

## Cost of Urbanization

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### Abstract

*We-human being exercise different rights and duties depending on our ages, not to mention all our status and experience. Likewise some rights cannot be fully applicable to certain countries at certain time due to their limited economical, physical and/or other capacities. Based on analyses of statistical yearbooks and survey reports on internal migration produced in the 2000s in Mongolia, the paper investigates consequences of the rural-urban migration and explains why migration should be controlled internally. Main argument is that any actions of a state, society or individual should be taken within the Law with the consideration of Human Rights rather than they should be ruled by the Rights and Freedoms.*

**Keywords:** Mongolia, internal migration, urbanization, freedom, human rights

### Introduction

Mongolia has a territory of 1.564 thousand square kilometers and extends for 2392 kilometers from west to east, and 1259 kilometers from north to south. The country has five geographical regions: west, *khangai*, central, east, and Ulaanbaatar. Administratively, Mongolia comprises of 21 *aimags*<sup>28</sup> and the capital city, Ulaanbaatar. Aimags are divided into 330 *soums*<sup>29</sup> and Ulaanbaatar is divided into 9 districts. Urban population in Mongolia is defined as population residing in Ulaanbaatar, *aimag* centers and towns. In 2016 urban population in the country was estimated at 68 percent of total 3.1 million people.

The citizens of Mongolia have gained freedoms and rights with democratic changes which took place in the 1990s, particularly, they have enjoyed civil and political rights, which had been extremely limited under the communist regime. A new Constitution, which came into force in January 1992 and the National Human Rights Action Program of Mongolia (2003) stipulate human rights and freedoms, including the right to freedom of movement, to travel or reside abroad, and to return to your home

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28 Aimag- largest rural administrative unit

29 Soum- secondary rural administrative unit

country. At the same time the fees and taxes required under current regulations of citizens moving to other *aimags, soums*, and the capital city for temporary or permanent residence was abolished (6: pp.97-98). The Government undertook these actions to demonstrate how Mongolia has progressively moved towards a democratic country, however, it poorly analyzed what the future would bring if each person pursues his/her own best interest. The paper questions whether the migration verses freedom or not based on desk studies and analyses of statistical yearbooks, survey reports on internal migration and other relevant documents produced from 2000 onwards in Mongolia.

## Findings

Migration is defined as any permanent change in residence. Migrants in Mongolia are persons who move from one place to another to live for six and more months. According to the latest statistics, one tenth of the total population in Mongolia has migrated and eight out every ten migrants have moved to the capital city and the central region.

According to the 1956 census, Ulaanbaatar's population estimated at only 14 percent of the total population of the country and it increased by over 8 percent in 1969 and reached 22.3 percent. However, the number of Ulaanbaatar's citizens had little change in the following 12 years and its fraction in the total population was 25.8 percent in 1981 (13: p.78). Stable Ulaanbaatar's population of this period despite intensive economic development of the 1970s can be explained by the founding of a new industrial city-Erdenet in 1976 in addition to the second largest city-Darkhan (established in 1962), regulations of internal migration by the Government and centrally planned rural and regional developments.

With democratic changes of the 1990s fees and taxes required under the current regulations of citizens moving to other *aimags, soums*, and the capital city for temporary or permanent residence was abolished. Rural population nevertheless, who presumably had not much realized a new for them social and economic system, did not extensively change their permanent residences up to the end of the 1990s. Internal migration in Mongolia had intensified since the second half of the 1990s, especially after 1998 or when herders suffered harsh winters. Net migration rates of

Ulaanbaatar show sharp increase in the number of immigrants in the period of 2000-2010.

Net migration rate (NMR), Ulaanbaatar, 1990-2014

Year	NMR
1990	5.38
1995	12.56
2000	24.99
2005	29.32
2010	22.18
2014	16.54

Sources: <http://www.ubstat.mn/statistics>

Report on Internal Migration and Settlements of the National Statistical Office of Mongolia based on the 2010 census demonstrate most internal migration is rural to urban and occurs in steps. Rural migrants usually move to *aimag* centers first, then to the central region and finally head for the capital city. Nowadays 22.8 percent of the urban population lives in *aimag* centers and towns, 4.5 percent of the total urban population lives in Erdenet and 4.2 percent - in Darkhan, and 68.5 percent lives in in the capital city of Ulaanbaatar.

In 2016 1.4 million out of total 3.1 million (45 percent) population lives in Ulaanbaatar only. In other words, almost a half of the citizens currently live in Ulaanbaatar, whose territory consists of only 0.3 percent of the vast territory of the country. Population density in the capital city reaches 306 people per 1 square kilometer, which is 150 times more than the national average (15: p14).

According to findings of migration surveys done in the last decade (3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10 and 11), major reasons for moving for households were to find job, to give children better education, and to get closer to services and information. Unlike rural-to-urban migrants in other countries Mongolian internal migrants move to a city with their *gers*, the collapsible and stable felt tent, and settle in vacated places at the outskirts of the city since the hitherto non-existing land fee is not strongly endorsed nationwide. Simple!

However, migrant families face problems of separation, poverty, discrimination, and limited access to services in cities. Half of migrants are

not registered, and unemployment rate is much higher among migrants than permanent rural residents. The majority of them reside in *ger* areas, where they use fuel for their heating and sometimes for cooking. Urban residents have access to all sorts of fuel, but due to shortage of money the poor burn any available things including discarded tires. Paradoxically, jobless people, the disabled and those with many young children use more fuel in the winter time because they are limited to their homes all day. As a result, according to the findings of Environmental Research Center, air pollution is two to three times in outskirts districts than in other areas. As a whole, air pollution of Ulaanbaatar is five times more than the accepted norm and it has led to a two-fold increase of respiratory diseases among its citizens between 2000-2002 and 2002-2004 or in peak migration years. To make matters worse, voluntary settlement of migrants almost in any outskirts area of the city without registration disables provision of emergency medical service to them. Thirty per cent of migrant families feel that their life improved a little, but a greater number report it worsened.

The second main reason why people move to cities is providing better education to their children. Statistics of the last ten years show that 30% of migrants coming to Ulaanbaatar are school-aged children. However, city schools had no capacity to accommodate that many children. As a result of additional burden, two dozen urban schools have to organize the classes in three shifts with up to 60 pupils. School-aged migrant children more than three times are likely to be out of school than children of long-term residents. According to the 2005 survey report "Children on the Move", 33.3 percent of migrant children have dropped out of their schools mainly due to registration problems, discrimination at school, and the poor economic situation of their family. This situation not only contradicts expectations of some migrants, who came to the city to get their children educated, but also negatively affects the quality of education in both areas of origin and destination. Due to overload at urban schools, teachers are encouraged to provide additional paid courses to their pupils and it develops 'shadow education system' particularly in Ulaanbaatar (10, 11)

If rural schools have in average 36 pupils per class, the rural ones have less than 20 children per class. As the normative costs per child began to be differentiated, the amount of educational expenses per capita of some remote and densely populated *aimags* began to be set below the national average. Freedom of movement matched with insufficient local budget has

led to out-flow of professionals much needed in local development. Currently, the lack of professional teachers has become a problem in rural schools. High quality education could not be given to children and youth without good teachers, sound policies and sufficient resources in the educational sector.

According to the latest survey on migration (4: pp. 16-17), from 17 to 31 percent of respondents in rural areas have intentions to migrate in the future, and over half of them are planning to live in the capital city. It is interesting to note young females move to Ulaanbaatar to study, while young males goes to the city for earnings (3, 11). Work and children's future have been reported as main reasons.

Migration is not a trip. Even for a short trip we tend to have a map or guide in order to save our time and nerves, and hire a guide to make a trip pleasant. After whatever trip- a short or a long one we come back where we live. But migration is defined as any permanent change in residence. It covers many aspects of human life: separation, un/employment, settlement, adaptation, education and in/security etc. Consequently, a physical map is not sufficient for a migrant. Therefore, the Government should have a role of a guide for migration in order to make their citizens' life sensible. Policy-makers and scholars in Mongolia have recommended many solutions as regulations of internal migration such as to relocate the capital city, to limit the entry, to redirect the flow, to prevent it and so forth.

The best way to regulate migration in Mongolia, which has vast territory with a small population, is to develop regional centres with advanced infrastructure and social services. At the same time Ulaanbaatar can be expanded by building new districts in the extensive open space areas for instance, between Ulaanbaatar and its satellite district (110 km. away from the city) in the east. Otherwise, a certain limit to in-migration should be sanctioned depending on the capacity of the recipient. As early as in 1941 Franklin D. Roosevelt, the President of the United States remarked, "We have to have a clear realization of the fact that true individual freedom cannot exist without economic security and independence" (9: p.243).

We-human being exercise different rights and duties depending on our ages, not to mention other factors. For instance, despite the earlier age of puberty of their population, most societies do not permit the marriage of people under the age of 18, considering their full maturity and capacity to act. Likewise some rights can not be fully applicable to certain countries at

certain time due to their limited economical, physical and/or other capacities. In fact, the term of Rule of Law is commonly heard yet not Rule of Human Rights. It could be interpreted that any actions of state, society or individuals should be taken within the Law with the consideration of Human Rights rather than they should be ruled by the Rights and Freedoms. Otherwise, freedom in a commons without security, to borrow Garrett Hardin's statement (1: p.1244), might bring ruin to all. Indeed, would rights to freedom of movement be universal, all countries would have not required visas.

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