

GENGHIS KHAN AND MODERN MONGOLIAN IDENTITY: THE DEMOCRACY CONNECTION

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It is not surprising that since Mongolia's separation from the Soviet Union Genghis Khan has rapidly become a symbol of national unity. Born in 1162 in Hentii Province (aimag), Mongolia, Genghis Khan had united the Mongol peoples into an independent, sovereign nation in 1189. By 1206, the year he was elected Genghis Khan of All Mongols, he had expanded Mongol territory to roughly its present size. Over the next twenty-one years, he and his sons conquered the largest land mass ever held by one ruler: from Korea to Persia and the Caspian Sea, from Russia south to the Yellow River of China (Ratchnevsky 1997). Clearly Genghis Khan is the author of Mongolian independence.

Today's Mongolian government promotes Genghis Khan as a symbol of national unity and independence. His picture is on the three highest denominations of Mongolian money. The ceremonial *ger* (yurt) located in the inner courtyard of Parliament houses a huge statue of the seated ruler; visiting dignitaries are brought here for 'photo-ops.' Right outside the legislative chamber on the first floor of Parliament, nine ceremonial 'banners' of white horsetails stand opposite a bust of Genghis Khan. The banners are paraded at the Naadam festival and then placed in a circular holder before the reviewing stand of the President. As 1,000 wrestlers march into the arena during the opening parade, they literally make obeisance to the nine banners, bowing before them. This year the government has organized a year-long celebration of the 840th anniversary of Genghis Khan's birth. Even more festivities are planned for 2006, the 800th anniversary of "state" formation.

Genghis Khan's picture is everywhere in Ulaanbaatar, the capital city. It is found on everything from wool carpets and paintings that decorate homes to

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commercial labels such as vodka and beer bottles to cigarette packs and dozens of tourist items.

Clearly Genghis Khan has become a major symbol of Mongolian independence. But he is more than a symbol of sovereignty, for recent research suggests that his ideas on governance form the core of Mongolian citizens' political culture (Falloff 2001, 2002). These ideas include the four basic principles of liberal democracy - the 'pillars' of democracy according to Western scholars (Diamond 1996, Myers 1996 and 1998, Huntington 1997). This statement does not mean that Genghis Khan headed a democratic government any more than King John did after he signed the Magna Carta. But Genghis Khan codified the four principles of liberal democracy by 1206 - nine years before the Magna Carta - and he did as willingly, not under duress as King John did.

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Almost 800 years after the formation of the Mongol polity (1206), the Mongolian people established a democratic, capitalist state when they ratified the present constitution (1992). Like many post-Soviet countries, the present government - a president elected by popular vote and a one-chamber parliament headed by a prime minister - draws inspiration from international (Western European) democratic forms and culture (Runic 1999). But the democratic political culture is not an import. Rather, it is built on the Mongolians' nomadic culture of independence as well as their knowledge of Genghis Khan's government, which comes from their written and oral history.

This paper begins with historians' descriptions of the democratic principles embedded in Genghis Khan's home rule. Their accounts - dating from about a decade after his death to the present - show that this great leader laid the foundation for democratic culture even though he did not preside over a democratic state. It then presents findings on the political culture of Mongolian citizens today (1998). This research shows that the majority of people interviewed credit Genghis Khan with laying the foundation for democracy as well as independence. Analyzed by demographic category, the research suggests that the understanding of Genghis Khan as founder of democratic principles for Mongolia is shared by citizens of different backgrounds - nationalities, religions, regions, residence, education, etc. Thus Genghis Khan's story has become a unifying force for the establishment and maintenance of democracy in Mongolia today.

The Democratic Principles of Genghis Khan¹

We know about Genghis Khan from several historical sources. The first and most important is *The Secret History of the Mongols*, which was probably written by Shigi-hutukhu, a Tatar captive raised by Genghis Khan's mother (Ratchnevsky 1997, p xiv; Morgan 1990, pp 9-12). Later accounts written less than 100 years after Genghis Khan's death are from Ata-Malik Juvaini (writing 1253-1260), who served the new Mongol governors in northern Persia (Boyle 1997 p xxxvii), and Rashid ad-Din, a doctor turned chief minister and historian of the court of Ilkhan Ghazan, Mongol ruler of Persia and Iraq (Morgan 1990, p 11). Ad-Din's account, written at the end of the thirteenth century, was based on the official Mongolian history, the *Altan Debter* (*The Golden Notebook*), which has since been lost. Other Western historians have written about Genghis Khan from the Western, or conquered perspective (*ibid*, 16-27).]

The supposedly definitive biography was written by Paul Ratchnevsky (1997). *Genghis Khan: His Life and Legacy* checks one historical reference against the other in the hope of determining the "historical truth." This book stimulated the historical part of my research, for Ratchnevsky's description of Genghis Khan's home rule made me suspect that he had actually laid the foundation for modern, or "liberal" democracy.² *The Secret History of the Mongols* confirmed my suspicion that Genghis Khan did include some democratic principles in his government.

For democratic rule to exist, Genghis Khan first united the Mongol tribes into one independent polity³ that had the right to make its own laws. He then fought neighboring groups (the Tangud, Jurchin Jin, and Chin Dynasty), freeing the Mongols from paying tribute or serving at the pleasure of foreign rulers. Eventually he conquered these groups and controlled the Silk Roads (Cleaves 1982, §139, 153-54, 189, 200; Morgan 1990, pp 61-69; Academy of Sciences MPR 1990, pp 98-101).

Having established the right to self-rule, Genghis Khan incorporated some form of the four pillars of democracy into Mongol governance. Some were traditional parts of Mongolian culture, predating him; others were borrowed from surrounding cultures. Genghis Khan contributed additional components, and

¹This section is a paraphrased version of the same section in Sabloff (2002).

²The main tenets of liberal democracy are listed in a seminal article by Diamond (1996). His nine points may be subsumed under the four "pillars" of democracy used by various authors in Myers (1996, 1998).

³Some Mongolian historians use the term 'state' to describe Genghis Khan and his successors' rule of the heartland. See Baabar (1999, p 24), and Academy of Sciences MPR (1990, p 98).

he combined the various principles into one government structure, which was unique for his time.

The first democratic principle is participatory government. Genghis Khan took the nomadic tribal tradition of electing a leader in mass assembly (the *hural*)⁴ to the next step by having a Great Assembly (*Jh Hural*) of Mongols meet periodically to discuss policy issues such as decisions concerning war and peace. Genghis Khan also maintained a Council of Wise Men that met with him regularly. Acting as his cabinet, they helped him think through major policy decisions. While he started his Council with Mongols, he eventually included men from other tribes and nations (Cleaves 1982, §204). While true participatory democracy includes all citizens in the decision process, the Great Assembly (*Jh Hural*) and Council of Wise Men are good starting places.⁵ However, it should be noted that while some historians consider his rule to have been a military democracy, others call it a military dictatorship (Ratchnevsky 1997, pp 42, 90-92, 150; Academy of Sciences MPR 1990, p 100; Cleaves 1982, §154).

Rule of law is the second democratic principle. In 1206, Genghis Khan instructed Shigi-hutukhu to form a judicial system that eventually extended throughout the Great Mongol Empire. As the first judge, Shigi-hutukhu listened to disputes and transgressions of the law (robbery, deception, adultery), imposing sentences ranging from fines to death. Although the laws were designed to apply to Mongols, Genghis Khan often rewarded his loyal followers by exempting them from punishment - for up to nine transgressions (Cleaves 1982, §203, 209-23; Morgan 1990, pp 96-99, Ratchnevsky 1997, p 95).

Genghis Khan never achieved this principle, equality of citizens. However, he initiated it in two different ways. He established the related principle of meritocracy, which enables individuals to rise from one status to another through their own initiative (Havel 1998, pp 27-28; Kohak 1996, pp 3-4). He organized the entire population into an army of fighting men and their supporters - family members who traveled with them and supplied them with food, horses, weapons, armor, and clothing. He handpicked the leaders for each army unit, selecting them for their loyalty, ability, and bravery, not because they came from noble birth. Thus Genghis Khan established a meritocracy for the organizing unit of the entire society (Cleaves 1982, §203-23).

⁴ Among the Mongols, the noble family of a tribe provided the tribal ruler, or khan, from among the male heirs, brothers, or nephews of the previous ruler. The final decision was made by a formal assembly of Mongols (Bacon 1958, p57 based on The Secret History §57).

⁵ Even in ancient Athens, only men who were not slaves were considered citizens; women and slaves were not allowed to participate in the democratic process (Finer 1999, pp. 341-68; American School of Classical Studies at Athens 1987).

He also staffed the Council of Wise Men according to the principle of meritocracy. No matter what their status or country of origin, he welcomed wise men into his advisory council. In fact, the story goes that Genghis Khan invited a beggar known for his wisdom into the Council (Academy of Sciences 1990, p 100).

Genghis Khan also exhibited a remarkable respect for women. It is true that at the time women could be given or sold by their male kin and that they had no voice in government. But *The Secret History* gives several examples of women making key decisions, telling Genghis Khan How to live and what to do, which is unusual and shows that women had some stature within Mongolian culture. For example, his wife Borate warned him that his blood brother Jamukha was plotting against him even when Genghis Khan assumed that their blood-brother obligation and affection were strong; his mother stopped him from committing fratricide. Most interesting is the passage in *The Secret History of the Mongols* that uses the same phrases to describe Borate as Genghis Khan. He is described as a boy

With fire in his eyes,

With light in his face (§62, 82, 149)

She is described with the phrases reversed, i.e., as a maiden

With light in her face,

With fire in her eyes. (§66)

Cleaves, the famous Harvard scholar and translator of *The Secret History*, remarks on the unusual use of the same phrases for a young girl and a world ruler (p 15, footnote 44). While these brief accounts do not confer political equality, they set the baseline for treating women with respect and therefore have the potential to pave the way for political equality.

Genghis Khan did not grant his people the basic human rights and freedoms that form the final pillar of liberal democracy and that today's Mongolians prize so highly. But he allowed a certain amount of freedom of speech or he never would have figured out who to invite onto the Wise Men Council. He also championed freedom of religion, as his own religion (shamanism) required. As he built the Great Mongol Empire, he declared that all religions should be respected and that none should be elevated above the others. He followed the principle even in his own capital, Harhorin (Ratchnevsky 1997, p 197).

The historical accounts and historians strongly suggest that Genghis Khan codified and sometimes introduced the four pillars of democracy to Mongolian society by 1206. The next step in my research was to find whether or not there is correspondence between today's citizens' ideas on democracy and then whether or not today's citizens believe that Genghis Khan's governance is related to their current political culture.

Modern Mongolian Political Culture

In the summer of 1998, thirteen Mongolians and I conducted research on the political culture of Mongolian citizens.⁶ seven of the researchers worked in Ulaanbaatar, the capital city of Mongolia. Six others interviewed people in Hove, a town of 27,000 that had been the economic and political center of western Mongolia in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Ulaanbaatar is a sophisticated city, the majority of whose inhabitants are Halh Mongols practicing Lamaism, Shamanism, or both. Halh Mongols form the vast majority of Mongolians. Hovd, on the other hand, is composed mostly of Oirad Mongols or Kazakhs (sometimes called Mongol Turks); the latter form 4.3 percent of the population (National Statistics Office 2001, p 50).

The researchers interviewed citizens of voting age in the two urban centers and surrounding countryside. For the first protocol,⁷ we interviewed people who fit the subcategories of the following demographic categories: gender (male/ female), age (18-26, 27-39, 40-54/59, 55/60 and above⁸), education level (less than a high school diploma, high school/vocational school diploma, technical school/ college degree, university degree and above), occupation (including herders, government workers, business people, skilled workers, professionals, pensioners, and students); ethnic identity (Halh, Kazakh, Oirad, Buryat), religious affiliation (Buddhist, no religion, Muslim, Shamanist, Christian), and political preference (including the party voted for in recent democratic elections: 1992, 1996, 1997).

Because we wanted to obtain data concerning respondents' cultural knowledge, we used the methodology of cognitive anthropology, which allows for quota sampling (Sabloff 1996, pp 123-27). We found at least 20 respondents in each demographic subcategory, as required in cognitive guidelines (Borgatti 1996). We administered the first set of questions to 867 respondents, 402 in Hovd and the surrounding countryside and 465 in and around Ulaanbaatar. Only 855 were usable, that is, the demographic profiles matched the responses.

⁶ *The research was sponsored by the National Science Foundation, Grant SBR-9806345. The Co-Director was Dr. G. Nyamdavaa, then Rector of National University of Mongolia-Hovd, and coordinated by Ms. Magsarj a Tsetseglen of Ulaanbaatar.*

⁷ *I proposed all protocols and the researchers in Ulaanbaatar and Hovd modified them to make them acceptable to respondents in the Mongolian language.*

⁸ *As there were no official guidelines for selecting the age groups, I separated youths (18-19) who had experienced all of their education during the non-Communist years (1990-1998) from youths who had some education under the Communist regime (20-26), young adults of working age (some were unemployed or still students) who might be raising young families (27-39), adults in their middle years who were of working age (40-55), and adults of retirement age although many of them were still working. In Mongolia, the retirement age is 54 for women and 55 for men. Thus the women enter this category at 54.*

As the demographic composition of our sample closely matched the demographic composition of the nation at large, our findings may be generalizable to the larger Mongolian voting-age citizenry.

In order to learn our respondents' perception of democracy, we asked them to list all the characteristics they could think of that make a country a democracy. The 855 respondents wrote 2,830 entries, which Ms. Munhtuya Altangerel (a native Mongolian and University of Pennsylvania B.A.) and I combined into 119 categories, or "items." Items mentioned by 10 percent or more respondents are listed. We analyzed the data using ANTHROPAC software (*ibid*), and with the help of John Gate wood (personal communication and Gate wood 1999).

Table 1 shows that our respondents' most important (most frequently mentioned) characteristic of democracy is personal freedom, which includes freedom of speech, religion, and movement (freedom to live anywhere within the country or to travel abroad); economic freedom (freedom to choose one's occupation and to strike); the freedom to hold demonstrations; and pluralism.

Table 1. Respondents' Characteristics of a Democratic Country In a democratic country,

The prominence of personal freedom suggests that this pillar of liberal democracy is a vital part of Mongolian political culture. The fact that idiosyncratic forms of personal freedom (different from what Americans might name, for instance) appear on the list suggests that the concept has been internalized, i.e., it is not just an abstraction.

Representative government here linked with participatory government, which is perhaps the most critical component of liberal democracy (Diamond 1996), is the second most frequently mentioned item. The majority of mentions (254 out of 274) are for 'multi-party elections.' The second largest category under this item is 'government of and by the people,' which was mentioned 163 times. This is distinct from 'government for the people, which received only 22 mentions, too few to fit on this table.

Because human rights are mentioned so frequently, they stand alone as the third item on the list. This item includes the general heading of 'human rights' as well as specific mentions of the right to life, health, education, employment, and political participation. Most of these are found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1992 Mongolian Constitution.

The fourth item is free market economy, which includes open competition and 'privatization of all kinds of property.' This item signals that Mongolians have made the transition from a political culture of 'Communist democracy' to liberal democracy. A people cannot associate democracy with capitalism or political rights and still believe in the Leninist concept of economic democracy.⁹

Mongolian respondents express the importance of law in the fifth item. Under this general heading are respondents' desire for 'rule of law' and 'equality under the law' - two pillars of democracy (ibid., Myers 1996, 1998). Other things mentioned by respondents in this category are respect for just laws and fear of lawlessness.

The sixth item is '*glasnost*,' or an open, stable and reliable government that is not corrupt. This was a true concern in the summer of 1998, a time of turmoil when the Democratic Coalition government was forming yet another cabinet. The seventh item is 'freedom of the media.' Mongolians recognize that the media must be free from government control and free to criticize government if a nation is to remain democratic.

Our respondents listed a 'just, humane, and democratic society' as the eighth most important characteristic of a democratic nation. Perhaps this senti-

⁹ Lenin (1917) defines democracy as economic equality and the abolition of classes. True equality means that even when people are different (produce at different rates and have different needs), they receive what they need from the bounty of the state.

ment was stimulated by the years of 'purges' (sometimes exile but usually death) during the Communist years; perhaps it referred to the current concern for kindness and honesty among citizens. It was probably coupled with the following item, which links democracy to lawlessness and callousness.

The final item is 'democracy is a better way to live.' By this Mongolians mean that it is better to live in an independent, democratic country where people can trust the government, enjoy peace, and feel good about their nation. Having tried feudalism under the Manchu Dynasty and socialism under a Communist regime, our respondents had some experience with other types of government.

Table 1 gives strong indication that our respondents had adopted the Western definition of liberal democracy within eight years of gaining freedom from Soviet control. The key indicators are the high support of personal freedoms, the idea that government is run by the people rather than an elite bureaucracy, and the idea of political rather than economic equality. In fact, our respondents advocate economic inequality, which naturally results from open competition and privatization.

We decided to determine whether or not there is statistically significant variation on people's concept of democracy in any of the categories as the data were collected by region (Hovd and Ulaanbaatar) and ten demographic categories. We¹⁰ selected five critical characteristics of a democratic country and performed chi-square analysis on each demographic category. The first three items (personal freedoms, freedom of speech, and government of/by the people) are indicative of liberal democracy as described above. The fourth and fifth items mark an exit from the Communist concept of an economic democracy and entrance into the Western concept of a political democracy (see footnote 9). The final column includes all the people in a demographic subcategory who marked at least two of the five items. In the table, the starred items exhibit significant statistical difference among the subcategories at the .05 level.

Having selected the key items from table 1, we administered the chi square test on ten demographic categories. Those categories with statistically significant variability suggest that (a) favors other than chance are responsible for the differences among the subcategories, and (b) there is lack of agreement - true difference - among subcategories.

The results may be seen in Table 2. The items in bold and followed by a star in the row giving the chi square results show significant statistical difference at the .05 level.

¹⁰ *The methodology was suggested and actual statistical analysis performed by Dr. Steven Marcus, epidemiologist of the School of Social Work, University of Pennsylvania.*

Table 2. Demographic Differences: Respondents' Ideas on Democracy

Demographic Categories	N	Personal Freedoms	Freedom of Speech	Government of/by the People	Free Market Economy	Privatization	Included at least 2
Region		P=.0001*	.0001*	<.0001*	<.0001*	<.0001*	<.0001*
Hovd	402	25.37%	15.17%	7.21%	7.96%	3.23%	11.69%
Ulaanbaatar	453	37.53	26.71	18.98	38.41	12.58	38.85
Education		P=.0014*	<.0001*	<.0001*	<.0001*	.0032*	<.0001*
Low	217	22.58	10.14	5.53	14.75	4.61	11.98
Medium	328	32.62	18.60	10.37	23.17	6.71	23.78
High	310	37.42	31.94	22.26	31.61	12.26	38.39
Nationality		P=.0298*	.0015*	.0015*	<.0001*	.0003*	<.0001*
Khalkha	519	34.49	24.08	16.57	32.56	11.18	32.76
Mongol Turk	63	19.05	4.76	3.17	7.94	1.59	6.35
Other	273	29.67	19.78	9.89	11.72	4.03	17.95
Religious Identity		P=.2021	.0035*	.1083	.0002*	.0176*	.0002*
Buddhist	398	33.67	24.12	12.31	25.13	10.80	29.15
Muslim	48	20.83	6.25	4.17	6.25	0.00	6.25
Christian	30	40.00	36.67	20.00	50.00	3.33	46.67
Other(none, /shaman)	376	30.32	19.15	15.16	23.14	6.65	23.67
Residence		.0002*	.0075*	.0005*	.0035*	.8785	.0003*
City	726	34.30	22.87	15.15	25.90	8.13	28.37
Countryside	129	17.83	12.40	3.88	13.95	8.53	13.18
Political Preference		P=.0045*	.0202*	.9505	.2084	.0375*	.0073*
Socialism	124	20.16	12.90	12.90	18.55	3.23	15.32
Democracy	679	32.99	22.09	13.11	23.71	8.69	26.66
Age		P=.5984	.6078	.5009	.0146*	.0509*	.0629
17-26	272	34.19	23.90	13.24	30.51	6.25	30.88
27-39	267	30.71	20.97	11.24	20.97	6.37	21.35
40-54/59	209	32.54	19.14	15.79	23.44	12.44	27.75
55+/60+	106	27.36	19.81	15.09	16.98	9.43	22.64
Economic Preference		P=.0265*	.0246*	.8226	.2070	.7745	.0657
Centrally planned	54	22.22	7.41	11.11	18.52	5.56	12.96
Free market	314	36.94	20.70	13.06	21.34	8.28	28.03
Both	481	29.52	23.28	13.93	25.99	8.32	26.20
Type of Democracy		P=.2598	.4960	.3853	.5990	.6624	.7368
Parliamentary	306	34.31	22.55	14.71	23.20	8.82	26.80
Presidential	540	30.56	20.56	12.59	24.81	7.96	25.74
Gender		P=.4246	.1039	.3018	.4438	.2541	.4416
Male	445	33.03	19.10	14.61	25.17	9.21	27.19
Female	410	30.49	23.66	12.20	22.93	7.07	24.88

N.B. Percentages are the percent of respondents per subcategory who include the item on their free list. In this table, 'individual freedoms' does not include 'freedom of speech,' which is presented in the next column.

The category exhibiting the greatest statistical variability (that is, the difference between subcategories for all six columns is significant) is 'Region.' Clearly the people of Hovd and Ulaanbaatar think differently about democracy. This is not surprising as we know that people 'inside the Beltway' of Washington DC and outside the Beltway think differently about politics. The populations of the regions are different in occupation, ethnicity, religion, and education levels.

The other two categories showing statistically significant differences for all six items are 'Educational Level' and 'Nationality.' As the project's database is just at the beginning stage of analysis, we cannot offer possible explanation of why these three categories are the only demographic categories to show significant differentiation over the range of items. But the current data suggest that nationality has some bearing on - or at least some correlation with - people's ideas on democracy, which is relevant to this paper.

Is it significant that 'Religious Identity,' which correlates so strongly with nationality for the Kazakhs (most of whom are Muslim) does not register the same degree of difference among items as nationality? Two items do not show significant difference at all. They are 'Personal Freedoms' and 'Government of/by the People.' Yet 'Personal Freedoms' shows significant difference in six of the ten demographic categories. 'Government of/by the People' shows difference in four categories (education, nationality, residence, and region).

Some demographic categories that my Mongolian friends and colleagues predicted great difference in ('Age' and 'Political Preference,' for example) proved to be insignificant. However, they were right when they predicted that 'Gender' would be insignificant.

Genghis Khan as Unifying Force

Curious about people's ideas on the possible connection between Genghis Khan and modern political culture, we asked a smaller number of Mongolian citizens (336) in Hovd and Ulaanbaatar what they thought of Genghis Khan. The first question was: 'Do you agree that in some sense there were democratic principles practiced in the time of Genghis Khan?' Two hundred and eight (61.9 percent) said yes; 63 (18.8 percent) said no; and 65 (19.3 percent) replied that they do not know.

When we performed the chi square test on the data according to nationalities, we found that the difference among the groups was not statistically significant (see Table 3).

Table 3. *Do you agree that there were some democratic norms or values in Genghis Khan's time?*

Nationality	N	Yes	No	Don't know
Mongol Turks	33	16	5	12
%		48.5	15.2	36.3
Oirad/Western Mongols	73	40	17	16
%		54.8	23.3	21.9
Halh	56	29	13	14
%		51.8	23.2	25.0
Total	162 ¹¹	85	35	42
%	100	52.5	21.6	25.9
P=0.05855				

We then asked a subset of the 336 respondents, ‘What democratic principles could be borrowed from Genghis Khan’s time for use today?’ This time 195 respondents from Hovd and Ulaanbaatar answered the question. Their answers were analyzed as free lists using ANTHROPAC (Borgatti 1996). Ms. Altangerel and I grouped the 483 different terms mentioned into 164 items. The frequency chart built from this database is found in Table 4.

¹¹ We had matching demographic data and questions for 162 of the 195 respondents to this question.

Table 4. *Mongolians' Perception of Genghis Khan's Democratic Principles Under Genghis Khan's rule,*

1. Rule of law prevailed; the laws/legal system were just, fair, and strict.	91 mentions	47% of respondents
2. All were equal before the law.	72	37%
3. Leadership was strong, wise, and caring.	66	34%
4. People revered, respected, and obeyed the government and its laws.	52	27%
5. The principle of participatory democracy resided in the Wise Men's Council and Great Assembly.	43	22%
6. Personal freedoms (speech, religion), pluralism, and human rights were honored.	40	21%
7. The state was strong in reputation, responsibility, power, and influence.	23	12%
8. There the different peoples were united into one independent nation.	21	11%
....		
13. The free market principle controlled the economy.	5	3%

Participatory democracy is seen in item 5; the two legal requirements for liberal democracy - rule of law and equality under the law - appear in items 1 and 2 respectively; and personal freedoms is represented in item 6. Free market economy, which signals the acceptance of the Western definition of democracy in Table 1, is mentioned as a characteristic of Genghis Khan's government (see item 13). And national sovereignty, one of the preconditions for democracy, is also listed (item 8).

Table 4 includes additional characteristics admired in Genghis Khan's government. These are well organized and strong government that exhibited strong responsibility toward the people and therefore earned the people respect (items 4 and 7).

To determine whether or not the statistically significant demographic categories for citizens' concepts of democracy were also significant for their ideas on Genghis Khan, we applied the chi square test to six key items from Table 4, creating Table 5.

Table 5. Genghis Khan's democratic principles recognized by Mongolians today

Demographic Categories	N	Particip. Govt	Rule of Law	Equality and the Law	Personal Freedom	Free Market
Region		.5768	.0174*	.0814	.4473	.4667
Hovd	71	22.54	38.03	26.76	14.08	2.82
Ulaanbaatar	120	19.17	55.83	39.17	18.33	5.00
Nationality		.5083	.0661	.0572	.2140	.7500
Halh	130	19.23	51.54	39.23	19.23	4.62
Kazakh	12	33.33	16.67	41.67	25.00	0.00
Other (Oirad/Burvat)	45	20.00	51.11	20.00	8.89	4.44
Religious Identity		.6183	.2193	.7231	.5188	.7225
Buddhist	97	21.65	53.61	34.02	20.62	3.09
Muslim	7	28.57	14.29	42.86	14.29	0.00
Christian	2	50.00	50.00	0	0	0.00
Other (none/shaman)	84	17.86	46.43	35.71	13.10	5.95
Gender		.8447	.0172*	.9974	.8663	.7741
Male	110	20.19	41.82	34.55	16.36	4.55
Female	81	19.75	59.26	34.57	17.28	3.70
Age		.5621	.1579	.1822	.0459*	.6516
17-26	58	20.69	58.62	29.31	20.69	1.72
27-39	50	20.00	48.00	46.00	26.00	6.00
40-54/59	51	25.49	37.25	27.45	9.80	3.92
55-Kf), 60+(m.)	32	12.50	53.13	37.50	6.25	6.25
Education		.0934	.2978	.0631	.2688	.2719
Low	37	18.92	37.84	32.43	10.81	6.78
Medium	59	11.86	50.85	23.73	13.56	0.00
High	95	26.32	52.63	42.11	21.05	4.21

N.B. Percentages are the percent of respondents per subcategory who included the item on their list.

Table 5 shows that the differences within demographic categories are not statistically significant at the .05 level. The few exceptions are region and gender

for 'Rule of Law' and age for 'Personal Freedom, Nationality and Religious Identity show no significant variation as they did when people defined democracy (see Table 2). Thus it appears that even the different nationalities share knowledge of the democratic principles embedded in Genghis Khan's story. And although Kazakhs define democracy differently from other citizens, they share an understanding that Genghis Khan contributed to democratic principles for the present government. Thus Genghis Khan appears to pull together citizens of different backgrounds. Conclusion

What are we to conclude about the political perceptions of different nationalities from these preliminary findings? Clearly the Kazakhs and Oirads/Buryats think differently about democracy from the Halhs. As the majority of respondents in the latter nationality are western (Hovd) Oirads, we can reduce the category to Oirads. Do the Kazakhs and Oirads feel differently from the Halh because they live in different regions, or is the difference between regions explained by the different representations of ethnic groups (Oirad v. Halh) and nationalities (Kazakh v. Halh and Oirad)? This database cannot answer this very interesting question. However, the data can show the power of the Genghis Khan legend. For the nationalities - Kazakhs, Oirads, and Halhs - have all 'bought in' to the Genghis Khan legend: They agree to roughly the same extent that he codified the basic tenets of democratic society that are in practice today: some rudimentary form of participatory government, rule of law, equality under the law, and personal freedoms including religious tolerance (Table 4). And they agree that he brought Mongolians (not just Mongols) independent nation status along with a well-organized, wise, and caring government.

If we return to the roots of the study of nationalism, we will remember that Benedict Anderson (1991 pp 5-7) defined a nation as an "imagined community." "Imagined" because (a) the members do not have face-to-face relations with all other members yet they believe that they share "communion," (b) they imagine the nation has finite territorial borders, (c) they consider it to be sovereign, and (d) they feel a "comradeship" - a "fraternity" - among citizens even if there are firm class boundaries.

The Mongolian State is comprised of thirty different nationalities and ethnic groups. According to the 2000 census (National Statistics Office 2001, pp 130-131), 81.5 percent of the total population is Halh while 4.3 percent are Kazakh. In the early 1990s, soon after the fall of the Soviet Union, about 40,000 Kazakhs - citizens of Mongolia but members of the nationality that dominates nearby Kazakhstan - migrated to Kazakhstan. After a few months, most returned to Mongolia. Clearly they feel more at home in Mongolia than in Kazakhstan.

What makes them stay in Mongolia? What unites them with the Mongol people? Citizenship and basic lifestyle, for one thing. But our database suggests that they are also part of Anderson's imagined Mongolian community because they all know the story of Genghis Khan. And they 'see' the principles of democratic society embedded in his story. They see him as more than the founder of an independent nation; rather, they know that he planted the seeds of liberal democracy, which have finally flowered in the post-Soviet era. Genghis Khan may have been a prince of the Borjigin tribe of Mongols, but his legend belongs to all Mongolian citizens.

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