

Moscow Briefing Paper
ATHENS
Pace Academy

A. Introduction

Moscow is a mega, developing city that is involved in new forms of technology, economics, and urban planning; in fact, Moscow is the fifteenth most populated city in the world as of 2018. In Russia, specifically concerning Moscow, the General Administration for Migration Issues of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russian Federation (GAMI), is the law enforcement agency in charge of immigration. GAMI has the role of issuing Russian international passports, resident registration, and immigration control in Russia. This directorate is imperative to Moscow because, according to the 2010 census, about nine percent of the city's population is not ethnically Russian. In addition, immigration has recently become an extremely important component of Russian society, with around 13 million immigrants occupying the country. Currently we have been accepting more immigrants and believe these people are necessary members to help fuel our economy. Moscow has made tremendous steps for immigrants in the recent years; however, we still have a lot more to do. We need to address the discrimination migrant workers face when first integrating into society, especially the lack of access of education for migrant children. As a developing city we need to figure out a way to both use migrant workers to fuel our economy but also have the necessary supplies and resources for these people to be able to live a healthy life, and that begins with the regulation of wages and the end to underpayment of these vulnerable workers. We would greatly appreciate your support and collaboration in attempts to improve our city as a whole. Thank you! благодарю вас! (that's thank you in Russian!)

B. Demographics

Moscow is the capital of Russia, and with a population of 12.5 million people is the second most populous city in Europe, being the most populous in Russia. Our official population figures are said to be inaccurate because of the alarming number of illegal immigrants inhabiting the country, but estimates from 2016 predict that there are around 13 million people. We have a population density of 8,537.2 people per square kilometer and its population is 91.6% Russian. The largest portions of the foreign population are made from 1.42% Ukrainian and 1.38% Tatar. While our predominant religion is Christianity, centered around the Russian orthodox church, our population is made up of 14% Muslims. We have always faced an illegal immigration problem caused by people migrating from parts of Asia and the old Soviet Republic for better jobs and better quality of life. We face many difficulties in day-to-day life such as higher death rates than birth rates, causing our population growth to be entirely dependent on migrants. Thus making migrants a vital part of keeping our population from decreasing; our population growth rate is far lower than many other countries, being .2% yearly.

C. Key Points, bulleted

Governance/Leadership

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- More local control is imperative for the Moscow municipality because of the anti-immigration laws imposed by Vladimir Putin
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- Under Putin, living standards have risen substantially so the Moscow municipality hopes to continue this trend
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- Moscow and the rest of Russia follows the slogan, “Russia is back,” and wants to appear like that on the international stage
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Health

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- We will continue providing healthcare from the government; however, we are working to improve the quality of the hospitals, communication, and hospital transport.
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- We are working to bridge the gap between the upper and lower classes for the treatment of healthcare. We hope to reach a point where government-sponsored healthcare can result in the same process for immigrants and the wealthy families of Moscow.
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- Technology will be implemented through cell phones to improve hospital transport. An app will be created for citizens to be able to send instant messages to the emergency dispatch team.
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- Moscow addresses the challenges that migrant children face in the education system by opening several special Russian language schools and hopes to pass more laws to prevent labor exploitation and help undocumented children have better access to education.
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Economic

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- We will allow more Syrian refugees to apply for refugee status or asylum without the
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- possibility of being arrested. We will also grant more Syrian refugees, refugee status or asylum.
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- We will continue to grant Ukrainian refugees refugee status, and allow their migrants to become
- Russian citizens.
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- Continue to grant refugees from Afghanistan refugee status or asylum.
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- Increase security in all refugee camps to ensure the refugees receive medical care, food, clean
- water, and keep the refugees safe. Also, build more schools and homes for these refugees.
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- Work with other countries to solve these problems instead of using refugees as a political pawn.
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D. Background of your city

Russia is a federal semi-presidential republic based on its constitution in 1993. Moscow is the capital and a federal city that is governed by the mayor, Sergey Sobyenin. The regional government can impose taxes, has authority over municipal police and property, and enforces state and city laws.

Moscow's economy is largely based on natural resources. Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev recognized in his "Go Russia" speech the need to decrease the reliance on natural resources, to stop the potential for bribery as a way to enhance economic status, and to expand

the variety of markets and specializations. That may be harder than it sounds, as Russia as a whole currently produces over 10 million barrels of crude oil per day, which is the third most in the world. This, combined with the fact that the Russian government owns more than half of the dominant oil producing company, leads to the government gaining great profit from its strong oil business. GDP is 62.3% in services, 32.4% in industry, and 4.7% in agriculture. The labor force is 63% in services, 27.6% in industry, and 9.4% in agriculture. Because of the low numbers, we want to increase our focus on agriculture, but unfortunately stronger sanctions have recently been imposed on us by the USA. We were prepared, but the sanctions make progress difficult.

The 1993 Russian Constitution granted all citizens the right to free, compulsory general education. At first, general education in Russia was compulsory for nine years but was extended to eleven in 2007. All public education in Russia is currently run by the Federal Ministry of Education. A sub-committee of this ministry is the Federal Education and Science Supervision Agency which supervises and checks the quality of all schools in Russia. The Moscow Ministry of Education regulates education policies at a local level. According to the Program for International Student Assessment, an international ranking for school systems, Moscow's school system is one of the best in the world with some of the high reading and mathematical literacy rates.

E. Issues

Committee on Governance and Leadership

The Russian Federation is a semi-presidential republic with 85 federal districts that have little legal autonomy. The Russian Federation's citizens currently possess the right to vote and run for public office. The Mayor of Moscow is the lead in the Moscow government and is restricted by the Moscow City Duma which consists of 45 elected members. All citizens, regardless of race, religion, or sex, are able to vote in elections. For example, in 2018, about two million out of the seven million registered voters voted in the election resulting in Sergey Sobyenin being re-elected mayor of Moscow. Most Russian voters fear that their vote means nothing because of recent elections; therefore, Moscow's voter turnout is very low.

Undocumented migrants do not have privilege to vote in elections.

The Russian Federation runs through a semi-presidential structure where the President and Prime Minister hold significant power; however, the President holds more. Multiple political parties are represented throughout the government and the bureaucracy. The government of Moscow is composed of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayors, and the Moscow Government ministers so the Mayor's power is balanced. The Moscow Government passes laws to then be signed by the Mayor if he so pleases. In theory, local Russian elections are voted for by the citizens so the elections are neither majoritarian or authoritarian.

According to the Russian Constitution, Moscow is an independent subject of the Russian Federation and classified as a city of federal importance. Cities of federal importance include St. Petersburg and Sevastopol along with the capital Moscow. Subjects have equal rights when it comes to the federal government bodies. The Russian Constitution's Article 5 states that, "The Russian Federation consists of Republics, territories, regions, cities of federal importance, an autonomous region and autonomous areas - equal subjects of the Russian Federation. With that said, Moscow has the right to seek an independent policy differing from the other 85 subjects of Russia.

NGOs in Moscow have been suppressed by the government through actions such as the “*Foreign Agents*” act in 2012 and other bills which have attempted to stop the flow of foreign funding. NGOs must show their loyalty to Russia, in order to qualify to receive support from the Presidential Grants Foundation. The authoritarian regime fears the thought that NGOs could rally an opposition movement and take to the streets to demand change, so governmental action does all it can to keep the NGOs loyal to the Russian government.

The Russian national policy on immigrants is negative under Vladimir Putin but Moscow views immigrants differently. The Moscow government relies on migrants, legal and illegal, to further their economy and industry. In a time of xenophobia and negative views toward immigration, Moscow’s policy is vital. Immigrants do not receive the same rights as citizens in the aspects of wages, voting, and work. Immigrants have trouble finding shelter and work; therefore, forcing them to work extremely low-income jobs with little care. Before migrants can legally work, they must pass a Russian language and history exam, a medical exam, and obtain health insurance. For documented citizens, two social programs exist providing healthcare for the elderly and financial aid for the poor. In 1992, the Russian government established the Federal Migration Service (FMS). This institution is tasked with keeping track of all registered migrants and providing help registering for Russian citizenship. The FMS helps find places of residency, employment, and schooling for migrants. As of late 2011, all migrants seeking Russian citizenship must have a valid residence permit and the process is not allowed to take longer than 1.5 years.

The Federal Migration Service deals with everything related to migration, including but not limited to visas, permits, and migration cards. Foreigners are required by law to share their address with the FMS shortly after entering Russia as part of the registration process. Many foreigners in Moscow rent property with their landlords off the books, so the landlord can avoid tax on the property, but risk receiving a fine that ranges from 2,000 rubles (\$32) to 500,000 rubles. (\$7,900) There has been discussions about a new type of identification for migrants, in the form of an electronic guest card for legal foreign workers.

The Kremlin restricts critical voices on the internet, suppressing anti-Russia voices. The suppression restricts the freedom of expression, expression on the rights of the LGBT community, and other fundamental freedoms. The electronic guest card will give foreigners a better way of representation which will enter them into a database of foreign workers. The system would keep track of the number of migrants, check if they have a work permit, if they have signed a contract with an employer, and if they are up to date with health check-ups. Russian government has been tightening migration laws, both registration and punishment for illegals. Despite this people in Russia can become citizens after five years of residence and a fluency test of the Russian language, provided the person has not committed any crimes. Large companies in Moscow are very pro-immigration, as migrants can not be replaced easily because of the shortage of labour found in Moscow. The Russian workforce has been declining since 2007 and is estimated to have lost over 10 million people by the mid-2020s, and migrants play a big role in helping to fill the holes in the workforce.

Committee on Youth and Education

Every citizen of Russia has the right to free general education according to Article 43 of Russia’s constitution. Our general education consists of primary school, lower secondary school, and upper secondary school which comprises a total of 11 years and is compulsory. Moscow

prides itself on making education available to all of its younger citizens. Our public school system is mostly run by the federal government as the Federal Ministry of Education implements education policies for all public schools in Moscow and Russia as a whole at every grade level and the Moscow Ministry of Education does similar tasks at a local level.

Russia has tried to be open to other cultures and beliefs and implemented a policy in 2012 which obliges Russian state-run schools to teach the “fundamentals of religious cultures.” These religions are Orthodoxy, Islam, Buddhism, and Judaism which are the most prominent religions in Russia. Russia’s rulers and Vladimir Putin have shown support toward this curriculum and push for even more expansion.

In 2017, Russia followed the United States, Germany, and Saudi Arabia with the 4th largest number of migrants.. With Moscow being the capital, a huge number of migrant families have settled into Moscow which means that there have been many children who have also immigrated into Moscow who require decent care and proper education. Therefore, Article 78 of the federal law “On Education” allows all migrant children free access to general education. In 2017, the Russian Ministry of Education passed Order 32 which requires migrants to provide proper documentation of their right to stay in Russia. Children can apply for a three year temporary residence permit in Russia without having to take the knowledge exam but must provide proof of income, a passport, and a HIV certificate which may prove difficult for some.

An essential component that is necessary to obtain a complete Russian education is knowledge of the Russian language. This is probably the biggest problem for migrant children who come from countries that were not part of the Soviet Union. This deficit causes lack of understanding and comprehension of material, conflicts with fellow Russian classmates, ignorance of culture and proper behavior, and feelings of loneliness and anger. Our mayor, Sergey Sobyenin, recognizes this pressing issue in Moscow and has committed himself in opening special schools in Moscow to help immigrants learn Russian. According to the Moscow Open Education Institute, there are more than 200 groups for children needing to learn Russian as a foreign language and 13 Russian language schools and the Immigration Service claims that Moscow has 68 schools where Russian is taught as a foreign language. Moscow also lends assistance to the Civic Assistance Committee, an NGO that runs classes for the children of foreign citizens in Moscow, by leasing their building to them at agreeable rates.

Migrant children are more susceptible than other children to being used in the production of child pornography. Also, those who do not attend school are most vulnerable to labor exploitation, and a study from 2013 estimates that there are currently between 40,000 and 60,000 such children in Russia. Russia has not yet passed clear legislature regarding these issues, but hope to do so in the near future. Moscow wishes to pass more laws on migrant child labor and to contribute more money to improve programs that teach Russian to migrant children to prevent labor exploitation.

Russia has also not passed legislation specifically targeting undocumented children. Children under the age of sixteen cannot be deported and are allowed to stay with their relatives. If they do not have any, they are put into social institutions. Undocumented children generally have limited access to education, health care, and social assistance. They are only entitled to medical treatment in case of emergencies which is provided for free and without delay. By law only children with legal status can be enrolled in schools and immigration authorities periodically inspect schools for illegal immigrants. However, undocumented children can gain citizenship if they are adopted by Russian citizens, fostered by Russian parents, or are in social institutions. Also, schools generally admit children who are in Russia on temporary visas. Visas

expire within ninety days, but schools usually allow children to attend classes at least until the end of the school year.

Committee on Resilience

As of 2014, Russia was ranked as the 20th country with the most refugees. In 2017, there were about 210, 389 refugees in Russia. Most people who are considered “refugees” are actually Internally Displaced Persons and are not technically refugees. The most amount of refugees are from Syria, with nearly half their population having fled. The Russians want the Syrian refugees to leave and have been encouraging other countries to help rebuild Syria. “Moscow is launching a diplomatic push with Syria’s neighbors to return millions of refugees and secure funding for the reconstruction of the war-torn country”. They have also been extremely slow with giving the refugees permanent or temporary refugee status. Out of 7,000 refugees in 2018, only two received permanent asylum and 1128 received temporary asylum. The inefficiency of this situation is proven by a Syrian woman known as Safa, who has been in Russia for four years trying to receive permanent asylum and still has not been granted it. “Russian courts have ruled that the seven-year conflict is not reason enough to grant asylum to Syrians in Russia, leaving thousands — like Safa — with little hope of ever gaining permanent legal status” and the Russian supreme court has recently ruled out the Syrian conflict as a war. It is easier for the refugees to get a tourist or business visas, however, it is nearly impossible to legally stay. When Safa went to Civic Assistance Center to apply for temporary asylum she was rejected, which is extremely typical for Syrian refugees in Russia. “Yevgeny Yastrebov, director of the Syria program for the Civic Assistance Committee, says: I tell people: I have to give you the real picture and the real picture is that Russia is not accepting of refugees.”

Refugees from Ukraine come because of military conflict, in-state corruption, and because of unemployment. Donbass, a city in eastern Ukraine, has the most refugees coming because of military/ in-state conflict or in hopes of employment. They are allowed to become Russian citizens and can do so very easily. There are more refugees and migrants from Ukraine than from Afghanistan and Syria, with 1.6 million. However, these people come mostly in search of work, not safety, and are therefore typically legally allowed to stay within Russia’s borders.

Refugees from Afghanistan make up the largest percentage of refugees

in Russia. They come escaping the war in Afghanistan and hope to find shelter in Russia. There are many schools and houses in Russia for these Afghan refugees. However, since Russia is so different from Afghanistan, many of these refugees feel their lives in Russia are as bad as they were in Afghanistan. They are “safe but not welcome”, many are not welcomed or respected by the Russians. However, they are safe from the war within the Russian borders.

Russia wants the Syrians to return to Syria and helped 101,976 Syrian refugees return to Syria since January of 2018. However, the UNHCR think it is still too early to send the refugees back and has declared it is not safe to send refugees back. They also want the refugees to be able to decide for themselves when they think it is best to return home.

The United Nations has a goal for 100% of refugees in Russia to gain refugee status, 10,000 will be given legal assistance, and there will be 500 staff trained in determining refugee status, in 2019. In 2017, 8,970 asylum seekers, stateless people, and refugees, received assistance from the United Nations. Russia will need to allow more of these people to gain refugee status or asylum to ensure their safety. Russia has prepared around 336,500 places to host refugees. Russia is fine with the refugees from Ukraine and Afghanistan. However, refugees from Syria are often met with hostility. Russia seems to be most concerned with helping the refugees return home and are continuing their efforts to send back Syrian refugees even after the United Nations declared it was not safe for Syrian refugees to return. Moscow is very technologically advanced and strives to meet the needs of these people by ensuring safety, meeting their needs, and granting refugee status and asylum.

Committee on Economic Integration

Russia’s economy is highly dependent on natural resources. In total, Russia produces the third most crude oil in the world. Russia’s main oil corporations are controlled by the government, with Gazprom, Surgutneftegas, and Rosneft, all being majority-owned by the Government of the Russian Federation, making the oil business very important to our government. Almost half of government revenue in 2018 came from oil and natural gas. Russia is trying to lessen the reliance on natural resources after the passing of a bill called “Go Russia” that attempts to stop the “addiction to surviving off exporting raw materials.” To do so, Moscow has brought in many foreigners to fill in jobs in agriculture, manufacturing, and IT. There is a need for these immigrants to fill new jobs, because Moscow does not have a large working class of citizens and we need immigrants to strengthen the working class of Moscow.

Russian citizens and immigrants have similar employment profiles. The jobs that have a higher percentage of immigrants are transportation, industry, and construction. There are fewer immigrants in government and agriculture. 38.4% of immigrants over 18 do not work, though most of them are retired. 48.5% are employed by a large company, so most immigrants are hired by businesses. 5.2% of immigrants are entrepreneurs.

Russian immigrants mostly come from former Soviet Union countries, so tend to be culturally similar to other Russians. Therefore, the immigrants' choice of residence is usually based on purely economic reasons rather than cultural. Immigrants usually come to Russia because they can receive a better paying job than in their home country.

Committee on Social Cohesion-

Migrants coming to Moscow are most commonly coming to us in search for better jobs and pay, in order to support their families. 1.9 million Ukrainian migrants are currently residing in Russia. Another large portion of our migrant population is people seeking asylum from terrors in their countries or wars in Asia. The migrant population in Russia make up 15% of the workforce, and that contribution would be impossible to replace. Although our migrants are a crucial part of our economy they still face discrimination as seen through low pay. We, Moscow, look to create ways for migrants to more smoothly integrate into society to help fuel our growing economy.

Moscow's immigration policy is continuously changing and evolving, but improved greatly in 2007 when leaders established the Russian Federation of migrants (RFM). The RFM works to help migrants both gain an education and learn the Russian language. It also works to raise awareness around the people of the city and combat ethnic discrimination. The main objectives of the RFM are: the adaptation and integration of foreign citizens, formation of a unified database of migrants, providing legal support to migrants, and the formation of a positive image of migrants in society. Most migrants are drawn to Moscow because of loose migration laws that easily allow one to obtain a temporary citizenship permit and a Russian visiting passport, both of which can be purchased. Often migrants are travelling to Russia to then send money back to their families in their origin country, and to do so must obtain a work visa which is both a lengthy and excessive process that many people are unable to afford. This leads to an influx of illegal immigrants migrating into the country to find work without the proper documentation.

The local population in the city of Moscow are against the influx of Russian migrants, as seen by the 66% of Russia voters that push for stricter immigration laws. The voting population of Russia clearly does not see that it is necessary for the Russian work force to have these migrant workers; in order for the economy to continue on an upward trend. The dislike of migrants leads to harsh discrimination in the pay of migrant workers. Currently the minimum wage is ₺11,163 per month, which is approximately \$170 USD per month. Records show that these migrant workers are commonly offered a minimum wage and that is on record, but their employers chose to partially pay them for their work. Because of this lack of money, the quality of migrant life goes down and eventually leads to a greater mortality rate between the migrant workers rather than the Russian citizens. On top of wage discrimination, non-Christian immigrants or migrants that are members of the LGBTQ community face even harsher discrimination than Christian migrants. Although the population of Russia views migrants

poorly, they are an essential part of Moscow's society and need to be more properly integrated into society, including raising awareness for the hateful discrimination they often receive.

Moscow has an alarmingly high rate of undocumented immigrants. Undocumented immigrants allow companies to pay low wages without benefits, this leads to a worse quality life for these already vulnerable people. In Moscow immigration raids are used as an attempt to ease the problem of undocumented peoples. Such raids are a common occurrence, but most commonly these raids do not go smoothly. Members of the police force are susceptible to accepting bribes to not report these undocumented people. If an undocumented immigrants are sent to court they will most likely be deported and not allowed back into Russia for a certain number of years. The illegal migrant workers are faced with little to no pay and when caught are asked to give whatever money they have to a law enforcement official, or be deported. These people face a completely unjust law system that needs to be regulated and improved.

Committee on Health

Moscow is the second largest city in Europe with a population, housing over 10 million residents. Many of these residents are immigrants living in Moscow, despite the fact that Russia frequently rejects citizenship to immigrants. In 2017, there were just 598 recognized refugees residing in Russia. The only non-governmental help that refugees receive is from the Civic Assistance Committee, in the form of legal and humanitarian assistance. Furthermore, Russia's native labor force is predicted to shrink by more than 12 million, or around 15 percent. This statistic shows that non-Russians are doing the majority of the fundamental labor. The concept of healthcare should be examined to determine conditions of immigrants and asylum seekers.

Although healthcare in Moscow may seem better than it is in other parts of Russia, the system is still inefficient and unsubstantial. Across Russia, 17,500 towns and villages do not have access to any medical infrastructures, and merely 5% of Russians had health insurance as of 2015. All Russian residents are entitled to free public healthcare via the Obligatory Medical Insurance (OMI). While subsidised healthcare is provided to everyone living in Russia by the state and mandatory health insurance system, the quality is shaky. Russian doctors are known to refuse to treat patients without a bribe, and access to healthcare is still not viewed as a basic human right. The probability that a 15-year-old Russian boy will die before he reaches the age of 60 is greater than 40%. It is the employer's responsibility to ensure their employees are registered and have access to state healthcare in Russia; however, a majority of the population continues to suffer from a poor and ineffective system. This issue led to more than 1.25 million Russians emigrating and leaving the country between 2000 and 2010.

Food and resources are a major concern, when dealing with the treatment of the immigrants. The agricultural production in Russia declined during the period of economic transition and Russians began consuming starches instead of high-fat animal products, yet energy consumption remained stable. This stability was because increased private expenditures on food and use of private land. Consequently, the obesity rates significantly increased with the consumption of the unhealthy and overwhelming amounts of sugar and salt. Likewise, Russians have reduced their necessary intake of fruit and vegetables, fueling the problem of obesity.

When these possibly malnourished immigrants arrive in Moscow, they face a repressive and arbitrary asylum system that punishes rather protects. Large discrimination and prejudice factors into the treatment of refugees, so there is no reliance on aid. Specifically, Syrian refugees

receive particularly egregious treatment, due to the country's direct military involvement in the war.

Day to day amenities are already coveted among natural born citizens, so they are near impossible to achieve as an immigrant. The current water and plumbing situation in Russia is The country is falling behind and lacking basic needs for its citizens. In addition, the mortality rates in the country keep skyrocketing as time passes. Russia only pays 6% of its GDP on healthcare, which is far lower than other nations. Russia should switch to spending around 10-12% on diminishing rapidly due to the fact that 70% of citizens' drinking water comes from surface water and the remaining 30% is supplied from groundwater. Furthermore, approximately 10% of Russians have no access to indoor plumbing, and 35 million people live without indoor toilets. In addition, 47 million Russians do not have hot water, and 22 million do not have central heating. These statistics prove that Russia needs change immediately, and that they must act fast.

The Russian government has recently been acting extremely slowly in responding to their current health crisis. These delayed actions have had catastrophic impacts on the economy, security, and quality of life in Russia. This issue can be seen through the fact that even though HIV/AIDS is very controlled in most countries in 2019, the disease has been proclaimed a modern epidemic in Russia. Around 1 million citizens have been diagnosed as HIV positive, and 80% of these are under the age of 30. To make matters worse, Russian doctors often show up to work while drunk and even try to work on patients while inebriated. This proves how unprofessional and unethical the healthcare situation in Russia is. Select Russian towns lack ambulance service and the time it takes for an ambulance to arrive from the next city over is often too long for those in need, resulting in the patient's death. The Russian mortality rate is double that of the U.S. and triple that of France. One of the primary causes of the current healthcare scares and troubles is due to massive funding cutbacks made in 2014 in response to an economic downturn. President Vladimir Putin recently promised to increase funding of healthcare; however, the results are yet to be seen.

The removal of waste is also a large concern in Moscow. Because of the inefficient removal of waste, Russia has been labeled with the title "waste crisis." Already in 2019, people in at least eight towns and villages have held protests against garbage dumps around Russia. Moscow's waste disposal troubles have caused outsize consequences for activism in the surrounding region.

The current Russian healthcare system needs a immediate revisions. Because of the lack of instant healthcare, we suggest an app is created. This app will notify a doctor or nurse with the press a button for assistance of the patient. The government should invest in more ambulances and skilled doctors instead of other useless projects. The health of Russians is currently in jeopardy, and in order to fix this, hasty actions need to be made.

Committee on Urban Planning

Moscow is one of the most overcrowded cities in Russia and is the second most populous city in Europe. On average, there are 27,300 people per square mile, which is more than New York, and a 2016 estimate of Moscow's population estimated the population to be close to 12.19 million. The current population is unknown, but using data from past censuses and accounting for illegal immigration, the population today could be anywhere from 13 to 17 million. Using demographics from a 2010 census, there is very little ethnic diversity in Moscow, with 91.6% of Moscow residents being from Russia.

Moscow is governed by its mayor, Sergey Sobyenin, and is divided into 12 okrugs, which are autonomous regions that exist throughout Russia. Housing is concentrated in the more industrial parts of the city, and around two-thirds of all workplaces are in Moscow's most central region. Major street systems have been designed to accommodate the major travel patterns forming circles and leading in and out of this urban labor and residency center. In 2012, Medvedev, the prime minister at the time, successfully acquired a large plot of land that added 233,000 people to Moscow. The goal of this addition was to decentralize jobs in order to create a sustainable transportation route and a de-congested environment.

Russia's rapid growth in the mid-twentieth century sparked massive immigration, which brought most of its current population. Migration has been heavily controlled since 1932, with the Soviet implementation of propiska, which was a form of documentation similar to a passport that was used to keep track of all citizens. Now, the documentation used for immigrants is called a registration, and it is a more humane form of documentation for current Russian citizens.

At the start of the 21st century, migrants flooded into Moscow only to find increasing housing prices caused by the dissolving of state price controls along with the fallout from the Soviet Union collapse over a decade prior. This drastic increase in migrants combined with few affordable housing options led to a housing shortage that has continued up until today. Migrants now live in cramped multiple story apartments on the outskirts of the city. Many of these apartment buildings are the same ones that were erected during the Soviet era, and are called khrushchevka. The khrushchevka are old and cause lots of congestion in Moscow, and the government has been trying to take them down for years. The city's attempts to tear down the khrushchevka and replace them with newer and more modern housing have all been greeted with animosity by the current residents, as they would be on their own to find housing during the renovations.

Migrants living in largely populated apartment buildings are exploited by their landlords and are intimidated by the local police. Those that are religious minorities, such as Jews or Muslims, are subject to even more hostility and hate. Houses are described to be lacking sinks, showers and toilets. Migrants often lack adequate clothing, food and other resources, and are usually not paid a living wage. Social services for migrants are often too expensive to afford, but are mandatory if a migrant wants to get work permits, thus creating an endless cycle of poverty and uncertainty.

A viable and necessary solution to these problems is to follow through with what Moscow has promised in the past and decentralize. It is necessary for new transportation to be erected throughout the metropolitan area of Moscow, not just the urban and industrial portions of the city. Simultaneously, housing needs to be expanded from just the central parts of the city, and only then can older housing be torn down, because the previous tenants of that housing will have somewhere to go. Decentralization and modernization go hand in hand, and when they are fully executed, the city of Moscow will tremendously benefit.