

## Reevaluating freedom in the era of urbanization. Measures and consequences

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In the globalized community much emphasis is put on cities. These are becoming hubs of knowledge, growth and dynamics, as well as of wealth and attention [1]. Suburban areas grow to accommodate ever increasing community of city workers. Therefore, cities transform into agglomerations.

Commuting becomes an inseparable part of working routines, creating pendulum migration [5]. Job-associated transaction costs, both monetary and time expenditures, become prohibitively high for people to invest in anything except their direct labor obligations. The quality of workforce decreases in education levels, creativity, engagement, emotional intelligence. As a result, human subjectivity is lost. An individual lacking unique characteristics and knowledge becomes easily substitutable. This makes the person insecure from being made redundant.

On economic level the outflow of workers causes periphery to lose autonomy and turn into an appendage of the center [5]. The problem of shadow wages becomes acute. People from regions, employed in the center, are taxpayers to the city where they work. In the long-term this leads to downturn in regional economics.

On political level, job-dependence associated with lack of personal distinguishing characteristics and value generation potential, lower living standards in regions cause life discontent and absenteeism [4]. Weak links with immediate circle relations lead to absence of incentives to take part in local societal and political issues. Moreover, trust is low to governing institutions, regarded as physically and cognitively distant from individual interests [3].

Cities, on the other side, suffer from overpopulation. Territorial opportunities for enlarging production become limited, transportation is overloaded, and living standards decrease due to overcrowding, high prices, air and noise pollution.

*“We live under the power of Modern Consciousness, which means that we are obsessed with progress”. (Satish Kumar)*

Progress is a good thing, when it comes to meeting people’s needs in a way that no one’s freedom is violated. Yet, the society has lost sense of what freedom means when it comes to the level of an individual [2]. Concentration of resources in major cities, as opposed to regions being drained due to human migration, undermines the right of communities and individuals to remain native.

To secure “the freedom to stay a local” following steps can be considered:

1. Autonomy for regions to manage local budget expenditures, solve problems and manage affairs. Strong educational institutions need to be in place locally to support administration with research and skilled workforce.

2. Proper scale of organization as a key to the self-governance. Incentivizing resource employment at the place of resource generation can promote local production and retain people in the periphery.

3. Consciousness and mindfulness enhancement in order to change behavioral patterns. The right of an individual to fail should be respected as a way to constantly improve and seek

better solutions [3]. At schools, universities, profit organizations critics need to be replaced with reflection and discussion.

Consequently, human-scale self-governing units have potential to emerge.

With universities serving as knowledge and competence centers small scale towns can become self-sufficient. Businesses can thrive using local resources and opportunities. Economic state of regions can be improved with increased tax receipts. Furthermore, people can become more conscious of their actions, active in community initiatives, as time can be released previously consumed by commuting. Each individual then, will gain the freedom to develop a self as a local, serving the native area and prospering with the benefits provided by it.

“Loving where you live” requires both State action and personal transit to “having courage to live simply but live well and joyfully”. In combination these measures have power to transform progress from inside: in the essence of where it is produced and how it is distributed.

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