina, two female Indigenous interlocutors, told me in 2010 that they are happy with what Gazprom is doing for their Altai and that they have confidence in the plans of Gazprom:

People need gas, especially in the winter, furthermore the forest is disappearing and gas is a good ecological alternative. Okay, the pipeline will affect the landscape but if the planning will be good we do not see a problem.

(ON-KAR-05)

Importantly, through investing in the renovation of the national museum of Gorno Altaisk, Gazprom has made it possible to repatriate the culturally significant Altai Princess from Novosibirsk to Gorno-Altaisk, thus ‘solving’ one of the most critical and symbolic ethno-cultural conflicts of the last 20 years. After three years of renovation, on 20 September 2012, the Altai Princess finally arrived back in Gorno-Altaisk. The reopening of the museum and return of the mummy was accompanied with a major public and widely publicised event that put both Gazprom and the local officials in the spotlights (figure 6-1).
Although I do not wish to make this part of the dissertation an even more full frontal, slightly left wing, attack of the corrupt federal and regional government and Gazprom. I want to share one more key event of the pipeline project: ‘Altai gate’.

On 9 January 2009 a helicopter owned by Gazprom crashed on the mountain range between the Ukok Plateau and the Chuya Steppe, killing seven passengers and severely injuring four others. Amongst the passengers were several high ranked government officials (two delegates from the Altai Republic to the Russian Duma, the vice-president of the Altai Republic, the chairman of the committee for wildlife and protection, a high ranked official responsible for regional and economic development), a Russian folk singer and the president of a private Russian investment bank who is active in the tourism business. On the crash site, hunting rifles and the carcasses of the officially protected Argali mountain sheep (one of the reasons why Ukok initially got protected by UNESCO) were found (Altapress 2012), suggesting that government officials, assisted by Gazprom, organised an illegal poaching trip with private investors. Despite an initial cover-up attempt by the government (RIAnovosti 2009), the popular press was able to obtain some pictures from the crash-site (figure 6-2). The story, known as Altaigate in the international press, quickly became a hot topic in both international and national press (Akorova et al. 2010: 298, Altapress 2012, Osborn 2009), sparking protests across Russia. An official investigation was demanded by both Indigenous representatives and national and international NGO’s. In 2011, the court ultimately judged that there was not enough evidence to prosecute the surviving passengers for illegal poaching (Altapress 2012). Although the government’s cover-up partially succeeded and the connection between Gazprom and government-tourism was never uncovered, this particular case shows the corrupt and neo-colonial nature of the government. Without any doubt, this example can be extended to the government’s fraught attention for Indigenous needs and the status of
legally protected areas of cultural and natural significance. Moreover, this case should enable the reader of this dissertation to answer the following key question:

Is there a post-colonial political framework and willingness to recognise, protect, integrate and manage the pluralistic cultural heritage of the Altai Republic based on the premises of intercultural joint stewardship?

![Figure 6–2: Pictures of the crashsite and downed Gazprom helicopter. (© Regnum)](image)

### 6.2 Impact archaeological heritage

Without any doubt, as one of Gazprom’s largest (both in length and volume) ever constructed pipeline (Regnum 2007), if the construction goes ahead, its effect will be enormous, impacting both the outlook and use of the sacred Altaian landscape, and its archaeological heritage. In order to estimate and manage the impact of the project, the exact route and dimensions of the project have to be known. The general route of the pipeline was released in May 2006. Only a general description of which valleys would be crossed was publicly communicated (Regnum 2007). Where and how the pipeline exactly would be constructed is still not known officially. If a long-term policy for preservation of cultural heritage were to be developed, more-detailed information about the route is absolutely necessary. Although I have made several attempts since 2010 to obtain this information from both Gazprom and the IAE SBRAS, no detailed information about the pipeline was ever received despite the promised transparency. However, local contacts have supplied my colleagues and me with a preliminary route on a 1:100,000 topographic maps. On these maps, the pipeline follows the higher lying dry terraces of the rivers, the only route to pass through the often rough landscape whose lower parts flood during spring.

To make an assessment of the pipeline’s impact on the physical nature of the archaeological heritage, a small segment (32.5 km) of the route was integrated in a GIS (figure 6 - 3). Previous prospections have been performed in the region and a very detailed
geodatabase of the archaeological monuments of the region has been compiled (Gheyle et al. 2009). Another part of the segment has excellent aerial pictures coverage, enabling an exact visualisation and analysis of the possible impact of the route. Rescue archaeology in the context of pipeline construction in other settings has illustrated that a buffer of 30–50 m along the route needs to be excavated to include all areas of destruction associated with the construction of the pipeline and the maintenance road (De Clerq and In’t Ven 2005, Museyibly 2010). After comparing this 50m buffer with the archaeological monuments, it quickly became apparent that the planners chose the flattest and driest places in the landscape: the terraces, which are also the places most where the ancient inhabitants of the Altai built their monuments. Comparison between the different datasets ultimately showed that a total of 318 monuments in this small study area (32.5 km of the route) alone would be affected.

Although it would be wrong to extrapolate this to the entire route of the pipeline (our chosen study region is known as an area dense in archaeological monuments), the fact that there is no attention for archaeological monuments that are even marked on topographic maps, means that cultural heritage and Indigenous interests are far from Gazprom’s main concern. Additionally, the remainder of the pipeline route follows the Chuya River, which is characterised by a deep, incised valley. The only appropriate position for the pipeline is on the narrow terraces. Extensive inventory work by Kubarev and Shulga (2007) shows that these narrow terraces are filled with archaeological sites and rocky outcrops with petroglyphs. The project will also cross other regions (Ukok Plateau and Tarkhata Valley) of potential archaeological richness, as already illustrated by previous research (Molodin et al. 2004).

Besides impacting the scientific integrity of the region (which was the initial subject of our study in 2011), the projected impact of the pipeline is also directly opposed to the needs and interests of the Indigenous Altaians. As will be outlined in Chapter 7, burial sites should be avoided as they are culturally stigmatised, and excavations should be limited. Additionally, the pipeline will affect the free movement and outlook of the sacred landscape. This movement and visual engagement lies at the basis of the veneration and process of meaning-making that transforms areas in the landscape into existential places of worship. Furthermore, sacred places that are important elements in the communal fabric of a village (see Chapter 8), threaten to lose their value if impacted by man-made infrastructure (cf. Halemba 2006: 73). For example, in the studied section of the pipeline, the sacred Bai Tuu mountain, which is the centre of worship of the inhabitants of the Karakol village, will be intersected by the pipeline.
Although the presented estimate is probably already out-dated, it is still valid to say that the project will have an enormous impact on the archaeology and landscape of the region. Even if the pipeline were to be constructed around known archaeological concentrations, on some places the valley is so narrow that the only possibility will be to follow the small terraces (for example Tarkhata valley) and destroy hundreds of monuments. The estimate of 2011 was made after a visit to Altai and Novosibirsk in February, which was followed up with a four months visit of a colleague of the IAE SBRAS to Ghent. The different archaeologists I spoke with of the IAE SBRAS insisted that they probably will be involved in the project but had, beginning 2011, not been approached by Gazprom. During fieldwork that summer (2011) in Altai, I saw surveyors of Gazprom putting small field markings in the ground. In October of that year, letters from our contacts at the IAE SBRAS reached us stating stated that they had been ‘quickly’ summoned in September to assess the potential impact of the pipeline. Disagreement between the heads of IAE SBRAS and Gazprom about the price of the prospection meant that the survey was constantly postponed. Despite the availability to advanced remote sensing data (including LiDAR), because of the timing, traditional preparatory desk-based study was limited and the prospection basically consisted of field walking between the field markings and describing all monuments. Though normally quite loyal to their institute and the academicians heading it, my contacts were very sceptical about the entire project. The archaeological survey in 2011 happened together with other extensive exploratory
works (studies of soil, landscape and permafrost, etc.) including permafrost drilling - which the local communities and Indigenous councils knew nothing about.

Official reports or scientific publications by the IAE SBRAS about their prospection are not available - the archaeologists involved in the project signed a non-disclosure agreement (The Altai Project 2011). However, through some unofficial reports (acquired through our contacts, NGO's and newspapers) it became apparent that the course of the pipeline was slightly changed and 330 sites (grouping of monuments) were still situated between the surveyor's field markings (Regnum 2012, RIA Novisti 2013, The Altai Project 2011). The impact on the sacred landscape is unknown, because cultural landscape studies were not included in the research.

During a press conference in January 2012, head of the project, Academician Vachislav Molodin minimised the impact of the project and pleaded in favour of the project, largely following the discourse of the government. The Russian newspaper RIA Novisti, which reported about the press conference, summarised the position of the Russian Academy of Science and the archaeologists as:

"I do not see any problem with the construction of the pipeline and I am sure that there will be time to investigate all the monuments before the start of construction work and efforts will be made to adjust the route of the pipeline so some archaeological sites would be safeguarded - all this is quite acceptable for both the archaeologists and builders," - said the scientist.

Molodin stressed that nowadays the energy resources in the Altai Mountains are based on imported resources (coal from Kuzbass), or own resources - firewood. According to him, the gas is the most environmentally friendly energy, so the construction of this pipeline will only be for the benefit of local residents. "We have investigated this issue together with geologists - Academician Alexei Kontorovich and Nikolai Dobretsov and came to the conclusion that building the pipeline is the right thing to do. We think that the opinion of the opponents of the project should be related to certain inertia. It is necessary that they understand the feasibility and consistency of the solutions [the pipeline provides]," - said the academic.

(RIA Novosti 2012b – emphasis added)

6.3 Pipeline construction, the 1980s ecological protests and recent de-regionalisation politics: a federal phenomenon

In their 2006 position piece in a special issue (journal Sibirica) about the connection between resource development, land rights and Indigenous Siberian culture, Florian Stammler and Emma Wilson insisted that resource development related the problems do not only need to be investigated on a local scale, but must be framed in their federal and
international context. As Russia’s thirst for non-renewable resources creates social structures radically impacting the social space of local communities (Stammler and Wilson 2006: 7-8). Russian anthropologist Natalia Novikova (2008) similarly argues that the impact and ultimate outcome of specific problems with the energy sector, like in Altai, can only be appraised when looking at a broader perspective and taking into account the needs and interests of the federal state (Novikova 2008: 24-25). Despite the lack of cross-regional synthesis in Russia, many different case studies (see Anderson 2002, Balzer 1999, Balzer 2004, Balzer 2010, Habeck 2002, Novikova 2008, Roon 2006) provide interesting comparisons and, sadly, illustrate that that Russia’s hunger for resources and transport facilities (i.e. pipelines) is putting increasing pressure on many local communities and their cultural landscape. Furthermore, careless construction, rough terrains and bad maintenance of both the infrastructure related to the extraction of resources and pipeline transport, very often results in environmental catastrophes (see Anderson 2002, Balzer 1999, Balzer 2010, Habeck 2002, Novikova 2008, Roon 2006) - the Russian network of pipelines has a reputations of leaks and spills.

Natalia Novikova (2008: 12) also argued that, because of its natural richness and importance of resource development for the economy and political stability of Russia, almost every social phenomenon in post-socialist Indigenous Siberia is to a certain extent related to natural resources related issues. In reality, most policy and political structures are always weighted with the needs and interests of the energy sector. Russia’s aversion of a total economic and political meltdown in the early 1990s, its economic recovery since the late 1990s, and the relatively limited impact of the global economic crisis, can only be related to the export of natural resources (especially gas and oil, but also various types of ores). As one of the only profitable economic sectors, Russia is highly dependent on the infrastructure that connects it with its international markets (Stammler and Wilson 2006). The only way to maintain its place on the international stage is by increasing export and direct connections with the growing Asian market (Stammler and Wilson 2006: 3). Currently, limited sufficient connections with China are however impeding Russia’s position in the region and further economic growth. So, the direct pipeline to China through the Altai is not just another pipeline, but a project that has to be finalised at all costs. This explains the major political efforts, federal pressure on local government and the sometimes ludicrous investments of Gazprom in the Altai Republic (for example construction of schools with swimming pools in villages that barely have running water).

The government’s discourse towards economic development and the particular means they appropriate to pursue their agenda through a variety of legal frameworks, provide important insights in how the political structures are governing the broader social arena - thus also governing the interlocked heritage field. Throughout the 1990s, the so-called oligarchs, extremely rich businessmen with strong political influence, largely owned oil and gas companies. The Russian state was relatively weak towards the energy sector: legislation was not very tight and the profits only went to a limited few. The northern gas
and oil regions were like colonies; resources were quickly extracted with limited attention for ecological and social problems (Anderson 2002, Habeck 2002). The only organisations that were able to influence the agenda of the oil and gas companies were internationally supported NGO’s and RAIPON (Balzer 2010, Habeck 2002). These NGO’s campaigns were quite successful and some companies made some considerable social and ecological efforts (more than legally necessary) in order to maintain their corporate image (Balzer 1999, Habeck 2002).

During Putin’s presidency, almost all companies were nationalised and the state became the new oligarch - a clear fox in the chicken coop situation. Because the energy sector is so important for the survival of Russia, together with Putin’s clear nationalistic and chauvinistic discourse, Moscow’s power over the federal subjects tightened. Through constant legislative changes, regional matters were increasingly transferred to the federal state and the collective agency was increasingly undermined to secure economic interests. Drawing on a comparison with contexts such as Venezuela, Iran and Algeria, Florian Stammler and Emma Wilson (2006: 6) argue that such a strict centralisation of power and bureaucratisation is diagnostic for relatively politically unorganised and unstable nations that have to deal with an increasingly important and (politically) powerful energy sector. Similarly, the power over the energy sector increased. But at the same time, the power over the different federal subjects and broader society increased to secure these energy assets. I argue that the unfavourable Indigenous climate and de-regionalisation politics since 2004, as mentioned in Chapter 5, finds its roots in the instability of the 1990s (razval, corruption and revolutions such as Chechnya) and the need to secure energy profits. Many reforms that undermine the collective agency of the Indigenous peoples and broader free speech rights in Russia can be related to the particular importance of the energy sector for the Russian state. Legal frameworks are changed so activists have limited legal tools to fight of development. Collective and well-directed action and agency by the local population is undermined or hampered. Such collective actions after all proved to be very successful in the 1980s to fight of Soviet imposed mega-projects and even gave rise to many ethno-national revivals often directed against the Russian supremacy (see Forsyth 1992 for the Altaian opposition against the dam on the Katun and Balzer 1999 for the Khanty’s protests against oil extraction in the Siberian north). Any effective form of activism is largely impeded through a combination of efforts that are aimed at:

(1) Winning over the hearts and minds of the public opinion through exchange of social, cultural, economic and symbolic capital: exemplary are Gazprom’s investments in Altai, but Novikova (2008), Balzer (1999), Habeck (2002) and Anderson (2002) also mention similar cases where economic and cultural resources are exchanged in return for support.

(2) Employing senior Indigenous leaders that organise the company’s relations with the local population (Stammler and Wilson 2006: 19), local zaisans in Altai were similarly mobilised.
(3) De-regionalizing the Russian Federation: illustrative is the 2004 federal law that puts the federal subjects under increasing control by the Kremlin. Furthermore, a variety of local regional laws are often revoked or drastically changed because they ‘do not comply with the federal law’. A striking example of the latter in the Altai Republic is the recent local decree “About Preservation and Development of Sacred Sites” issued in 2012 that included restrictions on the activities related to excavation of archaeological sites and building sacred lands, which was cancelled due to conflict with federal law.

(4) A variety of laws that undermine collective and public protests. Exemplary of the latter is the 2006 NGO law that impedes international funding and interference (Kamhi 2006). But also federal NGO’s actions are undermined, earlier this year RAIPON, one of Gazprom’s harshest critics (see Balzer 2010) was almost dissolved.

The events surrounding the Altai pipeline frame in a broader federal trend in which securing and managing the geopolitically important energy assets is primordial for the Russian state. Although there is a lot of Russian chauvinism nowadays, I think it is not the protection itself of a socio-culturally venerated sacred mountain or a burial site that antagonises the Kremlin, but rather the implications of such heritage related law on the implementation and execution of economically important projects and the possibilities such legal frameworks offer for collective action. Difficulties to comply with international standards such as the 1957 International Labour Organisation convention on the “Protection and integration of Indigenous and Other Tribal and Semi-Tribal Populations in Independent Countries” (discussed in the Duma in 1994) and Russia’s decision to abstain from voting on the 2007 United Nations’ “Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples” (that has an important clause about Indigenous heritage, repatriation and traditional lands) are all explicitly related to the particular rights these conventions give to Indigenous people in relation to their land and the resources they contain (Newcity 2009: 368-369).

Located in an economically and geo-politically relevant region, the current social, environmental and political climate of the Altai is largely impacted by the region’s importance for Gazprom. Whereas the regional governments were initially created during the Soviet Union to ‘accommodate’ the needs of the larger native groups and had important political power during the 1990s. Centralisation of the federal state that went hand in hand with the nationalisation of the energy sector and growing Russian chauvinism, deprived many medium to large Indigenous groups such as the Altaians of their basic rights to set out a policy on traditional and cultural relevant issues (Donahoe et al. 2008: 1009, Novikova 2008: 19-20). One should especially take into account that for many Indigenous peoples land and environment plays a central role in their culture and worldview (Gilbert 2010).
6.4 Intermediate conclusion

To conclude this case study, which will be integrated in the discussion about the Altai Princess at the end of Chapter 7, I wish to return to the question asked at the beginning of this chapter:

Is there a post-colonial political framework and willingness to recognise, protect, integrate and manage the pluralistic cultural heritage of the Altai Republic based on the premises of intercultural joint stewardship?

I think the answer is obvious: NO! The contemporary structures of the social field are impacted by the economic agenda of the federal state and state-owned energy sector (i.e. Gazprom). Through securing the development of this sector, the position and actions of the Indigenous peoples and inclusion of their particular worldviews is ultimately limited. Together with relentless efforts to deconstruct the collective agency of Indigenous advocacy groups, such a neo-colonial policy also radically undermines the legitimation of their particular heritage and heritage activism. Heritage is a human rights issue, inextricably linked with the status granted to Indigenous communities (Logan 2012, Ojala 2009). The government is one of the most powerful players in the entire social arena of highly centralised Russia, including the heritage field, it privileges discourses and, in combination with the agenda of the government, it decides which heritage will be granted an official status or remains an ‘unofficial heritage’ (cf. Harrison 2012). The particular Altaian association with the landscape and their general reluctance to the disturbance of graves is opposed to the agenda of the government that wants to retain its power over land. As long as economic imperatives continue to dominate the government’s discourse, the Altaian heritage will never become officially acknowledged.
This chapter will assess the different and often conflicting valuations and uses of the archaeological heritage in the Altai Republic, based on an analysis of the contestation over the fate of a well-preserved scientific treasure (i.e. Altai Princess). Through this chapter I would like to assert that conflicts over cultural heritage are not ‘just’ conflicts over material remains, but deeply rooted cultural struggles over symbolic capital and immaterial values, through which identity is created, consolidated and communicated. As noted by Laurajane Smith:

Conflicts over the meaning of the past become more than just conflicts over the interpretation or different values, they become embroiled in negotiations over the legitimacy of political and cultural claims made on the basis of links to the past.

(Smith 2004: 3)

Because the conflict over the fate of Ukok Princess is deeply rooted in the Soviet and post-Soviet space, the contention over her fate and repatriation will be the main thread throughout the investigation of the interrelated process of heritage creation, contestation and appropriation. Other related events will also be mentioned, but they will not be scrutinised. These insights are primordial in understanding the commodification process that defines the multi-dimensional value of archaeological sites and objects and the interconnected heritage discourses of the different involved agents.

Different scholars have already investigated certain aspects of the events surrounding the Altai Princess from an anthropological perspective. Besides providing a careful description of the events and narratives connected with archaeological finds, Agnieszka Halemba (2006, 2008b) and Ludek Broz (2009, 2011) have specifically focused on the Indigenous perception of ancestry, archaeological artefacts, and the supra-natural connections made between excavations and a myriad of misfortunes. On the other hand,
Dimitri Mikhailov (2013) has congenially discussed the particular use of archaeological objects and narratives in the context of Altaian nationalism. In many respects my contribution is different. First, I do not aim to focus on one particular aspect of the Ukok Princess conflict, but I will try to provide a holistic understanding of the entire process of heritage creation and contestation in the pluralist Altai Republic. Second, I aim to further underpin my processual appraisal through comparison with comparable cases from other settler societies. Third, not only the Altaians’ heritage discourse will be investigated, but also the social nature of the heritage perspectives of the archaeologists, Kazakhs and government officials will be touched. Through considering the archaeologists as one of the many actors in the heritage field, I aim to contribute to existing discussions in archaeological method and theory.

First, the different agents and heritages they constitute will be analysed and discussed, using the earlier addressed thinking tools of Pierre Bourdieu (i.e. *habitus*, *field*, *capital*, *hysteresis* and *doxa*). Very often, similar researches in the field of public archaeology focus only on the differences between the different actors and lack a broader societal framework, explaining the different agents’ mode of creating and using heritage (cf. Matsuda and Okamura 2011, Pyburn 2011). The basis of intercultural stewardship should be a comprehension of the underlying social frameworks that determine why different groups engage differently with archaeological heritage. It should transcend the simple recognition and description of how different groups perceive heritage differently. As noted in the beginning of this part of the dissertation, complex social phenomena can only be understood and tackled when investigating the entire social space (Bourdieu 2005) and when applying clear thinking tools and comprehensive theoretical frameworks. This means that I will investigate the different multi-layered dimensions of society (i.e. ethnicity, ontology, politics, epistemology and economics) that create and shape the archaeological heritages. On the other hand, social space is not only multi-dimensional. It also consists of different actors that shape society and the external structures defining individual practice. So, heritage conflicts are more than merely a story of two different approaches to heritage in the same space. It rather demands a broad multi-actor approach, transcending the traditional archaeologists-indigenous duality. Other agents, such as the federal and local government, resource developers as Gazprom, Russian settlers and Kazakh diaspora communities, similarly influence the structures of the *field* and need to be included in analysis and debate. In addition, drawing on research of Florian Stammler and Emma Wilson (2006) about ecological conflicts in contemporary Russia, it is very important that various non-indigenous majorities and minorities are included in debates about archaeological heritage and cultural landscape management. Preoccupation with the indigenous stakeholders and with the instigators of the conflict may reify ethnic boundaries and inflict tensions with other local communities that have become native to the land. A sharp dichotomisation between Russian bad guys and Indigenous victims may unfairly stigmatise the non-indigenous settlers. As described in Chapter 5, series of Soviet
displacements and policies have made many of the settlers rootless, and the only homeland they currently have is the land they share with the Indigenous people.

Second, such a clearly structured assessment, based on comprehensive theoretical frameworks that take into account the multi-dimensionality of heritage conflicts, do not only allow a thorough comparison of the different involved agents, it also enables comparison with similar cases in the United States, Australia, and various other settler societies (for example the Kennewick Man/Ancient One and the Lake Mungo burials). Although these are related to different social environments, comparison is indispensable because it has the potential to provide insights in the processual nature of heritage creation in post-colonial contexts. Contextualisation might furthermore disclose certain structures that particularly aggravate heritage conflicts. In addition, for potential Russian readers this comparison illustrates that the Indigenous demands for repatriation are not merely political whims, but understandable demands that are diagnostic for transitional settler societies. The appraisal of the heritage conflict in Altai in the light of similar problems in other post-colonial societies might also shed new light on much discussed topics as joint stewardship, indigenous heritage management, archaeological ethics and repatriation. Nowadays, discussions about these important topics are largely dominated by Anglophone archaeologies that indirectly prescribe policy and best practice for totally incompatible contexts. For example in South-America, Africa and the Pacific (Chirikure and Pwiti 2008, Fforde, Hubert, and Turnbull 2002, Politis and Curtoni 2011, Shepard 2011), the repatriation debate and various other indigenous heritage related issues have been very much dominated by the policy from other non-compatible western capitalist settler societies. Additional case studies beyond the well-known examples are needed if we want to move towards a broader understanding of the process of heritage creation, contestation and commodification. In this regard, the careful appraisal of the Altai Princess might provide new insights in the highly contextual nature of heritage stewardship and repatriation in developing countries.

Third, besides focusing on the processes of meaning-making that constitute the conflicting heritages, this analysis is also relevant for the broader field of archaeology. By applying a ‘critical sociology of archaeology’ (as requested in Shanks and Tilley 1987: 24), i.e. treating the Russian archaeological practice as any type of social action, I hope to contribute to current discussions regarding the dynamic trade-off between archaeology and its social context. First, I will appraise how archaeological research, ethics and resource management is directly related to political developments and historically embedded sociocultural tendencies (cf. Hodder 2003, Hodder 2011, McGuire 2008, Shanks and Tilley 1987, Trigger 1989). Second, I will also investigate the inherent social vacuum in which archaeology has historically operated and the difficult relationship with the broader public this has brought about. The difficulty to engage with the broader public is a global problem of archaeology. Investigating the nexus public-archaeology in Altai and discussing the underlying dynamic will provide important insights in the social nature
of heritage. This is not only important for future developments in Russia, it provides a framework that is also applicable on Western countries like Belgium, where a commercialised archaeology and institutionalised government apparatus impedes archaeologists from engaging with the broader public.

Interrelated with the cornerstones of this chapter, my further ambition is to bridge existing archaeology and heritage theory in order to understand the different heritage discourses in the Altai Republic and the polemic these constituted. Both in the field of heritage studies and archaeology, much has been theorised about the valuation and politics of the past. Unfortunately, despite very similar topics and problems, much of the work about the ‘present of the past’ is still deeply entrenched within disciplinary boundaries and is highly self-referential. Though archaeologists are an integral part of the broader cultural resource management field, ‘heritage’ and engaging with its different creators is not often perceived as the core business integral to the archaeological discipline (Smith 2004: 8). It is often ignored that we (archaeologists) have legal frameworks enabling us to study and protect the material remains of the past, because the broader public perceives these remains as important. Without the public opinion and the cultural resource management frameworks, we would not be able to function as a discipline. Important work such as the monograph ‘Archaeological Theory and the Politics of the Cultural Heritage’ by Laurajane Smith (2004) are an exemplary in illustrating that the investigation of archaeology related conflicts, such as the repatriation of human remains, benefits from the broader and more contextual approach of heritage studies. By disclosing the historically embedded and socially constituted dimensions of the archaeologist’s discourse, Smith provides important strategies to overcome existing problems. Similarly, public archaeology, which is the sub-discipline of archaeology that examines the relationship between archaeology and the different publics and attempts to improve it (Matsuda and Okamura 2011: 4), has a lot in common with the pluralistic and value-based approach of the heritage field (e.g. Ashworth, Graham and Tunbridge 2007), but is unfortunately self-referential and lacks insights form the heritage studies field.

This chapter consists of five sections. First, there will be a more or less descriptive overview of the events surrounding the removal and recent repatriation of the Ice Maiden. The different party’s actions and reactions will be described. Second, the different actors their particular heritage and interrelated discourse will be critically interpreted based on the earlier ethnographic descriptions. Results of fieldwork will also be integrated to supplement the earlier literature-based ethnographic insights. The third section aims to contextualise the events in the Altai Republic by presenting some very similar cases of the United States and Australia. The discussion aims to bring together the insights of the different sections and will critically discuss the particular heritages, the ethno-political climate, some of the underlying social patterns and a potential strategy to overcome the ongoing polemic. The last section will present some concluding remarks.
7.1 When a scientific treasure for ‘mankind’ literally ‘shakes’ up the fields of practice: the excavation, the contestation, the earthquake and the return

Although already briefly touched at the beginning of this dissertation, this section will outline comprehensively the events surrounding the excavation of the Ukok Princess. This section will not limit itself to a reiteration of the events specifically connected to the Ukok Princess. To underline that the Ukok conflict is not an isolated case or a particularly politicised caprice in the context of the ethnocultural revival in the Altai Republic, the long history of contested excavations will be discussed.

The excavation

Between 1990 and 1996, the IAE SBRAS conducted a large-scale multi-disciplinary international project on the Ukok Plateau. During this project, 405 sites containing over 1,000 surface monuments were mapped and dozens of monuments were excavated (Molodin et al. 2004). Better registration and conservation techniques and possibilities offered by recent methodological advances subsequently ensured the investigation and ex-situ preservation of Ukok’s heritage, meeting the needs of modern archaeological research (Molodin, Polosmak, and Chikisheva 2000: 309). Improved accessibility - during Soviet period the Ukok Plateau was a restricted militarised zone - and the gradual disappearance of the discontinue permafrost were furthermore an important impetus to revive the research into frozen Scythian barrows. Global warming particularly served as the main motivation of the research, and was also one of the central counterarguments when Indigenous voices demanded a suspension of the investigations (Molodin and Plosmak 1999). From a pure scientific point of view, the archaeologists’ insistence on the importance of excavations to safeguard the archaeological archive from global warming is without any doubt advisable. In the 1950s, still a considerable amount of the archaeological monuments had permafrost, resulting in a unique preservation of the organic archaeological record (e.g. Rudenko 1970). However, by the 1990s, only few monuments in the less accessible high mountainous valleys had optimal preservation conditions.

For the archaeologists the research came at the right time: global warming was threatening some of the few remaining frozen archaeological contexts and demilitarisation in the aftermath of the Soviet Union opened up the permafrost rich high mountainous border zones. Furthermore, in the light of shrinking funding opportunities, such high-profile sites attracted much welcomed international involvement and support (see Bourgeois et al. 2000, Chernykh 1995, Chungov, Parzinger, and Nagler 2005, Derevyanko and Molodin 1994, Graham 1993). Already in 1990, a frozen burial mound was
discovered. Despite the poor preservation of the bodies, a large amount of clothing and other organic artefacts were in an excellent condition, which provided a scientific treasure (Polosmak 1995). Ultimately, in 1993, the Ak-Alakha III burial context was excavated, yielding the intact body of the Ice Maiden and numerous imaginative organic finds. From an archaeological point of view, the remains and funerary objects relate to a female of the Scythian middle class. In 1995, a smaller frozen burial monument (Vergh Kaldzin 2) was unearthed, resulting in the discovery of the well-preserved body of the Man of Vergh Kaldzin mummy (Molodin, Polosmak, and Chikisheva 2000). After the discovery, the mummies and finds were transported to Novosibirsk for investigation and conservation, where most finds are still displayed in an archaeological museum. Globally, the discoveries are being considered as one of the most important archaeological discoveries of the 1990s and were openly applauded by the international archaeological community.

The contestation

Initial Indigenous reactions were complexly double-sided. On one hand, people were attracted to the discoveries and magnificent finds (Filimonov 2004a, Filimonov 2004b, Gordeev 2004). And as often in archaeology, the role of the media was particularly important in creating a one-sided image about the finds (Fagan and Rose 2003), complicating the events and contestation following after the excavation. Sensational coverage by the mass media ensured that many people perceived the Ukok Princess as a noble female warrior, and the idea was spontaneously cultivated that the archaeologists from Novosibirsk had excavated a mythical ‘Altaian Princess’. A broad segment of the Altaian society applauded the new discoveries and the light they shed on their past. She quickly became a national symbol and was perceived as the Altaian progenitor. Rooted in heroic epics, the Indigenous population often call her Altai/Ukok Princess, Princess Kadyn (the worshipped ancestress of the Altaians) or Ochy Bala (a hero girl who saved her people) (Halemba 2008b: 285-287, Telnov 2007). Artefacts and the Ice Maiden herself were quickly incorporated in cultural festivals (figure 7-1) and the national symbols of the Republic. Generally, the Altai Princess and important archaeological finds quickly became an integral part of the then reviving Altaian culture (Broz 2009, Mikhailov 2013).
On the other hand, various Indigenous intellectuals and leaders also expressed their deep discomfort with the fact that they were not involved in a project that was investigating their national past. All archaeological excavations in the Altai were criticised and repatriation and reburial was demanded to restore the balance between the ancestors and their land. Quickly, the struggle over her fate, picked up by the media, became a symbolic case, dominating local elections, everyday conversations and political debates. Today this conflict is still discussed; fieldwork shows that this happens on a national scale and that no matter which village, all Altaians share a similar opinion towards her fate. As a result of the open confrontation between the Altaian intellectuals, the archaeologists of the IAE SBRAS and broader Russian scientific establishment the El Kurultai, state assembly of the Altai Republic, considered “The appeal of the citizens of the Altai Republic about the archaeological excavations on the Ukok plateau”. In July 1997, the local government ultimately adopted the decree “About Prohibition of the Excavation of Burial Mounds in the Kosh-Agach District”. This law was, in summary, a moratorium on excavations, making non-developer led research dependent on local consent, terminating numerous research projects.

Figure 7 – 1: Altaian girl dressed up as the Ukok Princess during El-Oiyyn (2008). (© Keinesh.ru)
Immediate Indigenous reactions and the subsequent passing of a moratorium in the midst of the ethnic-national revival should not have been seen as a complete surprise. A significant number of earlier excavations had already led to similar, though smaller conflicts and reactions. In the 18th century, local Turkic nomadic families reacted to the 'subsistence' looting of burial mounds by Russian settlers. For example in 1745, a large group of settlers who were planning to excavate various sites in the Chulysman valley were stopped by nomadic families (Demin 1989: 16). Besides reactions against subsistence looters, protests against archaeological investigations occurred. In 1826, Carl Friedrich Ledebour carried out one of the first noteworthy scientific excavations in the Altai Mountains. In his diary, he wrote that the local population, who he employed as workers, was unhappy with the excavation of the burials. According to his reports, the Altaian clan members said that it disturbed the “peace of their fathers” (Ledebour, Bunge and Meyer 1993: 99). Only when the excavators decided to rebury the skeletons, did the Turkic nomads agree to participate.

Interlocutors assured me that even during excavations in the Stalinist 1940s and 1950s, many villagers were openly frightened and outraged by the actions of renowned archaeologists Sergei Rudenko. In the years that followed, an increasing amount of archaeological fieldwork was conducted, of which the finds are now displayed in museums throughout Russia. Archaeological monuments - particularly highly decorative stelae - were often taken from their original setting to be displayed in museums and parks outside the Altai. After excavation, monuments were generally not restored and in many places this resulted in lunar-looking landscapes, stripped from their archaeological remnants (figure 7-2).

The social change brought about by the perestroika and glasnost meant that the discontent amongst the local population now became publicly voiced. Illustrative are the reactions of the inhabitants of the village of Kulada (Karakol valley) in the late 1980s to the same archaeologists of the IAE SBRAS, who planned an archaeological excavation project on the nearby site of Nizhny Sooru. Despite the archaeologists’ official permit, an assembly of villagers opposed the scheduled excavations and the archaeologist had to leave. When large-scale excavation projects were set up along the Katun between Kuyus and Elanda around the same time - in preparation of the Katun dam - locals also reacted negatively, even to Indigenous Altaian researchers.
Figure 7-2: Impact of excavations on archaeological landscape. (top) Non-excavated archaeological monuments in the Yustid valley. (bottom) Excavated monuments in the Yustid valley.
The Russian archaeological community relentlessly countered Indigenous demands for repatriation and reburial, and the moratorium on excavations. Using an etic scientific discourse, they discarded these claims and mythical connections as obscurantist “whims of a small group of nationalists far removed from science” (Molodin and Polosmak 1999). The archaeologists perceived the excavations as their duty to humanity, against the anti-scientific activism of Indigenous political fractions (Postscript 2001). The reactions of the scientists were infused with Russian chauvinism. Scientists explicitly stated that they were afraid that if they would not fully pursue their research agenda and carried out reburial, Russian science would lose face abroad (Strauss 2004). The excavators of the IAE SBRAS and the members of other Russian archaeology departments refused any kind of limitation on their research and repudiated demands for reburial and repatriation. In 1999, Vyacheslav Molodin and Natalia Polosmak (1999) stated:

A prohibition of research on the plateau Ukok research (including archaeological) seems totally unacceptable to us. We are talking about what are essentially because of the whims of a small group of people far removed from science, we lose the opportunity to obtain a fundamentally new scientific knowledge. Under the conditions of the process of global warming on the planet there is a real risk of loss to science and humanity ... Therefore, it must be conducted on the merits of the protective excavations on the plateau.

(Molodin and Polosmak 1999 - emphasis added)

The Russian government largely backed the archaeologists’ discourse. Indigenous demands were never met nor did the federal government show any effort to accede to those demands, despite having the broader public opinion of the Altai Republic (and beyond) and national and international media on their side. This institutional privileging was highlighted when the archaeologists of the Ukok project, Natalia Polosmak and Academician Vyacheslav Molodin, were awarded the prestigious State Prize of the Russian Federation (Gosudarstvennaya Premiya Rossii Federatsii) in 2004 for their work on the Scythian mummies. During his speech, Vladimir Putin explicitly applauded their exemplary contribution to Russian science:

Distinguished laureates,

Your personal achievements are not just exceptional and bright events in Russian science and the arts; they are the pride and glory of our nation. It is deeply symbolic that we should be honouring those who have raised our Fatherland higher on this day, our main national holiday. Each of you has made an undeniable personal contribution to preserving our historic and cultural heritage, to reviving Russian science, education and to the renaissance of Russia’s spirituality.

(Kremlin 2005)

In his subsequent acceptance speech, Academician Vyacheslav Molodin said:

As I receive this award of distinction from my country today, I feel pride in my beloved science of archaeology and in the historical sciences in general, which have received such great recognition from my homeland. I am sure that it is on the foundation of our great,
glorious and sometimes tragic history that we will build our state anew (sic) and inevitably make our country a great nation.

The recent celebrations of the 60th anniversary of victory in the Great Patriotic War clearly illustrated how much Russians of all generations aspire to unity and a legitimate feeling of pride in our great people and its glorious achievements.

Science, and above all the Russian Academy of Sciences, which I have the honour of representing here today, is of immense importance for Russia today and will remain so in the future. In the almost 300 years of its existence, the Russian Academy of Sciences has always served its homeland in every way it can, sharing both the bitterness of failure and the triumph of victory.

I want to assure you, Vladimir Vladimirovich, that Russian scientists always have and always will serve their Motherland and their people.

(Kremlin 2005)

Both Putin’s and Molodin’s discourse is chauvinistic and clearly shows that the archaeological heritage of the Altai mountain is not perceived as the heritage of the Altaians, but the heritage of whole Russia, of whom the scientists are the privileged stewards. This does not only discloses who owns the past and defines the cultural heritage policy in Russia, it also shows that non-Russian nationalities are not acknowledged inside the Russian government apparatus. This gives the impression that, just as in the Soviet Union, if the Russian Federation is an apartment building (cf. Slezkine 1994) consisting of multiple rooms for the different ethnicities, the Russians are still ‘decorating’ and even claiming the rooms of the other peoples of the Federation.

Since Putin’s rise to power, the authority of autonomous republics to govern cultural heritage related matters has been challenged, ultimately resulting in the undermining of the moratorium on archaeological excavations in the Altai Republic. In 2002, regional heritage laws in theory became subordinate to the 2002 federal heritage law, which stipulates that archaeological sites are of federal significance and should be managed accordingly. Despite these changes, because of the ferocity of the conflict the moratorium initially stayed in place and was not publicly and legally challenged. The IAE SBRAS however assailed this important legal nuance in 2010 in the aftermath of the 2009 excavation in the Buguzun valley (see Chapter 1). The archaeologists insisted that they have the right to excavate archaeological monuments because they are under federal jurisdiction and the Altai is still Russian land. So, legally the regional law was surpassed by the federal legislation (Luchansky 2009, Pustolyakova 2009). The archaeologists of the IAE SBRAS subsequently turned to the ‘Federal Service for monitoring compliance with cultural heritage protection law’, who filed an official complaint against the moratorium. Subsequently, the 1997 moratorium was dissolved and in theory, excavations could restart (RIA Novosti 2010). In 2012, a new law was issued to make archaeological excavations dependent on Indigenous consent (see Chapter 8). However, this law was also found ungrounded and in conflict with the federal legislation.
The earthquake and DNA-results: when the fields of practice are further shaken up

Two specific events deepened the chasm between archaeologists and Indigenous people even more: the 2003 earthquake and results from DNA-research. These events heralded attention from other disciplines and the political community, making the conflict increasingly complex. Importantly, the reactions of the different actors to those events provide important insights into the underlying processes and discourses that shape the various actors their heritage and will be contemplated in the following sections.

First, together with other contested excavations, the Altai people employ the unresolved fate of the Altai Princess as a constant point of reference to explain a broad range of misfortunes. Misfortunes range from the drowning of people, car problems, the crash-landing of the helicopter transporting the mummy, suicides, periods of drought, and even extending to federal events like the unrest in Chechnya and the 1993 Russian constitutional crisis. Connections between the fate of the Altai Princess and such misfortunes were very often picked up and enforced by the popular media (both local and federal), which perpetuated an even greater atmosphere of mystery and myth, ensuring that the unresolved fate of the Princess stayed a publicly discussed problem. These supranatural connections are a focal point for scientists’ critiques and are used to underline the unscientific and ungrounded nature of the Indigenous demands. The most widely discussed disaster connected to the removal of the Ukok Princess is the powerful earthquake and aftermath that shook up the Chuya region. In the autumn of 2003, a heavy earthquake of 8 on the Richter impacted the Chuya steppe and destroyed the village of Beltir almost completely. Aftershocks plagued the region for several months in a row and forced around 1,400 inhabitants of Beltir to relocate (Halemba 2008b, Maslov 2006). That the land and mountains can destroy the life of the inhabitants is a particularly strong metaphor for the Indigenous population; their venerated homeland takes revenge for past events that may have disrespected the land (cf. Halemba 2006, Halemba 2008b). In 2004, Auelkhan Dzhatkambaev, the Kazakh head of the Kosh Agach district who was seeking re-election, just as other Indigenous leaders, publicly linked the removal of the Princess with the earthquake. He stated that the earthquakes would continue if the Altai Princess was not returned and reburied (Halemba 2008b, Michajlov 2004). The devastation in the aftermath and politicisation in the media caused many Altaians across the Republic to voice their discontentedness with the removal and swiftly increased demands for the return of the Princess to her homeland (Filimonov 2004b, Halemba 2008b, Michajlov 2010). Fieldwork by Russian social scientists in 2005 showed that a majority of the inhabitants of Kosh Agach (including Kazakhs) connect the unresolved fate of the Ukok Princess with the earthquake (Maslov 2006). During my own fieldwork, two thirds of all Indigenous interlocutors specified that they believe to a certain extent that the earthquakes of 2003 are connected with the fate of the Ukok Princess. Also well over half of the non-Indigenous interviewees (i.e. Russian and Kazakh) drew connections between the removal
of the *Princess* and the earthquake (table 7-1), which may be related to their paganist *habitus* and years of interethnic contact. Many non-Indigenous interlocutors stressed that their specific attachment to the archaeology of the region transcends the Ukok Princess and that all archaeological remnants have a special meaning. In case of some non-Indigenous interlocutors the type of veneration of the archaeology is not that different from the Indigenous one. For example, a Kazakh from Zhana Aul (YU/KA/06) told me that all archaeological monuments have sacred powers that he does not allow his animals to graze on burial sites because he is afraid hid stock could become sick (this is not an isolated case.

My own findings, which include regions from outside the Kosh Agach region, and the results of Dimitri Maslov (2006) clearly show that the claims and demands for repatriation are not ‘whims’ of a small group of nationalists. However indigenous intellectuals and local leaders might have initially promoted this connection for ethno-political purposes, the large and intercultural support for reburial and repatriation underline the significance of the conflict to and the genuine emotionally impact upon the multi-ethnic population of the Altai.

Table 7-1: Table indicating the different positions towards the relationship between the earthquake and the excavation of the Ukok Princess.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Assessed households</th>
<th>Ukok -quake: yes</th>
<th>Ukok -quake: no</th>
<th>No opinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Karakol Altaian</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uymon Altaian</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katun Altaian</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chuya Altaian</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakh</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Second, when DNA and physical anthropology where introduced to the debate, the chasm between archaeologists and the Indigenous people further deepened (Agranovich 2004, Broz 2009, Gordeev 2004, Larko 2001). Results from genetic and physical anthropological research provided important details about the genetic distance between Scythian (Pazyryk) people and contemporary Altaians. These insights supported older theories that suggest that the Turkic-Mongolian Altaians migrated recently to the Altai, thus questioning the relatedness of the current inhabitants with the Scythian nomads (Chikiseheva 2000, Molodin 2000, Potapov 1969). Although the excavators did not explicitly deny the ancestral links between the Altaians and the Ice Maiden, through stressing the inherent complexity of the ethnic history and composition of the
contemporary Indigenous Altaians and the large distance compared with other groups outside Altai, they did highlight the importance of genetics when discussing ancestry (Molodin 2000). However, the inherent challenge that archaeologists faced communicating these complex results, coupled with the intrinsic polarisation and generalisation by the popular press, these new findings quickly sparked a culturally charged discussion about the identity and the rightful ownership of the Ukok Princess. The public statements of senior scientists like Nikolai Makarov, the President of the Institute of Archaeology of the Russian Academy of Science (federal level), who stated that the modern Altaians have no rights to undermine archaeological research because they do not have any biological link with the Ice Maiden (Agranovich 2004), further polarised the conflict. These new findings and subsequent reactions in the press of the excavators and other scientists were interpreted by the Altaians as a denial of ancestral ties and rights to claim the fate of their progenitor (Broz 2009, Filimonov 2004b, Gordeev 2004, Halemba 2008b, Larko 2001), reducing the Altaian history in their venerated homeland to merely one of the many phases of occupation and one of the many peoples that migrated to the Altai, replacing the Scythian nomads.

The Return

Major investments by Gazprom in the National Museum of Altai finally led to a change of fate for the Ukok Princess. This injection of capital enabled the purchase of an expensive climate controlled sarcophagus that would enable the optimal conservation of the Ice Maiden. Alongside this, in agreement with the conditions imposed by the IAE SBRAS, only the Ice Maiden was returned and all the grave goods and the male mummy stayed in Novosibirsk. Furthermore, the Maiden will not be reburied. Almost 20 years after her discovery, on 20 September 2012, the Altai Princess arrived back in Gorno-Altaisk (figure 7-3). It is important to note that this is the first repatriation ever in Russia, a momentous precedent. The return of the mummy was coordinated by the Altaian Ministry of Culture and was a very important event for many inhabitants of the Republic. The helicopter with the mummy was met in the airport of Gorno-Altaisk by the official representatives of the Government of the Altai Republic, headed by Yuri Antaradonov acting for the Chairman of the Government at that moment (Novosti Gornogo Altaya 2012). Many ordinary people were also eagerly awaiting and preparing for the return of their progenitor. Rituals were held before her return and once returned, a ceremony was held on the spot where she was excavated 19 years earlier. During the ceremony, shamans asked the spirits of the mountains to calm down (RIA Novosti 2012a).
The official inauguration of the museum took place a few days after the initial return, on 26 September 2012. The event attracted a big crowd and as well as representatives of the republican authorities, the chairman of Gazprom Alexey Miller also participated in the ceremony. After a traditional Altaian rite of consecration (burning juniper smoke), the museum was opened for public (Novosti Gornogo Altaya 2012). The repatriation and opening of the new museum was both a momentous episode in the recent history of the Altaian nation and a PR stunt serving the corporate image of Gazprom, receiving coverage on the republican and federal TV-channels. Today, the museum contains finds from different excavations, a reconstruction of the burial chamber and some replicas of the finds kept in Novosibirsk. Because the majority of the Altaians are against her exhibition, the Ice Maiden is not publicly displayed.

In general, the vast majority of the local people, regardless of their ethnicity, positively perceived the return of the Altai Princess. The return and the financing of a new museum about Altai’s past and culture pleased many of the inhabitants of the Republic, and as a result, the relation with the IAE SBRAS is now less fraught. Despite considering the repatriation as a significant step, the political elite and the population of the Altai Republic do not see it as the final victory in the big struggle for the restitution of the Altaian historic and cultural heritage. First, representatives of local authorities insist that all archaeological materials held in Saint Petersburg and Novosibirsk should be resituated (Konstantinov,
pers. communication 21-06-2013). Second, the belief that the mummy should be reburied still exists among a significant number of Altaians.

The archaeologists of the IAE SBRAS also reacted to the repatriation of the Ukok Princess. During a press conference when the Ice Maiden was transported to the Altai Republic, Molidin insisted that there is still a need for excavations of frozen burial mounds, because of the threat caused by global warming. Molodin proposed to resume the research in Altai, starting on some royal mounds in the Karakol valley, the same monuments he was not allowed to excavate in the 1980s. Despite a changed legal framework, the Republic authorities were not willing to support renewed research in the Altai Mountains (Tikov 2012). Their eagerness to continue research alone shows that the archaeologists of the IAE SBRAS have not yet come to terms with the ramifications and limitation of repatriation. Furthermore IAE SBRAS archaeologists continue to publically deny the status of the Ice Maiden as a Princess. Their performance at a recent press conference discloses that there is still no recognition and understanding of the Altaian heritage discourse:

If there were kings, whose burials we attribute to the Pazyryk culture, these were buried near the village of Kulada ... The Ukok Plateau is too far away from this region, a region (referring to area around Kulada) which is interesting because undisturbed burial complexes with permafrost are still preserved there.

(Taco 2012 reporting about press conference at IAE SBRAS)

Two years earlier, when it was already publicly known that the Princess would be resituated, statements made during an interview by the excavators similarly disclose that they still have not come to terms with the indigenous conceptualisation of the Ice Maiden as a subject with whom they share a sociocultural emotional link. The statement below clearly shows that they still only see the Ice Maiden as a scientific object:

We are not indifferent to fate of the object, it is still a unique object. As an object of cultural heritage it belongs to the entire Russian Federation ... The issue of reburial of mummies, as demanded by some of the media and representatives of the population from outside the country, shall not be raised in any case ... [W]e furthermore need to enlist the support of the government of the republic in order to continue archaeological research in the Altai, including Ukok. This is extremely important because global warming has a serious impact on the preservation of these burial complexes, and many of them may simply be lost.

(RAI Novosti 2010 emphasis added)

The archaeologists from the Altai Republic reacted positively to the transfer of the Ice Maiden from Novosibirsk to the Altai Republic. They hope there will be a closer collaboration between the Gorno Altaisk and Novosibirsk archaeologists. This collaboration is imperative because the confrontation between the Novosibirsk IAE SBRAS, the Republican authorities and the indigenous population of the Altai negatively impacted upon the scope of archaeological research in the context of cultural resource management (CRM). In the last decades, the number of expeditions active in the Altai
decreased, although the pace of construction of tourist facilities, especially in the northern regions of the Republic, demanded an increase in archaeological work (Konstantinov, pers. communication 21-06-2013).

7.2 Archaeological heritages in the making: when a historically rooted habitus and changing fields constitute different heritages

7.2.1 When an animistic habitus and gets pulled into a field with new opportunities: the Altaian land-based heritage

Before proceeding to a critical investigation about the way Altaians perceive heritage, I will first briefly reiterate some key aspects of the Altaian habitus and some important structures that define the current social space. In the following subsections I will connect these key aspects of Altaian life with the particular perception of the archaeological finds, ultimately hoping to explain why burials and excavations are stigmatised. Three subsections will investigate how the Altaian habitus, which is in short a vibrant mix of animist dispositions with Soviet structures, defines the valuation of the Ice Maiden. The last subsection aims to explain the fierce Indigenous reactions through framing the animist-Soviet habitus in the restructured social arena in the aftermath of the perestroika and glasnost.

7.2.1.1 Altaians in a changing field: from a tribal pluralistic society to a heterogeneous ‘nation’

As of the 2010 census, Altaians make up one third of the total population of the Republic and predominantly inhabit the rural southern and central parts of the Altai Republic. As with many Indigenous groups throughout the post-Soviet world (Anderson 1998, Anderson 2002, Balzer 1999, Donahoe and Halemba 2006, Glavatskaia 2011, González-Ruiz et al. 2012), they have been striving for cultural recognition and self-determination in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union. Largely driven by Soviet trained Indigenous intellectuals, the Altaians have been promoting, consolidating and reviving their identity and culture in order to create a cohesive Altaian nation. Land rights and ecological activism were an integral part of this struggle. The period of ethno-cultural nationalism was very intense in the early 1990s (Broz 2009, Halemba 2006), leading to the birth of a reshaped Altaian culture and national identity (Tyuhteneva 2009: 25-54). The struggle for concrete Indigenous rights and self-determination was however less fruitful.
The federal government, until now, abstains from integrating international standards, because of the reluctance to provide Indigenous peoples the right over land and the resources it contains, and fear for ethnic instability similar to Chechnya and Ossetia (Donahoe et al. 2008: 1009).

The concept of the Altaian nation is itself an artificial Soviet relic, created as a pragmatic necessity to ensure the Socialist Revolution and subsequent stability of the Soviet ‘empire’ (Donahoe et al. 2008: 995, Shnirelman 1996, Slezkine 1994). Indigenous ‘nations’ were invented, consolidated and linked to geographical areas by dubious Soviet ethnographers and archaeologists (e.g. Potapov 1969), using a ‘primordial’ approach to ethnogenesis and culture (Tishkov 1992, Tishkov 1997). In such an approach, objective geographical, genetic, cultural and linguistic similarities between different agents are seen to underpin and distinguish ethnic groups and not the socially constituted sense of shared ethnic identity (Broz 2009: 51-55, Shnirelman 1996: 1-2, Jones 1997: 65-72). Although many Altaians perceive themselves as part of a larger single national group and the sharp kinship divisions have disappeared, there are still considerable differences. Especially during the 1980s and 1990s, the Altaian nation was still not a homogeneous and inclusive group (Broz 2009, Halemba 2006, Tyuhteneva 2009). In order to pursue external legitimation, it was important to develop a strong and cohesive national identity. Major efforts were made to strengthen a sense of ‘Altaianess’ through institutionalizing cultural markers such as language and religion (see Halemba 2003, Halemba 2008a, Tyuhteneva 2009). As will be elaborated below, appropriating cultural heritage was an integral part of this venture.

As with many Indigenous peoples (Gilbert 2010, Nabokov 2002: 131), contemporary Altaian identity, history, culture and place should be conceptualised as an interwoven holistic system. The venerated environment is a constant point of reference. It is the core of their heritage, their ancestral homeland which is linking them to their past. During fieldwork, interlocutors often commented that everything in Altai is connected. All aspects of everyday life are lived and interpreted through the indefinite people-land prism (Halemba 2006).

### 7.2.1.2 Funerary practice and the unity of people and land

The traditional Altaian funerary practice and general perception of the dead also has to be read through the indefinite animist people-land unity. Ancestors and burial places are part of the Altai. Even when one dies, the connection between the homeland and people should be maintained at all costs. Excavation or looting disturbs this balance and it is believed that misfortunes subsequently can affect the living. Burial monuments and artefacts have a supra-natural meaning and particular rules and injunctions apply. Several interlocutors told me that they avoid burial mounds because of the particular energy they contain. For example when foraging, they do not collect berries from the shrubs growing on the mounds, try to avoid crossing them when riding on horseback, and even during
collectivisation they sometimes deliberately avoided them with their tractor. One of my interlocutors told me about her experience after a visit to the local museum where some finds (no human remains) from a nearby burial mound are displayed:

There is a museum in the village of Karakol containing excavated finds. Once I visited it but I was not able to stay for a very long time. It did not feel good when I was inside; you have to leave the past alone.

(INTERNATIONAL/BB/ON/001)

Around 60% of the Indigenous households assessed in 2011 told me that they believe that burial places should be conceptualised as a part of the connection between the world of Erlik and the world of Uch Kurbistan. Uch Kurbistan is the master of the world of the living, Erlik is the master of the spirits inhabiting the lower world. Spirits connected with Erlik are often associated with misfortunes, illnesses and weakness. When something does not go as planned, people will refer to this as the work of Erlik’s spirits. Because disturbing a burial place disturbs the connection between the lower and the upper world, Erlik’s spirits inhabiting burial places can become angry and harm the living. It is also believed that if people frequent burial places or think too much about the dead, the spirits inhabiting those places may like it and take the soul of other people to the world of Erlik and cause further misfortunes. Before Altaians were forced to settle in villages with a Russian style cemetery, only old people were allowed to treat the dead. Subsequently, these elders bury the body in a remote place in the landscape and everybody has to forget where the dead were buried. Young people were not allowed to participate in the ritual, because the spirits connected with the dead harm the living, and these young people still have their whole life ahead of them.

Nowadays, despite the influence of the Russian funerary culture, the unity between the dead and land must be maintained and the dead are avoided and stigmatised. Such a particular position is a regional phenomenon. In the adjacent Mongolian regions, as noted by Caroline Humphrey (1995), the dead are stigmatised and people do not want to know where people are buried. In addition, Humphrey mentions that her interlocutors are against excavations, they do not want the archaeologists to discover the burial place of Changes Khan (Humphrey 1995: 154). In neighbouring Khakasia, similar values and beliefs are attached to the dead and their possessions (Anderson 1998).

Most misfortunes are however relatively harmless and only locally discussed. The connection of the fate of the Ukok excavations in this context is however extraordinary. The excavations were connected to a myriad of misfortunes, some relating to events taking place far from Altai (shelling of the Russian White House on 4 October 1993). Furthermore, the belief in the misfortunes was not limited to Kosh Agach, but spread across the whole Altai and dominated many everyday conversations. The idea that excavating and looting results in misfortunes and revenge from the spirits of that particular place, is clearly rooted in their shamanistic and animist worldview and is commonly believed amongst the Altaians. Some interlocutors said “we know that
scientifically it is not possible that desecrating burials results in an earthquake, but we have to believe it”, something Agnieszka Halemba (2008b) also noted in her work about the initial reactions after the earthquake.

7.2.1.3 Indigeneity in the Altaian society; Genealogical vs. Relational mode of ancestry

The ontological unity between people and land does not only define the funerary practice and stigmatisation of the dead, but it deeply permeates any aspect of life. Altaian animism/shamanism is not a religious framework but a philosophy and epistemological framework. The world is read and acted upon through a different *habitus* that is structured around the intense connection with the land. Similarly, ancestry is not understood through scientific variables, but through shamanist principles.

Yet many Altaians would highly value biogenetical links with the Ice Maiden. Despite the results of DNA-research and objective statements of the scientific community, Altaians persist in perceiving the Princess as their direct progenitor (Broz 2009, Halemba 2008b). This discloses that a different way of reasoning and constructing knowledge is at work, one that is not strictly organised around positivism and Kantian rationalism. Being Altaian is determined by the link between the Altai and the people inhabiting it: all people with a common stance to the land and that dwell or dwelled the Altai are considered as Altaian. Historical migrations, DNA or physical anthropological difference are not markers of relatedness, but the Altai as geographical and venerated space and homeland is. As underlined by Broz (2009: 47) “Altaians have always lived in the Altai and all ancient burials found in the Altai belong to direct ancestors of contemporary Altaians”. This discloses a particular approach to ancestry, indigeneity and time in general. As illustrated by Tim Ingold’s (2000: 132-151) theory of ancestry, the genetic discourse is not the only way to define relatedness. Ingold’s theoretical framework was critically applied by Broz (2008) to the Altaian context. Without elaborating on Broz’s (2009) remarks, the general basis of Ingold’s (2000) differentiation between a *genealogical* and *relational* mode of indigeneity offers a starting point to understand how both Altaians and Russian scientists perceive ancestry and ethnicity. The *relational model* suggests that relatedness can be drawn from attachment with place and land, while the *genealogical* mode of ancestry is largely based on etic biogenetic, linguistic and cultural attributes (Ingold 2000: 132-151). Similarly to many Native American tribes, the perception of history is characterised by a pre-eminence of geography over chronology (Nabokov 2002: 131). Everything in Altai is connected, no matter how old.

7.2.1.4 The Sovietisation of the Consciousness

The Altaian worldview and epistemology is on the first sight characterised by a rather traditional indigenous attachment to the environment. People and land cannot be considered as ontologically separate, the land is part of the Altaian personhood. However, many Soviet structures are also deeply embedded in the Altaian *habitus*. Near three entire
generations of Soviet policy, operationalised through the collective farms and boarding schools, has colonised the consciousness (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991) of almost every Altaian. In relation to cultural heritage and the Ukok conflict, three important interrelated aspects of the Altaian society have to be understood here: the sense of an Altaian ethnic identity and interlinked Soviet imposed ethnic boundaries, cultural heritage as symbolic capital and the value of science.

First, the sense of a shared Altaian ethnic/national identity is itself an artificial Soviet relic. Although at the end of the Russian Empire there was some growing ethnic awareness across tribal boundaries, when the Bolsheviks took over in 1922, the indigenous people were ultimately still fragmented and had no sense of common Altaian ethnicity. This changed during the Soviet Union. The name ‘Altaian’ was only introduced when people were designated an ethnicity on their passport. In adopting this ethnic category the Altaians also embraced some of the underlying markers of ethnic identity used by the Soviet Union. Subsequently these markers were also conceived by the Altaians as defining characteristics of group membership. As noted by Victor Shnirelman (2012), Soviet style nationalism and identity politics are still dominating the former Socialist space, including the activism of indigenous contexts. Objective ‘Soviet’ cultural markers such as language, material culture and the sense of a shared past are still appropriated to create and consolidate ethnic boundaries, both by federal and regional governments (Shnirelman 1995, Shnirelman 1996, Shnirelman 2012). In Altai, the sense of a shared glorious past (Broz 2009, Mikhailov 2013), language (Tyuhteneva 2009) and religion (Halemba 2003, Halemba 2008a) was similarly important and used by local leaders and intelligentsia - who had a Party background (Mikhailov 2013, Tyuhteneva 2009) - to consolidate the Altaian national identity in the aftermath of the Soviet Union. These intelligentsias could successfully pursue their agenda because their Soviet background was more in touch with the Soviet structures that were still governing the socio-political arena. To a certain extent, animist principles focusing on the land-people unity and institutional essentialist ethnic boundaries are fused, in order to gain both internal and external group legitimation. The availability to mobilise these markers of identity is therefore perceived as very important.

Second, interrelated with these inherent Soviet identity politics, the highly selective mobilisation of heritage as symbolic capital is also something that is inherited from the Soviet Union. During the Soviet period, glorious historic narratives were cultivated and connected with archaeological objects as a tool to confederate different tribes in a new nation. This was no different in the Altai Republic, where publicly communicated archaeological investigations in the 1920s and 1930s were aimed at raising public consciousness and rooting the Altaians into the past (Mikhailov 2013: 39-41). An awareness of a ‘glorified archaeological past’ in the context of Altaian national identity especially crystallised through the gradual development of an indigenous intelligentsia and growing education standards throughout the 1970s-1980s. Magnificent finds were popularised and connected with traditional Altaian epic tales (Mikhailov 2013: 44). So, the
indigenous Altaians were able to attach values to archaeological objects that were diametrically opposed to the more objectivist Soviet stance. A large part of their discourse and politicised use of the past as a tool for ethno-national consolidation is an sich a Soviet inherited structure.

Third, Altaians should not be considered as subjectivist obscurantists that stand diametrically opposed to insights provided by science. Altaians are not anti-science and have a high regard for scientific knowledge and scientists, even if these contradict traditional beliefs. Community meetings and presentations about archaeological surveys or rescue excavations were always characterised by a big turnout and participants attached considerable importance to the presented insights and results. On many occasions, interviews would end up with interlocutors inquiring about random scientific topics that ranged from global warming to plate tectonics. This interest in science frames in the Soviet past. As touched upon earlier, during Soviet times science was an integral part of national pride, ideology, and an imperative prerequisite for socio-economic development. Until its dissolution, the Soviet Union was the country with the world’s largest scientific establishment, and the importance of science importance to the well-being of the state was widely acknowledged and emphasised at all levels of Soviet politics and education (Graham 1993, Graham and Dezhina 2008). Very often, interlocutors who laid connections between misfortunes and excavations explicitly acknowledged that it is scientifically impossible for spirits to cause earthquakes, but they feel that they have to accept these connections because these are an integral part of their traditional worldview. Interestingly, albeit most Indigenous respondents were against excavations, directly referring to the negative impact of a very long history of invasive excavations, over a third firmly approved scientific excavations. A very common argument was “excavating is good for science. It is necessary for understanding our past and culture”, which is related to the Indigenous regard for scientific and disciplinary insights, which is connected to in the historically rooted validation of science and expert knowledge. Marjorie Balzer (1999: 167-168) similarly argues in her thick ethnography of the northern Siberian Khanty that many Indigenous people have lost part of their intuitive shamanistic ways of knowing through Soviet and post-Soviet education and have adopted logic and objectivity. Also, through overcoming the hysteresis between the field and the habitus, the Altaians have learned to deal with the government’s knowledge system and its particular way of argumentation based on objectivity and expert knowledge.

Scientific proof and support is part of the Altaian way of structuring knowledge and explaining the world around them. However, at the same time, shamanistic connections are also still important to explain particular events and phenomena in the world. This difficult combination of two hardly reconcilable knowledge systems might lie at the basis of the existing popularity of pseudo-science amongst the Indigenous population and more specifically amidst Indigenous leaders. Pseudo-scientists are known to employ a scientifically structured approach, based on experiments and modern equipment, to prove
supra-natural phenomena. Such evidence for supra-natural phenomena, which is on the first sight structured on scientific data, has the potential to convince the broader Indigenous community (whose education is still limited) of the legitimacy of particular traditional ontologies and worldviews. For local leaders it is also an instrument that enables them to consolidate or improve their position in society. As noted above, are occultism, obscurantism and new age-like groups on the rise in Russia, making these pseudo-scientific validations potentially valuable for external legitimation.

During the past 15 years, my colleagues and I have witnessed or heard about many cases in different regions across Altai, where pseudo-scientists produced ‘scientific proof’ - whether or not on behalf of local leaders - to confirm the supra-natural nature of particular events. As archaeologists, we mostly encountered cases where pseudo-scientists, who were often researchers at different Russian universities, were employed by local leaders to provide proof for the energetic nature of archaeological monuments and the potential threat of excavations. My own experiences in the ethno-cultural Karakol Park provide a prominent example:

In 2010, spiritual leader and administrator Danil Mamyev asked me to assist him with protecting the sacred burial mounds of the Karakol valley. As this was one of the central aspects of my research, I was glad to participate in such a venture. I suggested that I could provide him with a brochure for tourists, a website and information signs, and in a later stage we could develop a long-term management plan. Mamyev stated that he was not really interested in such things and said it was more important for him to convince the public of the sacred nature of the park and the necessity of using traditional rituals. Some days later, Mamyev and a researcher of Moscow University approached me and insisted that I would help them find somebody who could do a magnetic geophysical survey of the park. When I suggested that I could bring them in contact with some university colleagues who are specialists in detecting archaeological sites, their interest quickly cooled down.

When I returned to the administration of the park a year later, the same researcher of Moscow University (and two of her students) were doing fieldwork in the park and explained me that she was using the latest technologies to study how people perceive the environment. I was literally stoked and thought that she was applying some kind of ‘eye-tracking’ (cf. Duchowski 2002) technique that has already provided important insights in the way people visualise landscape. My enthusiasm was short-lived after her team did an experiment on our driver, Sergei Ivanovich. They set up a complex device connected to a computer and Sergei had to press his thumb on a button. That’s how the software device calculated his aura, which, according to the ‘scientists’, provided important insights in the way the human body responded to the environment. Mamyev was enthusiastic about this research, as well as an Altaian member of the team who wanted to participate in the ‘scientific’ experiment. A few days later, I saw Mamyev and the team of ‘scientists’ working in the village and doing experiments on Indigenous villagers.
When I was looking for information about pseudo-science in Altai, I accidentally discovered a lecture of Mamyev, presented at a conference at Rutgers University in 2012 about cultural landscapes\(^\text{13}\) (United States). During this lecture, titled "Understanding cultural landscapes (sacred sites) from indigenous and modern science perspectives, challenges of their protection and conservation: Case study of Uch-Enmek Ethno-natural Park", he insisted that research has proven that archaeological monuments have special powers. Consequently, the only way to manage landscape, burial sites and sacred places in it is through traditional rituals and knowledge. During this presentation Mamyev backed his arguments through a scientific framework (figure 7-4), he used data collected with sophisticated instruments and he presented his finding in a scientific manner. To demonstrate the energetic nature of burial mounds, magnetic geophysical data was used and the impact of the special magnetic energy of humans was studied, using the above mentioned aura measurement device. Based on his skilfully presented data, one of Mamie’s key conclusions was that that burial mounds were built to store energy and excavating these could harm the living. Countering Molodin, Mamyev also insisted that archaeological excavations cause global warming.

During fieldwork in both 2010 and 2011, some interlocutors referred to Mamyev’s tests and told me that they were aimed at providing scientific proof about the energetic nature of Altaian sacred places and archaeological monuments. Several interlocutors insisted that they believed Mamyev’s theory and one interlocutor told me:

Danil (Mamyev) says that burial mounds are sacred places, they are special energy nodes, they contain special energy comparable to acupuncture points in the human body. Burial mounds are supra-natural and should be treated like that

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\(^\text{13}\) This lecture can be seen on: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ar7ky0d58LE
The above case study does not only emphasise that heritage management is fundamentally about managing meanings attached to heritage, it also shows that Indigenous spiritual leaders can embrace scientific frameworks to seek legitimation for particular theories, in order to pursue their personal agenda. It also shows that scientific frameworks are an integral part of the validation of knowledge. This case study, as with many other examples of the application of pseudo-science, demonstrates that just as spiritual explanations are very important, scientific data and insights have become an integral part of the interpretation and explanation of the world. For the Indigenous people, Intuition alone has become insufficient to explain why a certain event is connected with a particular spiritual process. There is a perceived need for experimental validation, and disclosing epistemological structures inherited from European knowledge systems.

7.2.1.5  A tabula rasa of the field: new opportunities and sociocultural unrest

Whereas the previous subsections have looked at the impact of the historically constituted habitus on the ways in which the Ice Maiden as part of the Altaian material culture has become permeated with sociocultural meanings, this subsection will examine the particular impact of post-Socialist field conditions and will explain the ways that archaeological objects are perceived and used within this social context. As noted in the introduction, heritage objects should be conceptualised as cultural goods or commodities, ‘things’ that become important because socio-culturally grounded values are engrained in them. These values are often communally shared or selectively constructed by other agents and, as a result, they also become a type of capital, where ownership over these commodities is perceived as symbolically important. The Altaian worldview alone cannot explain the vigour of the reactions or the extraordinary extent of the connected misfortunes and supra-regional reactions to the case of the Ice Maiden. Why the Altaians suddenly reacted so publicly is intimately tied to the political reforms of the 1980s that heralded more openness in society. The cultural, educational, political, economical and ideological fields, and the power relations governing society were restructured, providing both new possibilities and uncertainties. This dialectic opposition between new possibilities and opportunities and social insecurity and anxiety lies at the basis of the political actions and public opposition in the case of the Ice Maiden.

As in many post-socialist societies, Altai underwent very difficult times throughout the 1990s, which impacted upon economic, social and spiritual life. Manduhai Buyandelgeriyn (2007: 137-142) described how the difficult post-Soviet years in Mongolia brought a lot of people to the shamans. Drawing parallels with the similar post-colonial context in Africa, Buyandelgeriyn argues that economic uncertainty and consequent social anxiety are a breeding ground for spiritual anxiety and ontological unrest. Similarly, the conversion of the Soviet-Union into neo-liberal privatised Russia left the Altai Republic with a collapsed economy and a destroyed system of state support. This collapse (razval)
did not solely impact upon the basic modes of substance but effected a broader breakdown of well-being, ethics, morality and responsibility (Halemba 2006: 54). Ontological uncertainty in the present, conjoined with a particular shamanist worldview, may have triggered spiritual anxiety that contributed to myth-forming about the Ukok Princess and the interrelated misfortunes it caused.

On the other hand, power and subsequent employment of the past as an authoritative resource (or symbolic capital; cf. Giddens 1984, Bourdieu 1990) is imperative for any group striving for both internal consolidation and external recognition and subsequent empowerment. European nationalism of both 19th and early 20th century and the aftermath of decolonisation from the 1960s onwards illustrated that the past has a universal and timeless political value (Kohl 1998: 233). In the post-socialist world, the appropriation of heritage and history further expanded and various nationalities (Kaiser 1995, Kaplonski 2004, Shnirelman 1995, Shnirelman 1996), driven by Indigenous intellectuals, quickly employed heritage as an integral part of their ethno-nationalistic activism, largely maintaining a primordial stance to identity and heritage. As with other post-colonial contexts, the imperative to agitate for control over archaeological heritage was clearly driven by cultural and political motives (Matsuda and Okamura 2011, Smith 2006: 288-295). A shared glorified past is essential for any transitional nation, striving for external and internal legitimation. It establishes a metaphorical kin group, a kind of extended family in which its members have both a sense of relatedness and otherness with neighbouring or competing groups (Eriksen 1993, Shnirelman 2012: 33). This was imperative within the context of the Altaian ethno-cultural revival where there was an active search for much needed markers of collective identity andethnicity in addition to language and religion (Tyuhteneva 2009: 97-101). Publicised efforts to appropriate the ‘Altaian past’ and opposing the power of the archaeologists, symbolising the colonial politics and power relations of the Soviet union, should be understood as a political act directed towards constituting a collective agency and countering the potential impact of tribalism and regionalism (Shnirelman 2012: 17). Besides overcoming the intrinsically heterogeneous nature of the Altaian society, gaining control over the past should also be seen as a reaction against a colonial and colonised past. In general terms, ‘colonial past’ refers to a period of suppression of Indigenous needs and worldview by a dominant or colonising power. More explicitly, it refers to a ‘past’ that was metaphorically controlled by the colonisers as an ideological tool within their essentialist colonial discourse to justify and rationalise their actions and policies (Liebman 2008: 6-7, Smith 2006: 281-282).

Mythical and metaphorically strong figures, which are from a historic point of view not necessarily important, are often popular symbols in the nationalistic discourse of a group and must be appropriated at all costs. As illustrated in research in Europe and beyond about the use of historical figures in creating national narratives (Péporté 2006, Péporté 2011, Warmenbol 2010), specific attributes of persons are magnified and linked with the needs in the present, provoking a sense of continuity and pertinence of current
problems (Eriksen 2001: 292). Legitimisation over such symbolically important figures and references to a glorified past are of course of pivotal importance. According to Smith (2006: 295), “The capacity to control symbolically important heritage is a performative and political act in the negotiation of political legitimacy”. The Altai Princess is such symbolic heritage, her symbolic importance is multidimensional.

- Because of her unique preservation and remarkable grave goods, the Princess is an exemplary figure of a glorious past and lifestyle inhabited by spirited nomadic warriors and heroes who are mostly at the centre of Altaian epics (Vinogradov 2003). Although nomadism *sensu strictu* has largely been destroyed during Soviet times, the idealised nomadic lifestyle (i.e. movement throughout the land) is still very important (Halemba 2006). In one way the narrative of the Ukok Princess and Scythian culture symbolises an unspoiled authentic pre-Soviet nomadic lifestyle where people’s lives were in symbiosis with the landscape, a lifestyle that is now undermined by economic reforms and land-related issues. This presents the ancient nomads as bearers of a higher culture who, in the light of current ecological problems, prefer a more desirable way to live. During a discussion about the ecological pressures Altai is currently facing, a member of an influential family of the Karakol valley commented:

> Our land is not made for economical developments such as agriculture and pipelines. In the past our Turkic and Scythian ancestors understood nature and the balance between people and nature. They had respect for nature. When the Soviets came, they decided how nature should be, invested a lot of money in reshaping the landscape for economical production. But the landscape was not made for such economical production and the system collapsed.

(INT/BB/ON/002)

- Privileged stewardship and ownership over own archaeological heritage provides symbolic authority to take contemporary sociocultural and identity related issues into their own hands, thus providing cultural legitimacy. The ability to control and direct the processes of cultural heritage management is an acknowledgement of a group’s particular heritage discourse. It furthermore enables a group to study and write the history of their own culture, and through public education it also provides power to selectively cultivate collective memories. Laurajana Smith and Emma Waterton (2009) similarly argued that having an independent heritage policy and archaeological service enables people to create their own heritage and identity:

> Cultural heritage management, archaeological policy and museum curation/exhibition are all processes in which meaning is made and maintained. These processes can be seen as ‘heritage-making’, as they are themselves creating values and narratives about the past that underpin the identities of communities of expertise.

(Smith and Waterton 2009: 138)
Controlling the narrative of the Ice Maiden can also be seen as one part of a broader struggle to overcome surviving post-colonial structures in the Altai Republic that are still affecting the fate of the Altaians. The polemic surrounding her removal and the repatriation refusal that followed made the Ice Maiden a political exile, symbolic for the oppressive Soviet days and therefore serving as an active axiom of continuing colonialism in the present.

In brief, the specific characteristics of Altaian funerary practice, combined with the socio-economic arena within which contemporary life is carried out, the indefinite land-based worldview of the Altaian population, their relational mode of ancestry and historical relations with science provide important insights in the historically evolved Altaian habitus. The interplay of this habitus with an altered and challenging social arena explains the Altaians’ fierce - publicly voiced - reactions towards the archaeologists. The heritage discourse of the Altaians is not only a politicised nationalistic reaction, nor merely a historically embedded traditional animistic land-based conceptualisation of the past, but it is both. A conceptualisation and appropriation of the past, heritage is continually being made through a highly interactive interplay between the Altaian-Soviet imbued habitus and a radically changed and challenging post-socialist field. The insights presented here about the perception of ancestry and burials identifies obligations and strategies for a collaborative heritage practice in multi-cultural Russia, and underscores the importance of comprehensive ethnographic investigations of the involved stakeholders.

7.2.2 Homo Archaeologicus: Institutionalised archaeology in a decentralizing space

Although I have been quite critical about the particular discourse and actions of the archaeologists (particularly the IAE SBRAS), it is neither my goal to demonise nor depict them as backward conservative neo-colonialists. Neither bad will nor backwardness, but rather historically rooted dispositions and power relations lie at the basis of the particular reactions of the archaeologists and prominent academics, such as Nikoli Makarov and Vyachislav Molodin – whose role and discourse if comparable to that of the Altaian intelligentsia, to the case of the Ice Maiden. As illustrated by similar research on archaeological conflicts in the United States and Australia (McGuire 2008, Smith 2004, Watkins 2003b, Watkins 2005, Zimmerman 1996), the discourse and actions of the archaeologists examined in the context of this research are not that dissimilar to the Indigenous ones and need to be conceived sociologically. The archaeologist and the broader archaeological community is socially constituted, and must be understood through thinking tools borrowed from the social sciences. Although there are some considerable differences, Pierre Bourdieu’s critical appraisal of French academia in his
‘Homo Academics’ (Bourdieu 1988) is applicable to Russian archaeology and archaeological community worldwide. Based on his research, this subsection we will investigate the homo archaeologicus!

These different structures and the power relations that constitute the homo archaeologicus’ specific heritage discourse will be scrutinised through critical discourse analysis of the reactions of archaeologists to the Altai Princess, their professional ethical code and cultural heritage legislation. More specifically such an analysis will be based on a hermeneutic reading of reactions in the popular press, written sources and my own experiences with archaeologists from both the IAE SBRAS and Gorno Altaisk State University. Before proceeding to an appraisal of the events surrounding the Altai Princess I will first briefly discuss some of the main elements of the habitus and field conditions of Russian archaeology.

7.2.2.1 Science in a Collapsing Field: a challenged doxic status and ideology

Russian archaeology can be regarded as a long and well-established discipline with early interests dating back to 16th-17th century tsarist Russia (Bulkin, Klejn, and Lebedev 1982: 273-274, Trigger 1989: 208-209). Despite a similar European antiquarian background, its organisation, epistemology, internal hierarchy, standards, and relation with the public nowadays is completely different than any other archaeology, and can only be understood through the historical trajectory of tsarist and especially Soviet science (Graham 1993, Graham and Dezhina 2008) and the changing social, political and economic structures throughout history. During the Soviet Union, science and archaeology was an integral component of the highly centralised state. Scientists and especially members of the highly prestigious Academy of Science were held in high regard and some had real and far-reaching political and administrative power (Graham 1993, Graham and Dezhina 2008). As with other disciplines in the Russian sciences, archaeology was a well-established and generously funded academic discipline. By the mid-1980s the Soviet Union had one of the most developed archaeological communities of the world (Kradin 2011, Trigger 1989: 207). Throughout the Soviet period an increasing number of expeditions were organised and numerous reports, research articles and other scholarly works were published (Bulkin, Klejn and Lebedev 1982: 275-279). Spearheaded by the institutes of the Academy of Science, countless prospections and excavations were carried out from the banks of the Amur in the Far East to the medieval cities on the shores of the Baltic Sea (Klejn 2012: 3-9).

That the archaeological network of the Soviet Union was so vast and generously subsidised can be related to two specific elements. First, as noted above, archaeological knowledge served as the ‘rough data’ to retrace the historical trajectories of the many ethnic groups of the Soviet Union and reorganise its different peoples in ethno-territorial
groups (Kohl 1998, Shnirelman 1995, Shnirelman 2012). Second, as one of the first nations in the world the Soviet Union had an elaborate CRM framework (Bulkin, Klejn and Lebedev 1982: 277). Already from the mid 1950s onwards, (state owned) construction companies had to contract archaeologists (mostly through the Academy of Science) and pay for rescue excavations. The building boom (dams, swamp drainage, railways, housing...) during the subsequent years quickly resulted in an unprecedented amount of archaeological data, excavations and professional archaeologists (Bulkung, Klejn and Lebedev 1982: 277, Klejn 2012: 35). It also created a need for new standardised methodologies and frameworks to process these large amounts of data, resulting in stricter objectivity and logic structuring of the research (Klejn 2012: 35). The attention directed towards archaeology from the government did not only mean that there was a lot of money for archaeological research, it also meant that archaeology became institutionalised and deeply entrenched in the administrative framework of the government. This institutionalisation did not only entail that the archaeological discipline was impacted by the discourse of the government, it also ensured that the objectivistic values and ideals of the discipline became embedded in the administration. The archaeological discourse became the authorised/official heritage discourse (cf. Harrison 2012, Smith 2006) and the ownership of the past was given to the experts.

7.2.2.2 Logic positivism versus regionalist subjectivism: an objectivist preservation ethic embodying scientific authority

Many archaeologists and heritage researchers have stressed the importance of understanding the theoretical underpinnings and ethics of a particular archaeology if one wants to understand (and mediate) its organisation and relationship with the wider public (Matsuda and Okamura 2011, McGuire 2008, Meskell 2002, Smith 2004, Ucko 1995). Theoretically Russian archaeology is a mix of culture-historical, Marxist and processual archaeology. It is an archaeology characterised by a preoccupation with peopling the past in reference to distinctive essentialist cultures, positivism, universalism and a thirst for quantifiable archaeological data. This particular theoretical approach and the discipline’s changing role within the government has constituted a particular set of principles, ethics and ideals, which underlie the existing conflict over the Ice Maiden. Before moving on to contextualise the core principles of the archaeologists’ habitus within the events connected to the Ice Maiden conflict, I will first discuss the theoretical developments in Russian archaeology and their particular impact on the homo archaeologicus’ mindset. The way these theoretical developments have been translated into a system of ethic principles will also be discussed.
**Culture-historical matrix**

As noted earlier, Russian science and archaeology finds its roots in late 19th century Europe (Dolukhanov 1995, Klejn 2012: 15, Kradin 2011), the cradle of culture-historical archaeology (Trigger 1989). As with any other archaeology in the world (Shanks and Tilley 1987, Trigger 1989), many ideals of contemporary Russian archaeology are deeply rooted in the culture-historian approach to the past. In culture-historical archaeology the past is peopled by mutually exclusive cultures that are defined by strict markers of ethnicity (material culture, race and economical organisation). Sociocultural developments are not explained by gradual changes in the dialectical exchange between field and habitus but by migrations or cultural diffusions (Smith 2004, Trigger 1989, Ucko 1995). In this approach to the past, the task of the archaeologists is to provide archaeological data/evidence (preferentially from funerary sites) to fuel historic hypotheses and the existence of cultures. Many culture-historian researches, and especially in Russia, are highly descriptive litanies of archaeological finds and how these are positioned towards existing ethnicity related theories.

Despite scepticism in Western archaeology towards this particular approach to archaeology, isolation from the wider scientific community in the first half of the 20th century ensured that the essentialist stance to culture and ethnogenesis was by and large preserved, even reinforced by the politics of the state in the aftermath of the Great Patriotic War (Klejn 2012: 26-55, Kradin 2011 Shnirelman 1995, Shnirelman 2012). A particularly distinctive element of the culture-historical approach in Soviet and Russian archaeology is the emphasis on studies retracing the migrations of contemporary cultures. In the 1960s this pre-occupation of the historical sciences with culture and ethnic studies crystallised in the *ethnos* theory that still is one of the corner stones of Russian archaeology (Shnirelman 2012: 15). Central to this theory of *ethnos* is the claim that ethnicity and identity can only approached through so-called objective *primordial* variables such as blood relations, material culture, language, religion and cultural traits (Kohl 1998: 231, Shnirelman 1996, Shnirelman 2012, Tishkov 1997). Very similar to Ingold’s (2000) *genealogical* model, according to the *ethnos* theory only objectively quantifiable variables govern the way relatedness is perceived, and the case of the Altai Princess DNA serves as a primordial marker that fuelled Nikolai Makarov’s reaction against the claims of the Altaians.

**Processualism in Russian archaeology: strict positivism colonises the consciousness**

An increase in data in the aftermath of new CRM legislation, growing collaboration with the natural sciences, the prestige of science in society and improving contacts with the international field resulted in the 1960s in an increased scientification of archaeological
thinking (Klejn 2012, Kradin 2011), which was also linked to methodological development in New Archaeology (processualism (Klejn 2012: 5), in the more research–orientated universities and Academy of Science. Whereas culture-historical archaeology was inextricably linked with history, processual archaeology enacted both a methodological and theoretical turn and promoted archaeology as an independent science. Theoretically, it reacted against the descriptive and taxonomic nature of culture-historical approach, instead of cataloguing and describing the past based on typological studies it intended to explain the past based on a mix of anthropological theory, holism and deductive reasoning. Methodologically, it was firmly based on the logic of positivism: the need for systematic research, preoccupation with methodology, objective treatment of the past, universalism and proper data collection and processing, emulating developments in the natural science (Smith 2004: 34–35, Trigger 1989).

While theoretically still developing on a firm culture-historian matrix, Russian archaeology embraced these methodological changes of processualism (Klejn 2012). This led to the standards of positivism, empiricism and objectivism - which were already a part of the inherited European enlightenment mindset - further colonizing the consciousness of the Russian archaeologists (Klein 2012, Kradin 2011). There was a heart-felt need to increase the resolution of the image of the past through using better techniques and excavation in order to produce a scientific account of the past. The strict positivism and overload of data through CRM meant that interpretation remained limited and most works today are still highly empirical and descriptive Russian archaeologists Nikolai Kradin (2011: 247) rightfully stated: “[Russian archaeologists] naively believe that the facts by themselves are the most important results of their investigations”. Russian archaeology is still obsessed with gathering quantitative and objective data, through excavation, fuelling their culture-historian research questions. Excavations of funerary contexts are considered as the ideal information sources, yielding primary data about ethnic variables. In order to make reliable interpretations trustworthy data was perceived as absolutely imperative, so preferentially a large number of contexts were excavated to ‘scientifically’ construal the past.

Central to this strand of positivist archaeology is the idea that archaeological objects are merely scientific data and require expert-based treatment. Remnants from the past became part of the archaeological ‘record’. Furthermore, because of the rationalised ‘distance of time’ (cf. Atalay 2006: 284-285), the scientific values of the past superseded any socio-cultural demands. Furthermore, underpinning the positivist approach are the values of objectivity and independent value-free research. As such it is the scientists’ task to protect the scientific record for misappropriation by non-scientists. Together with the firm institutionalisation of the discipline and a privileged role in the cultural research management field (see below), this rationale resulted in a sense of disciplinary authority based on expertise and knowledge. Through this approach archaeologists were presented as the privileged stewards of the past for the benefit of the public (cf. Smith 2004). Similar
to positivist archaeologies, Russian archaeology became governed by a rigid conservation ethic (see Lope 1974) where in situ and optimal ex situ preservation, objectivity and expert knowledge dominated the consensual stance towards cultural heritage objects (Kradin 2011).

Archaeological remains as non-renewable resources: the institutionalisation of the preservation ethic

The idea of the archaeological record as foremost a scientific resource that demands optimal care remains central to Russian archaeology. Cultural objects from the past are seen as both non-renewable and non-negotiable resources, which are essential for the archaeological praxis and must be preserved at all costs. Furthermore, archaeological resources can only be treated in a scientific and objective way. Whereas ethical codes of other settler societies have attention for the broader social context of the past (see below), the positivist responsibility to the archaeological record is the only cornerstone of the current Russian code of ethics. The “Code of Ethics of the Professional Archaeologist” consists of ten basic principles that all relate to the need for good preservation, professional investigation, essentialist objectivity and scientific rigor, further underscoring the positivist baseline of the Russian homo archaeologicus.

Positivism and primordialism versus reburial and animism

Clearly, such historically embedded theoretical precepts and the ethical standards they constitute are hardly reconcilable with repatriation, reburial, or the interpretation and subsequent politicisation of the past based on an animist worldview. A relational stance to ancestry is diametrically opposed to ethnic primordialism and objectivity and is not perceived as a legitimate claim of ancestral affiliation. A moratorium on excavations on the other hand is even more difficult to fathom, especially if the arguments employed alongside the underlying epistemological framework are based on spiritual, ideological and nationalist arguments and not on positivist scientific truths. Furthermore, impeding archaeologists to safeguard the frozen tombs and unique organic finds from disintegration from global warming is seen as antiscientific. As stated in the code of ethics their archaeological record must be protected from any possible (even non-identified) destruction, including natural forces, at all costs. This difficulty to escape own doxic rules and understand Indigenous demands is encapsulated in the earlier quote of Vyachislav Moldin and Natalia Polosmak (1999):
... a prohibition of research on the plateau Ukok research (including archaeological) seems totally unacceptable to us ... we lose the opportunity to obtain a fundamentally new scientific knowledge.

(Molodin and Polosmak 1999)

Reburial is even more difficult to fathom as it involves the deliberate destruction of scientifically important objects. Melodeon’s claims that because of her scientific importance the Ukok Princess transcends Altaian needs has to be similarly understood through the preservation ethic and interconnected value system of Russian Archaeology. In investigating the role of Russian archaeologists in the cultural heritage management of the Russian Sami (border region with Finland), Carl-Gösta Ojala (2009) similarly stated:

I have personally heard comments that it would be a “scientific crime” to rebury human skeletal remains, from well-established and well-respected archaeologists. There are also concerns that it might become “like in the USA” in the future.

(Ojala 2009: 269)

Whereas the Altaians base their claims on relatedness and their animist worldview, the archaeological establishment also bases their authority on their own value system that is governed by scientific rigor, objectivism, professionalism, objectivism and expertise. Logic and verifiable empiricism have become their religion - a religion with very strict dogma. Such an archaeological ethic invokes a sense of scientific authority, it becomes impossible to respectfully treat other insights that are structured and grounded on non-positivist principles and communicated through a non-scientific language (Smith and Jackson 2006: 314). In positivistic science only arguments based on adequate data, an appropriate language and well-founded interpretations are accepted. Furthermore, because positivist ideals have become part of their own doxa, scientific insights are often seen as neutral expert knowledge that is there to serve the broader public. Politicised supra-natural interpretations are discarded as opposed to these Kantian standards, and are perceived as anti-scientific, obscurantist and subsequently lower in hierarchy. In combination with a particular institutionalisation, expert knowledge invokes a sense of disciplinary authority, experts versus non-experts, scientific knowledge as the standard. In summary, the public statement of the discoverers of the Ukok Princess that they refuse to accede to the “whims of a small group of people far removed from science” (Molodin and Polosmak 1999) embodies their strict normative scientific objectivist and positivist approach. Such a strict positivist stance towards the past and the world is hardly reconcilable with the realities of the post-Soviet social space.

7.2.2.3 Institutionalisation and consolidation of a doxic status: archaeology in a social vacuum

Throughout her critical appraisal of American and Australian archaeology Laurajane Smith (2004: 195) stressed that two interlinked elements are important if one wants to understand the cultural identity and discourse of a particular archaeology: its theoretical...
underpinnings and the institutionalisation and official acknowledgement of the underlying norms of that theory through CRM and politicised identity politics. Whereas in the previous subsection I have especially investigated the impact of theory, in this section I aim to address the particular institutionalisation and doxic status of archaeology. As outlined above, Russian archaeology already has a strong sense of disciplinary authority that is inextricably linked with the particular positivist ethic that puts a high priority on expert knowledge and objectivity. Many cornerstones of this ethic, and the privileged expert power over cultural resources it entails, stayed unquestioned and was accepted as part of the doxa not only, not only because of its particular values but also because it became the authorised heritage discourse within a highly centralised bureaucracy. This discourse became the norm through (1) the identity politics of the Soviet government, (2) organisation of science in the bureaucratic Soviet Union and Russia, and (3) the early attention of cultural resource management and rescue archaeology.

Firstly, although the instrumental importance of archaeological knowledge in the particular ethno-national engineering should not be exaggerated (Klejn 2012: 7), the indirect impact of these studies on the archaeological community was significant. Victor Shnirelman similarly argued that today the preoccupation with ethnicity-themed studies and the strict positivist approaches to the past are not the result of bad will but rather became deeply engrained in the Russian archaeological practice through the particular role of the archaeological community during the Soviet Union.

On several occasions, various Western scholars have criticised the ethno-genetic studies carried out by Soviet researchers and inherited by post-Soviet scholarship ... This criticism is poorly understood and negatively perceived by the local archaeologists, and thus they continue to adhere to culture-historical methods based on the primordialist approach. Why? In my view, the issue is neither the local archaeologists “backwardness” nor their aspiration to stubbornly follow Soviet traditions. Instead, this attitude is an inevitable by-product of a political system based on politicised and institutionalised ethnicity ...

(Shnirelman 2012: 15)

Secondly, throughout the Soviet period, a growing reorganisation of fundamental research into prestigious independent disciplinary research institutes that were held in high regard by both the government and broader public, resulted in the area of the Academy of Science in the creation of a strong sense of self-confidence (Graham 1993). In reality the Academy had far-reaching bureaucratic power further consolidating a sense of superiority and legitimacy of their discourse (see Graham 1993 for a critical appraisal of the role of science and the Academy in Soviet and Russian society). In addition, through typical Soviet propagandist rhetoric, outcomes of investigations were always presented in the media as the ‘successes of Soviet archaeology’ (Klejn 2012: 10). Leo Klejn, a critical insider voice, stated that this particular impact of the propagandist party cultivated a strong sense of self-confidence in the merits of the own discipline. Leo Klejn (2012) stated:
At the root of the pride and narcissism of the community of Soviet archaeologists lay their confidence in their exalted missionary role, in their superiority over pre-revolutionary Russian archaeology and indeed world archaeology.

(Klejn 2012: 10)

Together with sufficient resources granted by the state, real bureaucratic privileges and acknowledgement by the government created both a social vacuum and position of oversight, in which theoretical presumptions were conceptualised as the norm and was difficult to overcome. Despite efforts to minimise the impact of the Academy of Science on society (Graham and Dezhina 2008), the opinion of the members of the Academy still has considerable influence, and today they are still the privileged experts (for example providing expertise for mega-projects as pipelines, see Chapter 6).

Thirdly, the archaeologists’ role in the cultural resource management legislation should not be underestimated. Archaeology and the government meet each other in the cultural resource management field, and the particular role for archaeology granted by the government largely discloses to which extent the government recognises and authorises the archaeological ethic and discourse (see McGuire 2008, Smith 2004). As noted by Laurajane Smith (2004: 195) cultural resource management is “ultimately about the management and governance of the meanings and values that the material heritage is seen to symbolize or otherwise represent”. Legal frameworks such as the 1950s legislation that introduces rescue archaeology in the Soviet Union, the code of ethics that is endorsed by the ministry of culture and the 2002 federal heritage law explicitly legitimised the role of archaeological experts in the government supported cultural resource sector. Through official acknowledgement of the privileged stewardship role that scientists should play, the Russian government makes the archaeologists’ heritage discourse the ‘official heritage discourse’.

In short, in their granting of a privileged role to archaeology, its instrumental importance for the ethnic engineering, and the particular CRM legislation in both the Soviet Union and Russian Federation, the government imbued archaeologists and their accompanying discourse with significant power. Bureaucratisation and reorganisation of research in relatively closed research institutes resulted in a social vacuum, subsequently naturalising archaeology’s particular status, resources and the theoretical ideals on which this position was built. Throughout the Soviet Union and existing governmental heritage framework, a doxic status of oversight over the ‘archaeological record’ was constituted. The strict positivist and rationalistic rules governing the archaeological praxis became the unwritten rule of the game, cementing objectivity deep into the archaeological thinking and language.

The roots of the archaeological discourse as the authoritative heritage discourse lay in the Soviet Union and although the Soviet Union has collapsed, expert knowledge is still privileged in contemporary Russia. Illustrative of this is the role of the IAE SBRAS in the
Altai pipeline project, the award of the prestigious State Prize of the Russian Federation and federal laws and standards that explicitly acknowledge the role of expert knowledge.

7.2.2.4 When the world’s largest scientific establishment collides with a radically changed field: the struggle for capital

Through its social status, particular doxa, dominant positivist epistemology and specific accountability to the government, the scientific establishment spearheaded by the Academy of Science has limited experience and no framework to deal with criticism and interests from outside academia. This is hardly reconcilable with the realities of the post-Soviet field in which Indigenous demands, inspired by their particular traditional worldview, became publicly voiced and critically questioned the scientific agenda. Also in broader Russian society, science was encountering a changing context where spiritual beliefs, pseudo-science and obscurantism were on a rise (Lindquist 2000, Lindquist 2002). Science was openly challenged (Rogov 2010: 321) and lost significant socio-political ground. Furthermore, growing regionalism ensured that regional governments started to claim jurisdiction to govern cultural heritage matters themselves and to choose the privileged stewards in the heritage policy. In Altai this own heritage policy even undermined archaeological fieldwork. As often in ethno-cultural struggles in post-colonials spaces, symbolic colonial structures such as the archaeological enterprise that embody colonial values become easy scapegoats (Smith 2004: 23-24, Watkins 2005: 441). Similarly the archaeologists became the “national enemies” (Mikhailov 2013: 45) and regional governments were not on their side.

Additionally, the well-developed and funded archaeological network experienced major difficulties. The devaluing currency ensured that the wages and research budget were worth next to nothing and many projects were forced to stop. In addition, the funding system changed and block funding allowing directors to distribute money independently diminished and archaeological projects became dependent on a highly competitive Western-style grant system and international funding (Chernykh 1995, Graham 1993, Graham and Dezhina 2008). In addition archaeologists were “often humiliatingly dependent on foreign funding” (Klejn 2012: 45). Just as for the Altaians, economical and social uncertainties drastically changed the field for the archaeologists.

Scientists were displaced to this new field, and hysteresis put enormous pressure on their actions. Habitus and field were not in synch anymore and the collapse of the government ensured that the structures governing the rules of the field were not favourable for the scientists; they were loosing their historically embedded position and their capital/resource became appropriated by other players in the field, ultimately forcing them to react. In a way the scientists’ struggle is highly similar to the Indigenous struggle, as it is also about legitimisation and recognition of the culture of science within the broader social arena. In discussing the very comparable Kennewick case (see below) Laurajane Smith (2004: 173) argues:
In this case the human remains became a resource of power and symbolic of not only the cultural identity of American Indians ... but also the disciplinary identity of archaeology as a science. What is highlighted in the claims of archaeological scientists for possession of the Kennewick remains is that these claims are cultural, and that disciplinary identity is created through linking identity to objects in much the same way as objects are linked to cultural identity for Indigenous people.

(Smith 2004: 173)

From the side of the archaeologists the appropriation of the Altai Princess can also be seen as a struggle over their position in the radically changed field, inextricably interlinked to the amount of capital available for exchange. On the one hand, the Ukok plateau is a high-profile archaeological site, appealing to both a multidisciplinary, international and non-scientific public, making it unique economic capital (comparable to the value of other high profile sites as for example Stonehenge). The Ukok project, even during post-exavcation, was an important economic resource that provided Russian scientists national attention, possibilities for international collaboration, publishing (also a new economic resource) and financing. This ultimately enabled archaeologists to keep doing science in one of Russia’s most difficult times. Their research put the archaeology of the broad region on the map, impacting archaeology as a science in Siberia and ensuring its survival. On the other hand, and more importantly, the refusal to accede to repatriation and rejection of the mythologisation of the Altai Princess can also be seen as a struggle over symbolic capital. The symbolic appropriation of the finds in the name of science is a reflection of the value archaeologists hold within its culture and the struggle for these ideals. It is seen as the ‘right thing’ to ensure optimal research and preservation of archaeological remains and artefacts. Its symbolic value also has to be seen within the context of the broader post-Soviet society and the historically situated place of science in Russian society. During the Soviet Union the scientific establishment, including archaeology, had an important social and institutional authority. Ethno-cultural revivals, alternative religious worldviews and also widespread obscurantism and mysticism in Russian society increasingly undermine this position. Various religions, traditional beliefs or other occult movements (even Russian) were ignoring or publicly questioning the applicability of scientific principles. The discourse against the repatriation of the Ukok Princess is permeated with these changing power relations and variable social valuation of scientific insights. The refusal is not dismissal of the viewpoints of the Indigenous groups or religions, but rather a struggle for objectivism and rationalism against a wider backdrop of pseudo-science and obscurantism.

In short, the specific historical trajectory of Russian archaeology and archaeological theory resulted in a particular position towards ethnicity and disciplinary authority, which is diametrically opposed to the Altaian standards and interests and the new structures governing the post-Soviet context. This, in turn, explains why archaeologists from the RAS
discarded Indigenous calls for repatriation using a discourse dominated by rationalism and objectivity. Not malice, but different value systems, a historically rooted colonial language, a particular positivist imbued distance of time, *doxa* and limited experience within an ethno-nationalised democratic *field* of free speech lay at the base of the Ukok Princess conflict. Before the *perestroika* archaeologists were only accountable to the state, and archaeological heritage was merely seen as empirical data, imperative for scientific research, with archaeologists as the privileged owners and stewards. Historically constituted ethical responsibilities are limited to the archaeological ‘data’ and not to possible stakeholders. Limited reforms in science during the 1990s (Graham and Dezhina 2008, Tishkov 1992) and a Soviet imbued agency ensure that the ethos and theoretical underpinnings of Russian archaeology are still largely situated within disciplinary boundaries permeated by objectivity and empiricism. The inherent difficulty to understand the other protagonist is not only a story of different philosophies. Intertwined, the particular dogmatic and *toxic* nature of exact science, the Ice Maiden as symbolic capital important for power, and interrelated *hysteresis* in the *fields* of social underpin archaeologists’ refusal to accede to the Indigenous demands. Thus, the heritage discourse of the archaeologists and interrelated conflict can only be understood as the outcome of the interplay between a historically constituted *habitus*, limited knowledge of the rules of the game of the suddenly decolonised *field* and a struggle for power through appropriation and exchange of *capital*.

7.2.2.5 Postscript: archaeology in a centralizing state

Whereas in the previous sub-sections I have especially elaborated on the impact of the Soviet mindset and the early post-Soviet *field* changes, in this very short postscript I wish to briefly touch upon the impact of the centralisation and de-regionalisation on Russian archaeology, something that will be reiterated in the discussion of this chapter. The more recent political and economical changes are important in understanding the events surrounding the repatriation and Altai pipeline. Firstly, if one looks at the 2002 federal cultural heritage legislation and federal efforts to undermine regional laws one could say that these recent changes in Russia are again in favour of the archaeologists. It seems that structures created by the state are more in synch with the needs of archaeology, Russian archaeology its Soviet background seems all too topical (Klejn 2012: x)!

Despite a better economic climate and growing support for science, changed funding schemes and a general decrease in financial opportunities still afflict archaeology. As noted by Leo Klejn (2012: 47) major state subsidised construction projects and the natural resources boom provide the archaeologists with considerable financial possibilities to organise rescue excavations, resulting in an unprecedented growth in fieldwork and excavations. Both local universities and the larger affiliations of the RAS engage in this
7.3 Repatriation and archaeological ethics in an international perspective: the Kennewick Man and the Lake Mungo burials

Although involving different socio-political contexts, the polemic surrounding the Ukok Princess is comparable to other indigenous cultural heritage management and repatriation struggles (important reviews and edited volumes are: Burke et al. 2008a, Fforde, Hubert and Turnbull 2002, Kakaliouras 2012, McNiven and Russell 2005, Smith and Jackson 2006, Smith 2004, Watkins 2005). Throughout this section I would like to appraise two very similar contested archaeological remains: the Kennewick Man/Ancient One (United States) and the Lake Mungo burials (Australia). Albeit case-by-case judgement should be the basis of any cultural heritage study, insights from other conflicts have the potential to contribute to the understanding of particular processes and to the finding of solutions for the current stalemate.

Both the Kennewick Man and the Lake Mungo burials were considered as milestones in understanding the occupational history of the respective continents. Consequently, some archaeologists and physical anthropologists were prompt to claim that their universal scientific potential superseded Indigenous claims (Chatters 2000, Jones and Harris 1998). At the same time, Indigenous activism was increasingly asserting claims over land and heritage, requesting repatriation. Ultimately the Kennewick Man/Ancient One and the Lake Mungo burials were not only scientific milestones but also cathartic doxa breakers for Australian and American archaeology, illustrating the particular impact of repatriation on archaeological practice. Ultimately, supported by the public opinion, politics and media, repatriation and Indigenous concerns became debatable in archaeological fora (Smith and Jackson 2006, Zimmerman 2005, Zimmerman 1996), impacting the processual conservation ethic of both archaeologies and giving momentum to the development of alternative archaeologies and heritage frameworks (Nicholas and Hollowel 2007), such as community archaeology (Chirikure and Pwiti 2008, Marshall 2002, Tully 2007), community-based archaeology (Greer 2010, Greer, Harrison and McIntyre-Tamwoy 2002), public archaeology (Matsuda and Okamura 2011, Pyburn 2011) and indigenous archaeology (Atalay 2006, Nicholas 2008, Nicholas and Bannister 2004, Nicholas and Hollowel 2007, Silliman 2008, Silliman 2010).
After all, these heritage conflicts potentially provide comparable insights in the impact of indigenous politically imbued cultural heritage activism, role of the public opinion, federal government, social constitution of archaeological ethics and archaeological theory and epistemologies. Both cases will be discussed individually, with particular attention to the context and similarities with the Ukok Princess. These insights do not only provide the reader with a contextualisation of the critical interpretations of the previous sections. In the next section this contextualisation will also be used to address the recent repatriation and the involvement of Gazprom critically. Based on the impact of both the Kennewick Man and the Lake Mungo burials on the respective archaeologies, a potential solution for the current stalemate will be discussed. Importantly, as opposed to the Ice Maiden conflict, both the Kennewick Man/Ancient One and the Lake Mungo Burials did change the archaeological practice and the relationship with the indigenous people. Ultimately, a growing understanding based on much-needed intercultural dialogue transformed archaeology, making the discipline more relevant and responsive to the needs and interests of other agents in the social field (Atalay 2006, Nicholas 2008, Smith and Jackson 2006, Watkins 2005: 435-436, Zimmerman 1996).

7.3.1 The Kennewick Man/Ancient One and NAGPRA: repatriation and archaeological ethics in the United States

In July 1996 an intact skeleton was found by accident near the village of Kennewick (State of Washington). The authorities were contacted immediately and the finds were transferred to a nearby coroner (Burke et al. 2008b). In order to determine whether the finds were recent or pre-contact, physical anthropologist James Chatters was approached. Based on the Caucasian features, he identified the remains as belonging to a European settler. However, a CAT-scan of the remains revealed a cascade point (8,500 BP to 4,500 BP) embedded in his hip. Radiocarbon dates showed that the find was 9,300 years old and in fact one of the oldest intact skeletons of North America. Interestingly, those remains are biogenetically not related to the current Native Americans, who were thought to be the first settlers. As a result, existing theories about the colonisation of the American continent and historical status of the Native Americans were radically challenged (Chatters 1997, Chatters 2000, Taylor et al. 1998). Although, when these pre-contact dates were in the media, the skeletal remains were claimed by local American tribes and in the end confiscated by the government, based on the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) (Burke et al. 2008b). This sparked a conflict between the Native American tribes and the scientific community, who refuted the repatriation because of the universal scientific value of the finds (Chatters 1997, Jones and Harris 1998: 254) and “lack of definitive Native-American characteristics” (Chatters 1997). Despite the fact that the Ministry of Home Affairs supported the Indigenous claims and hoped that
this precedent would turn in favour of the Indigenous people (Smith and Burke 2003: 179, Smith 2004, Watkins 2003b: 274), the court judged after a long legal battle in 2004 that, based on biological grounds, the remains belonged to the scientists (Burke and Smith 2008, Burke et al. 2008a, Burke et al. 2008b, Kakaliouras 2008, Smith and Jackson 2006, Smith 2004). While the debate waged, the Kennewick Man became a widely discussed precedent, radically forcing the archaeologists to re-evaluate their position and responsibilities in society. Although the relationship between archaeologists and native people is still tense, not only indigenous agents fiercely reacted on the actions of the archaeologists. Also an increasing amount of archaeologists started to reconsider previous positions (Nicholas, Jules and Dan 2008). Various contributions to special sessions at conferences, special issues and edited books ensured that the doxic status and positivist principles on which the archaeologists’ discourse was based, became debatable.

Just as the Ukok case, the reactions of both the American archaeologists and the Native American tribes should not be seen as a complete surprise considered the historical evolution of American archaeology. Institutionalisation of positivist archaeological theory and an anti-antiquarism ethos since the late 19th century (Lynott 2003: 18-19) constituted power relations in favour of the archaeological conservation ethic. On the other hand, the Civil Rights Movement in the second half of the 20th century brought the racism in American society in the limelight, including the difficult position of Indigenous peoples. Increasing attention by the public and political community for these difficulties slowly decolonised the social arena, resulting in the legitimation of cultural identity and interlinked epistemologies and ontologies. As such, the conflict of archaeological remains is related to changing field conditions, struggle for symbolic capital and multiple historically entrenched habituses.

Throughout the late 19th and 20th century, historical developments have ensured that objective scientific values and non-sociocultural variables determined whose heritage discourse became the authorised heritage in the United States. A dominant positivist theory and a non-relativist ontology resulted in a homo archaeologicus, who - driven by objectivity - scientificates cultural heritage objects into ‘archaeological resources’ (Atalay 2006, Willcox 2010). Prominent voices such as William Lipe (1974: 13-14) stressed the unique informational value of these archaeological resources, which on the first place demand expert knowledge and qualitative scientific attention. Lipe’s landmark paper (1974) made archaeologists be involved in all aspects of CRM, to ensure an optimal in situ and ex situ preservation of the archaeological record, giving rise to a conservation ethic. In combination with the positivist theory of that time, the concept of archaeological stewardship crystallised (Lynott 1997: 594, McGuire 2008, Smith 2004: 133). The idea of archaeologists as stewards of the past and archaeological record exposes that archaeologists consider themselves as privileged actors, based on their training, credentials and expert knowledge (Lynott 1997: 595). This is a result of the dominant dogmas of processualism that stresses importance of expert knowledge (Watkins 2003b: 274). After
lobbying throughout the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, this conservation ethic and stewardship principle became institutionalised by the influence of CRM and various heritage legislation frameworks.

Just when the archaeologists’ lobbying for a privileged role in CRM started to pay off, Indigenous activism in the context of the American Civil Rights Movement began challenging the various colonial structures that were undermining everyday life and cultural recognition. Archaeology in particular was one of those structures that lay under attack (Atalay 2006, McGuire 2008, Smith 2004, Watkins 2003a: 130-131) and was furthermore perceived as a symbolic enemy (Smith 2004: 23-24). During the colonial period, comparable to Siberia, more than 20,000 remains (McManamon 2002) were collected and stored in museums for racial studies (Atalay 2006, Watkins 2003a, Watkins 2003b). Because of this prior injustice and treatment, the struggle for repatriation of ancestral remains was particularly symbolic. Although the struggle to control their cultural heritage has to be seen as a symbolic political action related to their aspirations in society, demands for repatriation were foremost an emotional and deeply cultural rooted action. Ancestors must be treated with respect in accordance to funerary rituals and animist beliefs. Otherwise, it is believed that the spirit of the dead will affect the well-being of the living (Hamilton and Townsend 2009, Hubert 1994, Hubert and Fforde 2002: 1-2).

In the 1980s critique to the many museums that were holding and displaying skeletal remains, gained momentum and demands for repatriation and reburials further increased (Atalay 2006, Smith 2004, Watkins 2003a, Watkins 2005, Zimmerman 1996). Surprisingly, Indigenous activists had support of the media and the broader public opinion, changing the tide in favour of the Indigenous activists (Zimmerman 1996: 296). Although American archaeology was not entirely blind for the Indigenous demands (McGuire 1992, Trigger 1980, Zimmerman 1989), many archaeologists voiced their opposition and were obstinate to reburial and repatriation (Zimmerman 1996). Repatriation was not only diametrically opposed to the scientific ethos of the archaeologists, it was also hardly reconcilable with the common belief in positivist archaeology that the archaeological record has to be used in a political neutral way (Smith 2004). This political mobilisation of the past is particularly a point of critique of many archaeologists and anthropologists against the Indigenous activists, similarly discarding the claims as political whims (e.g. Jones and Harris 1998). Many archaeologists believed that artefacts, excavations and interpretations would be controlled by radical ethno-nationalists, jeopardizing the scientific integrity of the archaeological record and research, opening the door for religion (Watkins 2003a: 134).

The difficulty to successfully align themselves with the Indigenous demands and to escape their academic cultural vacuum came especially apparent when the Society for American Archaeologists (SAA) passed a policy in 1986, opposing the ‘indiscriminate’ reburial process (Smith 2004: 138, Zimmerman 1996). The failure of archaeology to come to terms with the Indigenous demands forced the federal government to intervene,
resulting in the ratification of NAGPRA (Zimmerman 1996). After almost a century of privileging the archaeological discourse, NAGPRA changed the terms of archaeological research radically. NAGPRA regulated that excavations on federal land involving human remains become dependent on a permit system, based on consultation with the Indigenous communities. It also ensured that universities and museums need to repatriate to the native communities if these communities can demonstrate ‘cultural affiliation’ to those finds and remains (see McManamon 2002 for an overview of the legal details).

The restrictions of this new legal framework came unexpected for many archaeologists. NAGPRA forced the archaeologists for the first time to rethink their prior-held position in the broader cultural resource field, including the principles on which this position was based (Zimmerman 1996). The biggest impact of this legislation was that it forced the archaeologists to communicate with the tribal people, forcing an intercultural dialogue. However these consultations were only minimal in the beginning, strong collaborative programs developed gradually, ensuring both scientific research and respect for the needs of the Indigenous stakeholders. In addition, institutional structures such as repatriation offices and joint heritage committees were created, fostering intercultural dialogue and bridging the epistemological and institutional chasm that undermines the indigenous participation with the government (Atalay 2006, McManamon 2002, Silliman 2008, Watkins 2003a, Watkins 2003b, Zimmerman 1996).

Although NAGPRA instigated a decolonisation of archaeology and brought native and archaeological stakeholders closer, the structures of the decolonised field were not fully internalised in the archaeologists’ habitus. For example, the new ethical code of the SAA in 1996 clearly showed that the consensual view was still dominated by the stewardship principle (Groarke and Warrick 2006). It even became the central structuring theme throughout the new ethical code. During the discussion about the new ethical code in American Antiquity, one of the fomenters of the new ethical code, Mark Lynott, merely mentioned the indigenous concerns. He only touched the ethical responsibility to the broader public briefly by stating:

… the stewardship concept requires that archaeologists become aware of and respect the wide range of legitimate interests in the possible use of archaeological sites. We must accept that in some cases, such as cultural heritage tourism, these uses of the archaeological record may not always be fully compatible with the interests of archaeology. (Lynott 2007)

The fact that the wider archaeological establishment still had not come to terms with its responsibilities to the wider public especially came apparent during and after the discovery of the Kennewick Man. Until the mid 1990s, most repatriation cases were related to relative recent remains, dating back some centuries before contact or during the post-contact period. According to the archaeological ‘mode of ancestry’, the cultural links were clear and the ‘distance of time’ (cf. Atalay 2006: 284-285) was acceptable. This was however different with the Kennewick Man/Ancient One, a discovery that had already
rewritten the history of the entire American continent and had a significant ‘distance of
time’. Because of its scientific uniqueness and distinction from other repatriation cases, it
became a symbolic case, negotiating the role of Native Americans and science in the
United States. It brought attention to the repatriation issue and touched a much larger
issue about who owns the past and what should be the privileged heritage discourse.

Because of the particular role of the media, the case was not only debated within
archaeological and indigenous circles. Various TV-documentaries and discussion panels
were dedicated to the issue and it became a popular subject in classroom discussions
(Smith 2004: 162). Likewise, the Secretary of Home Affairs supported the indigenous
claims, just as an important part of the public opinion did. Because of a broader
decolonisation of the field, the scientific ethos became openly questioned and it quickly
became apparent that the Kennewick conflict would “determine the course of American
archaeology” (Smith 2004: 2, referring to Preston 1997: 72).

Notwithstanding that a federal judge backed the demands of some prominent
scientists, the Kennewick Man ultimately enacted change, as well within the government
(i.e. Ministry of Home Affairs), broader American society and archaeological
establishment. There was a consensual agreement that the inherent colonial axioms of
American archaeological practice and theory were out-dated (Watkins 2003b: 274). The
many papers, special volumes and workshops about the Kennewick Man and repatriation
in general clearly show that the archaeological community is slowly aligning itself with the
importance of indigenous claims and of different epistemologies and value systems.
Although the Kennewick Man is still not reburied and the relationship with Indigenous
people is still difficult, its legacy ensured that alternative archaeologies became
increasingly mainstream and more and more researchers moved beyond mere
consultation towards collaboration with Indigenous people (Antalya 2006: 301, Nicholas
with NAGPRA, the Kennewick conflict promoted a new practice where negotiation and
consultations stood central. Illustrative for this broad support of alternative archaeologies
are the many recent critical responses (Croes 2010, Colwell-Clanthaphonh et al. 2010,
who fiercely reacted against repatriation and collaboration with Indigenous
stakeholders. The many responses underscored the methodological and theoretical
advantages of collaboration and consultation with Indigenous people, and the broader
theoretical shortcomings in American and Canadian archaeology.

As a conclusion, the long history of repatriation demands and particularly the
Kennewick Man took place in a decolonising political field. However epistemological and
institutional barriers still challenge the indigenous people to successfully operate in the
wider American society, attention by the government and support from various settler
groups ensured that indigenous heritage activism was heard. However archaeology was
still firmly rooted in its processual background, explaining the difficulties to come to
terms with the demands of the Indigenous peoples, the increasing importance of alternative archaeologies and scholarly debate show that archaeology is slowly coming to terms with the external social arena.

7.3.2 The Lake Mungo Burials: A similar case in a different climate

Repatriation and archaeological ethics in Australia have striking similarities with the events surrounding the Kennewick Man and NAGPRA, illustrating that similar colonial structures result in similar heritage oppositions.

Just as in the United States, both recent and old aboriginal remains were collected during the 19th and first half of the 20th century for anatomical and racial studies (Fforde 2002, McNiven and Russell 2005). In the late 1960s, at the backdrop of growing Aboriginal activism and initial granting of First Nation rights, claims for repatriation and reburial were made. During the years that followed, named remains and illegally acquired burials were returned, and by the 1980s there was no real contestation anymore within the scientific commune to the return of biologically affiliated skeletal remains. However, in 1984 it came obvious that legal changes also granted Aboriginals the right to request the return of older skeletal remains and artefacts, including ancient and fossil remains. As a result, a serious conflict between Indigenous people and archaeologists culminated (Dolon 1994, Fforde 2002, McNiven and Russell 2005, Smith and Burke 2007). The scientific community openly opposed these demands stating that the finds were ‘of great scientific significance and too old to be legitimately claimed by one group of people to the detriment of the world community’ (Fforde 2002: 34).

The conflict especially escalated and became a national and international issue when requests were made to rebury the famous Lake Mungo Burials (Kow Swamp, Willandra Lakes region, State of Victoria). Similarly to the Altai Princess and the Kennewick Man, these burials are of a paramount importance to understand the occupation of the respective continent. Hereby, the biogenetical affiliation with the current indigenous population is contested. Discovered 40 years ago, these burials are amongst one of the oldest archaeological sites of Australia (50,000-46,000 BP), and they radically forced scholars to rethink the colonisation of Eurasia and the Pacific (Smith and Burke 2003: 185-187, Thorne et al. 1999). Furthermore, morphological studies of the finds showed that they were not related to the current Indigenous population. Supporting the theory that there were multiple migrations into the Australian continent, making the current Aboriginals just a phase in a long history of migrations (Dolon 1994: 75, McNiven and Russell 2005: 241, McNiven and Russell 1997). In the aftermath of new repatriation legislation in the different states of Australia, remains from the lake Mungo site were also requested to be reburied, including the so-called Lake Mungo Lady (one of the oldest red ochre burials of the world). This led, in the context of repatriation of other fossil remains, to a struggle with bio-anthropologists and archaeologists. Indigenous claims and the
reburials were refuted because of the significant distance of time (Mulvaney 1991) and the lack of proof of being direct descendant (Jones and Harris 1998: 258). Because of the age and the genealogical distance with the current Indigenous population, ancient burials, and the Lake Mungo burials specifically, were seen as belonging to all humanity (Jones and Harris 1998: 258, Mulvaney 1991). John Mulvaney compares this reburial with destroying the Taj Mahal or pyramids and critically questions why the Aboriginals should claim archaeological heritage that has universal human values, similar to those governed by the UNESCO principle (Mulvaney 1991: 18). The claims of indigenous people are similarly discarded as politically based, against the scientific neutrality of Australian archaeology (Smith 2004: 174-194). New Zealand anthropologists Gareth Jones and Robyn Harris (1998), when discussing the events in Australia and New Zealand, similarly stress that repatriation and reburial is mainly a political deed:

Issues of sovereignty and frustration at the lack of recognition of unique cultural values and worldview underpin many of the claims by indigenous peoples for the return of ancestral remains.

(Jones and Harris 1998: 255-256)

The reactions of the archaeologists and Aboriginals and ultimately the attention of the government for Indigenous rights can be understood by the historical constitution of the different agent’s habitus and changes in the fields of practice.

Modern Australian archaeology’s roots only go back to the 1960s, when Cambridge trained archaeologists that arrived in Australia (Smith 2004: 94). This influence from both the United Kingdom and the United States shaped Australian archaeology’s discourse and CRM legislation. Similarly, the archaeological discourse became institutionalised and embedded with positivist archaeological values, stressing the importance of expert knowledge, constituting a very similar conservation ethic (Smith 2004: 143). The relative limited extent and short history of the professional archaeological community in Australia ensured that until the 1990s there were no real written ethical standards in Australian archaeology, unwritten ethics were however dominated by the positivist ethos of that time. In short, positivist archaeological theory and institutionalisation in the government created archaeology similar to that of the United States and Russia, with values diametrically opposed to Indigenous needs and interests.

As in the United States, the institutionalisation and authorisation of the archaeologists’ discourse concurred with growing Indigenous activism and lobbying. Similarly, reburial and control over cultural heritage was one of the first demands since the 1960s (Smith and Burke 2003, Smith and Burke 2007, Smith 2004). These demands were first of all related to traditional worldviews and funerary rituals, but were also aimed at articulating and constructing a local Indigenous identity and legitimacy, and even constituting a feeling of wider pan-Aboriginal identity (Fforde 2002, Hubert and Fforde 2002: 11). Previous heritage legislation came under attack because of its failure to recognise indigenous needs and interests (Smith 2004: 152). When the government passed
the commonwealth ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage (Interim Protection) Act’ after years of Indigenous demands (1984), Indigenous peoples were finally given greater control over their heritage. Through inclusion in state heritage frameworks laws, new provisions were adopted, officially regulating repatriation (Smith 2004: 153-154). It was under these legal changes that the Lake Mungo collection was repatriated. Importantly, unlike NAGPRA, affiliation was not based on scientific affiliation but traditional indigenous knowledge.

Only in the 1990s in the context of repatriation debates the need for an Australian code of ethics was raised. Ultimately in 1992 the ‘Australian Archaeological Association Code of Ethics’ was adopted. This code was diametrically opposed to the SAA code of 1996 and not the archaeological stewardship, but the importance of indigenous needs and claims was stipulated as the core principle. As argued by Claire Smith and Heather Burke (2003: 187-188), this shift in broader Australian society related to repatriation claims and indigenous activism influenced the stance of the broader archaeological community. This resulted in a broadly held view that the Aboriginal communities should have the privileged right to control their own history. However, as illustrated by the critical work of Ian McNiven and Lynette Russell (2005) and Laurajane Smith (2004), despite a considerable decolonisation of the field since the 1980s, many positivist structures are still deeply entrenched in the habitus of the archaeologists and official institutions, ensuring that there is still an epistemological and institutional chasm between archaeologists, CRM offices and Indigenous people.

A shorter history, a relatively small archaeological community, and a more decolonised field (see Smith and Jackson 2006 for a more elaborate discussion) have resulted in a different archaeology compared to the American or Russian archaeology. Because of the ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage (Interim Protection) Act’ and the publicised conflict over the fate of the Lake Mungo Burials, Australian archaeology has moved away from a strict stewardship ethic to a more inclusive and relativist archaeology. Although many positivist structures still permeate the archaeological discourse (Byrne 2008, Smith 2004), many structures in the broad social field were created, forcing archaeologists to collaborate with indigenous stakeholders: funding bodies, ethical committees of universities and museums and excavation permits depend on written proof of consent and collaboration with the Indigenous communities (Smith and Jackson 2006: 323-325). These changes in the social field and obligatory consultation and collaboration colonised the positivist habitus of the archaeologists and disclosed the doxa. Increasingly archaeology became a joint-venture between archaeologists and Indigenous people, addressing both indigenous and scientific questions, which led to community-based archaeological practice (cf. Clarke 2002, Greer 2010, Greer, Harrison and McIntyre-Tramway 2002, Marshall 2002).

Besides impacting the public opinion, breaking the doxa of Australian archaeology and serving the political struggle of the Aboriginals, the Lake Mungo burials are also a
symbol of how repatriation can be a negotiated action that ultimately serves the agenda of different groups. When the finds were repatriated in 1992, they were placed in a special safe that could only be opened with two different keys: one for the archaeologists and one for the local community. The safe was buried at the place of excavation. The reburial did not mean that research stopped, the only difference was that research became a highly collaborative joint-venture. After the return, dating and DNA-research took place. Despite the fact that the results of these investigation could further prove the large distance of time and biogenetic distance with the indigenous population (and it ultimately did), these tests did take place (Smith and Burke 2003: 168). Though the relationship between the Indigenous people, archaeologists and government in Australia today is far from ideal, I agree with Claire Smith and Heather Burke (2003: 186) that “the lesson to be learned from [the Lake Mungo repatriation] is that sharing the past can provide a foundation for working together in the future”.

7.3.3 The Kennewick Man/Ancient One, the Lake Mungo burials and the Ukok Princess: similarities

In short, both the Kennewick Man/Ancient One and the Lake Mungo burials conflict have some considerable similarities with the events in the Altai Republic, providing important insights in the processes that constitute the actions of the *homo archaeologicus* and indigenous people. In this intermediary conclusion I would like to highlight some important elements in the different cases.

**Repatriation is an important precedent:**
The events concerning the Kennewick Man/Ancient One and the Lake Mungo burials clearly show the importance of repatriation for the different involved parties. Repatriation, and especially repatriation of important ‘archaeological resources’ is not just any event. It redefines social space, power relations and the different heritage discourses.

**Repatriation of ‘scientific treasures’ is a doxa breaker for the archaeological community:**
While earlier repatriations in the United States and Australia were also contested, the debate over repatriation of very important finds, on which careers and the history of the respective continent depended, forced the archaeologists to come to terms with new realities in the *field*. While the opposition was particularly fierce in the beginning, slowly indigenous consultation or collaboration became a new ethical norm through time and alternative archaeologies became increasingly important.
Repatriation as a doxa breaker is linked with a decolonisation of the field: Repatriation and the impact it has on the social arena in Australia, the United States and beyond (Fforde, Hubert and Turnbull 2002, Hebda, Greer and Mackie 2012, Politis and Curtoni 2011, Sheperd 2011) is inextricably linked with a broader decolonisation of the (political) field. Political changes and public support did not only ensure that repatriation could take place, through legitimising the interrelated indigenous heritage discourses by the government and creating official monitoring bodies (ethics committees, repatriation offices, ...), archaeologists were forced to change and engage in intercultural dialogue.

Institutionalised archaeological discourse is dominant:
The particular polarisation of the heritage conflicts in both cases is very much related to the dominant value system of the homo archaeologicus. Objectivity and expertise are the core of the archaeologist’s ethos and ideals. Conjoined with special rights granted by the government, this internalised a sense of privileged stewardship and disciplinary authority. A hermeneutic reading of ethical codes that give unique insights in the ethos and ideals of the concerned archaeologies, highlights that remnants of the past are part of the ‘archaeological record’ and have to be studied and treated according to own positivist principles.

Repatriation is contested because of its political undertone:
Repatriation and reburial is not only diametrically opposed to the conservation ethic of the involved archaeologies. A critique that was also often voiced by archaeologists to the claims on the Kennewick Man, the Luke Mungo burials and the Altai Princess is that repatriation and claims for control over cultural heritage are merely political, a whim to assert power and to react on colonial structures.

Repatriation is both emotional and political:
While repatriation is politically engrained, it is not a whim, but in the first place related to the worldview of the different indigenous groups. Repatriation is a closure between people and land, imperative for the fate of the living. On the other hand, demands for repatriation are voiced on the moment when activism for basic cultural rights is increasing, which is a quest for internal and external legitimation of a particular identity. This presents repatriation as a highly political action that based on emotionally held traditional values.
7.4 Discussion: different valuations and uses of the past in a pluralist society

7.4.1 Multiple heritages dialectically in the making: opposing discourses as the outcome of a historical rooted habitus, changing field conditions and a struggle for capital

Based on the above appraisal of the events surrounding the Ice Maiden and comparison with very similar cases from the post-colonial world, I wish to assert in this discussion that the plural heritages that collide in the Altai Republic are the outcome of a broader dialectic process, best approached through a theoretical framework that both addresses the historically rooted agent’s agency and the external structures and power relations that govern the actions of any social being. Hence, if one wants to mediate such heritage conflicts, it is essential that both ethnographic in-depth information and insights in the general schemas of the social field are collected.

Very often studies that investigate conflicts over heritage objects in multi-cultural societies either focus on the politicised nature of the conflict and mainly investigate the role of power relations and external structures in society (for example Kakaliouras 2012), or put emphasis on the organic nature of heritage and see the contestation merely as a historically embedded phenomenon (for example Watkins 2006). I do not agree with both approaches; for me cultural heritage as a commodity and socially constituted cultural good is both organically constituted and externally created. I believe that the politicisation of a particular heritage object or the use of historical narratives for ethno-national purposes can only be successfully used if there is genuine support by the members of that particular community. In the case of Altai, the different ‘archaeological heritages’ are the outcome of the dialectical interrelation between the historically constituted habitus, field, capital and specific field conditions (doxa and hysteresis). Pluralist heritages are both political, power related, and epistemologically and ontologically founded. The following paragraphs will describe this dialectic and critically appraise the most recent developments in the conflict.

*Habitus*

Archaeological remains and ‘the past’ are interpreted and judged using standards inherent to one’s own dispositions. In some cases, regardless of religion, considering values of the other’s ‘culture’ can be impossible because it is diametrically opposed with their own philosophy and doxa. When analysing the conflict between First Nation Americans and archaeologists over excavations, repatriation of human remains and skeletal studies, Joe Watkins (2003a: 136-137) argued that “the conflict is not one of science against religion, as some of the popular press has surmised, but more a conflict between the philosophy of
Very often the epistemological foundations of the actors are miles away from each other, creating epistemological boundaries that undermine effective dialogue (Nicholas and Hollowel 2007: 77, Ross et al. 2011).

There is no doubt that the different actors’ use and struggle for heritage serves as a political agenda related to cultural identity politics. These actions are, however, firmly based on cultural values towards the dead, scientific data, cultural remains, Indigenousness and ancestry. As mentioned in the context of the Altai Princess, Soviet period Indigenous people reacted to the disturbance of ancestral sites, even in the pre-Soviet era. Ian McIver and Lynette Russell (2005) describe similar reactions of Australian Aboriginals to looting during the 18th and 19th century, emphasising that opposition to excavations and demands for repatriation are not a sudden whim, but frame in a historically rooted worldview and value system. Reburial and return of cultural significant material culture is primarily an emotional closure, based on the premise that ancestors need to be treated according to traditional beliefs and funerary practices (Hamilton and Townsend 2009, Hibbert 1998, Hubert and Fforde 2002).

The Altaian habitus, similar to the Native American or Aboriginal habitus, is structured along the lines of a traditional animistic worldview that is strongly influenced by a long exchange with the colonial field. Deeply felt cultural values govern the connection with the dead and burial sites. Central to this is the idea that traditional funeral rituals serve as rites of passage that unite the dead and their possessions with the ancestral homeland, something that must be maintained at all costs. Besides enacting a feeling of injustice, the colonial trajectory also constituted internal structures in the agent’s habitus that impact the heritage conflict. Three important colonial structures that have been internalised throughout the colonial period are (1) the sense of Altaian identity and interlinked process of identity politics, (2) heritage as a discourse (i.e. heritage as a political tool for internal and external identity legitimation) an sich and (3) the importance of science and methodical insights. Diaspora communities in the Altai (especially Kazakhs but also some Russians) on the other hand also have pagan structures embedded in their worldview constituting comparable connections made to the dead and burial places. Combined with strict dogma within their particular religion (i.e. Islam and Christianity), there is a broad consensual view that the dead should be treated respectfully. On the other hand, the scientists’ habitus is governed by logic and positivism and a strict preservation ethic. On the contrary, the government and Gazprom mainly have a centralist and neo-liberal underpinning.

So, the different agents have different needs and interests towards the same material objects, preferences that are deeply embedded in their habitus. As noted at the beginning of this dissertation, one has to take into account the zero-sum characteristics of heritage. For any of these groups an object can only have one meaning, divergent interpretations
and uses of those objects are subsequently very difficult to fathom and can result in a fierce polemic under certain field conditions.

Field, power and capital

The extent of the conflict between archaeologists and Altaians is more than merely a story of two different approaches to heritage. Different philosophies and epistemologies indeed lie at the basis of misunderstandings and might further impede intercultural dialogue, but it is the radically changed social arena that instigated the polemic and made the different valuations of the archaeological past hardly reconcilable. In the 1990s, new structures and power relations replaced the old Soviet ones. For the agents in the field these new schemas meant that one could change its existing position in society and seek legitimation for own needs and interests. As noted in the first part of this dissertation, the position of an agent within a social space is largely determined by the availability to employ certain assets (capital or resources). Archaeological heritage, and the past in general, is such capital (Byrne 2008: 166, Hamilakis 2007a, Smith 2006: 295). It is this struggle for symbolic archaeological capital within the context of the post-Soviet 1990s that should be considered as one of the driving forces behind the conflict and extreme actions of the different groups.

The notion of a shared and glorious past and having ancestral links to a particular region instigates a strong sense of group membership. Such a strong cohesion portrays the ethnic community as a unified group whose needs and interests must be taken into consideration. On the other hand, across cultural boundaries, historical roots are often seen as a legitimate marker of ethnicity, crystalizing the affiliation to land. Throughout the Soviet Union, the past and associated archaeological objects have proven to be extremely valuable tools for establishing group identity, creating ethnic distance and national prestige, both internally and externally (Kaplonski 2004, Kohl 1998, Kohl, Kozelsky and Ben-Yehuda 2007, Shnirelman 1996, Trigger 1984, Trigger 1989). As an inherited colonial instrument, collective memory and objects embodying this memory have played as essential role in the ethno-nationalistic activism and land claims, as well as the justification for nationalistic claims. In Altai, markers of identity such as a shared past were particularly important and had to be appropriated at all costs. Tribal differences are namely still noticeable and undermining a unified Altaian national identity. In his analysis of the particular role of the past in the post-socialist ethno-nationalism of the Chuvash and Tatars of the Middle Volga region (Russian Federation) during the 1990s, Victor Shnirelman (1996: 58) argued:
The existence of different cultural or ethnic groups within modern multinational states impels them to seek to legitimize their rights, which leads them to historical facts or fictions to strengthen their political position ... A group’s unsatisfied ambitions and feelings of inferior status spur a struggle for self esteem and later for political and cultural rights and sometimes privileges, which, in the common view, have to be grounded on a historical foundation.

(Shnirelman 1996: 58)

For the archaeologists, control over the Ice Maiden was also symbolically important. As a unique scientific resource, it provided important social benefits, radically increasing the possibilities to set up an elaborate research network in economic difficult times. The refusal for repatriation by the Russian archaeological community is not a dismissal of the viewpoints of the Indigenous groups or religions, but rather a struggle for the place of the own positivist and objectivist values against a wider backdrop of popular pseudo-science and obscurantism in broader society.

Other players in the field also skilfully used the Ice Maiden to negotiate their agenda with other players. The regional Kazakh leader Auelkhan Dzhatkambaev for example used the fate of the Ice Maiden to seek support of the Indigenous Altaians for re-election. Gazprom on the other hand, used the Ice Maiden as a kind of leverage for Indigenous support for their pipeline. The federal government did not intervene as for example the government did in the United States and Australia, which correlates with the ongoing de-regionalisation in Russia.

Clearly, for the different players in the field the Ukok Princess was a very valuable type of capital, enabling them to pursue their agenda and improve their position in the new and evolving social environment. Especially for the Indigenous people and the archaeologists, who also physically wanted to administer the references to the past, ‘the issue was control’ (cf. Smith 2006: 276-298). Power over archaeological heritage and challenging each other’s discourse became intrinsically a symbolic struggle for self-determination, survival and recognition. Striving for this symbolic capital and discarding each other’s interests ultimately made the different philosophies conflict with each other. Other agents in the field skilfully capitalised this polarisation for their own benefits. Especially Gazprom understood the value of the Ice Maiden as a commodity and exchanged her for authorisation and ‘Indigenous-washing’ (cf. green washing) of their project and broader economic agenda.

The only actor in the field that really has the potential to unlock the current stalemate is the federal government. In settler societies such as the United States, Australia, Canada and New Zealand, Indigenous heritage concerns have been put on the political agenda because of the support of public opinion. This created field conditions favourable for Indigenous stakeholders and forced archaeologists to reflect on their position in society. Furthermore, through political intervention, institutional frameworks (for example
repatriation offices and ethnic committees) were created, making the epistemological and institutional boundaries to collaboration between the Indigenous people, archaeologists and government much smaller. Indigenous rights might have evolved globally over the past 20 years, native peoples in Russia still do not have the rights and social recognition comparable to settler societies like Canada, the United States and Australia. Epistemological and institutional boundaries still survive and the heritage of the Altaians remains an unofficial heritage. By awarding the highly prestigious State Prize of the Russian Federation and stressing the importance of the Altai Princess for the Russian nation, the Russian government emphasised that the archaeologists’ definition of heritage remains the official authorised discourse and that their is no need to adapt the archaeological process to Indigenous needs.

*Hysteresis and doxa – repatriation as a doxa breaker*

So, the habitus explains the different philosophies and epistemologies that lay at the basis of the different interpretations of archaeological objects. The reorganisation of the field and the intrinsic value of heritage as symbolic capital to consolidate a position in the social space explain the fierce reactions and public contestation of the different parties. Doxa and doxic status, on the other hand, explains why after 30 years of public contestation the positivist discourse of the archaeologists’ remained unaffected. As described in Chapter 3, doxa relates to a society’s non-questioned and taken-for-granted truths and schemas, which in times of ‘structural crisis’ challenge the structure of the field and position of its agents in it. Hysteresis deals with the fraught relation between an individual and radically changed conditions of his contextual fields, and the time it takes before a habitus is conditioned to the challenges of his new environment.

As noted above, the post-Soviet space was in a structural crisis in the aftermath of the glasnost and perestroika. All actors were undergoing a hysteresis, and, slowly, old Soviet structures were replaced by new structures in order to come to terms with the changed reality. Similarly, old Soviet structures survived through the actions of the different agents in the field. The different ethnic groups made huge efforts to get in synch with the new structures of the field and obtain an optimal position. Altaians appropriated heritage objects and interrelated narratives as markers of national and ethnic identity in order to create a strong collective agency. At the same time, Gazprom developed a ‘feel for the game’ and understood the importance to anticipate the Indigenous demands and their related identity struggle. The archaeologists, on the other hand, did not really adapt to the new field conditions and unquestioned schemas were not reconsidered. In the end, a lot of Soviet inherited doxic principles and the doxic status remained well preserved and unquestioned both within the IAE SBRAS and various universities. Many Russian colleagues, including Indigenous archaeologists, still have positivist and culture historian principles deeply cemented in their way of thinking with respect to remnants of the past
and culture in general. Most research is still characterised by cultural migrationism, a strict dogmatic stance to ethnicity, a thirst for data (preferentially through excavation) and confidence about the own expertise and disciplinary authority. Discussing the deeply entrenched cultural historical stance towards ethnicity in Russian archaeology, Victor Shnirelman stated in his most recent paper that philosophical principles that are openly questioned elsewhere still survive in the framework of the Russian *homo archaologicus* due to the subsisting relationship with the central government:

> On several occasions, various Western scholars have criticised the ethno-genetic studies carried out by Soviet researchers and inherited by post-Soviet scholarship ... This criticism is poorly understood and negatively perceived by the local archaeologists, and thus they continue to adhere to culture-historical methods based on the primordialist approach. Why? In my view, the issue is neither the local archaeologists’ “backwardness” nor their aspiration to stubbornly follow Soviet traditions. Instead, this attitude is an inevitable by product of a [surviving] political system based on politicised and institutional ethnicity. (Shnirelman 2012: 15)

The examples of the United States and Australia clearly illustrate that repatriation serves as a cathartic *doxa breaker* for the archaeological community, radically challenging its status and the dominant positivist principles archaeology was founded on. As noted above, in those cases there was considerable discontinuity between the scientific *habitus* of the archaeologists and the decolonizing political *field*. Because the federal political *field* is one of the most important *fields* of practice for archaeology (it administers the financial and social assets of the discipline), American and Australian archaeology was forced to adapt to the new structures in the *field*. Prior held doxa and unquestioned status became openly questioned. The *doxa was broken* and reflection on one’s own practice was put on the agenda (Holder 2003), ultimately giving rise to new ethics.

In the post-Soviet world, a lot of *doxa* was created and preserved throughout its rough historical trajectory and interaction with the government. In the post-Soviet *field*, the disciplinary identity was challenged by the public opinion and Indigenous communities, but not by the particularly important political *field*. The government did not question the archaeologists as stewards and their extreme conservation ethic. In addition, limited international collaboration and a poor knowledge of English withheld archaeologists to learn from the repatriation history from abroad. In short, a lot of the Soviet influences *doxic principles* and the *doxic status* remained relatively well preserved and unquestioned. Although the repatriation only happened quite recently and its impact is difficult to evaluate, I believe that compared to other repatriation cases, the return of the Altai Princess will not initiate a restructuring of Russian archaeology because of a lack of political reforms and the role of Gazprom in the process and, therefore, it will not be a *doxa breaker*.

The structures governing the social arena might have encouraged the Indigenous people to appropriate cultural heritage objects and challenge the position of oversight of the archaeologists, existing colonial political structures have abstained Indigenous people
from attaining effective legitimation over both their heritage and own culture. In the light of the de-regionalisation politics of President Vladimir Putin, the recent repatriation of the Altai Princess should therefore be critically evaluated. In other settler societies, repatriation presents itself as a political act of respect and compensation for previous injustice. Through political support, the Indigenous heritage discourse gets an official status and the archaeologists are forced to adapt to the post-colonial structures of the field. The contemporary Russian political climate is, however, difficult to align with the recognition of Indigenous peoples having power over their past. Furthermore, the ongoing stalemate between archaeologists and Indigenous people even raises the question whether the return of the Ukok Princess by Gazprom should be considered as repatriation, or as a meaningless compensation to pursue a highly lucrative project. The use of the Ice Maiden by Gazprom underlines the need for archaeologists to come together with Indigenous peoples to form a collaborative solution before another player in the social arena employs heritage for economic imperatives, which would be destructive to both Indigenous cultural heritage and the ‘archaeological record’. Gazprom’s role in the repatriation was an act of neo-colonialism within a neo-liberal field of action where heritage was employed as capital and leverage, thus depriving it from its basic meaning as an emotional cultural construct that is continuously active in the present.

7.4.2 Towards joint stewardship: intercultural negotiation based on pro-active dialogue and acknowledgement of power relations

Towards informed negotiation

It is important that both archaeologists and Altaians move beyond the polarised contestation described in the previous section and engage in a collaborative stewardship over the past, both for their own specific agendas and for the archaeological heritage itself. If this does not happen, the heritage that both parties foster will be further disturbed by the current building boom and actors with another agenda (i.e. Gazprom). Reflecting on the Kennewick Man/Ancient one, Edward Jolie (2008), following Alison Wylie (2005), stated that the only way to overcome polarised heritage issues is through considering stewardship over the past as a highly collaborative and negotiated joint venture.

Inspired by the account of philosopher James Tully (1995) on intercultural constitutional negotiation in settler societies, Allison Wylie (2005) redefines the traditional American archaeological stewardship principle into ‘collaborative joint stewardship’, a type of responsible planning and management based on dialogue and negotiated collaboration. Joint stewardship basically entails that the protagonists engage in an open-ended negotiation, which takes place through intercultural dialogue based on a mutual recognition of cultural difference. Within this dialogue Wylie explicitly
underscores the importance of communicating the different identity-significant values, which are considered as equal at the outset of the interaction. Through this dialogue, intercultural understanding can be achieved, establishing a strong matrix on which heritage can be managed and investigated through collaboration. Ultimately, mutual recognition of the different parties’ arguments can provide a framework to set out the possibilities on what can and should be done with the archaeological heritage (Wylie 2005). Ian Hodder (2011) similarly underscores the importance of a negotiation, based on a clear communication of own values even if these are not reconcilable with Indigenous interests.

An important aspect of the decolonisation of both American and Australian archaeology was indeed directly related to the intercultural negotiation between both protagonists, which was initiated in the context of repatriation. Though both Hodder’s and Wylie’s concept of collaborative heritage stewardship and negotiation provides us with an acceptable strategy and framework, they do not go far enough in redefining the power relations and underestimate the historical rootedness of an agent’s habitus and the power of doxa.

Firstly, I would argue that archaeologists should take the initiative in setting up the negotiation. The archaeological establishment should be grateful to study and safeguard the past of descendant communities and should envision it as a “treasured privilege, not a natural right” (Joyce 2002: 101). Archaeologists should never see their work as a scientifically justified presumption of oversight, but as an honour to study other peoples’ past (Pyburn 2011: 35). Therefore taking the initiative in the intercultural dialogue is a moral obligation of guests researching the past of their hosts (cf. host-guest model of McNiven and Russell 2005: 234-236).

Secondly, this negotiation should be an informed negotiation from the outset; based on prior exploratory dialogue (in the form of fieldwork) that appraises the habitus of the involved stakeholders and the schemas of the field. The negotiation should be the moment where an intercultural understanding is achieved; it should be achieved beforehand by the ‘guest’ (i.e. archaeologists). Pro-actively understanding the people whose heritage you aim to study is a token of respect and essential in building up trust (Smith and Burke 2007). In addition, in modern settler societies where the Indigenous people have become a part of the broader society it is more difficult for ‘us’ to understand ‘them’ than the other way around – making a careful ethnographic analysis into the fabric of the community even more imperative. Furthermore, as noted by Thomas Hylland Erikson (2001: 40-57), one of the key effects of ethnographic fieldwork in other social spaces is that through actively investigating and reflecting on the principles on which other cultures organise particular aspects of their society, we start to understand ourselves and the principles on which our society is organised - the doxa is uncovered.
Towards an alternative Russian archaeology: joint stewardship as a scientific initiative

Recognition of traditional philosophies and acceptance of limitations is not ‘giving in’ to obscurantism and mysticism, nor does it legitimate poor scientific research that would make the scientific community ‘lose face abroad’.

Firstly, giving in to the Indigenous needs and interests is not succumbing to random obscurantist ‘whims’ that are detrimental for the archaeology of Altai. Indigenous ways of perceiving the past are objective, depending on how objectivity is defined. Using a strict positivist stance, objectivity is inextricably linked with scientific variables. Using a broader perspective, objectivity is much more than about science. Within the context of his critique on the lack of constructiveness of the post-processualists, Lewis Binford argued: “[objectivity] simply means that the rules for observation are made explicit so that another observer using the same rules for looking it would see the same fact if given the opportunity” (Binford 1987: 392). In case of the Ice Maiden, the rules of observation are different for the Altaians since other social structures define their way of perceiving archaeological remains. As scientists, we would not give in to obscurantist ‘whims’, but respect a historically rooted worldview that is governed by different epistemologies and ontologies. An ontology that is furthermore aimed at preserving the in situ unity between ancestors and land. Furthermore, when working in an Indigenous context, one should ask whether it is rational if the guest defines the rules of observation of the past instead of the people that are native to the land.

Secondly, as stressed by both Hodder (2011) and Wylie (2005) in the context of negotiation and intercultural dialogue, it is important that, as archaeologists, we are clear to the other parties about our own values and interests. Implied/tacit consent is not a solution, because the other parties will never get an insight in our positions. Furthermore, without clearly voicing our interests, we would indeed be ‘giving in’, constituting a feeling that science is gagged, which is opposed to the idea of academic freedom. If we can explain why we think in a certain way and communicate the possible benefits of our actions, whilst simultaneously also acknowledging its negative impacts, a consensus should be possible.

Thirdly, recent work in the field of Indigenous archaeology and other alternative archaeologies proves that active involvement of Indigenous people and respect for local philosophies does not undermine the archaeological process (Nicholas 2008, Nicholas and Bannister 2004, Silliman 2008, Smith and Jackson 2006). The decolonisation of archaeological practice in Indigenous contexts has added innovative dimensions to research projects and ultimately contributed to the development and consideration of alternative epistemologies (Nicholas and Hollowel 2007). Despite critics such as Robert McGhee (2008), Indigenous archaeology has become more mainstream and accepted as a scientific type of archaeology. It has proven that it is possible to do archaeology in Indigenous contexts in a constructive and sustainable manner and pursue the original
research agenda (figure 7-5). Indigenous archaeologies show that recognition of joint stewardship and restrictions to research actually advance the discipline towards a more multi-vocal archaeology, rather than threaten its scientific potential. Furthermore, it provides local communities with much welcomed knowledge and expertise, not only about their own history, but also about how to set up their own management frameworks; it even has the potential to increase a sense of community (Nicholas 2008, Nicholas and Hollowel 2007, Silliman 2008). Ignoring the benefits and successes of alternative archaeologies and persisting to continue the same research strategy would in fact be unscientific and unsustainable.

Figure 7-5: Australian Aboriginal participating in a survey project alongside archaeologists of Huonbrook Environment and Heritage. (©Iron Bark Heritage – ironbarkheritage.com)

In reality, most Indigenous communities recognise the importance of knowledge produced by archaeologists and scientists. Donald Sampson (2008: 41), former executive director of the Confederate Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (United States), argues: “We want the public and scientists to understand that we do not reject science. In fact, we have anthropologists and other scientists on staff, and we use science every day to help protect our people and the land”. As discussed above, Altaians, as other Indigenous peoples in settler societies, have respect for science, and have a flexible knowledge system that relates to objectivity, logic and the value of empirical data. Early contacts with Russian merchants and missionaries, and especially the policies of the Soviet Union, inflicted a colonisation of consciousness and axioms as scientific truth and objectivity.

There is common ground between archaeology and Indigenous communities, and in many cases archaeological researchers can continue the original research agenda they envisioned. It is a matter of taking the initiative of consulting, negotiation and involving
descendants in the whole archaeological process, which explicitly recognises the legitimacy of Indigenous worldviews. Examples like the Kwaday Dan Ts’Inchi, a Canadian ice mummy, (Beattie et al. 2000, Hebda, Greer and Mackie 2012, Watkins 2005) or the earlier mentioned Lake Mungo Burials, illustrate that, even within a consultative context, such investigations are possible, even if these could undermine the genealogical links.

Excavation in Yustid: basic recognition as an enormous step ahead

Through negotiation and dialogue, colleagues (Jean Bourgeois and Wouter Gheyle) have been able to do a very small rescue excavation in the Yustid valley (2011), in the vicinity of Kokorya (a traditional Altaian village whose members two years earlier fiercely reacted to nearby excavations of the IAE SBRAS). Although the run-up to the excavation and the excavation itself is not comparable to best practice examples from Australia, the United States or Canada, it shows the positive outcome of basic intercultural dialogue, collaboration, communication and negotiation. In 2009-2010, my colleagues decided that, after almost a decade of survey, it was necessary to do some small excavations in order to fine-tune the existing chronology of archaeological monuments. This is imperative to move towards a more diachronic understanding of the archaeological landscape. Initial excavations were planed in close collaboration with the local Gorno-Altaisk State University, who has a particularly good relationship with the Indigenous communities across the Republic (the university is the only source of higher education, many schoolteachers and younger village members are trained there). Although some professors have good contacts with local communities and also publicly opposed the actions of the IAE SBRASS (Konstantinov, pers. communication 21-06-2013), in 2010, the scheduled excavations were cancelled days before departure because there were uncertainties about the local consent. Jean Bourgeois ultimately decided to go to Altai and start up negotiations, and during the summer of 2010 a first dialogue was set up. Throughout 2010 and 2011, in collaboration with the Gorno-Altaisk State University, these negotiations continued and several community meetings were held, during which the research strategy was explained, the importance of archaeological research and conservation was communicated and local concerns were heard. A larger educational project was set up in collaboration with the Gorno-Altaisk State University and ultimately a relationship of trust was established and the Indigenous leaders agreed that excavations could take place.

During the excavation (summer 2011) there was no opposition, Indigenous leaders were invited to the site, comments were generally positive and the team was even invited to the wedding of the regional zaisan. Some months after the excavations, results were presented to the communities and local administration.

After almost two years of studying the heritage of the Altai Republic and intensive readings on similar heritage conflicts, I would tackle the research differently, with more attention for exploratory ethnographic fieldwork, education and involvement of
Indigenous people and neighbouring Kazakh diaspora communities during the excavation – ‘archaeology as a tool for civic engagement’ and inter-ethnic dialogue (cf. Little and Shackel 2007). Looking at it from theoretical viewpoint, the habitus of my colleagues had initially little experience with addressing non-scientific interests, and taking into account Indigenous voices whose epistemology is opposed to Kantian principles. However, their constructive stance and efforts to obtain a compromise through dialogue was perceived by the Indigenous people as a legitimation of the Altaian ownership over their cultural heritage (one of the first times in their history), a token of respect for their deeply felt needs and interests.

This small excavation, based on unsystematic consultation, shows that just by recognizing the inherent power relations and assessing the specific Indigenous needs, scientific excavations in the Altai Republic are possible. The integrity of the research was not affected: my colleagues’ excavation was neither used for ethno-political purposes, nor did ethno-nationalist leaders employ the data for proving supra-natural phenomena. It clearly underlines that a basic respect for local customs and stewardship could solve the particular polarised situation. Not repatriation (which was in other settler context the instigator of dialogue) specifically, but through initiating a dialogue could the problems in the heritage field of Altai be solved. In the end, open-ended intercultural dialogue with Indigenous leaders, villagers and people from the local administration, and a collectively designed research strategy should result in a solid base for long-term collaboration, community-based heritage management and capacity building.

Throughout my fieldwork, when asked about their feelings about future excavations, most people that agreed with excavations told me that they would very much appreciate being involved in the excavation. Just as Yakov (see quote at the title page of part three) many interlocutors basically stated that excavations are okay, but archaeologist should just ask and involve the community members. Similarly, during a discussion (2013) in a session about repatriation at the World Archaeology Congress (WAC) and during the WAC ethics committee, there was a consensus amongst the participants (including many Indigenous archaeologists) that, although intense collaboration and involvement on many levels in the research is the ideal way, informed consultation is already a good step in the right direction. Consultation acknowledges and redefines the power relations over the past. In case of Altai, open-ended consultation that is based on informed negotiation is a good first step for the future of. In later stages, institutional agencies such as repatriation offices, ethic committees and joint heritage councils should be established in both the Altai Republic and at the universities. However, for such a development a political initiative is imperative to change the existing code of ethics, heritage legislation and funding schemes.
7.5 Concluding remarks: multi-vocal heritage in contemporary Altai?

In a special issue of *Current Anthropology*, Ann Kakaliouras (2012) presented an anthropological investigation of repatriation in the United States as a social practice and power struggle, disclosing important aspects of the nexus science-Indigenous peoples. Similarly, this chapter has approached cultural heritage as social practice through a relational framework interrelating the multiple historically embedded conceptualisations and appropriations of archaeological heritage within a post-Soviet settler society. Through applying mainly a Bourdieuan and Giddensian stance, the complexity and seemingly subjectivity of heritage conflicts were unravelled, putting logic in the social actions of the different groups. The presented insights underline the need for a broader theoretical framework when investigating episodes of heritage conflict. Clearly, each actor has to be critically appraised within its broader social space, not only the Indigenous peoples. The *homo archaeologicus* (cf. Bourdieu 1988), but also the government and corporate institutions as Gazprom are social beings that are understandable through social theory.

Therefore this case study also provides important insights in Russian archaeology and archaeology in general. Ethics and archaeological practice always develop in relation to a changing social context and political ideology. Ethical standards are a reaction; they do not proactively develop alongside socio-political development. In post-colonial archaeologies attention to both the responsibilities of the broader public and Indigenous empowerment struggles only slowly developed in the late 1970s and 1980s, influenced by the emerging civil rights movements and commercialisation of archaeology. Extrapolated to the case study of the Ukok Princess, Russian archaeologists in the early 1990s were still operating to the standards of that time, place and society. Indigenous interests groups were only emerging in the 1990s and Soviet science had limited experience with addressing and respecting Indigenous needs. The political developments since Putin’s presidency similarly did not create field conditions advantageous for the Indigenous people. This is particularly illustrated by the polemic surrounding the Altai pipeline and the use of the Ukok Princess by Gazprom as a political asset to negotiate an economical and geo-political imperative project. There is always a dynamic trade-off between politics and archaeological ethics, and development of a decolonised archaeology is only possible if there are also incentives from the central government.

Understanding the polemic surrounding the Altai Princess was furthermore only possible through applying a multi-actor approach. Altai is a multi-cultural space in a capitalist time, with different stakeholders, each with their own agendas and values. Archaeology involves an array different publics, each with their own dispositions and epistemological frameworks that are ultimately all important players for cultural heritage management policy. Although the archaeologists and the Indigenous people are the
protagonists, also the political establishment and broader public opinion need to be included in understanding the conflict and predicting the possible outcome of the events. Both in Australia and the United States positive evolutions in CRM and archaeology were not initiated by the Indigenous people and archaeologists themselves but by the activity of politicians and non-Indigenous settlers. Understanding the settler communities is important because they are the public opinion. In case of the Altaian context, furthermore, many of these settlers have become or perceive themselves as ‘Indigenous’ and have developed emotional attachments to the archaeological heritage. Excluding them from the heritage negotiations could reify ethnic boundaries. Gazprom and the different governmental levels also have to be understood because they hold the keys to legitimise or further undermine the protagonists’ discourses.

As argued at the end of the discussion and illustrated by similar developments in other settler societies, informed negotiations based on extensive intercultural dialogue is the solution to existing heritage conflicts. It could change both actor’s discourse and the polarised conceptualisation the different actors have of each other. Though the 2011 excavation by my colleagues in the light of other examples in Australia or United States is not 100% perfect, it is a major step forward. It clearly shows that taking the initiative to set up dialogue is positively experienced by the Indigenous people and that their positions are not obscurantist and anti-scientific whims. Jean Bourgeois’ and Wouter Gheyle’s initiative clearly show that much is possible if there is dialogue and a basic acknowledgement of the legitimization of the other groups’ discourse.
Part IV: Landscapes in the making: a social approach to a spatial phenomenon

Amarat: When I visit my children who live in Ongudai I can’t stay too long. It is so difficult to live without the landscape around the village that I need to come back home after a few days.

(KA-KO-01)
Although taxonomic compartmentalisation of heritage in distinct categories (archaeology, landscape, intangible, etc.) is diametrically opposed to the holistic nature of heritage, in the end, the different categories, such as those defined by UNESCO, did not appear out of thin air. Even though social theory defines the general approach, different types of heritage demand a specific strategy in order to understand the logic behind the processes that transform ‘something’ into a cultural resource. For example, in the conflict discussed earlier, the Ice Maiden is an object which became a commodity through the media, national politics and post-colonial struggle. Cultural landscapes, on the other hand, are a totally different type of heritage. Although social processes also define the cultural values attached to places, these values are generated through different social institutions and mediums. In the case of the Altaian cultural landscapes, it is not coverage by the media or national politics that define which places are transformed into places embodying memories and cultural values, but transactional engagement with the environment and local transmission of knowledge (see below).

Just as in the Ice Maiden analysis, the next chapter also aims to uncover the logic behind the different perceptions of the environment that are the basis of the heritage value of the cultural landscapes. Furthermore, this comprehensive understanding will be used to critique a potential strategy for the sustainable development of Altai’s venerated geography. Similarly, the cultural landscape as whole and the particular places in it will be investigated through a material culture approach. Landscape and sacred places will be approached as ‘things’ that become meaningful commodities through the social values that are bestowed on them. This corresponds with approaches in human geography that argue that a void space is transformed into a meaningful place through a process of meaning making that is socially rooted (Greider and Garkovich 1994, Tuan 1977). As such, the cultural landscapes of the Altai Republic will be investigated from a semiotic and social stance, complemented with methodologies and theoretical insights from geography in order to understand the spatial dimensions of a cultural landscape.
8
The cultural landscapes of the Altai Republic

8.1 Introduction: interpreting cultural landscapes

8.1.1 Current challenges in landscape policy in the Altai and beyond

The institutionalisation of objectivist expert knowledge is not only a problem in the context of archaeological heritage management. More specifically, in the area of cultural landscape management and the broader field of environmental planning, the limited representation of local stakeholders and a lack of attention to the intangible values that lay at the root of a landscape’s heritage value has been discussed in great detail across disciplinary boundaries as one of the most important challenges (Brown 2005, Brown and Reed 2011, Fagerholm et al. 2012, Fagerholm, Käyhko and Van Eetvelde 2013, Meskell 2012, Ross et al. 2011, Termorshuizen and Opdam 2009). For over a decade is has been argued that an integrative transdisciplinary stance should be adopted rather than the traditionally promoted interdisciplinary approach to studying and managing the landscape (Tress, Tress and Fry 2005). Furthermore, as argued by the field of participatory action research (a popular approach within human geography), local insider knowledge and participation as well as expert knowledge are absolutely imperative if the current development pressures affecting both the environment and human well-being are to be overcome (Kindon, Pain and Kesby 2009, Pain 2004). Local people in peripheral areas such as the Altai Republic have a long history of inhabiting the landscape, which has given them a unique knowledge about the sensitivities and particularities of a given environment. Furthermore, place attachment and a variety of values attached to the landscape very often define the stability and identity of a given community. Faced with an ever-faster changing world and loss of traditional culture and habitat, assessing cultural landscapes from within could be the answer for both the sustainable development of the fragile ecological system itself and the well-being of the communities involved.
The problems faced in Altai relating to tourism and resource development demand a similar participatory approach that transcends the traditional focus on expert knowledge. Besides the need to acquire insider information on ecological sustainability, place attachment and the socio-cultural dimensions of the landscape should also be scrutinised regarding the cultural and ontological stability of the Altai Republic’s various communities. As pointed out earlier, the landscape is a subliminal entity that gives meaning to the past, present and future and is an integral part of the Altaian, Kazakh and Russian identity. This implicit relationship between socio-cultural and ecological environmental services underscores the need for inclusive environmental policy that takes the socio-cultural-imbued heritage value of the Altaian landscape as a starting point.

For many inhabitants in the Altai region, sacred places (called bailu jerler), such as mountains, sources and mountain passes, are the focal point of their landscape. Albeit sacred places seem to stand apart from the landscape as a whole, they are in fact metonymical references to the whole sacred landscape. As argued by research in similar contexts, sacred places have a reciprocal function: worshipping these separate places and respecting rules of behaviour are believed to maintain human activity and human presence across the entire landscape (cf. Carmichael, Hubert and Reeves 1994: 5-6, Halima 2006, Hubert 1994, Jordan 2011a). Unfortunately, the major impact of the recent tourism boom and Gazprom’s plans are threatening the unique holistic system that is maintaining this remarkable associative cultural landscape (to use a UNESCO taxonomic category).

In a combined effort to overcome the revocation of the moratorium on excavations and to protect the sacred Altaian landscape from the impact of tourism and Gazprom, in June 2012 the Government of the Altai Republic adopted the decree ‘On the conservation and development of sacred places’. With this law, the Altai Republic was the first region in Russia with a decree that recognises the cultural importance of sacred sites, and provides a legal framework determining the authorised activities on a variety of sacred sites and regulating the formation of a register for protection. Sites eligible for recognition range from mountain passes, rivers, lakes, mountains, trees, medicinal springs, temples, places of religious ritual prayers, burial mounds, rock artwork and areas connected with historical events. In May 2013, this law was dissolved because it was incompatible with the 2002 federal heritage law. The controversial pipeline and interlinked deregionalisation politics of the Kremlin were without a doubt the underlying arguments.

Although this law served as basic recognition of the Altaian cultural heritage, which should be applauded, its major flaw – a global problem in associative landscape management (cf. Byrne 2008) – was that the Indigenous landscape was presented as a fragmented totality of sacred places. The sacred places were not recognised as part of a holistic whole through which they get their meaning and are constituted. As such, the threat exists that sacred places will become categorical proxy data in the rigid bureaucratic heritage-management framework and will become detached from the local knowledge and social practice that lay at their foundation. As noted by Gregory Brown (2005), it is
absolutely essential when managing cultural landscapes “that special places, defined as places where people have some form of place attachment or identification, be spatially identified along with the reasons for their importance, to engage in suitability or trade-off analysis” (Brown 2005: 19). So, if management frameworks and policy are to be set up, inventorying the sacred sites alone will not be sufficient. It is not the components that are an expression of the Indigenous engagement with the land which have to be managed, but the whole system (and its scale) through which places get meaning that needs to be understood and tackled.

8.1.2 Disclosing the logic: integrating inside knowledge and expert data

Faced with this phenomenon of sacred places and landscapes as an integral part of the Altai Republic’s cultural heritage, and disastrous development pressures, this chapter aims to give insights into the logic and processes constituting the pluralist cultural landscapes of the Altai Mountains. Basically, a similar procedural approach as used with archaeological heritage has been adopted: the different variables that constitute the particular heritage value of landscape are defined, appraised and critically analysed. Compared to other similar studies, I will pay particular attention to the scale on which the landscape is formed (individual, village, regional or national), as this is primordial in defining the processes and relevant stakeholders, which is absolutely essential when developing a framework for heritage management. Furthermore, by applying a critical theoretical framework that aims to bridge traditional geographical and anthropological approaches to landscape, I hope to contribute to the growing field of cultural landscape.

Although outside the interest of traditional Russian ethnography and ethnology, since the collapse of the Soviet Union there has been an increasing amount of (international) research into the human-animal-environment relationship in Siberia and, more specifically, to the cultural dimensions of this close connection. In his introduction to his edited volume which presents different case studies from across native Siberia, Peter Jordan (2011b: 17) argues that throughout history particular geographical regions have proved influential in sparking theoretical debate about particular momentous topics (for example, kinship in Africa). In his view (which is shared by the contributors to his book), Siberia and Central Asia have the potential to determine the international agenda concerning human-environment interactions. In the last two decades, various studies have been published in which the human-landscape interaction has taken a central role, providing comparable insights for the appraisal of the Altaian cultural landscape.

In Altai, anthropologist Agnieszka Halemba has also investigated the cultural landscapes from a phenomenological point of view – focusing on the south-eastern Altaian Telengit tribe. Her work provides significant insights into the particular human-environment interaction and will be an important source throughout this chapter. However, in my opinion, for a number of reasons this work is not sufficient to address the
whole research question. First, Halemba’s research was mainly done in the 1990s during the post-Soviet period of razval and ethno-nationalism. Nowadays, Altaians and other ethnic groups are facing numerous other problems (Gazprom, tourism and the de-regionalisation politics of the Kremlin), and a new post-Soviet generation has come to play an important role in society. As such, an updated understanding, taking into consideration the new field conditions, is absolutely imperative. Secondly, her so-called ‘anthropological approach’ to landscapes (see below) which focuses on the social variables that define landscape does not fully disclose all different processes at work. By omitting the geographical and spatial dimensions of landscapes and focusing on the individual agency-driven nature of place and landscape, the different variables that lay outside the traditional interest of anthropology are ignored. Furthermore, by focusing on a few single study areas in a similar social and physical space only highly localised information is generated. Although her approach is absolutely imperative for understanding Altaian ontology, religion and epistemology (which is the goal of her research and is really revealing), additional contexts are imperative to understand the logic underlying the cultural landscapes of the whole Altai.

Basically, Halemba states that the particularities of Altaian society, Altaian tradition and animist ontology, combined with the importance of nomadic mobility are the core of the Altaian experience of place. As regards the scale on which the cultural landscape is formed, which will be a particular aspect for study in this chapter, Halemba (2006: 44-46), based on the work of Caroline Humphrey (1995), links the Altaian dwelling and veneration of land with the Mongolian concept of homeland, or nutag. Nutag is the area in which people move with their family and animals, with which they actively interact and where the veneration of land takes places (Halemba 2006: 44-46, Humphrey 1995). According to Halemba, in the case of the Telengits the nutag is Ere Chui, a notional area that correlates geographically with the contemporary administrative Kosh Agach raion and territory of the Telengits.

As a theoretical baseline, corresponding to the central thread of this dissertation, the Altaian cultural landscapes and special places in it will not be conceptualised as mere material references but as socially constituted heritage ‘things’ (cf. Appadurai 1986, Harrison 2012) whose intangible dimensions lay at the basis of its importance and valuation. In this chapter I aim to overcome the existing polarised dichotomy between human and natural sciences in the area of landscape research and management (Tress et al. 2001). Despite the fact that cultural landscapes are both defined by the physical nature of the environment and the social beings dwelling it, different disciplines very often ignore these main components and conceptualise landscape as merely social or physical.
In the field of natural science, many researches only partially acknowledge the relativist nature of landscapes, basically omitting that landscapes are an intangible cultural product that has to be understood through social theory (Cosgrove and Daniels 1988, Greider and Garkovich 1994). As noted by Thomas Greider and Lorraine Garkovich in their momentous paper about the social nature of landscape: “through sociocultural phenomena, the physical environment is transformed into landscapes that are the reflections of how we define ourselves” (1994: 2). It is important to honour the personal multi-sensory experiences that instigate the process of meaning making that transforms physical background into existential place (Casey 1996, Tuan 1977) and landscape (Greider and Garkovich 1994). Therefore, expert knowledge about objective dimensions of the landscape alone should not be core to planning but both expert and insider knowledge. Likewise, drawing on the work of Greider and Garkovich and the extremely important monograph of Xi-Fu Tuan (1977), Richard Stedman argues: “sense of place is not intrinsic to the physical setting itself, but resides in human interpretations of the setting, which are constructed through experience with it” (Stedman 2003: 672). Further theoretical discussions stress that different peoples, especially in multi-cultural contexts, create different ‘landscapes’ of the same physical environment which cannot always be aligned (Bender 2002, Casey 1996, Greider and Garkovich 1994, Zube and Pitt 1981).

Although a relativistic stance is imperative, we should not indulge in a type of post-modernistic determinism that portrays landscape as a merely subjectively structured discourse that is created through the creativity of the human agency. I firmly believe that the material characteristics of the environment are equally important. The human and natural physical conditions of the environment define the interaction itself and the type of interplay with the ‘sheer physical terrain’ (cf. Casey 1996: 14). Unfortunately, these material dimensions of the physical environment are very often excluded by the more experiential approaches to cultural landscapes popular in the human sciences (i.e. phenomenology). Especially in anthropology the landscape is studied in particular from the perspective that sense of place is mainly the result of social engagement and embeddedness in the land (Bender 2002, Greider and Garkovich 1994, Ingold 2000, Sltetto 2009, Tilley 1994). By focusing almost exclusively on the social, sensory and narrative nature of places and landscapes, the spatial nature of the human engagement with the environment and the physical matrix on which the cultural landscape is built are very often brushed aside and discarded. Similarly, building on Tim Ingold’s (2000) “Perception of the environment”, Agnieszka Halemeba criticises approaches that “look at the environment as if from the top of the mountain or even from the Geographical Information System satellite (sic), rather than from a perspective of embeddedness in everyday practices”. In her landmark analysis of the Altaian embeddedness in the land, Halemba follows an
approach where place and space are reduced to individualistic phenomena, not procedurally shaped into XYZ but produced by the individual social being’s making. As such, she argues that a phenomenological-subject-oriented anthropological analysis is the only method to assess and conceptualise cultural landscapes (Halemba 2006: 44).

Such a lack of attention to the spatial nature of landscapes is diagnostic of much research in the field of anthropology and ethnography. Maps and spatial data are mostly only used for utilitarian purposes, as a visual accompaniment and not as an analytical tool that enables the study of human behaviour and actions in all its dimensions (cf. Chapin, Lamb and Threlkeld 2005). In my opinion, a strict relativist stance is as flawed as the strict objectivist approaches to place and space. In his seminal paper that critiques such agency-determinism, Richard Stedman states: “[a]lthough social constructions are important, they hardly arise out of thin air: The local environment sets bounds and gives form to these conditions” (Stedman 2003: 671). Transactional human activity and mobility in the physical environment is one of the cornerstones of the interaction between people and land and determines how a cultural landscape dotted with special places is constituted (Brown 2005: 18, Zube 1987). Valuation occurs with time and ‘wayfaring’ (interactive movement) in an environment (Ingold 2009). Movement and wayfaring happen in XYZ in a physical space that itself is structured in XYZ. Halemba might be right that landscapes are more than patterns in XYZ; patterns in XYZ underlie the human engagement with the land. Spatial data is equally important as in-depth ethnographic data about human experiences and embeddedness in place. In the end, if people are embedded in an environment and transform space into meaningful space through transactional interaction with the environment, when we want to understand this embeddedness, the locus of it should be included in all its forms!

Following the central thread of this dissertation and taking into account the above-discussed socio-spatial nature of landscapes, cultural landscapes will be conceptualised as something that is dialectically in the making, something about which Peter Jordan (2011b: 19) similarly argues:

A central heuristic unties landscape research: people make landscapes, and are in turn, made by them; landscapes, route-ways and longer-term of social practice; landscapes are most essentially works in progress, under cumulative change through time, rather than emerging as a finished product.

(Jordan 2011b: 19)

If people make ‘existential’ landscapes through social actions, the agents’ habitus and field need to be understood. On the other hand, if people are also made by their landscape, the existing landscape or ‘sheer physical terrain’ (cf. Casey 1996: 14) also needs to be appraised. As such, inspired by the structuring components discussed by Peter Jordan (2011b: 26-31), and Gerard Kyle and Garry Chick (2007: 209), a cultural landscape can be defined as the outcome of a dialectic interplay shaped through time between an
individual's *habitus*, the structures of the social *field* of practice, and the given physical *arena*. Together, these different variables impact the way humans perceive and understand their surrounding environment that is ‘worked-upon’ and ‘lived-in’ (Oliver 2010: 6). Cultural landscapes can be configured as:

Cultural Landscape = ((*Habitus* + *Field*) x Physical Environment)$_{\text{time}}$

First, an agent’s historically rooted *habitus* largely defines how he/she will see, read and understand an environment and specific places in it (Greider and Garkovich 1994: 11, Ingold 2000, Stedman 2003, Tuan 1977) and predetermine particular landscape preferences (Stevenant 2010). Because of their specific ontology and relatively limited experience with other landscapes, Siberian Indigenous peoples will conceptualise the environment through a specific shamanist lens, land as the spiritual locus of human action (Halemba 2006, Humphrey 1995, Plattet 2011, Willerslev 2011). Land is something that has to be respected for the fate of the living and to secure the future. People with an Enlightenment attitude, on the other hand, operate with a different cultural logic and will not make substantive symbolic or spiritual associations, as they would rather see landscape as an inanimate object. However, outsiders (i.e. tourists) will conceptualise the landscape in relation to previous experiences and expectations with land and environment (cf. Breidenbach and Nyiri 2007, Urry 1990).

Secondly, cultural, economic, institutional and political structures that define the social *field* influence both directly and indirectly how the cultural landscape and specific places in it will be constituted. Political decisions might impede access to particular regions, historically entrenched economical schemas might define the land use of a region, and cultural stigmas might make people abstain from visiting particular areas in the landscape or regions inhabited by other groups. On the other hand, the social institutions/groups (for example, kinship, village, gender or class) based on which society is organised and what knowledge is passed on, also influence the particular conceptualisation of place. As illustrated by research by Mongolia and Buyratia (Humphrey 1995, Humphrey 1999, Pedersen 2009) the clan and extended family (types of social institutions) are very important institutions that define the transmission of knowledge about the landscape. Places can be sacred for clan A and can be meaningless for clan C. Similarly, Semm and Palang (2004: 56-65) investigated the impact of the social structures created by the Soviet Union on the engagement with land in Estonia. They mention that customs, rituals and beliefs connected to the land were affected by the promotion of a socialist culture and the demotion of traditional Estonian village life. This impact of collectivisation on the use and mobility in Estonia’s landscape (enforced settlement pattern and state-governed land use), and in particular impacted the personal attachment and self-identification with the land.

Thirdly, the physical nature of a place also defines how people will interact with where they dwell. On the one hand, as the locus of human action, the ecological reality of a
region determines the livelihood strategies for the inhabitants and thus the possibility to interact with particular places more easily than with others. On the other hand, existing human structural components in the landscape largely predetermine an agent’s presence in the landscape. Existing roads will be preferentially used, existing settlement patterns will determine where an agent will live and interact with his/her environment and other agents, and areas of land adapted to particular land use will be preferred above others.

Fourth, understanding the historical trajectory of the locales is also important to understanding the logic behind a cultural landscape. As discussed above, time inherently defines an agent’s habitus, field conditions and the physical matrix of the landscape. Very often this historical trajectory has a spatial expression and can be understood through maps and surviving relics in the landscape.

In order to acquire both social and spatial data about the Altaian cultural landscapes, participatory mapping combined with traditional ethnographic fieldwork was chosen as an underpinning methodology. As already illustrated by outcomes from previous participatory mapping research and GIS analysis (Brown 2005, Brown and Raymond 2007, Brown and Reed 2011, Chambers 2006, Chapin, Lamb and Thrilled 2005, Fagerholm et al. 2012, Fagerholm, Käyhko and Van Eetvelde 2013, Käyhkö et al. 2011, Sletto 2009), community-mapping initiatives provide unique spatial data about use and valuation of particular places. Furthermore, the ability to integrate a variety of both social background information and spatial data about the landscape and participants enables us to overcome the above-discussed shortcomings of both objective and subjective approaches to landscape and place. Because cultural landscapes are the outcome of a dialectical interplay of different variables, 13 different villages in different contexts were chosen in order to estimate the impact of the above-defined variables and understand the variation in landscape attachment.

8.2 Appraising local landscape knowledge: from participatory mapping to an interpretation of the Altaian landscape

Unravelling the logic behind the cultural landscapes of the Altai Republic is only possible if both the current associative landscape and processes constituting it are understood. Based on the above-defined variables and theoretical elaboration of the dualist subjective and objective-environmental nature of a cultural landscape, a workflow was set up taking into account a variety of materials. Inspired by earlier landmark research in similar developing and peripheral contexts (Brown 2005, Brown and Reed 2011, Fagerholm et al. 2012, Fagerholm, Käyhko and Van Eetvelde 2013, Käyhkö et al. 2011), and taking into
account the above-discussed cornerstones of a cultural landscape, this workflow was organised around five key thematic categories:

- Physical environment (human and natural)
- Historical trajectory
- Use of the landscape
- Social valuation landscape
- Habitus and field conditions

Based on a systematic collection, processing and integration of the various materials, the envisioned outcome of the workflow was a dynamic interpretation of the different processes that constitute the different cultural landscapes for each case study. In the next section these different case study areas will be discussed and interpreted. Below, subsections will discuss the materials used and the particular strategy of the participatory mapping.

8.2.1 **Physical environment**

The structural characteristics – both the natural and ‘human’ elements – of the physical environment were appraised using a variety of remote-sensing data, cartographic sources and multiple personal visits to the study areas. The most basic topographical information was mainly derived from 1:100.000 topographic maps (figure 8-1). The entire former Soviet Union was mapped just before and after World War II in an effort to provide maps for agricultural and military purposes. Most areas were mapped on a scale of 1:100.000 while some key areas (including Altai) were mapped on a scale of 1:10.000 (Rendell, Stride and Garcia-Graneron 2013). Only the last decades of the 1980s-updated 1:100.000 maps have been declassified, and the 1:10.000 maps are still considered top secret and are very difficult to consult. Because these maps are relatively dated, hold limited information about land use and contain some deliberate mistakes (see Goossens et al. 2006) additional remote-sensing data was necessary. Lack of funds to acquire recent high-resolution imaginary was bypassed by using ArcBruTile (http://arcbrutile.codeplex.com), an ArcGIS 9.3 extension that enables GIS users to display base maps from services such as Google Maps and Bing maps in ArcMap. Comparison with very precise GPS data assured that these base maps were sufficiently precise for the purposes of this study. Detailed information about the relief was acquired by using the free 30m-resolution ASTER digital elevation model (DEM) model (downloaded from http://reverb.echo.nasa.gov/reverb/).

All these information sources were integrated into ArcGIS 9.3 and important structural components that determine the transactional engagement with the environment were digitised (i.e. existing settlements, roads, rivers, land-use patterns, prominent hills, forest patches and administrative borders). In addition, for each study area a basic
A descriptive characterisation of the landscape was made (cf. Van Eetvelde and Antrop 2004).

Figure 8 – 1: Used geographic information sources. (a) Soviet 1:100,000 topographic maps. – (b) Aster 30m DEM, used for understanding the relief and for viewshed analysis. (c) High-resolution imaginary (ArcBruTile); a comparison in GIS with high-precision GPS data of archaeological monuments shows that this information source is very precise.
8.2.2 Local historical trajectory

Because of the limited number of micro-scale histories and a too many dubious Soviet statistics and descriptions, the historical trajectory of the different regions was appraised through the combined use of broader ethnographic and historical sources (cf. Chapter 5) and detailed cartographic data. This combination of sources enabled me to retrace the history of the different locales and its impact on present-day engagement with the land. Considerable attention was paid to the Soviet period: it is known from different ethnographic sources that collective farms were one of the most important tools used to overturn traditional subsistence, social organisation and shamanist engagement with the landscape (Balzer 1999, Humphrey 1999, Potapov 1969, Sasaki 2011). Furthermore, collective farming also impacted the landscape itself, directly affecting the mobility, movement and engagement with place and space.

As already outlined in Chapter 5, almost every villager was part of a collective farm. In the early 1930s, all land, stock and people were reorganised in government (i.e. Party)-controlled farms. Nomads were relocated to hundreds of villages, which had their own communal farms. During this period, each village was an independent *kolhоз* or *sovchoz*; the following decade, individual collective farms and state farms were aggregated into larger regional enterprises (called *sovchoz* or *kolhоз*). From the 1940s onwards, these large collective farms had a regional administrative, political and planning centre. These regional *kolhоз* and *sovchoz* were subdivided into *brigades*, workforces with their own territory. In many cases, the village was a *brigade* centre, making each village relatively independent. Each *brigade* consisted of different work units (for example, the herding unit, building unit, milking unit, drivers, tractor drivers and administrative unit).

Information from historical documents and that collected from informants was combined with cartographic data (basically the only systematic information) to reconstruct the trajectory of the locale. A variety of both detailed and more general maps were collected in order to retrace the local history of the villages and the particular organisation studied during the Soviet period (table 8-1). Many of these maps and additional geographic data were gathered from different archives: the Granö archive in Helsinki, the State archive of the Novosibirsk region, the archive of the Rthe private archive of Tomsk amateur historian Ivan Polousov, the historic atlas of Vadim Borodayev (2006), and the national archive of the Altai Republic (*fond* 42 – land-use maps). Apart from the Granö archive, the various archives had no equipment to scan the maps into digital format. The only option was to photograph the maps using a digital camera on a tripod. The poor preservation of many of the maps, incompleteness of certain series, spatial inaccuracies in the older maps, and deformations caused by photographing them meant that it was very difficult to correctly integrate the different sources in GIS and make a detailed spatial study of the historical trajectory of the landscape. Old maps and remote-sensing data were integrated as precisely as possible in GIS and compared. However,
because of problems with the data, in the end only the very general historical trajectories of the different study areas could be understood.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Coverage</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Mining</td>
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<td>South Siberia</td>
<td>Polousov</td>
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<tr>
<td>End 19th century</td>
<td>Topographic</td>
<td>1:250,000</td>
<td>North Altai</td>
<td>Helsinki</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early 20th century</td>
<td>Settlements</td>
<td>1:250,000</td>
<td>North Altai</td>
<td>Helsinki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early 20th century</td>
<td>Topographic</td>
<td>1:500,000</td>
<td>South Siberia</td>
<td>Novosibirsk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900-1917</td>
<td>Land-use</td>
<td>Varied/small scaled</td>
<td>North Altai</td>
<td>Gorno Altaisk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930-1940</td>
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<td>Gorno Altaisk</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1:24,000</td>
<td>Karakol</td>
<td>Academy</td>
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<td>1960s-1970s</td>
<td>Satellite</td>
<td>1:25,000</td>
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<td>CORONA</td>
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<td>1974-1975</td>
<td>Land-use</td>
<td>1:25,000</td>
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<td>2000s</td>
<td>Aerial</td>
<td>High-resolution</td>
<td>Whole Republic</td>
<td>ArcBruTile</td>
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Table 8 - 1: Collected geographic data.

8.2.3 Use of the landscape + social valuation of the landscape

Insights into the transactional engagement with the land were derived from participant observation and participatory mapping. Although participant observation (i.e. literally observing people’s behaviour and actions) was largely unsystematic, it provided important information about the basic economic organisation (i.e. transhumance between summer pastures and winter stables in the village, day-to-day mobility within the landscape, the relative boundlessness of personal land, and the communal nature of pastures). On the other hand, the effort to map the use and valuation of the landscape was very systematic and aimed at translating insider knowledge about it into a cartographic format.

Participatory mapping and PGIS (participatory geographical information systems) are commonly used umbrella terms which refer to all techniques that combine the potential of traditional ethnographic mapping methods with possibilities provided by geospatial platforms (i.e. GIS)(Dunn 2007, Kayak et al. 2011). Participatory mapping frameworks enable the collection, storage, contextualisation and analysis of stakeholder information and enable the unravelling of the highly dynamic human-environment interplay, thereby providing imperative insights for sustainable planning of locally constituted cultural landscapes (Käyhkö et al. 2011: 44).

Basically, by instructing informants to indicate certain values on existing maps or helping them to draw a mental map of their own landscape on blank paper, participatory mapping produces spatial data about how communities use and socially conceive the environment. It has already proven successful in many developing and Indigenous contexts in collecting relevant socio-cultural data on the valuation of places and environments and their interrelation with the transactional use of the landscape (Brown 2004, Pain 2004, Fagerholm and Käyhkö 2009, Kindon et al. 2009). Furthermore, aided by
GIS, illustrative research (for example, Brown 2004, Brown and Raymond 2007, Raymond and Brown 2007, Fagerholm and Käyhkö 2009) successfully established a comprehensive understanding of the social dimensions of the cultural landscape of specific communities and their specific interrelation with physical nature. As such, it enables us to spatially appraise both the use and communal socio-cultural importance of particular places – revealing imperative insights into the logic behind a cultural landscape.

As an emancipatory technique, it also provides unique political possibilities for the disempowered Indigenous people themselves. By mapping the Indigenous landscape, traditional knowledge is interpreted as a point or polygon on a map, a language which can be understood by governmental agencies. Thus, participatory mapping can partially reduce institutional and epistemological barriers and lead to an emancipation of local knowledge in planning (Brown 2005, Chambers 2006, Chapin, Lamb and Threlkeld 2005, Fagerholm et al. 2012: 432). Ultimately, it raises awareness about land-, resource- and heritage-related matters and the challenges existing in colonial structures. As concerns the Indigenous people, participatory mapping can serve as a political tool for negotiating their own ‘landscape discourse’ and identity (Chapin, Lamb and Threlkeld 2005, Sletto 2009).

An advantage and a shortcoming at the same time, the final product of participatory mapping is mainly a map. Although maps make it possible to govern a landscape’s social dimensions and display the spatial dimensions of social phenomena, they remain a two-dimensional representation of a multi-dimensional reality. As such, sacred sites can become detached from the dynamic processes that constitute their meaning. Similarly, in many field studies in the domain of participatory mapping, following the application of a myriad of GIS tools, the outcome is a static regional map that presents the social landscape as a patchwork of demarcated places in XYZ. Through such maps, the highly relevant social processes and contextual backgrounds that constitute this landscape are pushed into the background. Furthermore, by presenting all the data on one regional map the scale on which an associative cultural landscape is created and inhabited is masked. In his critical appraisal of the power and potential of Indigenous participatory mapping initiatives, anthropologist Bjorn Inman Sletto (2009) rightly states:

Maps put things and people in their place. Not only do they order the material world and make us visualize the where, but through their rhetorical power they also simultaneously obscure the why. Most maps—especially “scientific” maps produced by regional, state, and global institutions and their agents—are mute about the social context and consequences of their own existence.

(Sletto 2009: 445)

In a final effort to overcome this major bias of participatory mapping, I opted instead for a dynamic schematic map (based on a combination of different materials) which, when supplemented with key ethnographic insights, aims to disclose for each case study the different structures that shape the cultural landscape. During the fieldwork and processing of the individual mappings, considerable attention was paid to the scale on which the
landscape is formed and should be presented. As will become clear below, because of the importance of the village as an institution in society, schematic maps and ethnographic descriptions were organised on village scale.

Based on exploratory research in 2010 (see Chapter 4), participatory mapping and standardised interviews were conducted in 13 villages across the Altai during fieldwork in the summer of 2011. As noted earlier, because of the particular socio-economic organisation of family life in Siberia, the household was chosen as a working unit. This corresponds to the global trend in ethnography (Erikson 2001, Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). Thus, interviews and mappings were conducted within a family setting with several family members at the time. However, as often happens during interviews at the group level, and especially in hierarchical environments such as the Altai, one respondent takes the lead and serves as the main informant while other participants complement that with certain information. As a result, the main informant influences the mapping and interviews the most. The setting was described and the characteristics of the main respondent were also included and appraised. The number of households estimated was based on the interpretation of high-resolution satellite imagery and census data (on average, four to six people live in one household). In order to achieve a representative sample we aimed to assess more than half of the households in the village. It quickly became apparent that this would be difficult to achieve. Even though we worked with a local Altaian to win over the trust of the community members, assuring anonymity and going into great details about the purpose of the research, some people were reluctant to participate. Furthermore, serious alcohol-related problems in many of the villages prevented a considerable number of inhabitants from participating successfully in the research. To achieve a representative sample, we visited villages for several days consecutively and approached all the inhabitants. Across the 13 villages 195 households participated, so despite the above-stated problems and compared with other Indigenous mapping initiatives, a considerable sample of the village was assessed. As mentioned in Chapter 4, we did not use the so-called ‘snowballing sampling’ but by approaching all the villagers we tried to gather a random sample across gender, ethnic and tribal differences. In one village (Chendek), a lot of inhabitants were drunk or had no interest in participating in the research; subsequently, since representation was limited, the results from this village were not processed. Thus, of the initial 13 villages, 12 were held over for further analysis.

During the 20-60-minute assessments, after initially introducing the research and touching on some archaeology-related themes, community members were asked to indicate various areas that offered insight into their use and valuation of place and space. Based on insights from the exploratory research in 2010 and from prior participatory mapping research (Brown 2004, Brown and Raymond 2007, Raymond and Brown 2007, Fagerholm and Käyhkö 2009), five relevant social themes were kept for participatory mapping (table 8-2). A variety of topographic (scale 1:100.000) and ortho-photo maps
(scale 1:50,000) of the region were made available to the participants to indicate these areas. After discussing the appointed areas, regions were subsequently marked on a uniform 1:100,000 map (figure 8-2). In addition to the mapping of spatial attributes, during a semi-standardised questionnaire that also dealt with the archaeology-related problems, background information about the participants (i.e. age, ethnicity, tribe, occupation, autochthone to the region) was collected as well as general information about their livelihood strategy. Households were also asked to indicate on a scale of 0 to 10 their particular attachment to the surrounding landscape (0-4 = not important/4-6 just surrounding environment/6-8 = it is just the place where I live, I like it here and it is beautiful/8-10 = it is more than just the physical place around me, it would be difficult to live without it). Where accessible, and taking into consideration the restrictions on visitors imposed by the local community, specific indicated places were visited, described and photographed.

Although the initial goal of the research was to study all mapped social values, some could not always be studied in a representative way. While most interlocutors had no difficulties in appointing places as sacred or spiritual, for many it was very difficult to demarcate places with a historical value. In many cases, interlocutors also had difficulties indicating aesthetic places. Linguistic and cultural differences may explain the difficulties in determining these values. As noted earlier, in many Indigenous contexts ‘sacred’ does not refer to a place’s religious dimensions but rather to its distinct character and emotionally felt need for sensible stewardship. On many occasions, when people were talking about certain sacred places in the same sentence they also named ‘their most sacred place in the world’ alongside the ‘single most beautiful place in the world’, and made references to mythical figures and a variety of deities from the past who dwelt in those places. When I asked them to indicate aesthetic or historical places, many had difficulties identifying these areas and told me that the whole Altai is beautiful and historical. Only after insisting some stated that their sacred places are also the most beautiful and historical places in the landscape. Because of the predominant overlap between sacred and aesthetic values and ethno-lingual difficulties these were not processed further or included in the research.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subsistence</td>
<td>Places that provide for their economic and daily needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Areas for:</td>
<td>- Grazing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+ Fodder cultivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+ Food crops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+ Hunting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+ Fishing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+ Foraging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetic</td>
<td>Beautiful or attractive places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Places where people come together, have picnics, go with their family or have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>celebrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical</td>
<td>Places that are relevant for their personal, regional or national history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual/Religious</td>
<td>Places that have a specific supernatural meaning, are relevant for their</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>religious practices, and where they tie kira.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 8-2:** Mapped values.

The collected spatial data was subsequently digitised as polygons in ArcGIS 9.3 and each mapped variable was organised in thematic shape-files. In addition to the interview code, in the case of the spiritual/religious layer, the name and any particularities of sacred places were also added to the shape-files. General background information about the households and main respondents assessed was inserted in a spreadsheet, which was linked with the mapped values.

To determine whether there is agreement on a particular valuation of specific places or if certain areas in the landscape are used or perceived communally, overlap between mappings of the same variable was calculated through vector calculations using the *union* and *dissolve* GIS tool. Because the visual characteristics of landscape features (visibility, shape and colour) give a very important sense of perception (Stevenant 2010: 47 referring to Bell 2004) outcomes of *viewshed* analysis in GIS of socially valued places (together with pictures to evaluate the shape and colour) were integrated to evaluate the impact of visibility on the veneration of certain places (i.e. especially mountains).

Finally, participatory mapping data was combined and compared with the physical reality and the general time-depth maps. Based on an interpretation of this data, a schematic map was realised basically giving information about the organisation of the cultural landscape at a community level, representing important physical features, the use of the landscape, significant socio-cultural places and some of the most important spatial dimensions of the historical organisation of landscape and land use. The different layers and outcomes of the various GIS calculations can be found as GeoPDFs in the annex.

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14 *Viewshed* analysis was done in Global Mapper, when investigating the visibility from the village the transmitter height was 1.8m. When assessing which areas can see a particular area the receiver height was also 1.8m.
Figure 8 – 2: Workflow of participatory mapping research. (1) First people are asked to appoint certain areas on a variety of cartographic sources; the facilitator subsequently marks these on a standard map. – (2) After digitalisation vector calculations in GIS subsequently determined the overlap between markings of different interlocutors – (3) The areas visible from the village is calculated using the *viewshed* tool in GIS. – (4) After careful analysis data and comparison with other geographic data, a schematic map was compiled.
8.2.4 Habitus and field conditions

One of the major critiques that I share with Bjorn Set-to (2009) towards many existing participatory mapping initiatives is the preoccupation with map production and limited room for addressing the impact of the background of the participants involved and the structures of the social field that impact their practice and engagement with the environment. Therefore, throughout the discussion on the different study regions, there will also be room for a descriptive discussion of the social reality based on established ethnographic work, own experiences during fieldwork and background information about the involved interlocutors. This should further illuminate the processes and role of social institutions (i.e. family, clans and village) and politics that underlie the cultural landscapes of the Altai Republic, thereby transforming the schematic maps into dynamic socio-economic systems.

Working with hundreds of interlocutors forced me to make generalisations preventing me from including individual nuances. However, these nuances are pivotal in understanding the dialectical interplay between habitus, field, time and physical environment that lie at the roots of any cultural landscape. In an effort to overcome this shortcoming, for some case studies, particular nuances will also be scrutinised based on a more individual appraisal of the human-environment engagement constituting the cultural landscapes.

8.3 Results

In this section, the cultural landscapes of different study regions will be described and interpreted through a holistic framework. First, building on the general information touched on in Chapter 5, some relevant characteristics and the historical trajectory of the different study regions will be discussed as well as some general results of the participatory mapping research. As observed during fieldwork, it became apparent that due to the huge impact of the organisation of everyday life during collectivisation the village has become a very important level of organisation in Kazakh, Russian and Altaian society. As will become clear throughout the following subsections, the cultural landscape is a local product that needs to be appraised and managed at village scale. Therefore, after assessing the general characteristics of the region, each village will be discussed individually.
8.3.1 Karakol Park

The Karakol Park (figure 8-3) is a semi-protected nature park comprising the Karakol valley and part of the Ursula valley. The park is located in the Ongudai raion in the central part of the Altai Republic. Despite the long history of Russian presence (the Ursul valley was an important route to Mongolia where later the Chuiski Trakt was constructed), the Ongudai raion is a predominant Altaian region (roughly a quarter of the inhabitants are Russian). The south-north flowing Karakol is part of the larger west-east flowing Ursul basin, which is separated from the Uymon region by the Terektinsky range in the south. The landscape of the park is comparable to an alpine landscape that is typically characterised by altitude-related landscape types. The two most important elements of such an ecosystem are the mountain pastures situated above the tree line and the relatively vegetated lower valleys.

In the Karakol valley, the most southern part (Terektinsky range) of the landscape is characterised by a meadow-like landscape rich in lakes and springs. Its appearance is a grassy landscape visually dominated by high snowy peaks up to 2821 msl.; the Uch-Enmek mountain is the most prominent mountain peak (figure 8-4) and is also the headwater of the Karakol river. Fifteen kms downstream the valley bottom opens up and is characterised by a wide alluvial plain, flanked by grassy terraces and prominent peaks that dominate the view. Neither the Karakol river nor the Ursul river are navigable, being 4-6 metres at their widest. The Karakol and Ursul have a very broad and flat alluvial plain featuring a typical braided river system. This plain is extremely wet and, to a large extent, inaccessible and unsuitable for agriculture or grazing. Likewise, the terraces are very dry and not fit for agriculture. Both rivers are highly toxic because of the abundant use of fertilisers during the Soviet period.

The Karakol park consists of six villages: Tuekta, Karakol, Kurata, Bithicktu Bom, Boochi and Kulada. On average, most villages comprise 80 households (250-350 inhabitants), except Kulada (roughly 100 households and 532 inhabitants). The villages in the Karakol valley itself (Kulada, Boochi and Bitchiktu Boom) are connected by an unpaved road that is in relatively good condition. This road also connects the villages with the communally used southern mountain pastures (locally called Uch-Enmek taiga). The road to the southern mountain pasture is relatively drivable by jeep until 6-10 km south of Kulada. The villages along the Ursul are served by the busy Chuiski highway that meets the local road through the Karakol valley in Karakol. A local road that serves the settlement of Nizhniy Talda and some large farm complexes adjoins the highway in the adjacent settlement of Kurata. The highway also connects the villages with the northern mountain pastures (locally called the Seminski taiga), which are situated outside the perimeter of the park and are mostly used by the villages in the Ursul valley. Crossed by the Chuski highway this Seminski mountain pasture is also one of the republic’s most important mountain passes and is a key area of interest to be developed into a ski resort.
Figure 8 – 3: Topographic map of the study area with indication of much discussed places. (© Ghent University & Dresden University)
The park is ethnically mixed with a majority of Altaians; Russians predominantly inhabit the villages located closest to the Chuiski highway. Tuekta, a Russian village located on the banks of the Ursul close to the highway, was founded in the late 19th century by Russian settlers. All other villages were founded during the collectivisation. Situated along the Chuiski Trakt, Karakol and Kurata are ethnically mixed villages that have become one larger village. Karakol was the centre of the collective farm. Tractor stations, dairy industry, administrative buildings, (larger) shops, petrol stations, a medical centre and a boarding school were/are located in the village. Kulada, Boochi and Bitchiktu Boom are mono-ethnic Altaian villages located in the Karakol valley. Like the native inhabitants of Karakol and Kurata, all inhabitants of these villages are related to nomads who were displaced during collectivisation from their tribal territories in the wider region to newly founded villages organised around party-controlled collective farms.

Before the Soviet Union, besides some farming in Tuekta, there was no agriculture in the region or any fixed settlements. Different nomadic clans lived in the adjacent valleys. Alongside the transformation of the nomads into villagers, with the mixed economy, the landscape was also drastically transformed. Steppe fields were ploughed, parts of the wet
alluvial plains were drained, side valleys were deforested and a network of roads and channels was constructed. As shown by land-use maps, by the mid-1930s there were seven different collective farms in the area that each had their own territory and village. Shortly before the Second World War, the different collective farms in the wider region were reorganised into one larger collective farm. This reorganisation was for administrative purposes and to facilitate milk collection. Each previously independent collective farm became an independent brigade with its own farm and collective workforce that was limited to its own territory. Territory was sometimes shared – for example, brigades in the central part of the Karakol valley used the mountain pastures that were part of the more northern and southern villages, and these villages used some of the central villages’ lands for fodder cultivation. All villages except Tuekta were part of the Karl Marx kolkhoz. Tucket was part of the Tenginski kolkhoz that was later transformed into a sovchoz.

Despite the long history of Russian presence and the influence of the collective farms system, traditional culture in the Ongudai raion is strong. All Altaians predominantly speak Altaian, the cultural houses in the different villages are very active in promoting traditional culture, and there are different local and regional traditional festivals and celebrations. Many villages have a communal kuree praying place (a type of oobo praying place that can be found across Central Asia and is designed for communal land worship), many farmsteads in the village have an ail (figure 8-5), and villagers are very vocal about their particular shamanist beliefs. The relatively traditional organisation of society is one of the reasons why the park was created.

Figure 8 – 5: Picture of an ail next to a standard Soviet cabin. Before the Soviet Union the ail would move with the nomads when changing camp. As part of the traditional housing culture ail is linked with the nomadic lifestyle.
A total of 96 households in five villages were interviewed, and 94 agreed to participate in the mapping project – no interviews and mappings were conducted in Kurata as parts of its land are not located in the park.

As regards the sacred places, a total of 78 participants made 233 markings, which can be grouped into 61 individual areas. These areas were defined as distinct places with a strong spiritual character, clearly transcending the landscape around them. Nine households were not able to define specific locations and saw everything in the landscape as a sacred. This means that 90% of all participating households (n: 95) attach a spiritual meaning to (parts of) the surrounding landscape. Interestingly, this includes people who assured me that they have non-traditional beliefs (table 8-3), and Russians.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Traditional beliefs</th>
<th>Orthodox</th>
<th>Atheist</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attach supernatural</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>meaning to the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>landscape</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altaian</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attach supra-natural</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>meaning to the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>landscape</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attach supra-natural</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>meaning to the</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>landscape</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 – 3: Table indicating the religions of each ethnic group and their specific attachment to places in the landscape.

When looking at the types of mapped locations, the categories that were marked most are: prominent mountains (54%), springs (23%) and archaeological monuments (10%). This correlates well with the local character of the valley, as prominent mountains dominate the view of this alpine landscape and are important shelters against harsh and cold winds during the winter. The large proportion of springs could be related to the valley’s environmental problems: during the Soviet period, toxic insecticides and fertilisers were used frequently, resulting in the heavy pollution of the numerous streams and rivers, which meant that until recently the springs were the only sources of potable water. In addition, the valley is among one of the richest archaeological valleys of the Altai with numerous royal burial mounds from the Scythian period and rock art sites, which can explain the marking of archaeological monuments.

When combining these results in a GIS, the spatial dimensions and patterns of this social value can be better understood. Through vector calculations, areas with great overlap were delineated. At the valley scale, there is only agreement on one well-defined spiritual area, the Uch-Enmek mountain complex, which was designated as such by 61% of the participants (n: 47) – from different villages. Most people described it as the centre
of the world, which dictated their life. The complex comprises a series of prominent snowy peaks and forms the headwaters of the Karakol river. The nearby mountain pastures and lakes make it an important grazing and foraging area in the summer. Other locations were elaborately described by multiple participants as the centre of their world, but were not unanimous as the Uch-Enmek. When identifying which villagers defined these areas, it seems that there is strong agreement between participants from the same village. These are commonly striking landscape entities close to the village. Strangely, nearby villages close to such areas do not explicitly value that place in the same way. For example, in the Karakol village, 74% of the interlocutors (n: 14) marked the Bai Tuu mountain as an extremely sacred place. When looking at the results of Bitchiktu Boom, a village approximately 4 km south of Karakol, whose view is also dominated by the Bai Tuu (results viewshed analysis – figure 8-6), only one respondent out of 22 marked this area. The Tek Penek, a very prominent sacred mountain located between the villages of Boochi and Kulada, was also mentioned by almost all villagers of Boochi, while none of the participating inhabitants of Kulada considered the mountain as central to their cosmology.

In total, 287 markings were made to indicate subsistence-related themes: 106 for grazing, 80 areas for fodder cultivation, 13 for hunting, 62 for foraging, and 26 for fishing. There was a significant overlap between the indicated locations. As depicted in more detailed below, areas indicated for grazing comprised the village (winter) and mountain pastures (summer). Because the valley is quite wide, especially around Boochi and Bitchiktu Boom, some villagers also had their own stables where they put their cattle during the winter, or even throughout the entire year. In particular, foraging takes place around the village and on the taiga. Hunting of most animals is prohibited, and only predators (bears and wolves) can be shot. The few households that indicated hunting areas mainly indicated large areas around the village and on the taiga. Fishing took place where possible.

For many interlocutors it was difficult to identify places that have a social and leisure function. However, after explaining that I was looking for places that people prefer to relax, have a picnic or hang out in with other people, 58 interlocutors were able to identify such places, resulting in 73 individual markings. Most people indicated their home or places on the bank of the river near the village. Of the people who referred to areas with a social function, 25% referred to one specific place, the Arigem lake.
Figure 8-6: Viewshed analysis. (top) Kulada – (bottom) Boochi
Figure 8-6: Viewshed analysis. (top) Bitchiktu-Boom – (bottom) Karakol.
8.3.1.1 Kulada

Based on 17 mappings, a careful interpretation of different spatial information plus participant observation, an extrapolated schematic interpretation of the cultural landscapes of Kulada was made (figure 8-7).

Kulada is situated right on the spot where the valley becomes more south-west/north-east oriented and takes on a more open character. Two large terraces (eroded alluvial fans) are located close to the village and have been used intensively for agriculture since the 1930s; now fodder (a variety of fast-growing grasses) is cultivated there. Livestock is kept around the village, and larger herds are grazed on the summer pastures on the nearby Uch-Enmek taiga. A few households have their own stayanka (stables) that are mostly located in small adjacent side valleys where the stock and fodder are kept during the winter – during the summer only a few animals are kept in the stables as large herds are grazed on the mountain pastures. Few interlocutors indicated that they fish on the banks of the Karakol river. Foraging takes place particularly around the village.

Despite its longer Soviet trajectory and interrelated education programmes, village life today is still very much influenced by Altaian culture and tradition. Besides the veneration of places, the village has some distinct elements that are typical of the outspoken Altaian identity: day-to-day conversation was in Altaian and the children were unable to speak Russian. The housing infrastructure was characterised by the presence of the traditional ail. The village has its own Ak Jang praying altar that overlooks the village and a local museum about Altaian culture and archaeological monuments.

Most interlocutors (11) named the Arigem lake, 6 kms south of Kulada, as a location for social activities (family picnics or gatherings). Others selected their village or house, river bank, and some referred to the kuree altar where, at particular times of the year, communal offerings take place.

All but one household (a 24-year-old Christian Orthodox Altaian) indicated that the landscape around them is sacred. There was broad consensus among the villages that the sacred Uch-Enmek mountain (n: 15) – which dominates the view in the areas around Kulada – is the centre of the world, a very sacred place. There was also some agreement on another place, the kuree altar that overlooks the village (n: 4) and four springs surrounding the village (n: 4).

To summarise: most sacred places are situated close to the village or are visible from the village, which is the area that is also the focal point of everyday life (subsistence and social). The area that is most intensively inhabited and venerated correlates with the former territory of the collective brigade, striking landscape features located just outside the village territory, which although venerated in the neighbouring Boochi village, are not venerated at all in Kulada.
Figure 8-7: Schematic map of the associative landscape of Kulada. A. Uch-Enmek – B. Arigem Lake – C. Kure altar. The thicker the external lines of the polygons, the more communal agreement.
8.3.1.2 Boochi

The response rate in Boochi was significantly higher (26 interlocutors). A similar schematic map was made, giving insights into the spatial organisation of the use and veneration of the environment (figure 8-8). Boochi (meaning mountain pass in Altaian) is located on an alluvial terrace in a relatively wide part of the valley. The village is surrounded by prominent peaks that dominate the landscape. In the south-west, the mountain pastures and the Uch-Enmek ridge are clearly visible. Some large side valleys connect with the Karakol valley near Boochi and provide easy passages to adjacent valleys.

Similar to Kulada, life in Boochi is characterised by the relatively limited influence of modern culture, and many Altaian customs and traditions dominate all aspects of everyday life. The village also has an actively used kuree altar, which is situated on the flank of the sacred Karatu Mountain overlooking Boochi. People from nearby villages told me that the village is considered as having a strong communal fabric.

The large side valleys and part of the alluvial plain are intensively used for fodder cultivation. These side valleys and drier parts of the alluvial plain also have large stable complexes where cattle are kept during the winter or sometimes throughout the entire year. Most cattle are still held in and around the village and on the Uch-Enmek pasture that is connected to the village via a drivable road. The banks of the Karakol are preferred for fishing and the surrounding side valleys are used for foraging and hunting.

Outside the village, two areas were indicated by different participants as so-called ‘social’ places: the river bank (n: 7) and the Arigem lake (n: 3).

All interlocutors indicated that their surrounding landscape is very sacred and is more than just the physical backdrop on which everyday life takes place. Compared to Kulada, a broad variety (both in type and location) of sacred sites were mapped by the informants. There was considerable agreement amongst community members, and across clan divisions, about their value and importance. Four prominent mountains surrounding Boochi were marked as sacred and were seen as an integral part of their cosmology: the Karatu mountain with a praying place (n: 15), the Kizil mountain (n: 11), Sojoch (n: 10), and the very prominent Tek Penek mountain (n: 9). The Uch-Enmek mountain complex (n: 12) that also dominates the view of the village and its nearby mountain pastures is also communally considered as sacred. The Teduso arzhan suu (n: 6), which is visible from the road and is an important water resource for the village, is also venerated. The nearby Bashadar archaeological complex (n: 3), another spring (n: 2) and some prominent mountain peaks were also mapped.

To summarise: the interpretation for Boochi is similar to that of Kulada; both in a geographic and sensory sense (i.e. visibility). Most sacred places are situated in the territory of the village (corresponding to the territory of the brigade), which has been and still is the focal point of everyday life (subsistence and social).
Figure 8-8: Schematic map of cultural landscape of Boochi. A. Uch-Enmek – B. Tek Penek – C. Soyoch – D. Kizil – E. Karatu – F. Teduso
8.3.1.3 Bitchiktu Boom

In Bitchiktu Boom, 22 households participated in the mapping initiative (figure 8-9). In five of the households, the members or main informants were not raised in Bitchiktu Boom but came from Boochi, Kulada or Tenga. Bitchiktu Boom is situated on an alluvial terrace where the Karakol valley is at its widest. Located at the entrance to the valley, the landscape is relatively smooth. The Uch-Enmek ridge is no longer visible but another very prominent mountain, the Bai Tuu, dominates the view to the north-east. There are no considerable springs in the vicinity of the village and in the centre there is a communal pump that is the only possible water supply. Bitchiktu Boom was founded during collectivisation and ultimately became a brigade centre by the end of the 1930s. Another brigade centre was combined with Bitchiktu Boom after the Second World War. This smaller, although still considerable centre (called Siterlyu) was situated between Boochi and Bitchiktu Boom and comprised 15 to 25 households.

Just like Boochi and Kulada, Bitchiktu Boom is almost entirely Altaian. Despite more external influence (situated closer to the highway and with a considerable influx of tourists) life in the village is still very traditional.

The use of the landscape is similar to that of other villages in the valley: cattle herding is the most important livelihood activity and fodder is cultivated in the wide drained alluvial plains and adjacent side valleys. Most stock is kept in the village and on the mountain pastures. Because Bitchiktu Boom is situated roughly in the middle between the Seminski and Uch-Enmek taiga, both mountain pastures are used in the summer, although the Uch-Enmek pasture is preferred. Larger farmers keep part of their stock in stables close to the village. The forests and side valleys around Bitchiktu Boom are used for foraging and the river banks for fishing. The river bank (n: 5) was indicated as an area used for community meetings, picnics and for a variety of leisure-related activities.

Although all but one community participant indicated they have a strong attachment to the landscape and see parts of it as sacred, the variety and agreement on sacred places was less explicit. Although not visible, there was most agreement on the sacredness of the Uch-Enmek peaks (n: 10). The prominent Karatu mountain between Boochi and Siterlyu was indicated by six informants as well as the Kizil mountain (n: 3). A variety of smaller mountains directly around Bitchiktu Boom were also named as well as the Seminski area. Except for the Karatu and Kizil mountains, those mountains referred to around Boochi were mentioned by people who grew up in Boochi (ON-BB-18 and ON-BB-09). The prominent Bai Tuu was not communally venerated.

To summarise: in the case of Bitchiktu Boom, there was less agreement amongst the interviewees about the sacred sites – only the Uch-Enmek mountain was indicated by a considerable group of people. Other indicated sites are still situated in the vicinity of the village or the old brigade centre of Siterlyu (i.e. Karatu and Kizil). As regards one mapping (ON-BB-09), it was explicitly stated that the main informant’s parents lived in Siterlyu so the mountains around Siterlyu were considered very sacred.
Figure 8-9: Schematic map associative landscape Bitchiktu-Boom. A. Tek Penek – B. Karatu – C. Kizil.
8.3.1.4 Karakol

In Karakol, 18 different households participated in the mapping (figure 8-10). As the gateway to the Karakol valley, since the Soviet period it has been the region’s administrative centre. A high school, medical centre, police station, petrol station, bus station (services to Gorno-Altaisk, and various district capitals) and the park’s visitors’ centre are situated in the village, making it much frequented by other villages. Karakol’s landscape is visually dominated by the Bai Tuu mountain.

Karakol is an ethnically mixed village with a majority of Altaians. Despite being a less-closed community than Boochi, Kulada or Bitchiktu Boom, the traditional Altaian lifestyle is still strong. There is a strong sense of place attachment, most people speak Altaian, and there is a local museum featuring nearby archaeological sites and Altaian culture.

Because Karakol was mainly an industrial and administrative settlement, it only had a small territory for farming and herding during the Soviet Union. Furthermore, because most people still work for the public sector, agriculture and cattle breeding is slightly less important. Most families have a small herd (some sheep and cows) that predominantly grazes the flanks of the Bai Tuu and lower laying grasslands along the Ursul. Households with more stock keep their cattle on the mountain pastures during the summer. Because the Seminski pasture is also very easy to access, both the Uch-Enmek and the Seminski pastures are used. Foraging takes place around the village and on the taigas. The Ursula and Kurata rivers are used for fishing, and the nearby river bank is used as a social venue.

Two of the 18 households assessed did not consider the landscape sacred, or had any kind of attachment to certain places. Among those who connected intrinsically with the landscape, 14 mentioned the impressive Bai Tuu mountain. The Uch-Enmek complex was named nine times. A spring located in the area of the tourist base, an important point of criticism to the park, was considered as sacred by six interlocutors. The Seminski region (including the mountain pass) was selected by three interlocutors. A mountain pass to the Kurata valley and a spring in the same valley were also named. A little like Bitchiktu Boom and Boochi, the places venerated in other villages were not explicitly seen as central in their cosmology, despite the fact that people encounter them visually when making the drive to, for example, the mountain pastures.

Among the 16 households which indicated sacred places, two were not typically ‘Altaian’. On one occasion (ON-KAR-03), the household was Russian (having lived in the village all their lives and worked in the collective farm and factory) and indicated sacred places and preformed rituals. The other household (ON-KAR-19) was mixed (predominantly Russian) and indicated the Uch-Enmek peaks and a nearby spring as sacred.
To summarise: in brief, we can see a very similar pattern as in the other Karakol villages. Some sacred places are situated around the village, correlating with the area most intensively used and historically situated within the territory of the Soviet brigade. The Uch-Enmek peaks and Seminski region, both important headwaters and prominent landscape features in the mountain pastures, were also referenced. Sacred places are limited to the area around the village.

Figure 8 – 10: Schematic map of the associative landscape of Karakol. A. Bai Tuu – B. sacred spring on territory camp

8.3.1.5 Tuekta

In the predominantly Russian village of Tuekta all ten interlocutors participated in the participatory mapping initiative (figure 8-11). As the only village that is completely situated in the Ursul valley it has a different organization. Cattle is not grazed on the Uch-Enmek taiga but on the Seminski taiga. Just as in all the other villages, some stock is kept around the village. The alluvial terraces surrounding the village are used for fodder cultivation. The side-valleys around the village are used for foraging, as well is the Seminski taiga. The banks of the Ursul river were indicated by seven respondents.
Despite being a village that has a long Russian history, four of the ten household indicated that they have sacred sites in the landscape. Interestingly, besides two Altaian families (which had almost entirely assimilated), two Russian households also indicated that they have sacred places. There was no overlap between the households regarding the sacred places, three different spring waters on the Seminski taiga were indicated, the Uch-Enmek mountain and an archaeological burial site in an adjacent valley. The interethnic veneration of the environment may hint that there has been some syncretism (see below).

Figure 8-11: Schematic map of the associative landscape of Karakol.
8.3.1 Middle Katun region

Compared to the Karakol valley, the second study area is located in a different physical and social space. Environmentally speaking, the study area is situated in the middle Katun region (figure 8-12), an area located between Chemal and Tyungur whose landscape can best be described as a dry alpine type that is dominated by the Katun (figure 8-13), which is 100-200m wide and is not potable. Through time, the north-south flowing Katun has eroded deep into the landscape creating an impressive valley with huge alluvial terraces on both sides of the river. Compared to the Karakol valley, the scenery of the Katun valley is dominated less by prominent mountains (figure 8-14). Because of the dominant orientation of the mountain flanks and well-drained character of the terraces the landscape is dry and has a steppe-like appearance. Due to its dry characteristics, settlements are located on the sites where larger side valleys join the Katun valley. Side valleys are more forested and better suited for extensive fodder cultivation. They connect the villages with the mountain pastures that are visually dominated by high (snowy) peaks, mountain springs and lakes. Just as in the Karakol valley, these areas are best suited for cattle breeding during the winter.

Because the middle Katun region is relatively large and some parts are inaccessible, only the most northern part just south of the district capital of Chemal was selected for fieldwork. This particular area was chosen in particular because of its uniqueness in a socio-cultural sense. Compared to the Karakol area it is located in the more accessible region that was already colonised from the 19th century onwards. In addition, the region is characterised by a large influx of tourists who visit the area annually. Located in the Chemal raion, the study area comprises the villages of Elanda, Edigan, Oroktoi and Kuyus. Compared to the Karakol valley, the villages are more isolated and dispersed. Settlements (Elanda, Edigan and Kuyus) and tourist infrastructure are found on the right bank of the Katun and are served by a regional track road. There is only one bridge (in a very poor state) to the other side of the Katun that connects the regional road with the isolated village of Oroktoi. This regional road stops abruptly south of Kuyus.

On average, the different settlements were smaller than those in the Karakol park. According to the 2013 census, Kuyus has 229 inhabitants (± 60 households), Oroktoi 229 (± 60 households), Elanda 151 (± 35 households) and Edigan 235 (± 70 households). Elanda, Kuyus and Oroktoi are predominantly Altaian villages, while Edigan is ethnically mixed. Elanda and Edigan were founded before the Soviet Union; Kuyus and Oroktoi during the collectivisation in the 1930s. Each village was its own kolkhoz. Nowadays, the different communities are in despair since a large area of land has been taken over by tourists, making it increasingly difficult to maintain large herds. In addition, the future fate of the villages is uncertain. The villages are situated in the region that will be flooded by the postponed dam on the Katun. As a result of the difficult social climate and
uncertainty, a lot of villagers are moving away, which is further affecting the cohesion among the villages.

Figure 8-12: Topographic map of the region with indication of studied villages.

Today, tourism is one of the most important sectors. Tourist accommodation has been built on the land around Elanda and in the village itself. South of Elanda (the area that will be flooded) no major investments have been made to construct tourist complexes, although small and relatively disorganised campsites can be found. Tourists are attracted by the wild and rough landscape, opportunities for bush camping, and the rock art site near Kuyus. Cattle breeding is still very important in Kuyus, Edigan and Oroktoi. In Elanda, most land has been sold to tourist companies and a semi-nomadic lifestyle has become impossible to maintain.

In an attempt to understand the impact of a different historical trajectory, almost two decades of tourism and a varying landscape, participatory mapping initiatives were set up in three villages. A total of 28 households across three villages agreed to participate in the mapping project. No interviews and mappings were conducted in Oroktoi, which was initially not chosen because of its relatively limited impact of tourism and difficult road link. However, having processed and interpreted input from the other villages I now think it would have been interesting to assess this village, too, to compare an isolated village in a similar landscape setting with comparable villages experiencing more impact from
tourism. Despite efforts to assess as many households as possible, only 10-20% of the households were willing to participate. In Elanda, one of the cultural workers informed us that people are not very keen to speak to outsiders because of the general negative stance towards tourists. Furthermore, uncertainty about their fate, unemployment and alcoholism did not add up to a strong sense of community and cohesion.

Of the 28 assessed households, 17 indicated that they have a strong attachment to the landscape and consider specific places ‘sacred’ (table 8-4). When looking at the ethnicity of the participants and the religion they identified themselves with, this pattern is different than that in Karakol. Although difficult to extrapolate because of fewer interlocutors, the majority of Altaian interlocutors identified themselves as Christian Orthodox and only 72% considered the landscape as venerated, while in Karakol almost every Altaian had strong place attachment. A longer-lasting Russian influence that constituted different field conditions and impacted the *habitus* probably explains this difference. Amongst the Russian and mixed Altaian-Russian interlocutors the pattern is comparable to Karakol and the landscape and particular places in it are considered sacred and spiritually charged. In total, 27 sacred places were indicated; the dominant categories are: springs (60%),

*Figure 8 – 13: The middle Katun region. (a) The large Katun river with its wide valley and impressive alluvial terraces. – (b) Mountain pastures east of Kuyus seen from the Tamanel mountain pass. – (c) Tourists at the Kamishlinskiy waterfall; located north of Chemal this remarkable landscape marker is visited by thousands of tourists everyday – the site is very polluted, note the graffiti on nearby rocks. – (d) Foundations of the planned dam near Elanda. (©RPG-journal.ru)*
mountain passes (22%) and prominent mountains (11%). The prominence of the springs correlates with the character of the landscape: a dry landscape with few prominent peaks and a polluted river.

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Table 8-4: Table indicating the religions of each ethnic group and their specific attachment to places in the landscape.

In total, 72 markings were made to indicate subsistence-related themes: 28 for grazing, 24 areas for fodder cultivation, 16 for foraging, three for fishing, and one for hunting. There was a significant overlap between the locations indicated. Areas mostly indicated for grazing comprised the village (winter) and mountain pastures (summer), while some also indicated the dry alluvial terraces further away from the village. Foraging in particular takes place around the village and on the communal taiga. Hunting is prohibited for most animals, and only predators (bears and wolves) can be shot; the only household that indicated hunting areas mentioned the taiga. Fishing is carried out where possible, although because of the polluted nature of the Katun it was relatively limited.

A total of 27 markings were made relating to places that serve a social function, and in almost all cases villagers agreed on the communal social function of areas nearby the river or larger mountain streams. Some interlocutors also indicated the mountain pastures.
Figure 8-14: View shed villages study region. Visibility less outspoken than compared with Karakol region.
Kuyus

Kuyus is the most peripheral village of the entire Chemal raion and is the place where the regional road stops. In Kuyus, 11 different households were assessed and, based on the integration of the different information layers in GIS, a schematic map was drafted (figure 8-15). Kuyus is situated on a 500-700 m-wide alluvial terrace at the place where two medium-sized mountain streams called Nizhniy Kuyus and Verge Kuyus flow into the Katun. The Vergh Kuyus has a relative wide valley and one significant terrace that is suited for agriculture. By following these streams and crossing an important mountain pass the Manas mountain pastures can be reached, although the pass can only be crossed by foot or on horseback. The landscape directly around Kuyus is dominated by the Katun and due to the dominant southward orientation of the surrounding mountains and alluvial terrace the landscape has a dry and steppe-like character.

Kuyus was founded in the 1930s and throughout the Soviet period was a small but very wealthy sheep and goat farm called kolkhoz Kizil-Cheryu. Most inhabitants are Altaian and were displaced to the village during collectivisation. Compared to the other villages in the region, life in Kuyus is relatively traditional. Tourism has not entirely impacted everyday life and people were able to preserve their semi-nomadic lifestyle and livelihoods. The Altaian language is still commonly used and place attachment was strong. Seven of the ten interlocutors also explicitly stated that their ‘religion’ is ‘Altai’.

As briefly touched on above, pastoralism is the main livelihood and the relatively large alluvial terrace on which the village is situated is communally used for grazing. Larger stocks are kept on the Manas taiga, which is also an area where people often forage. One particular alluvial terrace in the Vergh Kuyus valley was used for fodder cultivation as well as some smaller alluvial fans in the Nizhniy Kuyus valley. Foraging was also carried out on the slopes around the village and in the side valleys. Two households indicated that they sometimes fish in the Katun. A small beach 5-6 kilometres south of Kuyus was named as a place people often visit in their free time (n: 3). It was stated that that many tourists camp there, to the great annoyance of a lot of villagers.

All participants stated that the landscape is extremely important to them and different sacred places were mentioned. There was considerable agreement on the importance of a nearby arzhan suu (n: 7) and the Tamanel mountain pass to the taiga (n: 5). Other interlocutors also referred to the Manas peak that dominates the mountain pasture (n: 2), a nearby rock art panel (n: 1), and a waterfall (n: 1).

To summarise: the environment that is lived in and engaged with most correlates intensively to a large extent with the collective farm territory. In particular, the sacred mountain pass underlines this: the pass is an important obstacle to be overcome when going to and from the economically significant mountain pastures.
8.3.1.2 Edigan

Edigan is situated in the relatively wide Edigan valley at the place where the Edigan and Kaynzara mountain streams meet (figure 8-16). Both valleys have small terraces and in particular those of the Kaynzara are used for small-scale fodder cultivation. Steep mountain slopes that are relatively well forested dominate the landscape around Edigan. At the headwaters of both the Kaynzara and Edigan streams are mountain pastures ideal for cattle breeding. The Kaynzara headwaters (Manas taiga) are used by the villagers of Kuyus while the inhabitants of Edigan use the Tamanyel taiga, where the Edigan spring rises. Tourist companies have bought some land and in 2011 two tourist bases had sprung up.

Edigan was founded in the late 19th to early 20th century as a Russian settlement and is now an ethnically mixed village. Some Altaians settled there before the Soviet Union and adopted Christian Orthodox faith and Russian lifestyle while others were forced into the village during collectivisation. Edigan was an independent kolkhoz named Iskra. Nowadays, most Altaians in the village have lost a significant aspect of traditional culture. None was fluent in Altaian, most have lost their mobile lifestyle and when asked about their religious interests they all said that they had been baptised and consider themselves Christians. In general, none identified themselves as Altaian and they were reluctant to
speak about traditional culture. Overall, there were not many people who were interested in participating in the mapping project, and only ten households took part (five Russian, three Altaian and two ethnically mixed). One informant, a former army colonel who had recently moved to the village, was however keen to give some ‘outsider’ insights into the spatial organisation of village life.

Most of the village’s inhabitants have a small herd of cattle, which graze predominantly on the fields around the village and dry terraces along the Edigan and Katun. The mountain taiga is used for larger stocks, although only two interlocutors mentioned that they had a large herd grazing there. Foraging was carried out across the entire valley and on the mountain pastures. One respondent mentioned that he sometimes fishes in the Edigan river, while others said that they meet on a small riverbank above the village; another interlocutor mentioned a small beach along the Katun.

Four participating households indicated that they feel a special connection with the environment and stated that they have sacred places where they sometimes tie kira and follow specific rituals. Remarkably, only one of the interlocutors was Altaian and the other three were Russian. A mountain spring close to the village was marked by two interlocutors, the Manas mountain and a mountain pass on the Tamanyel taiga.

To summarise: Edigan has a long history of Russian influence, which has impacted many dimensions of everyday life, including the cultural landscapes built up by the inhabitants. Most Altaians have been ‘Russified’ and apart from their racial characteristics have no relationship with Altaian culture and identity. Livelihood strategies are similar to those in other study regions, although mobility is more restricted to the village. Compared

Figure 8-16: Schematic map of the associative landscape of Edigan.
to other Altaian or mixed villages, the individual cultural landscapes are only comparable to a certain extent. It is noteworthy that only one of the three assessed Altaian households indicated special attachment to certain places while three Russian households marked different sacred places in the region – there were no particular age differences. A long history of Russian-Altaian exchange in the village may explain both the limited and multi-ethnic veneration of the environment. Albeit this would appear contradictory: a landscape is formed individually through the impact of the social structures and institutions governing the field and effective engagement with the land. It is possible that in some cases particular Russian households were more exposed to Altaian culture and places in the landscape (for example, part of a specific herding unit that was more mobile), while other Altaian households did not have the chance to practise and pass on their traditions. Only more in-depth interviews and participatory mapping can further illuminate why certain Altaians have no place attachment and some Russians households have specific attachment to the land.

8.3.1.3 Elanda

Elanda is a small village on the banks of the Katun (figure 8-17). The village is located on a narrow alluvial terrace between two rocky outcrops. The landscape is comparable to Kuyus: relatively steppe-like with some patches of forest on the northern slopes. Despite being a relatively large collective farm during the Soviet Union, nowadays there is not a lot of land left for grazing and fodder cultivation. Informants told me that most good pastureland on the accessible right bank has been sold to tourist developers. In the village itself, three tourist bases have been constructed. Many houses in the village were abandoned – one interlocutor (CH-EL-07) told me that people have no reason to stay in the village because there is no land for agriculture, and no jobs. There are no accessible mountain pastures on the right bank of the Katun. However, on the other side of the river there are adequate pastures although unfortunately there is only one narrow footbridge that connects Elanda with this side. The only remaining fields for agriculture are also situated on the other side of the river and the fodder can only be transported to the village when the Katun is frozen during the winter.

Elanda is a predominantly Altaian village which was founded shortly before the Soviet period. Already back in 1920 it had been reorganised into a collective farm called kolkhoz Pit Lenina. Altaian culture and traditions are not strong and the inhabitants did not really identify them as Altaian. Except for the manager of the cultural house, none of the Altaians interviewed spoke Altaian. When asked how they would describe their religion all interlocutors firmly stated that they are Christian Orthodox.

The problems faced were similar to those in Edigan; only seven households (one Russian, two mixed and four Altaian) agreed to participate in the mapping. Besides the local cultural worker and an older Altaian lady, those who participated were not eager to spend a lot of time in the mapping. Despite these issues, a schematic map was compiled.
Only the area around the village and adjacent terraces on the right bank of the Katun were used for cattle breeding. Foraging was limited to two forested side valleys. The bank of the river was mentioned as a social area.

Three households (two Altaian and one mixed) indicated they have a strong attachment to the landscape and certain sacred places in it. A total of seven markings were collected, all referring to mountain springs. There was agreement about two of the closest springs (sources that feed the small rivulets that are the main water resources for people and animals).

To summarise: the story of Elanda is similar to that of Edigan. A long history of Russian influence combined with the limited possibilities to engage with a larger landscape and maintain a mobile livelihood have eroded traditional lifestyles and attachment to land.

![Figure 8-17: Schematic map associative landscape Elanda.](image)

8.3.1 **Uymon region**

The Uymon region is located in the Ust-Koksa *raion*, a predominantly Russian district with a considerable Indigenous minority (roughly one-third). The region has a unique landscape that is a mix of steppe and a typical alpine landscape. Four important features define this landscape (figure 8-18): the Uymon plain, the Katun river, the Terektinski range (peaks of up to 2,927 msl.) and the Katunski range (highest peak: Belukha mountain
The Uymon plain/steppe is an inter-mountain basin that is covered by a contiguous series of north-south flowing alluvial fans which are eroded at their basis by the fast flowing Katun river. Because of the numerous streams flowing from the Terektsinski and Katunski ridge the area is relatively well suited to agriculture. The Katunski range is dominated by Russia’s highest mountain, the Belukha, which is visible at various places in the Uymon steppe as a white mountain peak (figure 8-19). The Belukha glacier is also the starting point of the Katun, Altai’s sacred river that is already 100-150m wide where it enters the Uymon steppe. Most settlements are situated at the border between the two ecological zones: the mountainous upland with its rich mountain pastures and the relatively fertile plain. The villages are mainly built where a side valley links up with the Uymon plain. These side valleys are also important passages to the mountain pastures. Similarly, the livelihood strategy of these villages is characterised by a transhumance system where the cattle migrate between high mountainous pastures and lower grazing grounds around the village. Some villages are situated close to the Katun with no access to mountain pastures. Despite the hundreds of thousands of tourists who visit the alpine region annually, and the agricultural importance of the region, the broader Uymon region is still fairly isolated and difficult to reach. Only one unpaved road connects the district capital (Ust-Koksa) with Ust-Kan (another district capital that is at the crossroads of different regional roads).

Figure 8-18: Topographic map of the Uymon region.
Because of its particularly isolated setting and fairly fertile environment the Uymon region was one of the key areas to which the Old Believers fled in the early 18th century, making it the region with the most enduring Russian presence in Altai. Since the 19th century, a considerable number of Russian emigrants have moved to the area making it predominantly Russian. As a result, the landscape was already well developed before the Soviet period. Although there was considerable interaction and influence on the Altaian tribes, most Altaians were forced to settle down during the 1930s when agriculture became collectivised. Some Altaians were relocated to mono-ethnic villages (for example, Akobi and Kurundu), while others were integrated into existing Russian or Old Believer settlements. Following a series of reorganisations these villages became brigade centres with their own territory. By the 1970s, all collective farms had been transformed into two large state farms (Multinskiy and Nizne-Uymonskiy sovchoz). In some parts of the Uymon steppe parts of these state farms still operate and the land is still owned by the state. In predominant Russian villages, Altaians have been assimilated almost entirely while mono-ethnic Altaian villages are dominated by traditional lifestyles and a very strong sense of place attachment.

Villages were selected for participatory mapping based on their ethnic composition, historical trajectory and landscape setting (i.e. bordering the Uymon plain and mountain
pastures or in the middle of the plain). Initially, three villages were selected: Akobi, Chendek, and Kurundu. Akobi is a very small village (± 20 households, 63 inhabitants) located along the Katun just outside the Uymon steppe with no access to mountain pastures. Chendek is a predominantly Russian village with a considerable Altaian minority; it is a large village (approximately 120-130 households, 928 inhabitants) and is located on the border between the Terektsinski range and the Uymon plain. Kurundu is a mono-ethnic Altaian village, created during the 1930s. Kurundu is a medium-sized village (± 60 households, 228 inhabitants) arranged around the Kurundu rivulet – mountain pastures in the Terektsinski range are used for pastoralism.

As noted earlier, in Chendek few households wished to participate; furthermore, the quality of the mappings was relatively low. Only Akobi and Kurundu will be discussed below in detail. Of the 26 households assessed, 23 agreed to take part in the participatory mapping: 10 mappings were done in Akobi and 13 in Kurundu. Just as in the other study regions, these gave unique insights into the use and veneration of the landscape. In both villages, pastoralism and foraging were important livelihood pursuits. Veneration of the environment was important in both villages, and 22 of the 23 participating households indicated a strong attachment to the environment and particular places in it. Although not as outspoken as in the Chemal region, because of the longer history of Russian-Altaian contact there were still a considerable number of Altaian households who see themselves as Christian Orthodox – but with special attachment to the land (table 8-5).

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Table 8-5: Table indicating the religions of each ethnic group and their specific attachment to places in the landscape.

Because of the high quality of the interviews in both Akobi and Kurundu we were able to get a good insight into the cultural landscape of the households involved. A total of 105 sacred places were mentioned. A broad variety of sites were named, the three most represented categories being: mountain springs (49%), prominent mountains (27%) and mountain passes (14%). There was a consensual appreciation for the prominent Belukha mountain, which was referred to as a sacred place by 16 interlocutors.

Besides insights into the households’ sacred geography, the transactional used of the landscape was also revealed. A total of 63 subsistence-related markings were made, 23 areas preferred for cattle breeding, 18 for foraging, 17 for fodder cultivation, three for fishing and two hunting areas. Leisure and socially-related areas were also mapped and 25 markings were made.
Figure 8-20: Areas in the study region from where the Belukha can be seen. Stars indicate studied villages

8.3.1.1 Kurundu

Located on the border of two ecological and economic zones, Kurundu is characterised by a typical transhumance lifestyle (figure 8-21). Herds are kept high in the mountains during the summer while the area around the village is used during the winter and for smaller herds throughout the year. As a mono-ethnic Altaian village, Kurundu did not exist prior to the Soviet Union. It was created through the displacement of mobile nomads living in the Terektinski range. Later, the independent kolkhoz became a separate brigade responsible for its own territory within the Multinskiy sovchoz. Kurundu is squeezed between two Russian villages (Kastachta and Terekta) and is connected to the district capital via a regional drivable but unpaved road. Everyday life in Kurundu can be described as traditional Altaian. The land and places in it are at the core of their cosmology, Altaian is spoken exclusively and traditional architecture (i.e. ail) dominates. People were very happy to participate in the mapping project.
A total of 12 of the 15 households assessed participated and because of the particular local enthusiasm, a detailed insight into the community’s landscape was acquired. As noted above, pastoralism was identified as the most important livelihood pursuit and largely determines the engagement with the land. The village has two taiga: one directly north of Kurundu (which is used most intensively) and another north-west of Kurundu (which can only be reached by crossing a mountain pass). The Uymon plain was used for fodder cultivation. Foraging took place around the village and in the Kurundu side valley. Because the Katun is too polluted for fishing, only the Karigem river is used for this pursuit.

Of the 12 households that participated in the mapping project, 11 indicated specific attachment to land, ultimately resulting in 77 markings. A wide variety of sacred places were indicated and multiple sites met with considerable agreement. Ten households marked the five mountain springs that together form the Kurundu stream. These arzhan suu’s were also indicated as places with a social function (n: 4). Besides the communal agreement over the sacredness of the mountain springs, other places were also indicated by more than one household. Eight marked the Belukha which is visible from the village. Other places were also marked by more than one household: a hill called Aialu on which Buddhist stuppa is erected (n: 5), the mountain pass to the north-western taiga (n: 4), and the ‘Kurundu’ mountain peak that dominates the northern taiga and forms the headwater of the Kurundu stream. Several other prominent hills and mountains were individually mapped.

To summarise: for an Altaian village located in an area that has a long history of Russian influence, traditional animist attachment to the land is relatively strong and communally held. Places indicated as sacred are linked with the movement and livelihood pursuits of the participants involved. Although Kurundu was part of a larger state farm, including the nearby villages of Tuekta and Kastachta (just 2 km west of Kurundu), the limited impact of Russian culture on the social fabric of the village and landscape engagement suggests that both nowadays and previously during the Soviet Union, life in the village was relatively isolated from outside influence – this correlates with the descriptions of both Caroline Humphrey (1999) and Marjorie Blazer (1999) about life in state-controlled farms.
Figure 8-21: Schematic map of the associative landscape of Kurundu. A. Headwaters of the Kurundu rivulet. B. Mountain pass. C. Aialu. D. Kurundu mountain.

8.3.1.2 Akobi

Akobi is a very small settlement located just outside the Uymon steppe on the left bank of the Katun (figure 8-22). The paved road that connects the district capital Ust-Koksa with the large settlement Katanda serves Akobi. There is no possibility of crossing the Katun easily. Although the system of collective and state farms has collapsed in large parts of the Uymon region, part of the state farm to which Akobi belonged still exists. Akobi’s land is still owned and controlled by the state. The few people that live in Akobi are not able to make a living from the limited land they have so one or more members of the households usually work in Ust-Koksa or in the nearby sovchoz (state farm).

Akobi has a majority of Altaian households and comprises a few Russian families. The village is characterised by a strong social fabric. Compared to other villages assessed, traditional Altaian culture has not permeated every aspect of everyday life. Albeit working with an Altaian interpreter, people and children initially started talking in Russian, and characteristic features of Altaian villages, such as the culturally important ail, were not present in the village.

Of the 12 households considered, 11 agreed to participate in the mapping project. After digitalisation in GIS it became clear that the people of Akobi have limited mobility...
and a ‘small’ cultural landscape. Most people had a few animals, which mainly grazed around the village. The few households with larger herds used adjacent terraces for grazing and fodder cultivation. Foraging was limited to the area around the village and some forested areas on the other side of the Katun. The bank along the Katun and more specifically a large beach 1 km south of the village was mentioned by multiple households (n: 6) as a place where there are often community gatherings or celebrations.

All households indicated a strong attachment to the land and 28 markings were recorded. A variety of sacred places were mentioned, and apart from some individual markings 20-30 km south of the village (indicated by an older man who often used to visit the Katunski ridge) most mappings were situated close to the village – both in the geographical and sensory sense. Ten of the households that participated referred to a mountain pass in the direction of Ust-Koksa as a very sacred place. This mountain pass (figure 8-23) is the only obstacle on the much-used road to Ust-Koksa. Eight households also indicated the Belukha mountain, which is not directly visible from the village but is on the higher slopes and on certain points along the road to Ust-Koksa and Katanda. Three households said that the prominent mountain that dominates the view east of the village is also sacred. One household (UK-AK-11) which indicated attachment to land and more specifically to the Belukha included a Russian who had lived in the village for a long time, and was even slightly enervated by the fact that in the beginning we had difficulties understanding that a Russian could have a supra-natural connection with land.

To summarise: despite the Russian influence, in both a geographical and sensory sense the area inhabited on an almost daily basis is dotted with sacred places. The mountain pass is indeed one of the few obstacles (both physical and experiential) that must be overcome on the way to Ust-Koksa and the sovchoz where a lot of people from the village work. Except for some places indicated by a respondent who used to live in the Katunski range, places outside the village’s communally used territory (especially west of the village where a lot of people are mobile for their jobs) are not explicitly conceived as sacred.
Figure 8-22: Schematic map of the associative landscape of Akobi. A) Sacred Boochi mountain pass. – B) Sacred peak.

Figure 8-23: View from the sacred mountain pass. Pay attention to the board under the traffic sign that says that people should drive carefully because of the dangerous turn.
8.3.1 The north-eastern Chuya region

Although the previous study regions have some striking differences, in general they are still situated in comparable contexts. All study regions are located in more or less alpine landscapes characterised by high alpine meadows and forested valleys with relatively open river terraces. And the predominant population groups occupying this landscape were Russian and ‘Altai-Kizhi’ communities (besides the Teleut and Telengits, one of the major territorial tribal groups). In this regard, the Chuya region is unique in both a physical and socio-cultural sense.

Roughly situated between 1,800 and 2,400 msl., the Chuya region has a unique landscape which greatly impacts the livelihood pursuits, mobility and cultural landscape of the region’s various ethnic groups. The landscape can be described as an intermontane steppe; an environment dominated by an extremely flat plain flanked by high mountainous ridges that are 1,000 to 1,500 m higher and often covered by snow (figure 8-24). Besides grass, there is almost no vegetation and only small patches of forest can be found. High mountain peaks are drained by numerous mountain streams forming wide side valleys (figure 8-25). The confluence of these mountain streams is in the central flat part of the steppe, resulting locally in a very wet and boggy landscape. To the west, this marshy system of lakes and large and small river channels merges into the impressive Chuya river. The higher parts of the side valleys are characterised by a rugged moraine landscape rich in lakes and a more diverse vegetation. Because of their particular ecology, these high mountainous areas are ideal for herding and foraging. And because of their similar characteristics, the areas are also called taiga. The region studied in this dissertation is the most north-eastern part of the Chuya region, comprising the villages of Kokorya, Zhana Aul and Tashanta. Four major valleys define this particular area: Yustid, Bar-Bugazi, Kizilshin and Tashanta. In particular, the Yustid and Kizilshin valleys are considerable with large alluvial plains, broad terraces and expansive headwaters rich in lakes, springs and prominent peaks. The area has three settlements: Kokorya (Altaian), Zhana Aul (Kazakh) and the relatively small border settlement of Tashanta (Kazakh-Russian). Tashanta was not included in this research because it is mainly a military border post controlled by Russian officials.

Socio-culturally, this part of Altai is also different. Part of the Kosh Agach raion, the region is dominated by a Kazakh majority. The Altaian communities are in the minority and due to the difficulties of coping with a liberalised economy they have serious socio-economic problems (i.e. poverty, violence and alcoholism). As described in Chapter 5, historically speaking, lands south of the Chuya river are traditionally considered Kazakh while northern lands are considered Telengit/Altaian. However, this division was not a strict one, and when during the Soviet Union nomads were forced to settle in villages according to geographic parameters, many collective farms were ethnically mixed. Nowadays, Kazakhs and Altaians are spatially segregated and there is a growing tension
between the two groups. A second socio-cultural difference is the importance of the very mobile livelihood strategy. Although to a large extent all the inhabitants are settled in villages, movement across the vast steppe is absolutely imperative to maintain herds (mostly sheep and goats) in this dry and marginally vegetated landscape. Some families keep their flocks in a particular area in the high mountains and visit them regularly, while others (mainly just a few members of the extended family) live on the steppe with the family's animals during the spring and summer in temporary yurt dwellings. Other families pay for professional herders. During the Soviet period, many people were still considerably mobile (compared to, for example, the Karakol and Uymon region) and multiple families would still migrate seasonally. This long history of high mobility has an impact on their engagement with the land and notions of sense of proximity and remoteness. As illustrated in the case of Kokorya, this results in a varied cultural landscape dotted with different sacred places. A third particularity of life in Kosh Agach is that, due to its peripheral setting, the Indigenous culture is genuinely more traditional and stricter compared to other areas in Altai. During fieldwork, Altaian was found to be the dominant language and in some households members barely understood Russian. The same applied to Kazakh villages. As stressed throughout her book about her ethnographic fieldwork in the region, Agnieszka Halemba stated that villagers in this region have a strong sense of ethno-national pride and consider themselves and their landscape as one of the focal points of Altai, the area where the mighty Chuya river springs. As noted earlier, Halemba stressed the importance of Ere Chui (roughly the Kosh Agach raion) as the nutag of the region’s inhabitants.

Except for Kosh Agach, almost all villages in the wider area were founded in the late 1930s when a final effort was made to collectivise all nomads. Because of the vast areas and dispersed settlement pattern, each village remained an independent kolkhoz. Kokorya (kolhoz 40 let Oktyabrya) comprised all lands north of the Yustid river, including the extremely wide Kizilshin-Buguzn valley. Aktal comprised all lands south of the Yustid (kolhoz IM. Kalinina). Aktal was initially built on a marsh and during the Soviet Union the village flooded multiple times. In 1993, Aktal was abandoned and was relocated 10 km to the south close to what is now called Zhana Aul. Many Kazakhs from the region moved to Zhana Aul, including those from Kokorya. Although the village was relocated, its territory has remained the same.
Figure 8-24: Characteristics of the Chuya Region. a) Steppe landscape flanked with high mountain range. b) Marshy alluvial plain. c) Kazakh nomads living in their summer dwellings. d) One of the many abandoned farms buildings of the collective farm high up in the mountains.

Figure 8-25: Topographic map of the region.
The transition from a nomadic to sedentary lifestyle was very difficult, especially in a dry and vast landscape that is very sensitive to overgrazing. Although herds were relatively well spread out, extra fodder was essential to support the collective stocks. In an effort to counter the relapse of cattle herds after the collectivisation, parts of the steppe were transformed into agricultural land, especially the lower-lying plains which were drained and cultivated. When Brezhnev launched his land amelioration act, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, vast irrigation complexes were constructed across the Chuya on the dry steppe plains. After the Soviet Union, this vast system of irrigation complexes quickly collapsed and these lands are no longer used. Only the lower alluvial plain is still used for extensive fodder cultivation.

In an effort to get an insight into the associative dimensions of the landscape, a mapping initiative was set up in both Zhana Aul and Kokorya. A total of 37 households agreed to be interviewed and 36 were willing to give insights into their transactional use and engagement with the land. In Kokorya (± 140 households, 981 inhabitants), 25 households were assessed (24 mapped), and in Zhana Aul (± 130 households, 876 inhabitants), only 12. In Zhana Aul, a community member had just passed away and the village was preparing for the funeral. So, with limited time left and taking into consideration this difficult period for the villagers, I decided to limit fieldwork to some key villagers I selected after consulting with a local veterinarian who knew the different households of the village well. I chose the households based on their historical background: Kazakh families originally from Aktal and Kokorya were selected.

Of the 36 who participated, 27 indicated that they have a spiritual attachment to the landscape and have sacred places. As illustrated by table 8-6, both Kazakh and Altaian interlocutors mentioned a special attachment to the land. Participatory mapping in the two villages resulted in 64 markings of sacred places. According to the type of sacred sites, most were mountain springs (38%), prominent mountains (36%) and a complex of springs and lakes (19%) that forms the headwater of the Buguzun/Kokorya river (considered by the inhabitants of Chuya as the headwaters of the Chuya river) – this correlates with the character of the landscape, which is dry with prominent mountains (figure 8-26).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Traditional beliefs</th>
<th>Orthodox</th>
<th>Islam</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>Kazakh</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attach supernatural meaning to the landscape</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Altaian</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attach supernatural meaning to the landscape</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>23</td>
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Table 8-6: Table indicating the religions of each ethnic group and their specific attachment to places in the landscape.
Figure 8-26: Visibility from Kokorya and Zhana Aul.
A total of 114 areas were indicated related to subsistence: 47 for cattle grazing, 35 for fodder, 13 for foraging and 19 for fishing. A similar trend can be seen as in other villages in the Altai: some cattle are kept in the village throughout the year, larger herds are kept on the steppe and in the higher valleys, and during the winter these cattle are kept in and around the village.

During the participatory mapping, 38 'social' places were mapped. The banks of the Yustid and Bugyzun rivers were mentioned as preferred social places that are often visited, and some interlocutors also referred to the springs as meeting places.

8.3.1.1 Kokorya

Kokorya is located on a narrow alluvial terrace between the Kizilshin and Yustid rivers, two rivers that largely define the landscape and economic strategy of the village (figure 8-27). The Kizilshin river is a relatively large mountain stream that rises 10 km north of Kokorya at the confluence of the Kokorya and Buguzun streams. Both are fed by numerous mountain springs, lakes and melting water from high mountain peaks north of Kokorya. The Yustid river is a large watercourse flowing through a broad valley with its origin close to the boarder with Mongolia, and is fuelled by the Narin-Gol, Buguti and Barbugazi rivers which spring from different lakes, mountain springs and high snowy mountain peaks. In addition, the Yustid valley is a unique archaeological complex that remained relatively untouched during the Soviet period. Both the Buguzun and Barbugazi are drained by one of the largest mountains of the region: the Sailu Kem (3,405 msl.). Kokorya is served by an asphalt road that connects the village with the region’s commercial and administrative centre (Kosh Agach) where some villagers work. Another important road is the track that runs northwards from Kokorya into the Buguzun valley to Tuva.

Today, the main economic activity is still pastoralism. Most people keep their cattle in the village, while larger herds are kept in adjacent valleys in the summer. Also, the highest parts of the side valleys (which have some trees and shrubs and are also called taiga) were preferred locations for herding and foraging. The Kizilshin valley is the most intensively used region for cattle herding. The area around the Sailu Kem, which also has a few patches of trees and shrubs, was also mentioned for foraging. Fodder is mainly cultivated in the wetter alluvial plain south of the village (which still has a functioning drainage complex). Fishing was very popular (n: 13) in the Yustid and Kizilshin rivers and along their side valleys, which were considered to be among the best rivers for fishing in the entire region (no pollution). As social places, most villagers named the banks of the Kizilshin (n: 18) and mountain springs (n: 7).

As noted above, and stressed in the work of Halemba (2006: 58-61), traditional culture is very strong in the village. During the Soviet period, many rituals and traditional celebrations continued (for example, Altaian new year), and the village also has its own museum dealing specifically with Telengit heritage and culture. The museum is very active
and plays an important role in the cultural life of the village. When colleagues of mine set up an excavation in Yustid, the negotiations took place through the museum’s cultural workers. Not surprisingly, attachment to the land was very strong: 23 of the 24 households who participated in the mapping initiative indicated a strong attachment to the land. A large number of locations (n: 57) were mentioned by the participants and a wide variety (both in type and location) of sacred sites were mapped. Halemba (2006: 176) described two sacred mountains that are related to clan divisions: the Sailu Kem (Sagal clan) and the Kok Yiyk (Keubeuk clan), which are both visible from the village. Despite the large number of markings, there was considerable agreement among community members across clan divisions about their value and importance. The Sailu Kem mountain, which was described by Agnieszka Halemba as a ‘kinship mountain’, was indicated by almost all households (n: 19 – different clans) as a sacred place. This correlates with the remark by Halemba that in the late 1990s the relationship between clan and mountain was no longer very straightforward (Halemba 2006: 176). The large area where the Kokorya river rises, called the Kokorya bazhi (translated as place where the river Kokorya starts) was also widely acknowledged as a sacred place (n: 12). Two mountain springs (n: 7) that were also described in Halemba’s (2006: 88-107) work, situated high up in the Buguzun valley, were also considered sacred. Some other springs and prominent mountains were marked, too, but there was less communal agreement on these. When looking at the distribution of the sacred places, most are located in the Buguzun valley, and only one area is situated in the Yustid valley.

A nearby sacred mountain (near Telengit Sortogoi) that was described by Agnieszka Halemba (2006: 50) as the one of the most sacred mountains of Ere Chui was not marked by any of the households.

To summarise: for a steppe landscape and nomadic lifestyle that is generally characterised by perceived openness and a limited sense of territoriality (Halemba 2006, Humphrey 1995, Pedersen 2009), the results of the participatory mapping show that the landscape of Kokorya is relatively limited by the territorial organisation of the former collective farm. The landscape may be perceived by the people as open, boundless and not limited by ‘strict territorial lines’ (cf. Halemba 2006), but in reality the cultural landscape is bound by historical and administrative lines. Similarly, sacred sites are located within this area which is most intensively used and populated. The preferred sites are linked to sensory characteristics (i.e. the visibility of Sailu Kem) and their importance as regards surviving in the dry steppe landscape (i.e. arzhan suu and the headwaters of a few rivers).
Figure 8-27: Schematic map of the associative landscape of Kokorya. A. Saulu Kem – B. Sacred mountain springs of the Buguzun. C. Kokorya Bazhy (headwaters Kokorya).
8.3.1.2 Zhana Aul

Zhana Aul is located between the wet alluvial plain of the Yustid and the Chuiski highway. The village comprises different families who lived in different villages in the Chuya region during the Soviet period. The majority of the inhabitants originally came from the abandoned Aktal settlement, and some from Kokorya. Many families are active in cross-border trade (which explains the relocation to the Chuiski highway) and cattle breeding. The village has a museum and cultural house that promotes Kazakh-Altaian culture and Islam; it also has a mosque and at least one imam.

The Yustid and Tashanta valleys are the most intensively inhabited areas of the village, largely correlating with the territory of the former collective farm (figure 8-28). All lands south of the Yustid (including moraine landscape) are intensively used for grazing. Compared to the right bank (in the territory of Kokorya) more seasonal dwellings can be found – some cattle are also kept around the village and in the relatively narrow Tashanta valley. Fodder is cultivated on the alluvial plain south of Aktal and the Yustid river. Fishing is also popular (five of the 13 households assessed referred to fishing areas) and the Yustid, Barbugazi and Kizilshin are also fished. Only one marking was made related to foraging. The bank along the Yustid was indicated as an area where people often go to rest or for social activities.

Although many Kazakhs mentioned during the fieldwork of 2010 and 2011 that they have a special attachment to the land and consider it as their home, most indicated that they do not have venerated sacred places. However, four households with little reservation stated that landscape and specific places in it are sacred. Markings indicated by three households all referred to the two mountain springs situated high in the Buguzun valley, which were also noted by people from Kokorya. All three households that indicated these two arzhan suu’s lived in Kokorya during the Soviet period and worked for the collective farm together with Altaians. One of the most remarkable informants who marked these arzhan suu’s was the village imam (KA-JA-11). He assured me that although he only prays to Allah in the mosque the mountain springs indicated have special powers and energy; they are very special for him and he often visits them.

To summarise: one of the most important findings of the relatively limited participatory mapping in Zhana Aul are the mappings by families who previously lived and worked among the Telengits of Kokorya. Although more research is imperative in order to fully appraise the impact of syncretism in the process of cultural landscape formation, the results from fieldwork in Zhana Aul corresponds with similar trends in mixed Russian-Altaian villages and more specifically with the work of Konstantin Bannikov (2008) on Kazakh nomads in the more inaccessible mountainous regions of south-east Altai (Argut-Dzazathor valley and Ukok Platteau) (see below for a more detailed discussion).
Figure 8-28: Schematic map of the associative landscape of Zhana Aul.
8.4 **A messy meshwork: landscapes created through paths in social and physical space**

As illustrated above, members of the same village share a particular associative landscape that is limited to the territory of the former *brigade*. Although each village has a different cultural landscape, this does not mean that these associative landscapes are randomly constructed. In this more interpretative section I aim to discuss the logic behind the different appraised cultural landscapes. The assessment of this logic will be structured around the three highly interlinked variables (*field, habitus* and environment, which are all shaped through time) that were referred to at the beginning of this chapter as the building blocks of an associative cultural landscape. Throughout this discussion considerable attention will be paid to the *scale* on which the landscape is formed and needs to be managed. Once the systemic nature of the cultural landscapes of the Altai has been appraised, the problems regarding landscape protection in contemporary Altai will be critiqued. During this discussion, special attention will be given to Pierre Nora’s concepts of *milieux de mémoire* and *lieux de mémoire*.

8.4.1 **Uncovering the associative landscapes: the dialectic interplay between field, habitus and environment**

8.4.1.1 **Structuring the environment: the animist *habitus* in a landscape of possibilities and injunctions**

As stressed throughout the introduction of this chapter, how the landscape is perceived and sheer physical space is transformed in existential place is linked to a person’s individual background, his/her prior knowledge, mindset, worldview, epistemology and dispositions … his/her *habitus*! Although the impact of structures in the social arena and the characteristics of the environment are important aspects of the creation of a heritage landscape, individual perception still underpins the individual perception of a landscape.

As detailed in Chapter 5, an Altaian does not see a physical space, but though his/her shamanist *habitus* constructs a spiritual space that is dotted with sacred places which have their own shamanist master spirits. Just as in similar Indigenous contexts, there is a reciprocal basis underlying such an engagement with the landscape (cf. Carmichael, Hubbert and Reeves 1994, Hubert 1994, Ingold 2000, Jordan 2011a, Willerslev 2011). Places are venerated because there is a perceived need to thank (and negotiate with) the spirits of that place for contributing to (and future use of) the welfare of a group. So, especially those places that directly contribute to a group’s well-being are acknowledged and actively venerated.
The categories of sacred places that were mapped most frequently during participatory mapping in Altai were in particular those places which, to a certain extent, serve a purpose for the Indigenous people occupying that environment (i.e. mountains, mountain passes and springs):

- **Prominent mountains** (in Altaian: *bai tuu* or *yiyk tullar*) are important markers in that they provide protection against the wind during the winter. Etymologically, the word sacred mountain in Altaian is connected with the word for shelter and safety (Halemba 2006: 67). It is important to note is that although many villages were founded during the Soviet period, these were located mainly in the places of frequented pre-Soviet nomadic winter settlements. Thus (although most villages now have quite strong houses) mountains in particular would have been one of the implantation parameters, as they protect the temporary dwellings of Indigenous nomads from the strong winter winds. Furthermore, high peaks such as the Uch-Enmek, Sailu Kem or the Belukha are the headwaters fuelling the local rivers, and making them *bazhy* (sacred headwaters, see below).

- **Spring waters** (*arzhan suu*) were absolutely essential for everyday needs in most assessed villages. For example, in the Karakol valley they are the only available waters sources as the main river is too polluted. During my stay in the neighbouring village of Nizhny Talca, every morning I had to go to the local *arzhan suu* to get water. In the other study regions (Chuya, Uymon and Katun), the sources of small streams that flow through the villages (the only water supply for the villagers) are also communally venerated. As noted by Olga Khomushku (2008:53), rituals at an *arzhan suu* are specifically oriented towards keeping the water clean.

- **Mountain passes** do not directly serve a function; however, Olga Khomushku (2008: 53) states that they have to be understood through the particular difficulty or danger involved when crossing a mountain pass. According to Olga Khomushku (2008: 53) “Crossing a difficult and dangerous pass always meant either leaving the danger behind or encountering new, unknown difficulties. So it was natural to appeal to a presumed master on whom a successful journey depended.” In the same way, the mountain pass near Akobi had a sign stating that the road on the mountain pass is very dangerous and traffic accidents are common.

Khomushku's(2008) functionalist approach to Altaian place veneration gives important insights as to why certain places in the landscape are sacred and why others are not. I agree that there is a link between the function of a place for the well-being of the people inhabiting the landscape and its sacred value. As such, sacred places embody a sense of 'existential nearness' – places are perceived as nearby because of their importance for the fate of the living. For example, in Kokorya, notwithstanding that different *arzhan suu* are located high up in the mountains, they are venerated as the sources of the river that provides their village with water.
8.4.1.2 The inherited collectivised field: transmission of knowledge, colonising the habitus and Soviet kinship

Although a functionalist explanation might lie at the root of the Altaian sacred geography, any valley in the Altai has springs and mountains that to a certain extent are important. However, this does not mean that all mountains and springs are sacred. As noted throughout the introduction, cultural landscapes are formed in a social space structured by a myriad of structures and institutions that guide or influence actions and perceptions. When looking at the results of the participatory mapping, the cultural landscapes are characterised by communal agreement, intercultural influence and an outspoken territoriality. Particular places within a sharply defined territory were not chosen by different agents merely because of their unique sensory characteristics and functions, but also because:

(1) A process of communication and knowledge transition defines the importance of places;
(2) Movement in a place is defined by historically rooted socio-political structures.

A cultural landscape as a communicative product

In his seminal paper, Denis Byrne (2008) underlined the social dimensions of heritage objects and landscapes and that landscapes should be conceptualised as something created through social relations and transmission of knowledge via social institutions such as clans, villages and families. Byrne stated that landscapes are:

…culturally configured by one generation is ‘inherited’ by the succeeding generation but is reinterpreted in the eyes of their own experience … [a] landscape is inherited by any one generation as a configuration of places whose significance was established by the previous generation. This significance is communicated by members of the previous generation who are now more or less old.

(Byrne 2008: 162)

Understanding this process of ‘inheriting’ it is very important to fathom the current landscapes, especially when vital questions about scale are asked. It is therefore important to identify which social institutions play a prominent role in transmitting place-based knowledge. In Altaian society, before the Soviet Union the clan served this role. The importance of certain places was agreed on by clan members and transmitted from generation to generation (Halemba 2006, Potapov 1964, Potapov 1969). Nowadays, despite the fact that clan membership still plays a role, places are now considered sacred across tribal divisions. The village as a social institution has taken over the clan’s place in society in many domains, including the sacred geography. Between villages there is merely an overlap about which places are important, while among villagers from the same villages places are communally agreed upon. In particular, the results from the Karakol valley
clearly show that despite being located in the same valley and the closeness and visibility of a neighbouring village's sacred places, the patchwork of sacred places is different and locally restricted. So, it is the village that defines which places are talked about as sacred and which are not.

This shift from the clan to the village as the defining level in society is a broader phenomenon in post-Soviet Siberia. Like any rural region in the world, the village defines the organisation of everyday life on many fronts (i.e. economic, religious and political). Different scholars argue that because the socio-economic function of traditional institutions in society became obsolete through the collective farm, old organisational forms (e.g. clan and tribes) were replaced by the collective workforce (whose locus is the farm) as the structuring level in society. Throughout her investigation about life in the collective farms of Buyratia, Caroline Humphrey (1999) similarly argued that the reorganisation of social and economic life through the system of collective farms was one of the main explanations as to why kinship has lost its significance and has been replaced by other social institutions which define society and are the new levels on which social matters are debated and through which knowledge is transmitted. In her ethnography about village life in the 1960s, Caroline Humphrey stated:

... there has been a change in the relation between the 'family' as a productive group and the wider economic-political groups in society. Before the Revolution Buyrat society was organized primarily in terms of kinship structures of which the family appeared as the hierarchically lowest unit. This is no longer the case. Now, the wider groups of society (work team, brigades, collective farms, Party organizations, etc.) are recruited by principles other than kinship, and there are no economic-political functions for kin groups wider than the family in official Soviet society. This had important repercussions both on the internal relations within families, and on the social functions (now largely unofficial) of kinship relations beyond the immediate family.

(Humphrey 1999: 268)

In addition, the Party also deliberately attempted to dislocate the traditional organisation of society and forced different ethnic tribes and clans to form working units (Humphrey 1999: 283). Generally, life was confined within the brigade: other villagers were not frequently visited, a system of internal passports made long-range movement impossible, and there was a huge pressure of work with limited free days. Furthermore, the few traditional celebrations and land-worship rituals that were performed during the Soviet Union, as described by both Humphrey (1999) and Blazer (1999), were no longer organised through traditional clan structures. The social groups involved became the collective workforce and, in some cases, even the brigade head or kolkhoz representative took over tasks previously performed by clan leaders (Humphrey 1999: 374).

I think that in Altai because of the important socio-economic role the collective working units played, these units became the new kin groups through which land was worshipped and venerated and knowledge was transmitted. Although public gatherings were not allowed during the Soviet Union, different informants assured me that when
herding or working the land rituals were still performed. Caroline Humphrey (1998: 415) described an event where a Buyrat Party head performs a sacrifice to a sacred mountain spring in front of other villagers and official Russian ethnographers.

A particular example that further underscores the changed importance of the village in the process of land worship and the veneration of Altai are the communal land worships and offerings that seasonally take place at the so-called kuree praying places (linked with Ak Jang). Before the Soviet Union this celebration, also called the oboo or tagyla ritual, was mainly performed on a clan scale and aimed at strengthening the unity of the clan (Halemba 2006: 169). Nowadays, the celebration takes place at the village scale, regardless of tribe – interestingly, these altars are also located on a hill overlooking the village. Importantly, as research by Carole Pegg and Elizaveta Yamaeva (2012) on Ak Jang rituals suggests, there are differences between neighbouring villages as to how the ceremonies at those places are carried out. This communal worship, which varies from village to village, further underlines the localness of the worship of the environment.

So, the social scale through which the landscape gets its heritage value and should be managed is the village. This dominance by the village to the detriment of the clan finds its roots in the Soviet collective workforces and was further consolidated through three generations of collective farming and the limited relocation of the rural population.

The collective system does not only explain why there is so much agreement between the mapped attributes of one village, but it could also be an explanation for the inter-ethnic valuation of the environment (or lack or it) in multi-ethnic villages. Although more research is needed, results from Elanda, Karakol, Akobi and Zhana Aul hint that a long-shared history and close interaction within the collective workforces has ‘colonised the consciousness’ of some Indigenous and non-Indigenous households. As noted by Mary Louise Pratt (1992), interaction between different ethnic and social groups is never one way, but should be conceptualised as a contact zone impacting both involved agents’ internal structures and knowledge systems. One particular reason why in the late 19th and early 20th century Russians and Kazakhs easily connected with the Altaians’ animist worldview and worship of nature can be related to their own particular habitus of that time. As discussed earlier, Kazakh religious life has only become relatively strict and dogmatic since the collapse of the Soviet Union (Okyaberskaya 2003) and well into the 20th century Islam was interwoven with pagan beliefs (Forsyth 1992: 26-27). In ethnically mixed villages (for example, Kokorya during the Soviet Union), this ‘pagan’ epistemological foundation, combined with generations of exchange during the Soviet Union, fuelled syncretism leading to the veneration of particular (communally respected) places (see Bannikov 2008 for another example). The same applies to the Russian households in mixed contexts, such as Karakol. As discussed in Chapter 5, most Russians who settled in the Altai Mountains since the late 19th century were simple peasants who came from small villages. Many were uneducated and were only Christian Orthodox on paper. Folkloric beliefs in which, for example, springs had special energies remained
strong, making the displaced Russian peasants susceptible to syncretism. In more mono-
ethnic contexts (for example, Chendek and the inhabitants of Zhana Aul who lived in
mono-ethnic Aktai) the influence is less explicit and is dominated by more traditional
Russian or Kazakh customs.

The socio-politically structured nature of nomadic movement

So, with the village becoming the focal point of Altaian life, it is absolutely essential that
cultural landscapes are approached on village scale. Another reason why the village needs
to be taken into consideration when developing heritage-management initiatives is the
fact that during the Soviet Union people’s mobility became restricted within the territory
allotted to a collective farm (i.e. village). Soviet administrative borders had confined
nomadism, impacting the creation of the existential place. Although places outside the
village are still considered sacred (because the whole Altai is sacred), those that are central
to the cosmology of the village are located within its territory. People very often call their
sacred places the most sacred in the whole world – corresponding to the quote on the
opening page of the chapter. Villagers in Boochi would talk endlessly about the Tek Penek
as the most sacred mountain in the world, while arriving in Karakol (just 10 km to the
east) no one talks about the Tek Penek – instead, the Bai Tuu is considered the most
sacred place in the whole world.

So, through the Soviet Union, the nutag, the area that is most intensively inhabited
and interacted with, has become the village (and not the broader region, as argued by
Halemba). Similarly, if management of these places was to be set up, only information and
management at the village level which takes into consideration a variety of stakeholders
(including non Altaians) would prove effective.

8.4.1.3 Creating knowledge about the environment along a meshwork of paths

The connection between the functionality of particular places and the land-based habitus
explains why particular categories are venerated and others are not. However, every
landscape is dotted with sources, mountains and passes, not all of which are considered
significant. Although knowledge transmission might partially explain why particular
places are preferred, as illustrated throughout the different study regions, actual everyday
encounters, guided by sensory engagement with these places also constitutes the
veneration and heritage values underlying the associative landscape.

For example, in Akobi, Kurundu and Kuyus a sacred mountain pass was located right
in a place passed by many people while on their way to their work (Akobi) or mountain
pastures (Kuyus and Kurundu).

Tim Ingold (2007) argues that place making is the result of the encounters an agent
makes when moving through the environment. These (visual) encounters and perceptions
are themselves guided by the agent’s habitus and field and result in knowledge about a
space. Ingold sees movement as paths, lines along which the world is interpreted; all these lines added up constitute a *meshwork* of lines (figure 8-29). The places where the meshwork is dense or knotted are the areas where perception and attachment to a place will be strongest. In this regard, places that are inhabited most intensively will be conceptualised most intensively (i.e. territory of the village).

**Figure 8-29:** The meshwork. (left) Ingold conceptualises movement across space as lines. Where these lines are dense or intersect, engagement with the environment is most intense and space is transformed in existential places. (right) Different meshworks can also intersect; at those places where the intersection is concentrated exchange of knowledge between agents can take place. (after Ingold 2009: 38)

As the locus on which the paths lay, the physical environment largely determines the course of this meshwork. The environment defines which livelihood pursuits are possible, radically dictating movement through space. The physical matrix also guides the meshwork: existing roads or mountain passes will be preferred and available forested valleys rich in fauna and flora will be inhabited more intensively than dry inaccessible valleys. The environment is also the *subject* of the engagement, so its physical characteristics will also define its perceptual value. In the case studies, high prominent mountains with bright snowy peaks were more intensively venerated than small anonymous hills.

Both in a sensory (i.e. visibility) and geographical sense, in the different study regions the area most intensively used (where the *meshwork* is most intense) correlates with the location of the venerated places. As mentioned earlier, a lot is related to the boundaries imposed by the collective farm. However, it is through dwelling in these bordered spaces that knowledge – guided by the agent’s worldview and mindset – was produced and reproduced. Places where different agents and their meshwork meet are preferential places where knowledge is transmitted (Ingold 2007 and 2009)(in the case of Altai the villages and herders’ camps).
Thus, the *meshwork* itself and the visual engagement with surrounding places guides the perception and encounters underlying the transformation of sheer physical terrain in an existential place (figure 8-30 a/b). So, the *meshwork* model provides the understanding for explaining the *encounter* with places. It is important to emphasise that this does not explain the *conceptualisation* itself. The production and communication of knowledge about these places is guided by the *field* conditions and *habitus* (ontology and epistemological framework. These two combined enable us to fathom particular patterns in the Altaian landscape.

**Figure 8-30 a** Schematic map Kurundu overlaid with possible *meshworks*. (see below)
However, if places are created along paths, then why is there limited overlap between villages? Although life is organised within the Soviet-inherited territory of a village, it is not confined to the village and people move through other villages if they want to visit the mountain pastures or other neighbouring villages (for example, for the local administration or for petrol).

This is particularly apparent in the Karakol valley. Different villages have sharply defined sacred landscapes that have limited overlap. However, the inhabitants of the different villages need to pass through each other’s landscape if they want to go to Karakol for provisions or petrol, or if they need to go to the Uch-Enmek or Seminski mountain pastures. Limited veneration by Karakol’s inhabitants of the prominent mountains that dominate the landscape of Boochi, for example, can be related to the socially constructed nature of places and the local functionality of these mountains. This underlines the fact that place attachment is more than sensory engagement with the physical environment – it is also defined by internal and external social structures. But, it could be related to the relationship between perception and the speed of movement, too. As argued by Tim Ingold (2009: 38-39), interactive movement can become mere transport if the speed prevents the people from intensively engaging with the surrounding landscape. The villages in the Karakol valley are connected with the mountain pastures (and with each

**Figure 8-30b:** Schematic map Kuyus overlaid with possible meshworks. The lines of the meshwork were defined based on existing paths and roads. In both cases the mountain pass is a place that is an important obstacle on the road to the taiga.
other) by a drivable road, and most people drive to these places relatively quickly. As also illustrated by Marc Antrop (2007: 79), speed and perception are coupled and the faster you go the more your sight is narrowed (figure 8-31). In mountain passes the speed is very low and active engagement with the surrounding landscape will be most intense.

Figure 8-31: With increasing speed the field of view narrows. (After Antrop 2007: 79)

8.4.1 Diametrically opposed landscape discourses and the authorities’ landscape discourse: milieux de mémoire versus lieux de mémoire

Because of variations in the variables that lay at the root of place attachment, cultural landscapes are inherently pluralist. Altaians who talk about their landscape apply a different discourse than, for example, tourists, government officials, Kazakh nomads who have lived their entire lives in mono-ethnic villages or Russian farmers from a predominant Russian region. Just as with archaeological heritage, these various ‘discourses’ and priorities often lay at the root of conflict, making effective management increasingly difficulty.

In the case of tourist companies which try to accommodate the needs and interests of the tourist, the discourse involved is in total opposition to the Altaian one. As discussed in Chapter 5, Russian tourist are actively looking for authenticity and individual active experience: being in the wilderness, conquering natural obstacles (climbing mountains and navigating treacherous mountain streams), chopping wood, making fires, camping and freely discovering the landscape. In addition, because of inherent Russian chauvinism
in the wider Russian society, many Russians are unwilling to conceive the Altai Republic as Altaian homeland. Tourist see it as part of Russia, where Russian norms apply rather than ‘backward’ Altaian injunctions. This is diametrically opposed to the Altaian engagement with and claims for Indigenous land management. However, tourist companies, and a government which wishes to promote tourism, do not want to acknowledge these Indigenous demands. This opposition ultimately fuels conflict and makes Indigenous heritage management increasingly difficult.

It is not only tourists and tourist companies which apply a totally different discourse, but other agents too, besides the non-Indigenous actors in the field, have a particular viewpoint on land and landscape. One of the most important players today are companies like Gazprom that apply an economic stance. Again, the role of the government is primordial in deciding whose interests are negotiated. Not totally unexpectedly, the official landscape discourse does not accommodate the heritage landscape of the Indigenous Altaians. The land is not seen as something that should be respected but that should be tamed and developed. As stressed in Chapter 7, international charters on Indigenous rights that argue that Indigenous stakeholders should control landscapes and define land use, are opposed to the current thrust for securing economic interests. Institutionalising the limits Indigenous people want to impose threatens the future economic development of Russia and would be a bad sign to other regions across Siberia. This is highlighted by the myriad of local heritage laws that have been revoked in the last couple of years.

Besides the geopolitical and economic interests of the government, there is also a different framework at work through which cultural landscapes and heritage in general are perceived, deterring them from accommodating the Altaian associative landscape. While the Altaians’ way of looking at a landscape is holistic, focusing on its interconnection with everyday aspects of life, officials see the landscape as a space dotted with discrete meaningful places that have to be managed and protected separately. These different frameworks for heritage landscapes can best be compared with Pierre Nora’s concepts lieux de mémoire and milieux de mémoire.

For Indigenous Altaians and some non-Indigenous groups, sacred places get meaning through the Altaian homeland, presenting associative cultural landscapes as environments embodying cultural values and memory, which maintain their value through transactional engagement. Through interactive habitation and active worship, the role of a group in the world is negotiated and peoples’ actions are rooted in the past and present. Although specific sacred places embody Altaian tradition and cultural values, today they get meaning through their context. Mountain passes are not purposefully visited an sich, but they are engaged with through dwelling in the wider context. Mountains are not important and venerated because they are mountains but because of the place and role of that mountain in the meshwork that constitutes it. Altaians do not decouple sacred places from the whole homeland but they are metonymically linked. This approach to a
landscape that embodies culture and memory could best be described as what Pierre Nora calls *milieux de mémoire*. A *milieux de mémoire* is a ‘real environment of memory’ (Nora 1989: 7); culture and memory are embedded in the whole environment and are part of everyday life. Memory and culture are experienced through transactional engagement and transmitted through active engagement and social institutions such as families, kin groups, education or religious institutions (Nora 1989). Sacred places may present themselves as discrete places; they are not only constituted through the whole environment but are also perceived as part of the whole Altai and in relation to local livelihoods.

In most Western countries, the nexus memory and landscape are not perceived and actively remembered through the entire locality but through specific places. Similarly, in both federal heritage legislation (cf. Federal Service for Monitoring Compliance with Cultural Heritage Legislation 2002) and the recently revoked legislation, the associative landscape is not approached as a *milieux de mémoire* but as a compilation of *lieux de mémoire*, specific sites that embody culture and memory. Similarly, to many non-Indigenous outsiders, government circles do not see the Altaian sacred places as places embedded in everyday practice, but merely demarcated places that embody Altaian culture and heritage. Pierre Nora (1989) states that this is diagnostic for contexts that are influenced by modernity which render culture, memory and heritage to its material dimensions, and relating it to specific objects that are a material expression of those values. Compared to the discussion of the Altai Princes and the particular stance of the government, such a categorical approach correlates with the government’s positivist and bureaucratic stance – demarcated places that refer to culture, memory and heritage are easier to monitor and manage on a larger scale than a myriad of local systems that produce a compilation of sacred places.

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8.4.3 Managing heritage and tourism together: a sustainable livelihoods approach to tourism in Altai

The presented insights provide important lessons for future management and clearly stress the need for a context-dependent approach based on a balanced community understanding. Also, within the broad field of tourism studies there is agreement that in developing management on a local scale, based on ethnographic understanding of the local socio-economic strategies, is the only sustainable way forward (Cheer, Reeves and Laing 2013, Turner 2011, Tao and Wall 2008). In the following paragraphs I will briefly introduce the concept of sustainable livelihoods as a potential solution to both managing
the sacred landscape and tourism. This is a field that I have been introduced to only quite recently so the ideas and insights presented are rather preliminary, although promising.

It is already a fact that in the tourist region along the Katun, by depriving people of their land and growing employment in the tourism sector, tourism is undermining the traditional livelihood pursuits and interlinked veneration of the environment. In addition, because of the short tourist season, profits are limited. Together with the loss of tradition, the unsustainable economic situation is putting enormous pressure on the social fabric of the communities. In the popular tourist regions of the Altai, problems such as alcoholism and drug abuse have become part of a sad reality, severely affecting the well-being of local inhabitants (i.e. the tourist region along the Katun). It is expected that the problems will only get worse: future generations will further loose their connection with their culture and will end up in an even more hopeless situation as tourism encroaches throughout the Altai. At the same time, many landscapes are threatened with losing their heritage value, something that was already apparent in Elanda, which was characterised by a fairly limited attachment to land and an unstable community fabric.

Currently, there are no existing frameworks and mechanisms either for the sustainable development of tourism or for protecting Indigenous culture and traditions. The only tourism policy the local government promotes is further increasing the number of visitors. Furthermore, the nature of tourism is radically changing, big complexes (resorts and casinos) are being constructed and the numerous tourists, looking for natural authenticity, are forced deeper into the untouched parts of the Altai.

As highlighted in similar research about sustainable tourism development in Indigenous contexts, if tourism wants to add value to the existing community while preserving Indigenous customs, traditions and heritage it needs to operate in balance with traditional livelihoods. As insisted by Teresa Tao and Gopher Wall (2008), “[w]hen tourism is introduced into a community, it is important that it complements rather than displaces existing activities” (Tao and Wall 2008: 90). Tao and Wall’s research is inspired by the work of Robert Chambers (1988) who argues for the so-called sustainable livelihoods approach as a key strategy for the development of impoverished peripheral regions. The basic idea of the sustainable livelihoods approach is that organically grown communities in developing countries always adopt different economic strategies at the same time, and diversify their livelihoods in order to recover and cope with stress and sudden changes. These livelihoods are mainly context dependent and in relation to the possibilities offered by the social and physical environment. This is no different in Altai; for the main part, some members of the household have a job, but they also moonlight in the construction industry, keep a herd, cultivate vegetables in their garden and forage for nuts and berries throughout the year. Different livelihoods are maintained as a kind of security. Drawing on their research in an Indigenous context in Taiwan and the sustainable livelihoods theory of Chambers, Tao and Wall (2008) argue that tourism in Indigenous contexts must fit into the existing socio-economic system as one of the many
livelihoods if tourism is to lead to sustainable development of the communities involved and their environment. Furthermore, because of the social and cultural dimensions of those traditional livelihoods, this also ensures socio-cultural sustainability, negotiating the stability and cohesion of the involved communities (Cheer, Reeves and Laing 2013, Tao and Wall 2008, Turner 2011) – also, in Altai livelihood strategies are inextricably linked with the heritage value of the associative cultural landscape and stability of the community.

It is argued that planning tourism through sustainable livelihoods demands a small-scale approach (Cheer, Reeves and Laing 2013, Tao and Wall 2008, Turner 2011) that is based on ethnographic insights into the holistic nature of a particular community (i.e. field conditions, habitus, knowledge frameworks and sensitivity of environment). Interestingly, participatory mapping is not only an ideal tool for understanding the local veneration of the environment, but it is also an ideal instrument for understanding the full (spatial) extent of traditional livelihoods.

In reality, despite its negative impact, many rural Altai people are open to tourism, are interested in earning some extra money through it and understand that it could solve current economic problems and result in much-needed regional development. In order to be successful and lead to social and environmental sustainability, tourism should be a complementary livelihood instead of an economic activity that replaces existing strategies, the latter being the strategy of both the local and federal government. Tourism should be an additional economic pursuit that further diversifies the existing economic strategy of a community. I believe tourism really has the potential to alleviate existing poverty and cope with the post-perestroika challenges that remain highly relevant. So, preferably tourism should be small scale and based on slow growth, local control and insights into the socio-cultural fabric of the communities involved. Preserving traditional livelihoods would also mean that traditional culture has more chance of surviving – including the associative cultural landscape. Only a combined effort that manages tourism and heritage together and is embedded in the existing multi-sectorial character of everyday life has the potential to lead to economic development and environmental and socio-cultural sustainability.

Local eco-tourism (cf. Honey 2008) could serve this function. However, one pertinent problem remains: the epistemological barrier between the Altaian/Russian-Altaians and tourists. First, many Indigenous people have problems communicating their needs and interests to the tourists in a language understood by Russian tourists. As noted by Agnieszka Halemba (2006: 5-11), this excludes them from engaging in constructive dialogue with tourist companies and clearly articulating particular needs. Secondly, if local communities should be the main components in the tourist sector, a tourist sector that preferably is profitable, then they will also need to understand what tourists want. Many people who live in the rural parts of Altai have never been tourists themselves so they do not know what tourists want.
Such situations are particularly dangerous if local people threaten to get involved in a risky business they are ill prepared for. I think the first step towards developing tourism within the sustainable livelihood framework in Altai is by building up local expertise and understanding of the field conditions of a given locale. Workshops on a village scale would be an ideal tool to inform people about the basics of the tourism business and discuss particular local restrictions. These workshops should basically address: tourists’ expectations, how to set up a business, what opportunities are presented by the Internet, and which places should tourists be allowed to visit.

I firmly believe that only local rural tourism could turn the tide, otherwise the current situation will continue and outsiders who know how to engage with tourists will continue to profit from them. The Ethno-Natural Karakol Park is a striking example of the latter. Although the park promotes eco-tourism and aims to protect local lifestyles, in fact not many of the park’s inhabitants know how the park works. The tourist activity takes place mainly in a fenced-off and guarded tourist base and local people are hardly involved in the tourist process. The park is particularly successful because the director, Danil Mamyev, knows how to engage with foreign aid agencies and to attract tourists. The epistemological and institutional barriers are less pronounced and he is able to develop a successful tourist enterprise.

8.5 Intermediate conclusion: cultural landscapes as a messy heritage

Although at the outset of this chapter my initial goal was to disclose the processes that constitute the heritage dimension of landscapes in a clear and logical manner, I quickly came to the conclusion that it is very difficult to present interlinked and context-dependent phenomenon such as cultural landscapes in a straightforward way. However, despite the difficulties faced and the inherent ‘meshwork of processes’ that together shape the associative landscapes of the Altai, the general picture is that landscapes are formed through the dialectic interplay between social and physical variables on a very local scale, along paths in social and material space, depending on the interplay of different variables:

- Place making and creating existential landscapes happens through interaction along paths in physical space. Furthermore, the characteristic of the material environment guides the paths along which the perception and meaning-making take place. Perception is also directed by prominent markers in the landscape.
- The interaction between the agent and the environment happens along the paths of the meshwork. The subsequent transformation of what is sensed into knowledge is
predetermined by the external social structures of the field and the internal structures of the habitus.

- Social institutions that define the relationship between agents and the transmission of knowledge play an important role and help to determine the scale on which a cultural landscape is formed;
- The ontological and epistemological framework of the agents themselves also have an impact on how the environment is read.

- Cultural landscapes are shaped through time. A given landscape cannot be understood without looking at the history of the place and the people dwelling in it. Most popular approaches in anthropology and geography fail to address the myriad of variables that underlie an associative cultural landscape. Anthropological research may give insights into the social nature of place and landscapes, but they fail to address the spatial dimensions of the meshwork along which spaces are transformed into existential space. Techniques from human geography, on the other hand, such as participatory mapping, all too often focus on the effects of the meshwork, the patchwork of markings of social values on a map, and ignore the mobility and the socially structured engagement that actually lies at its roots.

When appraising cultural landscapes, I argue that an in-depth spatial approach is imperative. Despite their shortcomings, existing anthropological methods need to be combined with the advantages of participatory mapping. Participatory mapping has the strength to integrate insider knowledge in planning and protection. It has the power to work context-dependent and to analyse a category of data that is ignored by anthropology: spatial data. However, when working with spatial data we should be cautious about reducing insider knowledge to mere quantities of XYZ data. Although participatory mapping still mainly produces patches and polygons, combined with participant observation and a close study of high-resolution imaginary (that shows existing structures that guide mobility), the meshwork defining a cultural landscape can be unravelled. A meshwork will never be fully quantifiable unless we attach a GPS logger to all inhabitants of different villages. Even then, the interpretation and production of knowledge by the landscape is defined by existing field conditions and the individual habitus.

As regards management of associative cultural landscapes, there is no doubt that one centralised policy that defines practice for the whole Altai is not the way forward. The cultural landscape in Altai is not dotted with lieux de mémoire but is a milieux de mémoire. As a system, the issue of scale is extremely important, and in the case of the Altai the village is an important level on which the landscape is formed, and as such should be managed. Interestingly, a local approach is also the ideal way to tackle tourism, the sector that threatens the future of the Altai cultural landscape. A local livelihoods approach provides us with an opportunity to tackle heritage and tourism in a combined effort and strengthen the economic and socio-cultural fabric of local communities.
Part V: Conclusion
The multitude of hardly reconcilable heritage discourses and the particular position of the
government were identified as the main obstacles to the sustainable development of the
cultural heritage(s) of the Altai Republic at the outset of this dissertation. In an effort to
mediate a solution, this research investigated the multiple historically embedded social
frameworks underlying the conceptualisation and commodification of history and cultural
memory though the medium of archaeological objects and place by the different
stakeholders.

In this regard, the two cornerstones of the heritage of the Altai were studied: the rich
archaeology of the region and the venerated associative cultural landscape. In an effort to
fathom the different cultural values engrained in these material references, archaeological
objects and Altai’s sacred geography was approached through a material culture approach.
In this approach, heritage places and objects were conceptualised as cultural goods or
commodities, useful and valuable ‘things’, whose values are constituted through social
processes of meaning making. This dissertation argues that social theory is absolutely
essential in appraising heritage. I believe that a structuralist theoretical framework that
focuses on the entire social space is an essential first step to understand and contextualise
how heritage is created, utilised and maintained. My theoretical framework was
constructed around Pierre Bourdieu’s ‘logic of practice’ (Bourdieu 1977) and Anthony
Giddens’ (1984) structuration theory. Bridging agency and structure, both theories argue
that social phenomena must be understood through the dialectic interplay between the
dispositions (habitus) of an individual agent or group, the external structures defining
society (field) and the struggle to consolidate or improve a particular position in society
(depending on the availability of capital).

An ethnographic approach was chosen to identify the different groups and
understand the parameters that define their actions. These ethnographic insights were
acquired through an exhaustive literature research and fieldwork (2010-2011). The use of
these insights on the social characteristics of the different stakeholders did not only enable
me to understand and contextualise the Indigenous ways of engaging with cultural objects
and cultural memory, it also allowed me to understand other groups’ needs and interests.
Ultimately, through comparison of the often conflicting discourses some potential
strategies were identified.

Archaeological heritage conflicts in a challenging social field: the Altai Princess

The analysis of the conflict connected to the fate of the Altai Princess was extremely
valuable in understanding the pluralist ideation about archaeological remains. There is no
doubt that the different discourses related to the Altai Princess have to be understood
through the agent’s historically constituted dispositions of and their interaction with the
structures governing society.
The Altaian way of looking to the past is directed by their shamanist ontology, where the unity between people and land stands central. Although burial sites are culturally stigmatised, a considerable group of people is not opposed to excavations and highly values scientific insights, which is related to the influence of Soviet education on their epistemological framework. The fierce opposition to the work of the IAE SBRAS rather has to be framed within the Indigenous struggle against surviving colonial structures and the importance of the Ice Maiden as a marker of identity.

The discourse of the archaeologists proved extremely interesting in understanding how archaeological practice and theory evolves and collides with transformations in contemporary societies. Furthermore, because of a shared processualist and culture-historian background, these insights into the Russian *homo archaeologicus* provide many tangent points with European archaeology. Driven by a positivist *habitus* and limited experience with dealing with the needs and interest of people from outside academia, the archaeologists of the IAE SBRAS had major difficulties with understanding the basic needs and interests of the Indigenous people. Furthermore, countering the moratorium on excavations and reburial was also symbolically important as the position of science in Russian society was coming under increasing pressure. Such an anthropology of archaeology presents archaeologists as one of the many social agents in the field. Agents that have a particular historically constituted positivist ‘cosmology’ (theory) and own rules of behaviour (ethics).

Comparison with similar cases from the United States and Australia does not only show that a post-repatriation archaeology is still scientific and objective. It also questions if the recent return of the Altai Princess to the Altai Republic should be conceptualised as a proper repatriation or a mere capitalisation by a multi-national that wants to pursue a highly contested project. First, whereas repatriation and the development of indigenous heritage frameworks mostly correlate with a broader political decolonisation of society, Altaians do not have basic Indigenous rights or privileges comparable to other settler societies. Second, however it is too early to estimate the impact of repatriation on Russian archaeology itself, because of the ongoing de-regionalisation in Russia it doesn’t look that there will be growing intercultural dialogue and that the current colonial discourse will be deconstructed. In other settler societies the *doxa* of the discipline was challenged by the central government, who redefined the authorised heritage discourse.

To my opinion an ethnography of the different audiences interested in archaeology has the potential to change the archaeological process for the benefit of both the public and the experts. Within the field of archaeology, the multi-cultural values attributed of the ‘archaeological resources’ we study is often omitted and discarded as not central to our own discipline. However, we study ‘things’ that belong to society and get funding because non-experts find our discipline important. So it is essential that we as a discipline move towards an understanding of the full extent of our own practice on the broader society. This is not only imperative in settler societies with indigenous people where the
differences between the epistemologies is more outspoken, also in Western European countries such as Belgium. Understanding our different publics and ourselves is essential for the sustainable development of the own discipline and the heritage goods we create through our research. I furthermore argue that although existing literature from the field of Indigenous archaeology and community archaeology is very instructive, each context is different and demands a careful assessment of the social structures that define a particular social arena.

Despite the fierce activism against archaeological fieldwork in the Altai Republic, I believe that there is room for archaeological fieldwork and excavations. Not only did a recent excavation by colleagues prove this, many indigenous respondents explicitly stated that they are not opposed to archaeology, as it is good for science. However, their only demand is to have an important voice in the archaeological process. In this context I have argued for a heritage framework based on the principle of joint heritage stewardship: heritage management as a negotiated joint venture between the public and the experts. I think the archaeological community in any region in the world would benefit from such an approach where management and research is based on informed intercultural dialogue with all possible stakeholders. To my opinion, researchers should take the initiative in the intercultural dialogue since it is a moral obligation for guests researching the past of their hosts. Whether in the context of the Altai or of my hometown in Flanders, we should be aware that very often, local people do not directly benefit from our archaeological fieldwork. Even if we are protecting it ‘for the sake of humanity’, in reality, still or own scientific interests in the ‘archaeological resources’ prevail over those of the public. I believe insights from heritage studies about the pluralist nature of the past have the potential to colonise our archaeological consciousness and break the positivist doxa that is destroying our discipline.

Heritage landscapes as a local phenomenon: towards an integrative management of tourism and cultural landscapes

Although I have argued that disciplinal essentialism is a serious problem in the current heritage field and social theory should be the central thread throughout the appraisal of heritage resources, this does not mean that everything that is considered heritage in a given context can be treated with the same methods and theoretical frameworks. In case of the study of associative landscapes, methodologies borrowed from geography infused with social theory is absolutely essential in understanding the logic behind the processes that transform physical space into an interconnected ‘environment of memory’ (cf. Nora 1989).

I argue that an in-depth spatial approach is imperative. Despite their shortcomings, existing anthropological methods need to be combined with the advantages of participatory mapping. Ethnography enables us to understand the social structures in the
field, while participatory mapping has the strength to integrate spatial insider knowledge in planning and protection. It has the power to work context-dependent and analyse a category of data that is ignored by anthropology. To my opinion participatory mapping has the potential to bring cartography into ethnography, enabling the researcher to understand the myriad of social and spatial processes at work.

This research has proven that heritage places in the Altai Republic are created through active engagement with the physical space through transactional movement that is bordered by Soviet administrative boundaries. This movement can be materialised as a meshwork, a series of lines through the environment along which people create knowledge about the environment and create existential space. This process of creating knowledge is guided by the contextual nature of the field and the structures defining the habitus of the individual agents.

I argue that the issue of scale is especially important to understand and manage the inter-culturally venerated landscape of the Altai Republic. This key aspect of an associative landscape is unfortunately often omitted in participatory mapping research due to the lack of insights in the complexity of the social processes that guide perception of place and space. For the Altaians, a place becomes sacred through local livelihood strategies and knowledge transmission through the village. For this reason I believe a centralised policy on republican scale that transforms sacred places into categorical proxy data in a register will not be effective. Each village has a different cultural landscape with its own ‘most important places in the whole Altai’, which is connected with the historical trajectory of the village, the habitus of the villagers and the nature of the physical landscape.

Drawing on research from similar post-colonial societies that witness/have witnessed a similar tabula rasa of the socio-economic environment. I argue that the industry that has the largest influence on the cultural landscape, tourism, also would be best developed on the same local scale management through a sustainable livelihoods approach. I believe that in theory the success of a cultural landscape policy would lay in a combined management of both tourism and heritage. As argued at the end of Chapter 8, the framework of the sustainable livelihoods approach, which argues that tourism must be integrated as an additional livelihood in the existing socio-economic system of society, is an ideal instrument to both preserve traditional culture and achieve much needed regional development.

Contested heritages in a neo-colonial space

Both case studies presented in this dissertation clearly argue for joint-stewardship and local empowerment. In addition, power relations in the political field were identified as one of the most important factors in deciding whether a multi-vocal heritage discourse has the chance to become the authoritative heritage discourse. In this regard, because of the
agenda of the Kremlin, heritage policy and management in Altai presents itself as a very complex and controversial enterprise.

Indigenous rights might have evolved globally over the past 20 years, native people in Russia still do not have the rights and social recognition comparable to settler societies like Canada, the United States and Australia in the late 1980s. Through examples such as the awarding of the highly prestigious State Prize of the Russian Federation and the revocation of different legal frameworks, the Russian government hinders the development of foundations for Indigenous legitimation and the subsequent adaptation of the heritage process to Indigenous needs. In the same way, not regional poverty alleviation based on local-scale growth is identified as a way forward. On the contrary, through promoting Soviet-style prestigious building projects the government rather supports large-scale lucrative economic development that is centrally administered. Related to an inherent fear to relapse into an uncertain economic situation as in the 1990s, the Kremlin directs all its power at securing the economic future of Russia. Indigenous demands over land and culture are perceived as potential threats and governmental structures are constantly recreated to secure the economic development of the land.

As long as the political structures are in favour of the archaeological community and tourist developers, and epistemological and institutional boundaries impede the Indigenous people to participate in the heritage process, the future of the cultural heritage of the Altai Republic looks very bleak. Although an outsider perspective as mine served very useful in illuminating problems impeding heritage management, through own experiences with local park administrators, ministry of culture and companies as Gazprom I learned that convincing the legislators about the seriousness of these problems is a very difficult task.

Despite of this fraught position of the government, I am confident that the presented insights have the potential to contribute to the academic heritage community in Siberia. The publication in *Etnograficheskoe Obozrenie* may have the potential to invoke scholarly debate that might trigger reflection and ultimately break the strong Soviet doxa that is undermining the Russian heritage field. Throughout the process of rewriting Part III into a paper with archaeologists of GASU, I was already able to influence their consciousness invoking them to rethink unquestioned beliefs. I hope our collaborative paper, written in according to the ‘rules of the game’ of Russian archaeology, will have a similar effect.

In the end, within the context of a PhD about an under-theorised academic space, I think I cannot do more than initiate the dialogue and invite scholarly debate. I hope these insights might be a first step towards the development of a new philosophical baseline for heritage and tourism policy in the Altai Republic that transcends the current preoccupation with the material and scientific dimensions of heritage objects and places.
Understanding ethnic identity through heritage study

As I stressed throughout Part I and II, heritage is tightly connected with identity and group membership. Therefore, insights in the sociocultural organisation of society are not only imperative to understand how people engage with the past. The heritage discourses people construct are also ideal analytical instrument to learn a whole lot about the social reality of a given society. Whereas this study has illustrated the benefits of using social theory and information to understand heritage, heritage theory also enabled us to understand specific aspects of the social constitution of society (cf. Waterton and Watson 2013). Besides providing unique insights in the disciplinary identity and positivist doxa of the archaeological discipline (see above), my analysis has also enabled me to grasp certain elements related to the social organisation of everyday life in the multi-cultural Altai Republic.

First, through the of heritage practices produced by the different agents I was able to accomplish a better understanding of the contemporary processes of self-identification that defines group membership amongst the Altaians. On the one hand, the shared stance towards the Ukok Princess as the progenitor of all Altaians clearly shows that today the Altai people perceive themself as one national group, connected by their Altaian homeland. On the other hand, a domain that was traditionally dominated by the clan before the Soviet Union, the associative cultural landscape is now communally worshiped on village scale across tribal boundaries. I argue that through physical and social displacement during the Soviet Union, the tribe or clan as a socio-economical institution in society was made obsolete. This created a matrix for decreasing tribalism, which, assisted by ethnic engineering during the Soviet Union and increasing contact with Slavic settlers, constituted a pan-Altaian national identity. A national identity that further crystallised through cultural activism organised on a republican scale by local Indigenous leaders. In this regard, the official recognition of the different Altaian tribes (except the larger Altai-Kizhi tribe) as ‘Small-numbered peoples of the North’ in the midst of the ethno-national revival is hardly reconcilable with the reality of the post-Soviet field. I argue that this category has to be understood as an instrument for ethnic engineering, skilfully used by the Kremlin to deconstruct the collective agency of the Altaian nation and further undermine the federal model of contemporary Russia.

Secondly, by including the non-Indigenous population in my multi-actor approach, I was also able to shed some light on the non-Indigenous groups that are frequently omitted in classic ethnographic studies. Through my analysis of their perception of archaeological objects and landscape I was able to establish that, in contrast to what is commonly assumed in literature about Siberia, the non-Indigenous people should not simply be perceived as settlers with no interest in the Indigenous heritage. On the contrary, both Russian and Kazakh communities that have a shared history with Altaians through the collective farms have Altaian structures deeply embedded in their habititus. In mixed villages same sacred places as the Altains were worshiped and even in mono-ethnic
villages the Ukok Princess was also connected with misfortunes and conceptualise it as part of their heritage. When I confronted my Altaian interlocutors with this reality, they were astonished by the attachment of non-Indigenous peoples and their general respect for indigenous needs and interests.

These important insights about the intercultural values that are attached to land and archaeological objects bring me back to the point of joint-stewardship over the past. Joint-stewardship can only be attained when both protagonists engage in an open-ended intercultural negotiation, including a mutual recognition of cultural difference and participation. This can subsequently lead into an intercultural understanding and trust, which forms a basis for flexible yet comprehensive dialogue. I believe that collaborative stewardship over the past has the potential to disentangle the existing ethnic boundaries that are impeding the development of heritage policy (i.e. conflict between archaeologists and Indigenous people) and the growing tensions between the different ethnic groups that occupy the Altai Republic (i.e. Kazakhs versus Altaians in Kosh Agach). I firmly believe that cultural heritage is a type of social capital that has the potential to promote intercultural participation and mediate integration.

**Future perspectives**

Since this research is one of the first researches in the field of heritage studies and public archaeology that investigates the politics of the past in Siberia from a sociological and ethnographic perspective, only the very basic processes that define the engagement with the past could be uncovered. As argued in Chapter 3, structuralist theory is ideal for understanding the basic structures and institutions that define social practice. Once these are understood, which is already a very time-consuming enterprise in multicultural contexts that lack interpretative ethnographies, the more complex dimensions of the past can be understood. In an effort to better understand the role of semiotics and intentionality within the context of cultural heritage and memory, I wish to revisit to some philosophical literature to further crystallise my thoughts (e.g. Barthes 1977, Gamer 1989, Ricoeur 1983).

Besides developing a more profound understanding of the myriad of processes that define cultural heritage and memory, it is my aim to continue to investigate the relationship between heritage and tourism. As I stressed in Chapter 8 and in this conclusion, the management of Altai’s unique heritage must go hand in hand with the development of a tourist policy. I am convinced that a sustainable livelihoods thinking, based on an in-depth understanding of the physical and social realities of the locale, is an ideal instrument to both mediate heritage preservation and alleviate poverty in any developing country. I have the luck to work on this topic next year as I received a ‘Belgian-American Education Fund’ grant for a year of post-doctoral research at the department of
Throughout this thesis I have often commented on the serious problems faced in Flemish archaeology. My experience with heritage related problems in a totally different context has ‘colonised my consciousness’ and broken the positivist *doxa* that dominated my own *habitus*. Because of my experience with other archaeologies and heritage discourses I am not entirely ‘homeblind’ anymore. In relation to the concept of ‘homeblindness’, being blind to the *doxa* that defines the own social space, Thomas Hylland Eriksen (2001) argues that:

> Fieldwork at home, like anywhere in the world, depends on the anthropologist’s professional skills. In a familiar or semi-familiar setting, one has the advantage of mastering the language and cultural conventions better than in a culturally distant place, but one also tends to take too much for granted.

(Eriksen 2001: 30)

Although Flanders is a totally different context and different social structures and institutions are at play, I believe I am well equipped to do an anthropology of the Flemish archaeological discipline and the different stakeholders from outside the academic world (ranging from community members to contractors). First steps have been set in that direction in collaboration with Lien Van Dooren, a master student who has investigated the perception of archaeology in the province of East-Flanders.
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Dutch summary

Inleiding

De Altaj Republiek (deelrepubliek van Rusland, zuid-Siberië) wordt gekenmerkt door een uniek en gevarieerd cultureel erfgoed. Duizenden archeologische monumenten zijn nog steeds bewaard in het landschap en de specifieke culturele waarden die de bevolking toeschrijft aan bepaalde plaatsen, versterkt de erfgoedwaarde van het landschap nog meer. De explosieve groei van de toeristische sector (tegenwoordig 1,5 miljoen bezoekers per jaar) en recente plannen van de overheid om één van 's werelds grootste pijpleidingen aan te leggen, zorgen ervoor dat het erfgoed van de regio steeds meer onder druk komt te staan.

Naast methodologische problemen zorgen vooral sociale problemen ervoor dat de verschillende belangengroepen er niet in slagen om samen het erfgoed op een duurzame manier te beheren. De lokale inheemse bevolking, de Altajers, hechten door hun sjamanistisch geloof andere waarden aan archeologische monumenten en landschappen dan de overheid en de Russische archeologen van de Academie voor Wetenschappen, die een belangrijke positie in de Russische erfgoedsector bekleden. Deze verschillen zorgen ervoor dat enkel de materiële dimensie van het erfgoed wordt beschermd, en niet de erfgoedwaarden die de lokale Altajse, Russische en Kazakse bevolkingen belangrijk vinden.

Bovendien zorgt het conflict tussen de archeologen van de Russische academie, die heel veel expertise in huis heeft, en de lokale erfgoedinstanties ervor dat deze lokale initiatieven zich niet kunnen ontwikkelen door een gebrek aan wetenschappelijke ondersteuning. Ook maken de sterke epistemologische en institutionele verschillen het moeilijk voor de lokale bevolking om hun erfgoedgerelateerde noden duidelijk te maken aan de overheid of toeristische bedrijven. Dit heeft als gevolg dat lokale noden amper begrepen worden en er geen kennis is van wat de inheemse en andere lokale bevolkingen nu precies als erfgoed beschouwen.

De problemen die het beheer van erfgoed praktisch onmogelijk maken zijn hoofdzakelijk van sociale aard. Verschillende groepen ervaren hetzelfde materiële erfgoed
anders en hebben andere verwachtingen van het erfgoedbeheer. Deze verschillende verwachtingen liggen ook aan de basis van het conflict tussen de archeologen en de lokale bevolking.

Het doel van deze thesis is dan ook niet om verdere toepassingen te ontwikkelen die de bewaring van de materiële dimensie van het erfgoed vergemakkelijken. Cultureel erfgoed is voornamelijk een sociale constructie, een ervaring die gedefinieerd wordt door culturele waarden, gekoppeld met de - eveneens sociaal bepaalde - herinnering die een bepaalde plaats of object oproept. Het is mijn ambitie om de sociale structuren die aan de basis liggen van de perceptie van het archeologisch en landschappelijk erfgoed van de regio te ontdelen. Omdat de Altaj Republiek een multiculturele samenleving is, zijn er meerdere groepen die een bepaalde interesse hebben in het erfgoed. Erfgoed wordt in deze thesis als meervoudig beschouwd en de erfgoedperceptie van de verschillende belangengroepen, waaronder die van de Russische archeologen, wordt met behulp van sociale theorieën en etnografische methodes ontleed.

Theoretisch kader

In dit onderzoek wordt erfgoed geanalyseerd aan de hand van materiële cultuurstudies. In tegenstelling tot wat gangbaar is in de Vlaamse archeologie, hebben deze materiële cultuurstudies niet het doel om te ontdelen hoe bepaalde objecten individuele en collectieve waarde verkrijgen. Het is dan ook mijn ambitie om de processen die bepalen hoe objecten en plaatsen culturele erfgoedwaarde verkrijgen te ontdelen. Objecten of plaatsen zijn dus niet zomaar erfgoed omdat ze uit het verleden afstammen, ze worden als erfgoed beschouwd door sociale wezens.

De sociale dimensie van erfgoed werd onderzocht aan de hand van de sociale theorieën van Pierre Bourdieu en Anthony Giddens. Beide sociologen ontwikkelden structuralistische denkkaders die de onderzoeker toelaat om de bouwstenen van een sociaal systeem te analyseren en te definiëren. Al kunnen dergelijke brede theoretische denkkaders de volledige complexiteit van een sociaal fenomeen als erfgoed niet verklaren, maken ze het mogelijk om de algemene processen verscholen in het sociale veld te definiëren. Volgens Giddens en Bourdieu zijn onze acties het gevolg van de dialectiek tussen onze interne denkpatronen en wereldbeeld (habitus), de structuur van de maatschappij (veld), en de mens zijn streven naar een optimale positie in die maatschappij (wat bepaald wordt door het kapitaal dat een mens voor handen heeft).

Methodologie

De verschillende actoren in het erfgoedveld werden onderzocht aan de hand van een extensief literatuuronderzoek gecombineerd met etnografisch veldwerk. De literatuurstudie maakte het mij mogelijk om de algemene structuur van de maatschappij
en de denkpatronen van de individuen te begrijpen. Het veldwerk in de zomer van 2010 en 2010 hielp me om erfgoedspecifieke vragen op te lossen en de verzamelde inzichten uit de literatuurstudie kritisch te evalueren. Al liggen sociale structuren aan de basis van elk type erfgoed, archeologische monumenten en culturele landschappen zijn nog steeds verschillend en vragen om een specifieke methodiek.

De pluralistische perceptie van het archeologisch erfgoed werd onderzocht aan de hand van een casus. Door middel van een kritische discours-analyse van het conflict rond de Ukok Prinses heb ik de verschillende belevingen van archeologie in kaart gebracht. Omdat het cultureel landschap een ruimtelijk fenomeen is, waren aanvullende methodologieën en theoretische inzichten uit de geografie noodzakelijk. Om een inzicht te krijgen in hoe mensen de fysische omgeving omvormen tot een omgeving met een waarde, werden sociale inzichten gecombineerd met ruimtelijke gegevens over het landschap en de mobiliteit van de mensen in dat landschap. Het dagelijkse gebruik en de perceptie van het landschap werd in kaart gebracht aan de hand van participatory mapping, een techniek waarin de onderzoeker een gemeenschap bezoekt en aan verschillende gezinnen vraagt om specifieke zaken aan te duiden op een kaart. Deze informatie wordt dan in een geografisch informatiesysteem samengebracht en vergeleken met de fysische karakteristieken van het landschap.

Resultaten

Archeologie

Aan de hand van een kritische contextualisering van alle erfgoedgerelateerde fenomenen verkreeg ik inzicht in de erfgoedbeleving van de verschillende belangengroepen. Niet alleen uit de percepties van de inheemse bevolking, die vaak de enige groep is die onderzocht wordt, maar ook uit de disciplinaire identiteit van de Russische archeologen werden verregaande conclusies getrokken. Deze inzichten zijn uniek aangezien er binnen de publieksarcheologie maar weinig aandacht is voor de rol van de eigen discipline in de maatschappij. In de context van de archeologische erfgoedbeleving konden de volgende interpretaties worden gemaakt:

1. De manier waarop de Altajse bevolking omgaat met archeologie wordt gestuurd door hun sjamanistische kosmologie. Binnen dit wereldbeeld staat de eenheid tussen mens en landschap centraal. Archeologisch onderzoek van funerale monumenten wordt gezien als een verstoring van dit belangrijk evenwicht. Daarenboven maken de Altajers een etno-culturele heropleving door, sinds ze met de val van de Sovjet-Unie strijden voor meer culturele rechten. Omdat erfgoed een belangrijk kapitaal is om hun identiteit te versterken, wordt de macht over hun eigen verleden een symbolische strijd voor legitimiteit. Dit wil echter niet zeggen dat de Altajers tegen

2. De sterke reacties van de Russische archeologen tegen de inheemse bevolking dient begrepen te worden binnen de context van de cultuur-historische en processuele paradigma's die nog steeds het denken van de Russische archeologen domineren. Niet de aandacht voor interculturaliteit, maar data en rationaliteit domineert de ethiek en ethos van de Russische archeologische gemeenschap.

3. Andere vergelijkbare conflicten zoals in Australië en de Verenigde Staten leren ons dat de overheid een bemiddelende rol kan spelen én de archeologen kan verplichten om zich aan te passen aan de multi-vocale realiteit in de moderne samenleving. De weigerachtigheid van de Russische overheid om tussenbeide te komen kadert in de nationalistische agenda van President Poetin en de de-regionalisering, gekoppeld aan een neoliberaal programma.


Landschap

Het participatory mapping liet me toe om een uniek inzicht te krijgen in de schaal waarop een associatief cultureel landschap wordt gevormd, en de manier waarop dat gelinkt is aan de dagelijkse mobiliteit van mensen én de fysische karakteristieken van de omgeving. Vooral het element schaal was belangrijk, dit leert ons immers hoe we het landschap best beheren.

De resultaten van dit onderzoek toonden aan dat een landschap het resultaat is van de wisselwerking tussen de habitus van een persoon, de dominante structuren van zijn sociaal veld en de fysische realiteit. Veldwerk in twaalf verschillende dorpen toonde duidelijk aan dat, door de invloed van collectieve boerderijen, culturele landschappen op de schaal van het dorp worden gevormd. Deze schaal werd tevens geïdentificeerd als de beste schaal voor de duurzame ontwikkeling van toerisme in de regio. Deze thesis pleit dan ook voor een landschappelijk erfgoedbeheer waar zowel aandacht is voor toerisme als voor de processen die een associatief landschap definiëren (i.e. integratie van economische strategieën).
Bibliography


The date of the Bradshaw paintings of the Kimberley in northwest Australia is discussed, along with the issue of whether they should be termed "early Aboriginal" or "pre-Aboriginal."


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