

## Chapter 3 Migration

### Key Issues

1. Why do people migrate?
2. Where are migrants distributed?
3. Why do migrants face obstacles?
4. Why do people migrate within a country?

(80)

The subject of this chapter is a specific type of relocation diffusion called **migration**, which is a permanent move to a new location. **Emigration** is migration *from* a location; **immigration** is migration *to* a location. The difference between the number of immigrants and the number of emigrants is the **net migration**. Migration is a form of **mobility**, which is a more general term covering all types of movements. Short-term, repetitive, or cyclical movements that recur on a regular basis, such as daily, monthly, or annually, are called **circulation**.

The changing *scale* generated by modern transportation systems, especially motor vehicles and airplanes, makes relocation diffusion more feasible than in the past. Within a global culture, people migrate to escape from domination by other cultural groups or to be reunited with others of similar culture.

### Key Issue 1. Why Do People Migrate?

- **Reasons for migrating**
- **Distance of migration**
- **Characteristics of migrants**

Geography has no comprehensive theory of migration, although a nineteenth-century outline of 11 migration "laws" written by E. G. Ravenstein is the basis for contemporary migration studies. Ravenstein's "laws" can be organized into three groups: reasons, distance, and migrant characteristics.

#### Reasons for Migrating

People decide to migrate because of push factors and pull factors. A **push factor** induces people to move out of their present location, whereas a **pull factor** induces people to move into a new location. Both push and pull factors typically play a role. We can identify three major kinds of push and pull factors: economic, cultural, and environmental.

#### Economic Push and Pull Factors

Most people migrate for economic reasons. Because of economic restructuring, job prospects often vary from one country to another and within regions of the same country.

#### Cultural Push and Pull Factors

Forced international migration has historically occurred for two main cultural reasons: slavery and political instability. Large groups of people are no longer forced to migrate as slaves, but forced international migration persists because of political instability resulting from cultural diversity. Refugees are people who have been forced to migrate from their home country and cannot return for fear of persecution.

(82)

Political conditions can also operate as pull factors. People may be attracted to democratic countries that encourage individual choice in education, career, and place of residence. With the

election of democratic governments in Eastern Europe during the 1990s, Western Europe's political pull has disappeared as a migration factor. However, Western Europe pulls an increasing number of migrants from Eastern Europe for economic reasons.

### **Environmental Push and Pull Factors**

People also migrate for environmental reasons, pulled toward physically attractive regions and pushed from hazardous ones. Attractive environments for migrants include mountains, seashores, and warm climates. Migrants are also pushed from their homes by adverse physical conditions. Water — either too much or too little — poses the most common environmental threat. Many people are forced to move by water-related disasters because they live in a vulnerable area, such as a floodplain. The **floodplain** of a river is the area subject to flooding during a specific number of years, based on historical trends.

(83)

### **Intervening Obstacles**

Where migrants go is not always their desired destination. They may be blocked by an **intervening obstacle**. In the past, intervening obstacles were primarily environmental. Bodies of water long have been important intervening obstacles. However, today's migrant faces intervening obstacles created by local diversity in government and politics.

(84)

### **Distance of Migration**

Ravenstein's theories made two main points about the distance that migrants travel to their home: Most migrants relocate a short distance and remain within the same country. Long-distance migrants to other countries head for major centers of economic activity.

### **Internal Migration**

**International migration** is permanent movement from one country to another, whereas **internal migration** is permanent movement within the same country. International migrants are much less numerous than internal migrants. **Interregional migration** is movement from one region of a country to another, while **intra-regional migration** is movement within one region.

### **International Migration**

International migration is further divided into two types: **forced** and **voluntary**. Economic push and pull factors usually induce voluntary migration, and cultural factors normally compel forced migration.

Geographer Wilbur Zelinsky has identified a **migration transition**, which consists of changes in a society comparable to those in the demographic transition. A society in stage 1 has high daily or seasonal mobility in search of food. According to migration transition theory, societies in stages 3 and 4 are the destinations of the international migrants leaving the stage 2 countries in search of economic opportunities. Internal migration within countries in stages 3 and 4 of the demographic transition is intraregional, from cities to surrounding suburbs.

### **Characteristics of Migrants**

Ravenstein noted distinctive gender and family-status patterns in his migration theories: Most long-distance migrants are male, and most long-distance migrants are adult individuals rather than families with children.

### **Gender of Migrants**

Since the 1990s the gender pattern has reversed, and women now constitute about 55 percent of U.S. immigration. The increased female migration to the United States partly reflects the changing

role of women in Mexican society. Some Mexican women migrate to join husbands or brothers, but most are seeking jobs.

(85)

### **Family Status of Migrants**

Ravenstein also believed that most long-distance migrants were young adults seeking work. For the most part, this pattern continues for the United States. With the increase in women migrating, more children are coming with their mothers.

### **Key Issue 2. Where Are Migrants Distributed?**

- **Global migration patterns**
- **U.S. immigration patterns**
- **Impact of immigration on the United States**

About 9 percent of the world's people are international migrants. The country with by far the largest number is the United States.

### **Global Migration Patterns**

At a global scale, Asia, Latin America, and Africa have net out-migration, whereas North America, Europe, and Oceania have net in-migration.

The United States has more foreign-born residents than any other country, approximately 40 million as of 2010, and growing annually by 1 million. Australia and Canada have higher rates of net in-migration. The highest rates can be found in petroleum-exporting countries in the Middle East, which attract immigrants from poorer neighboring countries to perform many of the dirty and dangerous functions in the oil fields.

(86)

### **U.S. Immigration Patterns**

About 70 million people have migrated to the United States since 1820, including the 40 million alive in 2010. The United States has had three main eras in immigration, each drawing migrants from different regions.

### **Colonial Immigration from England and Africa**

Immigration to the American colonies and the newly independent United States came from two sources: Europe and Africa. Most of the Africans were forced to migrate to the United States as slaves, whereas most Europeans were voluntary migrants — although harsh economic conditions and persecution in Europe blurred the distinction between forced and voluntary migration for many Europeans. From the first permanent English settlers to arrive at the Virginia colony of Jamestown in 1607 until 1840, a steady stream of Europeans (totaling 2 million) migrated to the American colonies and after 1776 the United States. Ninety percent of European immigrants prior to 1840 came from Great Britain. During the eighteenth century, about 400,000 Africans were shipped as slaves to the American colonies, and after importation of slaves was made illegal in 1808 by the United States another 250,000 were brought in.

(87)

### **Nineteenth-century Immigration from Europe**

In the 500 years since Christopher Columbus sailed from Spain to the Western Hemisphere, 40 million Europeans migrated to the United States. Among them, Germany has sent the largest number of immigrants, 7.2 million. Migration from Europe to the United States peaked at several points during the nineteenth century.

During the 1840s and 1850s, annual immigration jumped to 200,000. Three-fourths of all U.S. immigrants during those two decades came from Ireland and Germany.

In the 1870s, emigration from Western Europe resumed following a temporary decline during the U.S. Civil War (1861–1865).

During the 1880s, immigration increased to a half million per year as Swedes and Norwegians joined Western Europeans in migrating to the United States.

Between 1900 and 1914, nearly a million people a year immigrated to the U.S., two-thirds of whom came from Southern and Eastern Europe (especially Italy, Russia, and Austria-Hungary). The shift coincided with the diffusion of the Industrial Revolution and rapid population growth.

(88)

### **Recent Immigration from Less Developed Regions**

Immigration to the United States dropped sharply in the 1930s and 1940s, during the Great Depression and World War II, steadily increased beginning in the 1950s, and then surged to historically high levels during the 1980s.

More than three-fourths of the recent U.S. immigrants have originated in two regions:

**Asia.** The three leading sources of U.S. immigrants from Asia are China, India and the Philippines.

**Latin America.** Nearly one-half million immigrate to the United States annually from Latin America, more than twice as many as during the entire nineteenth century.

### **Impact of Immigration on the United States**

The U.S. population has been built up through a combination of emigration from Africa and England primarily during the eighteenth century, from Europe primarily during the nineteenth century, and from Latin America and Asia primarily during the twentieth century. In this current century, the impact of immigration varies around the country.

### **Legacy of European Migration**

The era of massive European migration ended with the start of World War I.

**Europe's Demographic Transition.** Rapid population growth in Europe fueled emigration. Application of new technologies, spawned by the Industrial Revolution, pushed much of Europe into stage 2 of the demographic transition. Migration to the United States served as a safety valve, draining off some of that increase.

**Diffusion of European Culture.** Europeans frequently imposed political domination on existing populations and injected their cultural values with little regard for local traditions. Economies in Africa and Asia became based on extracting resources for export to Europe, rather than on using those resources to build local industry. Many of today's conflicts in former European colonies result from past practices by European immigrants.

(90)

### **Unauthorized Immigration to the United States**

Many people who cannot legally enter the United States are now immigrating illegally, called **unauthorized immigrants**. The Pew Hispanic Center estimated that there were 11.9 million in 2008 and around 59 percent of unauthorized immigrants came from Mexico, 22 percent came from elsewhere in Latin America, and 12 percent from Asia.

People are in the United States without authorization primarily because they wish to work but do not have permission to do so from the government. According to the Pew Hispanic Center's 2008 estimate, undocumented workers account for 5.4 percent of the total U.S. civilian labor force.

Americans are divided over whether undocumented migration helps or hurts the country.

### **Destinations of Immigrants Within the United States**

Recent immigrants are not distributed uniformly through the United States. Individual states attract immigrants from different countries. **Chain migration** is the migration of people to a specific location because relatives or members of the same nationality previously migrated there.

### **Key Issue 3. Why Do Migrants Face Obstacles?**

- **Immigration policies of host countries**
- **Cultural problems living in other countries**

The principal obstacle traditionally faced by migrants was the long, arduous, and expensive passage over land or sea. Today, the major obstacles faced by most immigrants are cultural: gaining permission to enter and hostile attitudes of citizens.

### **Immigration Policies of Host Countries**

The United States uses a quota system to limit the number of people who can migrate. Other major recipients of immigrants permit guest workers but they cannot stay permanently.

### **U.S. Quota Laws**

The era of unrestricted immigration to the United States ended when Congress passed the Quota Act in 1921 and the National Origins Act in 1924. Quota laws were designed to assure that most immigrants to the United States continued to be Europeans. Quotas for individual countries were eliminated in 1968 and replaced with hemispheric quotas. In 1978 the hemisphere quotas were replaced by a global quota of 290,000, including a maximum of 20,000 per country. The current law has a global quota of 620,000, with no more than 7 percent from one country, but numerous qualifications and exceptions can alter the limit considerably. Congress has set preferences to reunify families and admit skilled workers and exceptionally talented professionals. Other countries charge that by giving preference to skilled workers, the U.S. immigration policy now contributes to a **brain drain** which is a large-scale emigration by talented people.

### **Temporary Migration for Work**

Prominent forms of temporary work migrants include **guest workers** in Europe and the Middle East and historically time-contract workers in Asia. (93) Guest workers serve a useful role in Western Europe because they take low-status and low-skilled jobs that local residents won't accept. Although relatively low paid by European standards, guest workers earn far more than they would at home. Most guest workers in Europe come from North Africa, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and Asia. Millions of Asians migrated in the nineteenth century as time-contract laborers, recruited for a fixed period to work in mines or on plantations. More than 33 million ethnic Chinese currently live permanently in other countries, for the most part in Asia.

### **Distinguishing Between Economic Migrants and Refugees**

It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between migrants seeking economic opportunities and refugees fleeing from government persecution. The distinction between economic migrants and refugees is important, because economic migrants are generally not admitted unless they possess special skills or have a close relative already there. However, refugees receive special priority in admission to other countries.

**Emigrants from Cuba.** The U.S. government regarded emigrants from Cuba as political refugees after the 1959 revolution that brought the Communist government of Fidel Castro to power. In the years immediately following the revolution, more than 600,000 Cubans were admitted to the United States. A second flood of Cuban emigrants reached the United States in 1980, when Fidel Castro suddenly decided to permit political prisoners, criminals, and mental patients to leave the country. More than 125,000 Cubans left within a few weeks to seek asylum in the U.S. in a migration stream known as the "Mariel Boatlift."

(94)

**Emigrants from Haiti.** Shortly after the 1980 Mariel Boatlift from Cuba, several thousand Haitians also sailed in small vessels for the United States. Claiming that they had migrated for economic advancement, rather than political asylum, U.S. immigration officials would not let the Haitian boat people stay. The Haitians brought a lawsuit. The government settled the case by agreeing to admit some of the Haitians. After a 1991 coup that replaced Haiti's elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, thousands of Haitians fled their country. Although political persecution has subsided, many Haitians still try to migrate to the United States.

**Emigrants from Vietnam.** Thousands of people from Saigon (since re-named Ho Chi Minh City) evacuated after the Vietnam War ended in 1975. Thousands of other pro-U.S. South Vietnamese who were not politically prominent enough to get space on an American evacuation helicopter tried to leave by boat. A second surge of Vietnamese boat people began in the late 1980s. As memories of the Vietnam War faded, officials in other countries no longer considered Vietnamese boat people as refugees, but rather economic migrants. Vietnam remains a major source of immigrants to the United States, but the pull of economic opportunity in the United States is a greater incentive than the push of political persecution.

### **Cultural Challenges Faced While Living in Other Countries**

For many immigrants, admission to another country does not end their problems. Politicians exploit immigrants as scapegoats for local economic problems.

### **U.S. Attitudes Toward Immigrants**

Americans have always regarded new arrivals with suspicion but tempered their dislike during the nineteenth century because immigrants helped to settle the frontier and extend U.S. control across the continent. Opposition to immigration intensified when the majority of immigrants ceased to come from Northern and Western Europe. More recently, hostile citizens in California and other states have voted to deny undocumented immigrants access to most public services, such as schools, day-care centers, and health clinics.

### **Attitudes Toward Guest Workers**

In Europe, many guest workers suffer from poor social conditions. Both guest workers and their host countries regard the arrangement as temporary. In reality, however, many guest workers remain indefinitely, especially if they are joined by other family members. Political parties that support restrictions on immigration have gained support in France, Germany, and other European countries, and attacks by local citizens on immigrants have increased. In the Middle East, petroleum-exporting countries fear that the increasing numbers of guest workers will spark political unrest and abandonment of traditional Islamic customs. As a result of lower economic growth rates, Middle Eastern and Western European countries have reduced the number of guest workers in recent years.

### **Key Issue 4. Why Do People Migrate within a Country?**

- **Migration between regions of a country**
- **Migration within one region**

Internal migration for most people is less disruptive than international migration. Two main types of internal migration are interregional (between regions of a country) and intraregional (within a region).

### **Migration Between Regions of a Country**

In the past, people migrated from one region to another in search of better farmland. Today, the principal type of interregional migration is from rural areas to urban areas.

### **Migration Between Regions Within the United States**

An especially prominent example of large-scale internal migration is the opening of the American West. The U.S. Census Bureau computes the country's population center at the time of each census, and the changing location of the population center graphically demonstrates the march of the American people across the North American continent.

**Colonial Settlement.** When the first U.S. census was taken, in 1790, the population center was located in the Chesapeake Bay. This location reflects the fact that virtually all colonial-era settlements were near the Atlantic Coast.

**Early Settlement in the Interior.** Building of canals and other transportation improvements helped open the interior in the early 1800s. The Erie Canal allowed for inexpensive travel by boat between New York City and the Great Lakes. People moved into forested river valleys between the Appalachians and the Mississippi River.

**Migration to California.** The population center shifted more rapidly during the mid-nineteenth century, moving 400 miles west in 50 years. Pioneers passed over available agricultural lands to the west and kept going in search of gold in California beginning in the late 1840s. The tough sod of the Great Plains convinced early pioneers it was unsuitable for farming. Maps at the time labeled Great Plains as the Great American Desert.

**Settlement of the Great Plains.** The westward movement of the U.S. population center slowed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in part because large scale migration to the East Coast from Europe offset some of the migration to the West. Advances in agricultural technology (such as barbed wire, steel plows, and windmills) enabled people to cultivate the Great Plains. The expansion of the railroads also encouraged settlement of the Great Plains.

(97)

**Recent Growth of the South.** The population center resumed a more vigorous migration during the late twentieth century, moving across Illinois and into central Missouri by 2000. It has also moved southward by 75 miles since 1940 because of net migration into southern states.

Interregional migration has slowed considerably in the United States into the twenty-first century. Net migration between each pair of regions is now close to zero.

### **Migration Between Regions in Other Countries**

As in the United States, long-distance interregional migration has been an important means of opening new regions for economic development in other large countries.

**Russia.** Soviet policy encouraged factory construction near raw materials rather than near existing population concentrations (see Chapter 11).

(98)

The collapse of the Soviet Union ended policies that encouraged interregional migration. In the transition to a market-based economy, Russian government officials no longer dictate “optimal” locations for factories.

**Brazil.** Most Brazilians live in a string of large cities near the Atlantic Coast. To increase the attractiveness of the interior, the government moved its capital in 1960 from Rio de Janeiro to a newly built city called Brasília, situated 600 miles inland.

**Indonesia.** Since 1969 the Indonesian government has paid for the migration of more than 5 million people, primarily from the island of Java, where nearly two-thirds of its people live, to less populated islands.

**Europe.** The principal flows of interregional migration in Europe are from east and south to west and north. This pattern reflects the relatively low incomes and bleak job prospects in eastern and southern Europe. In the twentieth century, wealthy Western European countries received many immigrants from their former colonies in Africa and Asia. Interregional migration flows can also be found within individual European countries, and the attractiveness of regions within Europe can change.

**India.** Indians require a permit to migrate — or even to visit — the State of Assam. The restrictions, which date from the British colonial era, are designed to protect the ethnic identity of Assamese.

(99)

### **Migration Within One Region**

While interregional migration attracts considerable attention, far more people move within the same region, which is *intraregional* migration. In the United States, the principal intraregional migration is from cities to suburbs.

### **Migration from Rural to Urban Areas**

Urbanization began in the 1800s in Europe and North America as a part of the Industrial Revolution. In recent years, urbanization has diffused to LDCs, especially in Asia.

### **Migration from Urban to Suburban Areas**

Most intraregional migration in MDCs is from cities to surrounding suburbs. As a result of suburbanization, the territory occupied by urban areas has rapidly expanded.

### **Migration from Urban to Rural Areas**

MDCs witnessed a new migration trend during the late twentieth century. More people in these regions immigrated into rural areas than emigrated out of them. Net migration from urban to rural areas is called **counterurbanization**.

(100)

Most counterurbanization represents genuine migration from cities and suburbs to small towns and rural communities. Like suburbanization, people move from urban to rural areas for lifestyle reasons.

Net in-migration into Rocky Mountain states has been offset by out migration from Great Plains states where the economy has been hurt by poor agricultural conditions. Future migration trends are unpredictable in more developed countries, because future economic conditions are difficult to forecast.

**Key Terms**

- Brain drain (p.92)
- Chain migration (p.90)
- Circulation (p.80)
- Counterurbanization (p.99)
- Emigration (p.80)
- Floodplain (p.82)
- Forced migration (p.84)
- Guest workers (p.93)
- Immigration (p.80)
- Internal migration (p.84)
- International migration (p.84)
- Interregional migration (p.84)
- Intervening obstacle (p.83)
- Intraregional migration (p.84)
- Migration (p.80)
- Migration transition (p.84)
- Mobility (p.80)
- Net migration (p.80)
- Pull factor (p.81)
- Push factor (p.81)
- Quotas (p.92)
- Refugees (p.81)
- Unauthorized immigrants (p.90)
- Voluntary migration (p.84)

**Test Prep Questions**

- 1) Migration and circulation are both forms of:
  - A) emigration
  - B) mobility
  - C) immigration
  - D) net migration
  
- 2) The desire to reunify with family living in another country would be considered:
  - A) an environmental push factor
  - B) a cultural pull factor
  - C) an economic push factor
  - D) an environmental pull factor
  
- 3) Which of the following is true of the characteristics of migrants since Ravenstein formulated his theories?
  - A) The percentage of men has increased.
  - B) The percentage of children has decreased.
  - C) The percentage of women has increased.
  - D) all of these
  
- 4) Which of the following regions has net in-migration?
  - A) Oceania
  - B) Asia
  - C) Latin America
  - D) Africa
  
- 5) Which European country has sent the largest number of immigrants to the United States?
  - A) Italy
  - B) Ireland
  - C) The United Kingdom
  - D) Germany

- 6) Which of the following countries is NOT one of the three leading sources of immigrants to the U.S. from Asia?  
A) India  
B) the Philippines  
C) Japan  
D) China
- 7) According to the Pew Hispanic Center estimates, how many unauthorized immigrants are thought to be residing in the U.S.?  
A) 11.9 million  
B) 3.2 million  
C) 21 million  
D) 5.7 million
- 8) Which of the following countries has NOT sent boats of refugees as part of their emigrants to the U.S.?  
A) Cuba  
B) Haiti  
C) Vietnam  
D) Mexico
- 9) How has the U.S. center of population changed, historically?  
A) It has moved northward slightly.  
B) It has moved to the west and the south.  
C) It has moved dramatically to the south.  
D) It has moved moderately to the east.
- 10) Which country relocated its capital in 1960 to the interior of the country from the coast in order to encourage interregional migration?  
A) India  
B) Russia  
C) Brazil  
D) Indonesia

**Short Essay**

- 1) What are the reasons that people migrate according to E. G. Ravenstein's "Laws"?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

2) Describe Zelinski's migration transition and identify the net migration from continent to continent.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

3) Explain the difficulty distinguishing between economic migrants and refugees, using Cubans, Haitians, and Vietnamese as examples.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---