

The Ties That Bind:

Urban Migration, Family Networks, and

Cultural Change in Modern Mongolia

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Table of Contents

<u>Acknowledgments</u>	-----	1
<u>I. Introduction</u>		
1.1 Abstract	-----	2
1.2 Bias and Limitations	-----	3
<u>II. Background</u>		
2.1 Definitions	-----	4
2.2 History	-----	5
2.3 Causes of Migration	-----	8
2.4 Migration Issues	-----	9
2.5 Perceptions of Migrants	-----	13
2.6 Aid	-----	14
<u>III. Study</u>		
3.1 Methodology	-----	17
3.2 Demographics	-----	19
3.3 Research Findings	-----	23
3.4 Analysis and Conclusions	-----	31
<u>Bibliography</u>	-----	34
<u>Appendix: Informed Consent and Prepared Questions</u>	-----	36

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I. Introduction

1.1 Abstract: Migrants represent the future of Mongolia. They are those members of Mongolian society who pursue, and often achieve, a better life by choosing to uproot themselves and their families to move to the capital city of Ulaanbaatar. Along the way they face many obstacles, and are in turn blamed for many of the problems that plague the city. However, they do not face these obstacles on their own. Migrants succeed with help, be it from society, friends, or family. Family in particular plays an important role in the lives of Mongolian migrants, creating important, nationwide networks which can support individual members. Migrants use these networks to adjust to their new surroundings.

In order to examine how this process of cultural change occurs, nineteen interviews with migrants aged 18 and over were collected over a two week period. These migrants were questioned on issues of their family relationships and the process of adjusting to city life. The informants confirmed that reuniting with family is often an important reason behind the decision to migrate, and that family can also figure into this decision in other ways. Once the migrant has settled in, their relationships with their family can change drastically, though. Some retain their strongest ties with the countryside, keeping in regular contact with their relatives there in lieu of other, more city-oriented relationships. Others seem to rely on few people outside of their immediate household. Still others have built up new networks of family members or friends in the city itself. These networks

grow, change, and move with time. As more family members come to the city, the earlier migrants themselves will take on the role of teachers and helpers.

These processes often have a direct effect on a migrant's success in their new home. Those who manage to expand their networks more completely into the city generally face fewer problems than those whose networks remain small or centered in the countryside. However, regardless of location, family is still of primary importance to most migrants.

1.2 Bias and Limitations: This research suffered from several limitations in time and scope. Having only two and half weeks in which to set up interviews, this study could have been improved with a wider range of participants. In addition the selection of participants was not as scientific as it could have been. The nature of the ger districts in Ulaanbaatar makes interviewing its inhabitants without a contact to introduce you first unwise, so random sampling was not an option. The interviews yielded a wide variety of results, suggesting a diverse sample, but they were all selected through only three contacts. It is possible the experiences of migrants in general could be different than this potentially skewed sample.

In addition to sampling bias, researcher bias may have also played a role in skewing some results. In general, ignorance about traditional Mongolian family structure may have prevented me from asking certain questions about how that structure has changed in response to migration.

II. Background

2.1 Definitions: *Migration* itself is the voluntary movement of people from one administrative unit to another (Byambatseren 2005: 29). The reasons for their voluntary decisions are varied and numerous.

A *migrant* is someone who has voluntarily decided to take part in migration. According to a law adopted in 2002, one is considered a permanent migrant after staying in their new residence for more than 180 days (Byambatseren 2005: 30).

Urbanization or “classical migration” is the migration of a significant portion of the population to urban centers from rural homelands. It is a process that has intensified the world over in response to globalization (Lambaa 2005: 19).

Push and pull factors may be defined as the expenses and potential benefits migrants weigh when decided whether or not to move (Byambatseren 2005: 29). People may be drawn to a place because of employment opportunities, or leave one because of unemployment. Some young people may prefer to be in a city with more people their age, and elders may seek better medical care. The rush of city life, responsibility for providing for one’s own, thirst for education, concern for a child’s future, and even a desire to reunite with family and friends are all examples of cultural pressures that can cause one to leave their homeland and travel, often sight-unseen, to a new place.

Infrastructure defines broadly the services necessary for life in a modern state, including electricity, living space, roadways, sewage systems, water supply, health care, and welfare.

Ger districts are those underdeveloped areas on the outskirts of Ulaanbaatar where migrants usually end up. They are sprawling areas which lack many basic services, and are characterized by many families living in gers, the traditional Mongolian felt tent.

2.2 History: Mongolia is a nation in a state of flux. Old traditions, repressed during decades of communist rule, are reemerging even as global forces push the country into the free market, new territory for Mongolians. Mongolia has many possible paths to take, and the rapidly changing makeup of its society ensures new opportunities are always emerging. The engine that has driven this change is internal migration, particularly as it relates to the process of urbanization.

In a traditionally nomadic nation, one would think that the ability to migrate unhindered would have long been enshrined in laws and customs. However, in Mongolia until very recently, this was not the case. After the socialist revolution following the country's independence in the 1920s, the government gradually introduced various systems of control over traditionally independent herders. Privately held livestock was nationalized, religious expression was forbidden, and new systems of administration were instated. Among these changes was a shift away from traditional kinship ties with extended

clan groups, towards more nuclear families and communities. As an example, today in Umnugovi aimag, only 31.3% of the population keeps records of extended family relationships, whereas before socialism such records were important for determining relationships and marriages (CPR 2008: 447-450). Clearly socialism was having many transformative effects on Mongolian culture.

By the 1950s, this included tight controls on where and when people could move. Registration of births, deaths, marriages, divorces, and adoptions became mandatory. By 1960, citizens had to follow similarly strict registration procedures in order to migrate (Byambatseren 2005: 31). A herder could only become a city dweller with approval from the central government, which made all economic and employment decisions. Movement to and the population of Ulaanbaatar was strictly controlled, and the city grew slowly but stably (National Statistical Office of Mongolia 2007, 20). All of this changed with the peaceful revolution of 1990.

When a new constitution was forged 1992 by a coalition government, it expressly rebuked these restrictions on travel (NSOM 2007, 20). In article sixteen of the 1992 constitution, it enumerates the rights of individual citizens. Paragraph eighteen reads:

The right to freedom of movement and residence within the country, to travel and reside abroad, and to return home to the country [shall not be infringed]. The right to travel and reside abroad may be limited exclusively by law for the purpose of ensuring the security of the country

and population and protecting public order. (Constitution of Mongolia 1992)

Though the right to international migration does have a caveat, internal migration was now inalienable. Lawmakers repeatedly tested this clause with policies such as a migration fee designed to directly discourage movement, but the country's Supreme Court has upheld it time and time again (NSOM 2007: 26). As of 2004, the Mongolian government adopted the "State Population Development Policy," which was the basis for a coherent policy regarding migration (Nyamdorj 2005: 37). The current policy does not seek to control or halt migration, but rather to indirectly discourage it by removing push factors. It does this through actions like trying to develop non-central aimags, reducing poverty and unemployment in people's homelands. Mongolians quickly took advantage of this new freedom.

Interestingly, the initial flow of migration was not toward the capital city as global urbanization trends would predict. Rather, people left the city in droves to pursue life as nomadic herders. These migrants were fleeing a city displaying "an excess of labour force" and moving toward a countryside where "livestock had been privatized and transferred free of charge to...herders and citizens" (Lambaa 2005, 20). This trend did not last long, however. Within a short time "severe natural and climactic conditions" forced the flow of people in the other direction, towards Ulaanbaatar. By the year 2000, 25.7% of Mongolia's population had emigrated in their lifetimes, and approximately three percent of the total population had emigrated in just the past year (Lambaa 2005, 20). In that

year of Mongolia's 360 522 emigrants, 268 988 settled in Ulaanbaatar. Migration has only sped up since this period. From 2000 to 2004, 109600 migrants came to the capital, and 68800 of those came just in 2004 (Baatarzorig 2005, 61-62). From 2005 until 2007, Ulaanbaatar grew and average of 3.7% per year (Bolormaa 2009, 39). Now the city is feeling the strain of such rapid growth.

2.3 Causes of Migration: Internal migration is a complex issue, with myriad causes and even more results. Economic, demographic, and cultural pressures all push and pull people from one location to another, acting on individuals' personal decisions. In short, "it is natural for people to migrate from a region that offers little opportunity to another that is more favourable" (Byambatseren 2005: 28). They are naturally drawn towards a place they perceive as positive and away from places that have little to offer them.

These "push and pull factors of migration" act on "individual, household, and societal" levels to create a varied and dynamic pattern of movement which one can approach from any number of angles (Byambatseren 2005: 28; NSOM 2007, 23). Social factors, such as unemployment, may arise and force a migrant's decision to leave home. Migrants may also be pushed by natural disasters or constraints such as drought, flood, hunger, and *zud*, a natural disaster which causes large numbers of livestock to die off. The city might also demographically "pull" people with services such as schools, hospitals, and more opportunities (Byambatseren 2005: 30). Ulaanbaatar is by far the largest population center in

the country. It is also the most densely populated, with 195 people per square kilometer as of 2005. As a result it also possesses a higher concentration of social and cultural services. Sixty-two percent of all major companies, 59.2 percent of all doctors, and 77.2 percent of all higher educational facilities reside in the nation's capital. The city thus becomes a cultural Mecca as a result of global forces "that structure the location of employment, educational, and other opportunities" and encourage rapid urbanization (NSOM 2007: 23). This process is so rapid that the city is beginning to feel a definite straining of its services.

2.4 Migration Issues: Regardless of individual reasons for coming to Ulaanbaatar, most migrants face the same problems upon their arrival. Migrants must overcome lack of services, lack of living space, lack of knowledge, and sometimes prejudice in order to thrive in their new homes. Some face these challenges alone, but more often than not they have help, be it from aid organizations, friends, or family.

The issues caused by migration have increased in number along with the migrants themselves. This is no coincidence. With rising urban population, schools, hospitals, and other social services have reached their capacities (Lambaa 2005, 20). As if that were not enough, migrants face additional problems as a result of Ulaanbaatar's urban sprawl. The physical layout of Ulaanbaatar city is not organized to allow easy access to migrant families (Bayarsaikhan 2005: 47; Baatarzorig 2005: 64-65). Being a migrant is not easy.

The goals migrants pursue, such as education for their children, are often frustrated by the sheer volume of new people coming to the city. Every year, up to ten thousand new children arrive in Ulaanbaatar. Classroom sizes in the city, which are supposed to accommodate 35 students, sometimes must incorporate as many as 60 children (Bayarsaikhan 2005: 48). This flood of people makes education more difficult on a number of levels. Crowded schools are forced to conduct classes in shifts, and education suffers (Bayarsaikhan 2005: 48; Baatarzorig 2005: 64). The city doesn't construct new schools quickly enough. New arrivals must travel an average of 4.1 kilometers to reach the nearest school (Bolormaa et. al 2009: 121). As a result, many children rarely attend classes. Though schooling in the capital is often fraught with difficulties, many still prefer it over schools in the countryside. The problems the children of migrants face are severe, but education is not the only area where migrants must overcome obstacles. They also encounter severe economic troubles.

In theory, increased urbanization in Mongolia should not be the cause of increased economic woes. More people should increase demand and development, in turn creating more jobs (Baatarzorig 2005: 66). Nonetheless, 34.5% of new migrants and 24% of migrants total are unemployed. There is a strongly dissonant trend where a large number of young people migrate to find work in a city characterized by high unemployment (Baatarzorig 2005: 62-64). The haphazard state of urban planning in Ulaanbaatar is to blame. Settlement in ger districts is chaotic and largely unsupervised, so basic, necessary services are

rarely extended to migrants. As a result, migrants are too focused on just getting by to improve their communities (Baatarzorig 2005: 55). At the same time many migrants are unable to receive welfare from the government due to marginal location and lack of registration (Bayarsaikhan 2005: 48). Unemployment and lack of support are dangerous phenomena leading to crime and a slow-down of development (Baatarzorig 2005: 65). Without higher employment infrastructure cannot improve, and the other issues that plague migrants, such as lack of adequate healthcare, cannot be resolved.

Access to healthcare is an obstacle that contributes greatly to the miserable conditions of the ger districts. A majority of migrants are considered to be at high risk for various health problems, but they on average live three kilometers away from the nearest doctor (Bayarsaikhan 2005, 47; Bolormaa et. al 2009: 121). For many this is an insurmountable barrier. In addition, overcrowded hospitals force migrants to wait an average of 65.4 minutes for emergency care (Bolormaa et. al 2009: 121). Migrants are frequently unable to get health insurance (Bayarsaikhan 2005, 48; Baatarzorig 2005: 64). In addition, the crowded conditions of ger districts cause numerous exacerbating environmental effects such as water and air pollution (Baatarzorig 2005: 65). Though this problem could be addressed with more and better hospitals, it is in fact the infrastructure of the ger districts themselves that is in sore need of improvement.

The conditions in the ger districts make life there especially difficult. According to the Zorig Foundation's Gansuren, paved roads are in short supply,

and do not reach even a fraction of ger district households (Personal Interview, 2 May 2009). The crux of the problem is that “ger areas are expanding at a speed with which urban planning and regulation measures are not able to keep up” (Baatarzorig 2005: 65). In 2005, around 58 percent of the households in Ulaanbaatar were in ger districts which lacked basic utilities. Housing was unavailable to over 58 thousand families, who lived in traditional gers (Baatarzorig 2005: 64). These numbers have only risen since then. Pollution is on the rise as a lack of a working sewage system for the city’s 120 thousand households contaminates the Tuul River. More than 50 percent of Ulaanbaatar’s sewage facilities operate at substandard levels. Scientists estimate that as a result nitrogen levels in nearby waterways are 3-4 times higher than they ought to be (Baatarzorig 2005: 65). According to the Zorig Foundation’s Gansuren, the everyday burdens of life in the ger districts are even more extensive. Electricity is available to some, but the system needs work. Without central heating, most migrant families burn coal, contributing to Ulaanbaatar’s air pollution problem. Water is available only from a few stations which are supplied daily with water trucks. Residents are responsible for carting the water home themselves, often a long distance (personal interview, 2 May 2009). The city does not possess adequate housing, even were most ger district residents able to afford it (Baatarzorig 2005: 67). Massive development and aid is necessary for many migrants to even begin to close the gap with those who live in the city center.

2.5 Perception of Migrants: There is no doubt that the rapid urbanization of Mongolia poses problems that the country is in a poor position to solve. However, the fact remains that migration itself is an indispensable process that carries as many positive benefits as it does negative (Lambaa 2005: 25). In theory, migrants contribute greatly to the development of their new homes (Baatarzorig 2005: 66). In the words of the head of the National Statistical Office, “Instead of considering migration as a challenge posing social problems and difficulties, we need to focus more on managing and regulating migration appropriately” (Byambatseren 2005: 34). Internationally, nations such as South Korea and Mexico have been able to guide migration in such a way that it creates employment opportunities, increases access to social services, and spurs urban development (Lambaa 2005: 25). However, since this has not been the case in Mongolia, many are eager to lay the blame on migrants and the poor.

The poor perception of migrants is present in many different levels of society. Former president Enkhbayar himself has said, “These migrants, most of them men, overburden the social, economic, Government and other services, and add to the number of poor people due to their low education” (Enkhbayar 2005: 11). The poorly-educated migrant is a widespread image in Mongolia today, but it is by no means the only accusation brought against migrants. Even many migrants accuse their peers of general laziness, blaming this flaw for the poverty and unemployment in their country. Neither of these perceptions are verified by looking at the statistical data on migration.

The migrants to Ulaanbaatar are, in general, some of the most educated and ambitious people in the country. There are a high percentage of migrants who move exclusively to take advantage of Ulaanbaatar's system of higher education. As a result, migrants as a group have a slightly higher level of education than the rest of the population (NSOM 2007, 22). In the recent migration study conducted jointly by the United Nations Population Fund, the National University of Mongolia, and the Ministry of Social Welfare and Labour, 42.6 percent of respondents stated education, either for themselves or their children, as a primary reason for their decision to migrate (Bolormaa et. al 2009: 115). Only 13.2 percent of the Ulaanbaatar migrants they interviewed reported having no education, and 52 percent had attended high school or higher education facilities (Bolormaa et. al 2009: 102). The characterization of migrants as uneducated or lazy could not be further from the truth.

2.6 Aid: There are official avenues through which migrants may be able to overcome the challenges they face. The most common and easiest of these is registration with the city. Registration is a process that is intended to keep track of the flows of migration within the country. Since the 1980s, there are three types of registration certificates one may obtain: a certificate for migration within an aimag or Ulaanbaatar, a certificate for migration into an aimag or Ulaanbaatar, and a certificate for migration out of an aimag or Ulaanbaatar (Byambatseren 2005: 31). Therefore, in order to migrate to the capital, one must, in theory, first

get a certificate to leave their home aimag, and one to gain residence in the city. The government and various organizations use information obtained from registration for purposes of research and policy formation which are vital in order to provide services to migrant populations (Byambatseren 2005). Registering in Ulaanbaatar allows migrants access to basic social services (Lambaa 2005: 23). Once a migrant registers, they can obtain health insurance and unemployment money. They enjoy full access to the courts. Pensions and other forms of welfare are made available to them. They may privatize their own plot of land, take loans from banks, and draw any number of benefits from the state (Gansuren 2008: 4). Unfortunately, getting migrants to register with the authorities is a daunting task.

Lack of registration causes many problems for new migrants. Quite simply “many people do not care about this registration and unless urgently needed do not register with the governor offices” (Nyamdorj 2005: 39). As a result, it is likely that in their first year in the city, migrants will make do without many necessary services just because of a lack of registration (Baatarzorig 2005: 63). Hospitals are unavailable, children can’t enter schools, and legitimate jobs are hard to come by until a family registers itself (Bolormaa et al. 2009: 128-129). To top it off, in the recent National University migration study, 36.9 percent of the respondents had no knowledge about the registration process, and 34.2 percent found out about it only after coming to the city (Bolormaa et al. 2009: 129). There are organizations which seek to educate migrants on this vital procedure. The Zorig Foundation supplies a free handbook detailing the benefits

of and procedures surrounding registration. Open Forum has also released a handbook about city life. It is unclear how much these efforts have helped.

However, the blame for the dearth of registration does not rest with the migrants alone. The government has only recently begun to take action to educate people on the importance of registration (Lambaa 2005: 23). Migrants themselves cite a sprawling and confusing bureaucracy as the primary reason for not being registered (NSOM 2007: 26). The centralized nature of this bureaucracy means that those on the edges of the city, often the newest arrivals, have to travel great distances in order to reap the benefits (Bayarsaikhan 2005: 48). There needs to be an overhaul of the system itself if the government wishes to provide for its citizens. Some suggest more punitive measures to encourage unregistered migrants to register (Nyamdorj 2005: 40). However, this would seem to add another burden to already suffering migrants. Some suggest improving communication between various city and countryside agencies, making the registration process almost automatic (Lambaa 2005: 23). This may be a better a solution, assuming it is coupled with education efforts aimed at helping migrants adjust to their new surroundings. It will not help much if a migrant is registered, but does not know where to find their nearest doctor.

III. Study

3.1 Methodology: This study was intended to serve as an examination of changing cultures and perceptions among migrants to the Mongolian capital of Ulaanbaatar. Dealing, as it did, with questions of point of view and personal experience rather than statistical and demographic trends, the researcher decided that in-depth interviews would be the best method for gathering information, instead of using broader survey procedures or exclusively secondary sources. In this way, respondents would be free to give full explanations of their responses to questions, and could volunteer more information of their own volition. Personal interaction with each respondent would help ensure that they understood and had a full explanation of the purpose and procedures of the study before they agreed to participate.

To this end, the researcher prepared interview questions in advance. One questionnaire of 27 main and 17 sub-questions was intended for those migrants who had arrived within the past ten years. For those respondents who were born in Ulaanbaatar, or who had migrated more than ten years ago, a separate questionnaire of 20 main and 10 sub-questions was prepared. The reasoning was that those who had lived in the city for their entire lives, or who had had many years in which to adjust urban life, would have fundamentally different perceptions and experiences than those to whom the city was still a strange world. In support of this decision, research suggests that newly arrived migrants live in vastly different conditions from those who have lived in the city for an extended

period (Baatarzorig 2005: 63). The different responses received from each group also seemed to support this decision.

In order to ensure that the participants in this study were able to give informed consent, the researcher also prepared an informed consent form. The form explained the goals and methods of the study in plain language. Participants were informed that participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and that they could end their participation at any time. They were informed that their anonymity would be maintained to the best of the researcher's ability, but if they had worries about confidentiality they were free to not participate. They were then invited to sign the form to show that they understood.

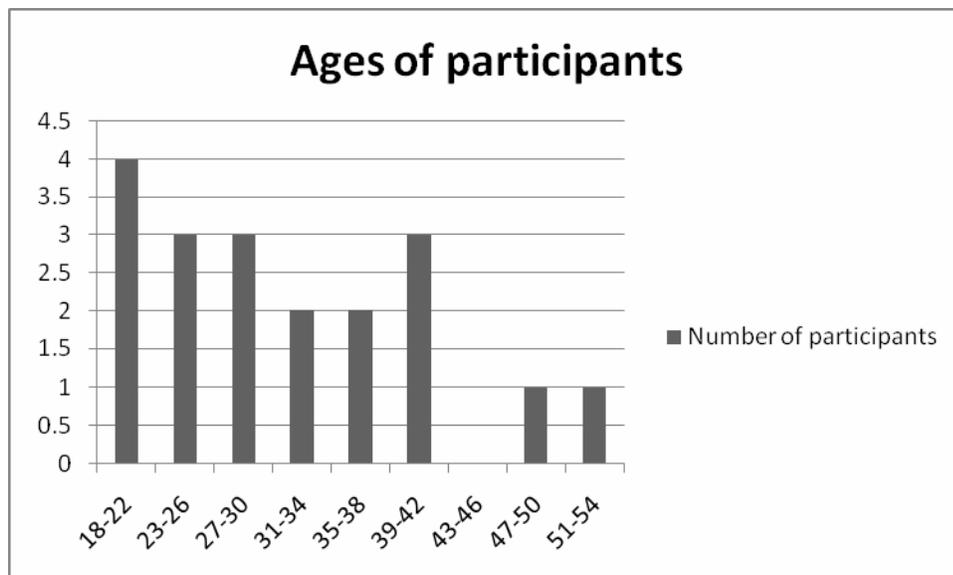
Selection of participants was a process undertaken through contacts. Gansuren of the Zorig Foundation introduced the researcher to numerous households of migrants in one of Ulaanbaatar's ger districts. The researcher approached people about participation only after being introduced by either his contact or a previous respondent. If they initially agreed to participate, the researcher asked them to read the informed consent form, and to ask any questions they had before signing. Having understood and given consent, the participant would sign the paper, and the interview would begin.

The researcher conducted the interviews without the aid of a translator. He asked the questions in Mongolian, presenting the printed page of questions for the participant to read if there was a problem in understanding. The researcher

then wrote down the participant's responses in his notebook, and asked any follow up questions the response may have engendered.

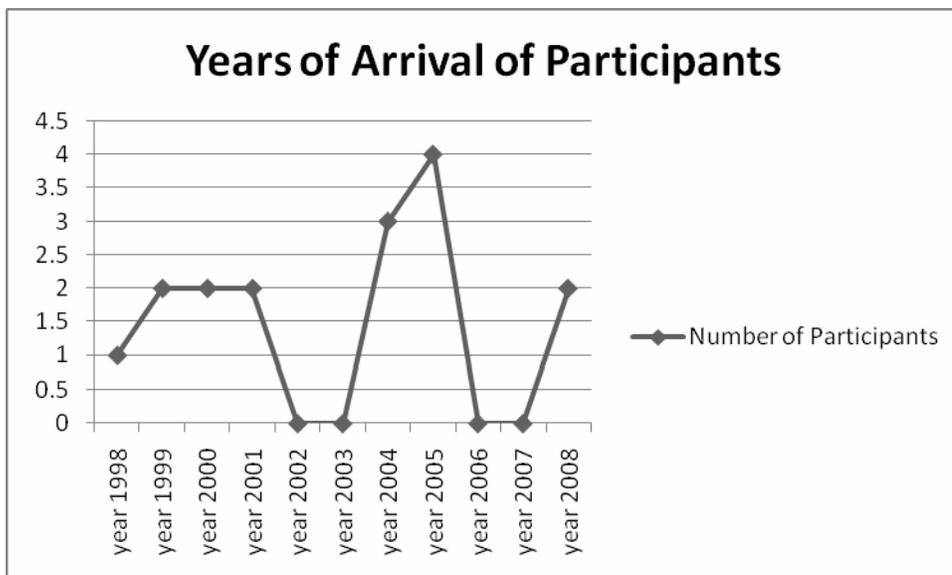
In this way, the researcher collected nineteen interviews over a span of two weeks. Two of these interviews were cut short due to schedule concerns of the respondents. After the researcher took the interviews, he assigned each one a random letter and number combination in order to preserve confidentiality. The researcher used these combinations to refer to the interviews in his notes. The respondents themselves were from varied backgrounds, and gave a good variety of different responses to the study's questions.

3.2 Demographics: The respondents to the study were quite diverse demographically. The youngest of them was 19 years old, whereas the eldest was 51 years of age. The rest of the respondents fell fairly evenly between these two ages, as seen in the following chart:



Overall, ten of the participants were of 30 years of age or younger. Nine were older than thirty, with only two being older than 45. This is consistent with larger trends of migration, which tends to be an activity of young adults, rather than the elderly (NSOM 2007: 22). In the year 2007, 20-24 year-olds comprised the largest demographic group of new migrants in Ulaanbaatar (Bolormaa et al. 2009: 42). The even spread of ages provided a balanced variety of perspectives on many issues.

The respondents' dates of arrival perhaps had even more effect on their perspectives, though. Of those interviewed, only two had not come to Ulaanbaatar within the last ten years. One of these two, one was born in the city after her family migrated in 1987. The other came to the capital with his family when he was just a boy in 1971. Both of these respondents gave answers that were quite different from those who had moved recently, describing social networks that were of a very different variety.



Of the 17 remaining migrants, nine had most recently migrated in the past five years, one of them for a second time. The remaining eight came in the years from 1999 to 2001. These last two groups in general gave subtly different responses which suggested different types and functions of family networks.

The spread of genders of the participants was more one-sided. Out of nineteen respondents, twelve were women and seven were men. This may have been the result of several factors. The first is employment. Of the twelve participating women, six of them reported being without work at this point in time. All of the interviewed men reported working regularly. A higher employment rate among men might mean they would be less likely to be home when interviews were conducted during the day. The second possible factor is childcare. Only four women in the study did not live with and care for children of their own. Two female respondents stated that the reason they were now without work was so that they would be able to be home and care for their young children. With their children tying them to their homes, women were possibly more available to participate in the study. The third factor was the phenomenon of the women just being initially friendlier. On at least two separate occasions, both a husband and wife were at home, and the wife volunteered to give an interview first. After the researcher recorded the first interview's answers, the husband would refuse to participate, insisting that his answers would be identical to his wife's. However, there were no noticeable, gender-specific trends in the responses of participants, as far as this study is concerned.

The employment statuses of the participants of this study are also worth noting. Only six participants in this study were without employment. All were women with young children. Two of them expressly cited their children as the reason they were currently without work. Of these unemployed, one had attended law school, one had been a teacher and researcher, and two had possessed various jobs before. Four respondents, three female and one male, were university students, and one, a woman, actively worked at the Mongolian National University. Another woman worked at a pharmacy, and another made handicrafts. One man was a repairman, and another worked at a publishing office. Two men were professional drivers, one for a large company, the other for a taxi service. One man was a scientist, and another said he possessed many different small jobs. The employment rate for this sample population was large and diverse. It seems many had fulfilled their wishes to find work in the capital, after coming from regions where unemployment was often staggering.

The majority of participants had migrated to the city from aimag centers, or provincial capitals. In total, 11 of them lived in these cities before coming to the capital. Three participants hailed from the much smaller soum centers, more akin to county seats in the USA. Only one participant reported being a nomadic herder before choosing to become an urbanite, while two left their origins outside of the city unspecified.

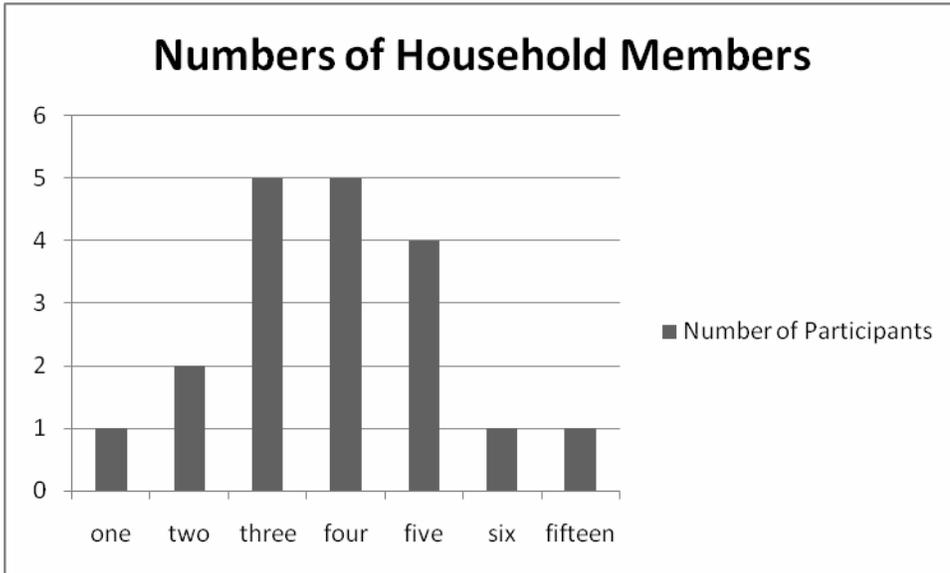
The participants in this study demographically represented a wide cross section of migrants in Mongolia. Their ages, dates of migration, origins, jobs, and

genders were diverse, if not always verifiably representative of the migrant population at large. Given that this study was intended to catalog many different perspectives and experiences, a diverse sample group was desirable over a completely representative one.

3.3 Research Findings: Family is an important institution in the lives of many migrants. Family is not only consciously considered important by migrant populations, but it is visible subtly in many aspects of a migrant's life. The influence of family affects everything from the initial decision to migrate, to employment, to adjustment to city life. At the same time, the needs and circumstances of city life have a tendency to alter networks and change how migrants relate to their relations.

The social network begins within a migrant's household. The vast majority of respondents reported that their immediate family members are the most important people to them. In total, 13 out of 19 people reported that they rely upon those in their own households more than anyone else. For 11 people, this meant their spouses and children. Seven others extended this definition to the siblings and parents who also live with them. Overall, after migration small nuclear families predominate, most respondents living in three or four member households. Before migration, respondents were likely have lived with parents and siblings in similarly nuclear households. Again, 13 of them said this family unit had been most important to them before they moved. They would migrate

either after marriage, or find a spouse soon after coming to the city.



Regardless of changes to individual members of their household, this study's participants, almost without exception, brought their reliance on the small family unit with them when they came to their new homes. Even before they migrated, they reported, thirteen still relied mostly on close family. The main difference is before they relied on their parents, whereas now they are tied to the household of their own spouses and children.

Reliance on more extended family can often explain the motivations of migrants. Three respondents listed reuniting with family as a primary reason for their decision to migrate. One intended to reunite with sisters who had migrated earlier. One hoped to reunite her whole scattered family in the capital. One moved expressly to avoid splitting up his young family when his wife migrated. The fact that no other respondents listed reuniting with family as a reason for their migration would seem to suggest that family networks play little role in the

decision to migrate. However, there is more to it than that. Three other participants noted that they chose to migrate for the sake of their children, again placing family in an important position. Even if other respondents didn't cite family as a determinant for their migration, they frequently did end up reuniting with family anyway.

Fully eleven of this study's participants were not the first members of their families to make the move to Ulaanbaatar. Of these, three specified that they were following close relatives to the city. This means that either their parents or siblings were here, and they likely exerted a strong pull pressure, even if the respondents didn't directly acknowledge it. Most of the rest of the respondents did not specify who in their family had come before, and one specifically said that only distant relatives had lived in the city before her. However, this woman ended up living with her distant relations soon after she arrived. Two others without "close" relatives also lived with family upon their arrival. The fact that relatives had supplied them with places to live implies that family was likely taken into account by these migrants before the move.

However, even family networks do not supply all the motivation and support a migrant needs. Migrants also draw upon and are influenced by more extended social networks. Four respondents mentioned close friends who had preceded them in the city. Two of these respondents also mentioned that they lived with these friends after arriving in the capital. Like those who lived with their family members, these respondents likely saw the presence of close friends

already in the city as an additional reason to make the shift. Thus family members are not the only people who may influence prospective migrants.

The respondents themselves also provide evidence for the pulling power of family members and friends. Eight of the study's participants reported that other members of their families either followed their lead or were about to. These followers included cousins, in-laws, in three cases younger siblings, and in two cases the whole of the respondent's family. One respondent noted that he was preparing for the imminent arrival of his aging mother, for whom he would provide a home and care. In addition, six respondents stated that some close friends had followed from the countryside. These strong connections between migrations implies the presence of social networks which have a particular effect on countryside communities, pulling, as they do, both friends and family toward a city where they have pre-existing contacts.

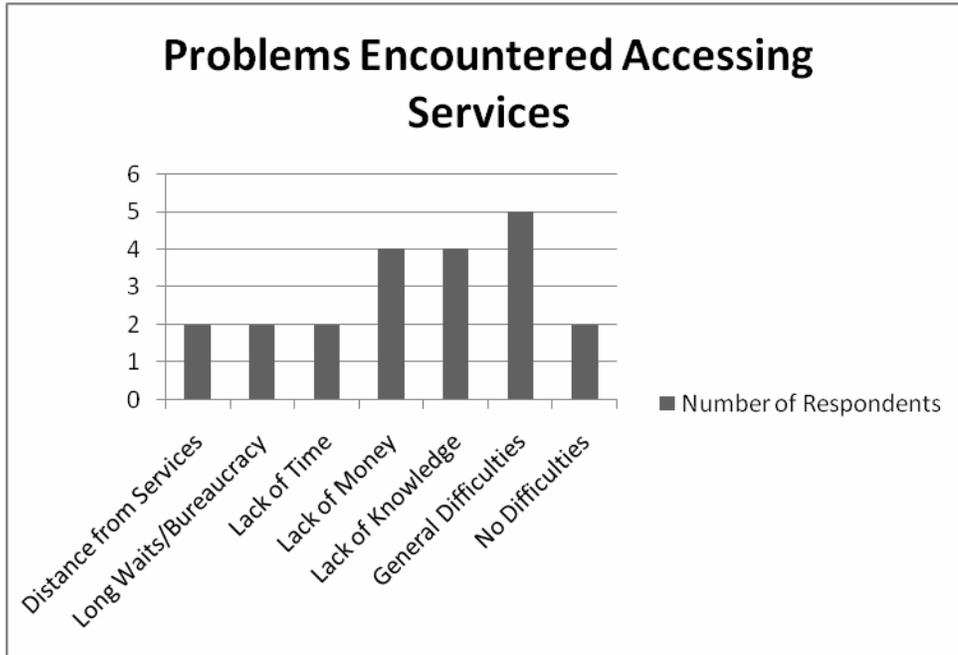
At the same time, these social networks are more than push and pull factors. Almost immediately after migrants move to the city, they may call upon their contacts in order to deal with the very real problems they encounter. Participants most commonly cited lack of living space, no private land, lack of money or work, a lack of knowledge about the city, and the difficulty of getting registered as the difficulties they encountered upon arriving in Ulaanbaatar. One participant related how even the simple task of taking the micro-bus was difficult as she could not understand the bus's quickly shouted destination, being unfamiliar with Ulaanbaatar addresses. Only one respondent actively claimed to

have overcome all these obstacles on her own. Most others had at least vague help from an extended network of family or friends.

Most respondents claimed to have received help from family members, but many also relied upon their friends. In general, both groups fulfilled almost identical roles and provided similar aid. For some respondents, they provided a place to live, loaned money, gave directions on how to get around the city, and instructed them on the registration process. Many respondents paid this help forward, providing similar aid for friends and relatives who migrated later. This aid is notable as it forms a migrant's first contact with an entirely city-based social network.

After migrants pass their initial hurdles, they become more and more enmeshed in these city-based networks. In day to day life, even an established migrant will encounter difficulties stemming from their location in the ger district and from a number of other sources. As seen in this chart, there is a wide array of

issues a migrant must deal with in order to conduct normal business.



Migrants frequently encounter issues of distance, bureaucracy, time, money, and lack of knowledge when attempting such activities as shopping, going to work, or getting access to a hospital. As with the first problems they encountered in the city, migrants frequently overcome these obstacles not on their own, but with help from their social networks.

This help takes many forms. Two respondents use their relation to people who work in hospitals to shorten their waits if their children are sick. Four respondents ask more city-savvy friends for advice on getting where they need in an unfamiliar urban setting. At least one respondent has received a loan from a friend. Overall, five respondents regularly receive day-to-day help from members of their family who live in the city, and five seek out their city-dwelling friends. One reported that she relies both on friends and family for aid and advice.

However, this is not a simple split between those who prefer to ask family for help and those who ask those outside of their family. Four of those who get by with help from their friends are younger than 25. Those who rely more upon family connections tend to be slightly older. All the respondents in this group were 26 or older. It seems that age is a determinant of the kind of social network a migrant constructs. Those who are younger tend to rely more upon people to whom they have no familial relation. The only exception to this trend is the fact that these young, recent migrants tend to still have strong ties to their countryside relatives.

A city dweller's contacts in the countryside provide real benefits for both parties. Statistically, 70% of countryside households receive remittances from city-dwelling family members (NSOM 2007: 25). The potential for this kind of behavior certainly existed among the study's participants. All but two of the respondents had family in the countryside. Of these two, one had been in the city for nearly 40 years. Ten respondents specified that they had left parents and siblings behind, and only one, the woman born in the capital, claimed she was particularly distant from her countryside relations. Interestingly, only two participants stated that they regularly sent money back to their places of origin. However, money is not the only form remittances can take. Five other respondents said they made frequent gifts of clothing and food to those they had left behind. Surprisingly, the flow of goods and money in the other direction was even greater.

Eleven participants admitted that they received gifts of food, clothing, and, in the case of four university students, money from their countryside relations. A majority of the people who engage in these exchanges are relatively recent migrants, having arrived only in the past five years. What is interesting is that, with the exception of the students receiving tuition money, nearly everyone who receives goods from the countryside also sends remittances of money or goods. It seems like a strong relationship with the countryside is mutually beneficial.

If remittances generally provoke reciprocal behavior, this revelation has several potentially broader consequences. It seems like this reciprocity between rural and urban families indicates a close and strong family network. Statistically, the sending of remittances is far more widespread than among the population of this study. It is possible, therefore, that strong connections with the countryside are a part of the lives of a huge portion of at least the recent migrant population.

Is the same true for migrants who have had more time to adjust to city life and city networks? Of those six who both send and receive goods and money, four migrated within the last five years. Those that receive tuition money from the countryside also migrated recently. This trend exists in spite of the fact that all of those who arrived more than five years ago have family in the countryside. One possible explanation for why those who migrated longer ago don't have an exchange relationship with their rural relatives is a simple one. As one respondent put it, moving to the city means becoming more independent. Simply being farther away from and out of contact with rural family causes migrants to

hold more closely to those they are near. Being in Ulaanbaatar for a longer time causes the strengthening of city-based networks, and the atrophying of rural-based ones.

3.4 Analysis and Conclusions: The family and social networks of migrants are some of the most important and useful tools they have for adjusting to life in the capital city. At the most basic level, the networks centered around a single household provide a stable core and sense of continuity for migrants entering an alien world. The relationship to the family unit is valued above all other contacts a migrant may develop. Of secondary but more extensive importance is the extended family network. It is this network which can provide impetus for a rural resident to attempt migrating in the first place. Even if that migrant does not state they are moving to reunite with family, in fact they often do just that as they meet their relations who have migrated before. These relations provide valuable help, and new migrants continue the cycle by making it ever easier for more relatives from the countryside to follow to the city.

At the same time, family relations are not the only social networks migrants can and do draw upon. In a city which presents so many obstacles to migrants, and where they are not guaranteed to have family members well-connected enough to help them, they must often rely upon their friends. Most still place the networks they brought from the countryside in a more important position, but increasingly among younger people friendships that were made in

the city are becoming more important. In a few years as this population of young people grows, the typical social network of an Ulaanbaatar migrant could look quite different. Nonetheless, for the moment the shifting networks of migrants are still based primarily upon family ties. The most drastic shift is the relocation of networks from rural to urban settings, illustrated by the presence or absence of gift exchanges between the city and countryside.

As a migrant spends more time in the city, their ties to the countryside become more and more distant. Most of the respondents who arrived more than five years ago neither send nor receive money to or from their countryside relations. All of those that do arrived within the last five years. This is a result of distance and time placing an ever larger gap between the city and countryside. As migrants spend more time living in the city, they become more and more enmeshed in and dependent upon networks that are based there. Rural networks, while still potentially important, cannot directly aid the migrants in their urban lives.

Though the locations and exact functions of these networks may change, their fundamental character does not. Family is still incredibly important in the life of a Mongolian migrant.

This study raised many questions even as it answered others. Do migrants to aimag or soum centers have similar experiences to those who come to Ulaanbaatar? What is the nature of the family and social network in the countryside, and how does it contribute to the shaping of the urban network?

What various household dynamics exist in migrant communities? These are questions beyond the scope of this study, but would be interesting to examine at a later date.

Ultimately, hypotheses about social networks being radically altered by the process of migration were proven wrong. There is more continuity in the social networks of migrants than there are drastic changes. These particular processes of cultural change are not sudden from the perspective of a migrant.

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Appendix: Informed consent and Prepared Questions

Study Title: Urban Migration, Family Networks, and Cultural Change

Principal Investigator: Christopher Williams

Introduction: I would like to invite you to participate in a research study related to my work at my university. You have the right to not participate if you do not want to. You may also ask any questions you have about the study before you agree to participate. It is important that you understand my study before you participate in it.

Purpose of Study: This study will look at human movement to cities in modern Mongolia. It will focus on how relationships between family members have changed following migration to the city. The study will help people understand how Mongolian culture is changing as a result of movement to cities. I will use the results of my study in an academic paper at my university.

Information: Participation in this study will involve speaking with me and answering a series of prepared questions on the subject of migration and family. Participation in this study will take around one half hour. There will be questions about your own family such as where they live and how you support one another. You will not have to give out specific names or addresses. Your own name will not be published in my paper.

Risks: You will have to answer questions about your family and about your current situation. If these questions will make you uncomfortable, you do not have to participate.

Benefit: Participation in this study might not benefit you directly. However, the knowledge gained from your answers will help people better understand the challenges you face and how Mongolian society is changing.

Confidentiality: Efforts will be made to keep your personal information confidential. Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Your name and the names of your family members will not be published. Written and recorded information from this interview will be stored privately and made available only to me. Personal accounts of your situation will only be printed in my study after many details (i.e. names and locations) have been changed, and then only with your oral permission.

Contact: If you have any questions regarding the study, please contact Christopher Williams at 95126301.

Alternatives to participation: You may choose to stop participating at any time during the interview. Of course, you may refuse to participate altogether.

Sign below to participate in this research study and allow your answers to my questions to be published. You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's
signature _____ Date _____

Researcher's
signature _____ Date _____

Судалгааны нэр: Хот Руу Шилжилт Хөдөлгөөн, Гэр Бүлийн Сүлжээ, ба Соёлын Өөрчлөлт

Судлаач: Кристофер Виллиамс

Танилцуулга: Би их сургуулийн судалгааны ажилтай холбоотой судалгаандаа оролцохыг таныг урьж байна. Оролцмооргүй байвал, татгалзаж болно. Танд асуулт байвал, та хэзээ ч хамаагүй надаас асууж болно. Таны ойлголт зөвшөөрөл хоёр маш чухал юм.

Судалгааны зорилго: Энэ судалгаа орчин үеийн Монгол хүний хот руу шилжих хөдөлгөөнийг судлана. Энэ нь гэр бүлийн гишүүдийн хоорондын харилцааны өөрчлөлттийг хотруу шилжилсэнтэй голлон харуулж байгаа.

Мэдээлэл: Та оролцвол надтай ярьж миний бэлдсэн шилжин суурьшилт болон гэр бүлийн талаар асуултанд хариулна. Энэ ярилцлага гуч орчим минут үргэлжлэнэ. Таны өөрийн төрөл садны байдалын тухай асуулт байгаа. Харин надад нэр, хаяг нь хэрэггүй. Би таны нэрийг бас бичихгүй.

Анхаарал: Та оролцвол одоогийн нөхцөл байдалынхаа тухай асуултанд хариулах ёстой. Танд эвгүй байвал оролцохыг татгалзаж болно.

Ашиг: Энэ судалгаа танд шууд ач тустай байхгүй байх. Гэвч энэ судалгаанаас авсан мэдлэг олон хүмүүст танай нөхцөл байдал ойлгоход тусална.

Нууцлал: Би таны нууцал хамгаалахыг оролдоно. Гэвч би таны нууцал батлаж чадахгүй. Би таны нэр ба таны хамаатаны нэрийг бичихгүй. Надаас гадна хэн ч таны тухай бичсэн юмуу хураасан мэдээлэлийг харахгүй. Таны хувийн байр суурь тань зөвхөн миний судалгаанд хэвлэгдэнэ, хэдийгээр таны нэр, таны байрлал, ба олон зүйл өөрчлөгдсөн ч энэ нь таны зөвшөөрлөөр байх болно.

Сонголт: Та хүсэхийн бол хэзээ ч зогсоож болно.

Танд асуулт байвал над руу утасдана уу? Гар утас: 95126301

Та оролцож, намайг судалгаагаа хэвлэхийг зөвшөөрвөл доогуур нь гарын үсгээ зураарай.

Оролцогч _____ **Өдөр**

Судлаач _____ **Өдөр**

Шилжиж ирсэн хүн

1. Та хэдэн настай вэ?
2. Та Улаанбаатарт төрсөн үү?
 - а. Тэгвэл, өөр асуулга дээр үргэжлүүлээрэй.
 - б. Үгүй бол, хэзээ энд нүүж ирсэн бэ? Арваас илүү жилийн өмнө ирсэн бол өөр асуулга дээр үргэжлүүлээрэй.
3. Та гэртээ хэдүүлээ вэ?
4. Танайд хэн хэн амьдардаг вэ?
5. Энд ямар ажил хийдэг вэ?
 - а. Ажил яаж олсон бэ?
 - б. Танай хамаатан ажил олоход тань тусалсан уу?
6. Энд ирэхийн өмнө хаана амьдардаг байсан бэ? Малчин байсан уу? Суманд амьдарч байсан уу?
7. Танай хамаатан тэнд байсаар байгаа юу?
8. Та ганцаараа шилжиж ирсэн үү? Хэнтэй ирсэн бэ?
9. Яагаад ямар учраас Улаанбаатарт шилжиж ирсэн вэ?
10. Таныг ирэхийн өмнө зарим хамаатан тань Улаанбаатарт байсан уу?
 - а. Тэгвэл, тэд хэдүүлээ байсан бэ? Хаана амьдарч байсан бэ? Гэр хороололд байсан уу?
 - б. Үгүй бол, найз юмуу танил нөхөд тань энд байсан уу?
11. Таны шилжиж ирсэн үед ямар ямар саад гарсан бэ?
 - а. Та тэр саадууд яаж ялсан бэ? Хүн танд тусламж өгсөн үү?
 - б. Хамаатан тань ямар тусламж өгсөн бэ? Найзууд тань ямар тусламж өгсөн бэ?
12. Таныг ирсэний дараа, танай хамаатан дагаж ирсэн үү? Найзууд тань дагаж ирсэн үү?
 - а. Тэгвэл, та тэдэнд хотод дасах тусламж өгсөн үү? ямар тусламж өгсөн бэ?
13. Та хөдөө амьдардаг хамаатандаа мөнгө юмуу өөр зүйлс явуулдаг уу?

- а. Тэд тан руу юм явуулдаг уу? Жишээ нь мах юмуу сүү.
14. а. Та хотод амьдардаг хамаатантайгаа долоо хоногт хэдэн удаа ууздаг вэ? Ер нь хаана уулздаг вэ?
- б. Та сард хэдэн удаа хөдөө амьдардаг хамаатантайгаа ярдаг вэ? Хэр зэрэг тэднийд очдог вэ?
15. Одоо та хэнтэй хамгийн сайн харилцаатай байдаг вэ? Аавтайгаа юу, ээжтэйгээ юу, найзтайгаа юу, өөр хэнтэй вэ?
16. Улаанбаатарт шилжиж ирэхийн өмнө, та хэнтэй хамгийн сайн харилцаатай байсан бэ ?
17. Харилцаа тань өөрчлөгдсөн үү? Яагаад?
18. Та хотод бүртгүүлсэн үү?
- а. Та бүртгүүлээгүй учраас, ямар ямар асуудал гарсан бэ?
- б. Та бүртгүүлсэн учраас, ашиг тус нь гарсан уу?
19. Ямар ямар учраас хотын төв явдаг вэ?
20. Хот руу юугаар явдаг вэ?
21. Хотоос ямар ямар үйлчилгээ авдаг вэ?
22. Тэр үйлчилгээнүүдийг авахад хэцүү юу?
23. Үйлчилгээ авахын тулд хэнээс тусламж авдаг вэ?
- а. Та хамаатанаасаа тусламж авдаг уу?
- б. Тэд ямар ямар тусламж танд өгдөг вэ?
24. Таны бодлоор, гэр хороололд хамгийн хэрэгтэй зүйл юу вэ? Хамгийн том асуудал нь юу вэ?
25. Таны бодлоор монголд хамгийн том асуудал юу вэ?
26. Та хөдөө рүү буцаж шилжиж чадвал , хотоос явах уу? Яагаад?
- а. Хотын амьдрал юмуу хөдөөний амьдралыг, аль нь илүүд үздэг вэ?
27. Та одоо хэнээс илүү хамаардаг вэ? Найзуудаасаа юу?
- Хамаатануудаасаа юу?
- а. Та хөдөө байхад хэнээс илүү хамаардаг байсан бэ?
- б. Яагаад?

Улаанбаатарт төрсөн юмү арваас илүү жилийн өмнө ирсэн хүн

1. Танайх хэдэн жилийн өмнө Улаанбаатарт ирсэн бэ?
2. Ямар учраас ирсэн бэ?
3. Та гэртээ хэдүүлээ вэ?
4. Танайд хэн хэн амьдардаг вэ?
5. Та хөдөө амьдардаг хамаатантай юу?
 - а. Та хэр зэрэг тэдэнтэй ярьдаг вэ? Тэдэн дээр очдог уу?
 - б. Та тэдэн рүү мөнгө явуулдаг уу?
6. Та хотод амьдардаг хамаатантай юу?
 - а. Тэд гэр хороололд амьдардаг уу?
 - б. Тэдэндтэй хэр уулздаг вэ?
7. Зарим хамаатан тань сүүлийн үед хөдөөнөөс Улаанбаатарт шилжиж ирсэн үү?
 - а. Тэгвэл хэзээ ирсэн бэ? Хэн?
 - б. Үгүй бол та зарим саяхан шилжиж ирсэн хүн мэдэх үү? Тэд хэзээ ирсэн бэ? Хэн?
8. Та саяхан шилжиж ирсэн хүмүүсийн тухай юу гэж боддог вэ?
9. Та энд ямар ямар ажил хийдэг вэ?
 - а. Ажил яаж олсон бэ?
 - б. Танай хамаатан ажил олоход тань тусалсан уу?
10. Та саяхан ирсэн хамаатан юмуу найздаа ямар тусламж өгдөг вэ? Ажил олоход нь тусалдаг уу? Хотод бүртгүүлэхэд нь тусалдаг уу?
11. Одоо та хэнтэй илүү сайн харилцдаг вэ? Аавтайгаа юу, ээжтэйгээ юу, найзтайгаа юу, өөр хэнтэй?
12. Ямар ямар шалтгаанаар хотын төв явдаг уу?
13. Хот руу юугаар явдаг вэ?
14. Хотоос ямар ямар үйлчилгээ авдаг вэ?
15. Тэр үйлчилгээ авахыг хэцүү юү?
16. Үйлчилгээ авахын тулд хэнээс тусламж авдаг вэ?

- a. Та хамаатанаасаа тусламж авдаг уу? Найзуудаасаа?
 - б. Тэд ямар ямар тусламж танд өгдөг вэ?
17. Таны бодлоор, гэр хороололд хамгийн хэрэгтэй юм юу вэ?
 18. Таны бодлоор монголд хамгийн том асуудал юу вэ?
 19. Та хөдөө рүү шилжиж чадвал, хотоос явах уу? Яагаад?
 20. Та одоо хэнээс илүү хамаардаг вэ? Найзуудаасаа юу? Хамаатануудаасаа юу? Яагаад?

Prepared Questions for Recent Migrants to the City

1. How old are you?
2. Were you born in Ulaanbaatar?
 - a. If so, proceed to the other list of questions.
 - b. If not, when did you move here? If it was more than ten years ago, proceed to the other list of questions.
3. How many people live in your home?
4. With whom do you live?
5. What sorts of work do you do or have you done in the city?
 - a. How did you find this work?
 - b. Were relatives or friends of yours helpful in finding this work?
6. Before you moved to the city, where did you live? Where you a herder or did you live in a soum (county) center?
7. Are any of your relatives still there, in the place you moved from?
8. Did you move here by yourself? With whom did you move?
9. For what reasons did you decide to move to the city?
10. Before you came here, were any of your relatives already living in the city?
 - a. If so, how many were living here? Were they living in the city center or the ger districts? Did you live with them at first?
 - b. If not did you at least have friends or acquaintances who lived here?
11. When you first came here, what obstacles did you face?

- a. How did you overcome these obstacles? Did you receive help from anyone?
- b. Did your relatives help you? Did your friends help you?
12. After you moved here, did any of your friends or family members follow you?
 - a. If so, were able to give them any help or advice on adjusting to city life?
13. Do you send any money or other goods to whatever relatives you have living in the countryside?
 - a. Do they send you any goods, such as meat or dairy products?
14. a. In an average week, how often do you see whatever relatives you have in the city? Do you usually meet them at your house or at theirs?
 - b. In an average month, how often do you speak with the relatives you still have in the countryside? How often do you visit them?
15. Currently with whom would you say do you have your best relationship? With your parents, your spouse, some other friend, or someone else?
16. When you lived in the country, with whom did you have your best relationship?
17. Have your relationships changed since moving to the city? How so?
18. Are you registered in the city?
 - a. If not, what problems are you faced with as a result?
 - b. If so, what benefits have you received as a result?
19. For what reasons do you go into the city center?
20. When you go to the city center, how do you go?
21. What services do you get from the city?
22. Do you ever encounter difficulties getting these services?
23. Are you able to get help in order to get these services? From whom?
 - a. Do your family members ever extend help? Friends?
 - b. What sort of help can they give?

24. In your opinion, what is the thing the ger districts need most at the moment?
What is the biggest problem here?
25. In your opinion, what is the biggest problem in Mongolia right now?
26. If you were able to move back to the countryside, would you leave the city?
- Do you prefer country life or city life?
27. On whom would you say you currently rely the most, your friends or your family?
- Whom did you rely on the most in the countryside?
 - If this has changed, why did it change? If it did not, how do you rely on them?

Prepared questions for people who were born in the city or who moved here more than ten years ago.

- How long ago did your family move to the city?
- For what reasons did they move here?
- How many people live in your home now?
- Who lives with you?
- Do you have any relatives in the countryside?
 - How often do you speak with them? How often do you see them?
 - Do you send them any money or goods?
- Do you have relatives in the city?
 - Do they live in the ger districts?
 - How often do you see them?
- Have any of your relatives recently moved from the countryside?
 - If so, when did they come? Who were they to you?
 - If not, do you have any friends or acquaintances who recently moved from the countryside? When did they come?
- What do you think about recent immigrants to the city? Do you believe they cause problems?
- What work do you do or have you done in the city?

- a. How did you find this work?
 - b. Did friends or family members help find it?
10. If you have recently emigrated friends or family, what help do you give them? Do you help them find work, or get registered with the city?
11. Currently who is your closest relationship with? Your parents, spouse, children, or someone else?
12. For what reasons do you go to the city center?
13. How do you go there?
14. What services do you get from the city?
15. Do you ever encounter difficulties getting these services?
16. Are you able to get help in order to get these services? From whom?
- a. Do your family members ever extend help? Friends?
 - b. What sort of help can they give?
17. In your opinion, what is the thing the ger districts need most at the moment?
What is the biggest problem here?
18. In your opinion, what is the biggest problem in Mongolia right now?
19. If you were able to move back to the countryside, would you leave the city?
- a. Do you prefer country life or city life?
20. On whom would you say you currently rely the most, your friends or your family?