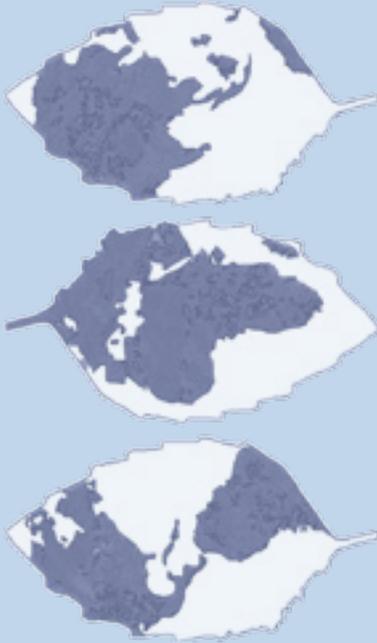


The Vanishing Power Plant: Infrastructure and Ignorance in Peri-urban Ulaanbaatar

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In the peri-urban district of Ulaistai situated in the north-eastern corner of Mongolia's capital Ulaanbaatar, the livelihood of dozens of households have over the last five or so years been seriously effected affected by the political and economic reverberations from a large infrastructure project that is never going to be built. Known as "Power Plant # 5", the 300 MW thermal power plant was tendered to a Chinese construction firm in 2008 by the city municipality and the Ministry of Mines and Energy as part of a national strategy to beef up Mongolia's energy production light of the fast growing capital city and the rapidly increasing foreign investments in Mongolia's resource-extraction sector. Taking its departure in the tragicomical case of a poverty-stricken woman who continues to be employed as a care-taker for a mysterious organization allegedly in charge of Power PLant # 5, this paper explores the "productive poetics of ignorance" by which lacking knowledge about this and other infrastructural projects in contemporary Mongolia feed into dispossessed peoples' dreams about and plans for the future.

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