

Migration

3

Learning Outcomes

After reading, studying, and discussing the chapter, students should be able to:

Learning Outcome 3.1.1: Describe the difference between international and internal migration.

Learning Outcome 3.1.2: Identify the principle sources of immigrants during the three main eras of U.S. immigration.

Learning Outcome 3.2.1: Describe the history of interregional migration in the United States.

Learning Outcome 3.2.2: Describe interregional migration in Russia and Canada.

Learning Outcome 3.2.3: Describe interregional migration in China and Brazil.

Learning Outcome 3.2.4: Explain differences among the three forms of intraregional migration.

Learning Outcome 3.3.1: Provide examples of political, environmental, and economic push and pull factors.

Learning Outcome 3.3.2: Summarize the flows of migrant workers in Europe and Asia.

Learning Outcome 3.4.1: Identify the types of immigrants who are given preference to enter the United States.

Learning Outcome 3.4.2: Describe the population characteristics of unauthorized immigrants to the United States.

Learning Outcome 3.4.3: Describe characteristics of immigrants to the United States.

Learning Outcome 3.4.4: Compare American and European attitudes towards immigrants.

Chapter Outline

Introduction. Migration captures the interest of geographers because it is so fundamentally geographic: The act of migrating affects both the place of origin and the migrant's destination. Geographers are interested in how and why people migrate.

Key Issue 1: Where Are Migrants Distributed?

Nineteenth-century geographer E.G. Ravenstein's "laws" are the basis for contemporary geographic migration study. The "laws" are organized into three groups that help us understand where and why migration occurs. These "laws" are mentioned throughout the chapter.

Geographer Wilbur Zelinsky identified a **migration transition**, which consists of changes in a society comparable to those in the demographic transition. International migrants typically leave countries in stage 2 of the demographic transition for stage 3 and 4 countries. Internal migration is more important for countries in stages 3 and 4.

International and Internal Migration Migration is divided into two types: international and internal. International migrants may be **voluntary** or **forced**. While international migration gathers a lot of attention, most migration is internal within a country. There are two types of internal migration. **Interregional migration** is the movement from one region of a country to another. The movement within the same region of the country is called **intra-regional migration**.

International Migration Patterns Global migration patterns reveal that most people migrate from developing countries to developed ones. International migrants may be voluntary or forced. Asia, Latin America, and Africa have net out-migration while Europe and North America experience net in-migration. While other countries have higher percentages of foreign-born residents, the United States has the largest number, with 40 million foreign-born residents.

U.S. Immigration: Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries Three distinct eras of migration are observed in the United States. First, from the late 1700s to 1840, most migrants were from Europe, mainly Great Britain and forced migrants from Africa. All of the colonies in the United States were established on the Atlantic Coast.

U.S. Immigration: Mid-Nineteenth to Early Twentieth Century From 1840 until the outbreak of World War I, the source regions for new migrants coincided with the Industrial Revolution diffusing from its hearth in Great Britain. The majority of the immigrants that came to the United States in the second half of the nineteenth century came from Germany, Ireland, and Scandinavia. In the early twentieth century many of the immigrants came from Eastern and Southern Europe.

U.S. Immigration: Late Twentieth to Early Twenty-first Century After World War II most new migrants to the United States came from Asia and Latin America. Asians and Latin Americans have come to the United States in recent decades after many of their countries entered stage 2 of the demographic transition.

Key Issue 2: Where Do People Migrate Within a Country?

Migration between Regions of the United States The history of interregional migration in the United States was largely an east-to-west phenomenon with the exception of an early start in California. More

recently the center of U.S. population has been moving slowly southward, but interregional migration in the twenty-first century is relatively small.

Migration between Regions in the Two Largest Countries The world's largest countries in land area are Russia and Canada. Interregional migration has been an important means to opening up regions of these large countries for economic development. Migration in Canada was voluntary and in Russia during the Soviet Era it was sometimes forced.

Migration Between Regions in China and Brazil The world's largest countries in land area other than Russia, Canada, and the United States are China and Brazil. Government policies encourage interregional migration in Brazil by moving the capital of the Brazil from the densely populated southern coastal city of Rio de Janeiro to the sparsely populated interior city of Brasilia. The Chinese have restricted the migration of people from the interior to the coast.

Migration from Rural to Urban Areas Intraregional migration is more common than interregional migration. Ravenstein felt that people were much more likely to migrate to a closer location. More developed countries underwent urbanization (moving from rural to urban areas) with the industrial era. This trend is now occurring in LDCs.

Migration from Urban to Suburban Areas In MDCs today, most intraregional migration is from the central city to the suburbs (suburbanization). Nearly twice as many Americans migrate from the cities to the suburbs each year as migrate from suburbs to cities. People typically move to the suburbs because they believe that their quality of life will improve.

Migration from Urban to Rural Areas The late twentieth century saw a trend to move from urban to rural areas (**counterurbanization**). People move from urban to rural areas for lifestyle reasons. With modern communication and transportation systems, rural locations are not as isolated as they used to be.

Key Issue 3: Why Do People Migrate?

Reasons for Migrating Most people migrate for economic reasons, but may be also influenced by political or environmental factors. Economic, political, and environmental **push factors** and **pull factors** combine to motivate a migrant to leave their present home and influence their choice of destination.

Political Push and Pull Factors A difficult question in immigration policy is how to distinguish between economic migrants and **refugees**. Refugees are pushed out of a country by political factors. People that have been forced to migrate for similar political reasons as refugees but have not crossed an international boundary are called an **internally displaced person**. The United States, Canada, and Europe accept refugees but do not accept all economic migrants. Someone that has migrated to another country and hopes to be recognized as a refugee is called an **asylum seeker**.

Environmental Push and Pull Factors People will sometimes migrate for environmental reasons. They are pulled toward physically attractive regions and pushed from hazardous ones. Many people are forced to move by water-related disasters because they live in a vulnerable area like the **floodplain** of a river. A lack of water will often force people to migrate from an area.

Economic Push and Pull Factors Most people migrate for economic reasons. They migrate from areas with limited job prospects to areas where jobs are available. The United States has always been a magnet for migrants because of the economic opportunities. Economic migrants are often not admitted into a country unless they possess special skills.

Europe's Migrant Workers Immigrants serve a useful role in wealthy European countries because they take low-status and low-skilled jobs that the residents won't accept. The **guest worker** program in the 1960s and 1970s allowed immigrants to temporarily move to a country to obtain a job. Turkey and North Africa are the leading source of economic migrants to Europe. Many immigrants from Eastern Europe find work in the wealthier Northern European countries.

Asia's Migrants Workers Many Chinese have traditionally **emigrated** to find work in other countries around the world. China's booming economy is actually attracting immigrants from neighboring countries to China. Wealthy oil-producing countries in Southwest Asia are also attracting a large number of immigrants from poorer countries in the region.

Key Issue 4: Why Do Migrants Face Obstacles?

Intervening obstacles that make it difficult to migrate were once primarily physical, but are now largely political. Migrants used to face a long, arduous, and expensive passage by land and sea. Transportation improvements have diminished the importance of environmental features as intervening obstacles. Now the biggest obstacle for migrants is the lack of a passport or visa.

U.S Quota Laws The United States has long used **quota laws** to limit the source regions and numbers of new migrants. Quota laws were historically preferential to Europeans. Today's quotas give preference to talented and skilled workers in wanted professions which in the long run harms the countries these professionals are emigrating from. This situation is called **brain drain**. Family members of U.S. citizens are also given preference.

Characteristics of Unauthorized Immigration Migrants who enter the United States without proper documents are called **unauthorized immigrants**. More than half the unauthorized immigrants in the United States emigrated from Mexico. They are also most likely to be employed in construction and hospitality industries. The states with the largest number of unauthorized immigrants are California and Texas. Thirty-five percent of unauthorized immigrants have been in the United States for 15 years or more.

Many unauthorized immigrants migrate disproportionately to states that have large cities and where previous migrants have located (in a process called **chain migration**). Proximity to the U.S.-Mexico border also plays a role for some Mexican migrants. Due to the recession that started in 2008, the number of unauthorized immigrants has declined because there are fewer job opportunities in the United States.

Mexico's Border with the United States The United States has constructed a barrier along the U.S.-Mexico border that covers approximately one-fourth of the border's length, but locating the border is difficult in remote areas. Mexicans oftentimes urge understanding and sympathy for the plight of the immigrants trying to cross the border. Ironically, many Mexicans want stronger security along their southern border with Guatemala.

Gender of Migrants Ravenstein theorized that men were the more likely than women to migrate long-distances. This had been the case until the 1990s, after which women were more likely to migrate long-distances than men. The increased female migration partly reflects the changing role of women in society.

Age and Education of Migrants Ravenstein also theorized that most long-distance immigrants were young adults seeking work. This pattern continues in the United States, though an increasing number of children are also migrating with their families. The typical unauthorized Mexican immigrant has a year more of education than the average Mexican.

Immigration Concerns in the United States Recent immigrants have long faced hostility from non-foreign-born citizens in the United States. Arizona and Alabama have passed laws that favor stronger enforcement of authorized immigration. Many Americans want more effective border patrols so that fewer unauthorized immigrants can get into this country. Controversy even extends to exactly what to call the unauthorized immigrants in the United States. People that advocate for more rights for these individuals prefer the term **undocumented immigrant**. **Illegal alien** is a term used by groups who favor tougher restrictions and enforcement of immigration laws.

Immigration Concerns in Europe It has become much more difficult for non-Europeans to immigrate to a European country, while it is much easier for Europeans to migrate to other European countries. Recent immigrants to Europe also encounter resistance from citizens. Hostility to immigrants has become a central plank in the platform of political parties in many European countries. The severe global recession of the twenty-first century has reduced the number of immigrants to Europe and the United States.

European emigration has had impacts around the world, but especially on American culture. Indo-European languages are now spoken by half of the world's people. Europe's most prevalent religion, Christianity, has the world's largest numbers of adherents. European art, music, literature, philosophy, and ethics have also diffused throughout the world.

Icebreakers

Oregon Trail

Many students in American classrooms have played "Oregon Trail," a computer simulation of some of the challenges faced by migrants to the American West. Mentioning this game is likely to generate examples of physical barriers to migration: the sheer distance, river crossings, deserts, and other challenges such as disease, exhaustion, and hunger.

Class Discussion Topics

In 2011, Alabama enacted a law that prohibited or restricted unauthorized immigrants from attending public schools or colleges. Do you think that the citizens of Alabama should pay more in state taxes because the federal government has not effectively controlled the border? Should the federal government have an obligation to fully or partially reimburse the taxpayers of Alabama for the education of unauthorized immigrants? Do you think that the denial of public education will possibly deter unauthorized immigration into Alabama?

Americans purchase products made in foreign countries using cheap labor. Is this any different than allowing low-cost labor to immigrate to the United States? How? Why are employers who knowingly hire undocumented immigrants under less scrutiny than the immigrants themselves?

Challenges to Comprehension

Mobility vs. Migration

Most college students have a great degree of mobility, much greater than that experienced by much of the world's population. Therefore, students may have a difficult time imagining how little many people around the world actually move and how significant a migration decision is.

Illustrating the significance can be helped with a discussion of the difficulty of obstacles, both cultural and physical, faced by migrants. An understanding of how few resources most migrants have is especially useful. This understanding also aids students in comprehending chain migration, as migrants are likely to travel where they have a connection to family or a group from their home country.

Another approach is to ask students about where, provided they have the money, they would like to travel. Write a list of their favored destinations.

Now ask the students whether there are any places on the list where citizens of which are not free to visit the United States. . . . A healthy discussion should follow.

Refugee/ Internally Displaced Person

The United Nations defines a refugee as “a person who has a well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.” Most internally displaced people are essentially refugees that have not crossed an international boundary. For example, apartheid policies in South Africa forced approximately 3.6 million blacks to migrate to government-created homelands within the country. Sudan is estimated to have nearly 5 million internally displaced people due to the ongoing civil unrest.

Sometimes countries will forcibly relocate people if it is deemed to be in the best interests of the country. China forcibly relocated 10 to 17 million people from urban areas to rural communities because they wanted to ease pressure arising from high urban unemployment. The Soviet government forced people to migrate to the Far North to construct and operate steel mills, hydroelectric power stations, mines, and other enterprises.

Explain the concept of eminent domain to the students. Ask the students if they think eminent domain is basically a small scale version of what China and the Soviet Union did. Ask the students if they would be upset if their family had to relocate because of eminent domain.

Assignments

Review/ Reflection Question

- Name an economic, social, and environmental “push” factor (three in all) that would make you migrate, and explain each one. Do the same for three “pull” factors. Make sure you demonstrate an understanding of the difference between mobility and migration in your answer.
- Why did 40 million Europeans leave for the United States to face unknown challenges in America? Answer as though you were a European in the late 1800s preparing to migrate and give your reasons for leaving Europe as well as your reasons for choosing America.
- Why are new migrants to an area frequently the butt of racist or ethnic jokes? Explain in the context of the history of European emigration to the United States. Which groups were more frequently made fun of?
- Describe an interregional move made by your family, some friends, or some others you know. Explain their migration decision using terminology from the book. Do the same for an intraregional move.
- Based on your migration history, consider any “cultural baggage” that you have inherited. This baggage may include sports teams allegiance, food, language, dress, and behavior.

For additional review and test prep materials, have your students visit **MasteringGeography™** to access a variety of resources, including interactive maps, videos, Google Earth activities, RSS feeds, flashcards, web links, and self-study quizzes.

Thinking Geographically Questions

3.1: What is the impact of emigration on the place from which migrants depart?

Large-scale emigration from an area can have both positive and negative effects on that area. International migrants will often come from countries that are in stage 2 of the demographic transition. These countries have high birth rates but limited economic opportunities. Emigration helps reduce unemployment in these countries. Also, many people that emigrate send money to friends or family members back home which stimulates the local economy. The downside of large-scale emigration is that skilled and educated people often move to another country. Brain drain hinders long-term economic development in less developed countries.

3.2: In recent years, has your community seen net in-migration or net out-migration? What factors explain your community's net migration?

Southern California has net in-migration even though Southern California actually has had domestic out-migration in recent years. Since the economic downturn began, more Southern Californians are moving to other states. There has been a decrease in the number of people from other states moving to Southern California. It is the first time in history that this has happened. Southern California's high unemployment rate and high cost of living are pushing people out of the area. Mostly Anglos and African Americans are leaving Southern California for other states.

Even though Southern California has had domestic out-migration in the last several years, it still has net in-migration because of the large number of international immigrants. Southern California in the last several decades has been a magnet for Hispanic and Asian immigrants. Chain migration is pulling people from Latin America and Asia to Southern California. Southern California's economy is struggling, but many international immigrants are coming from countries where the economic conditions are worse. Not many Southern Californians are moving to other countries.

3.3: What factors motivated your family or your ancestors to migrate?

Economic, environmental, and political push factors motivated my father's ancestors to move to the United States. My father's ancestors are from Ireland and they moved to the United States during the mid-nineteenth century because of the Potato Famine. The famine was caused by a potato disease commonly known as potato blight. Most of the Catholic Irish also felt they were being horribly mistreated by the English who were ruling Ireland at the time. There was very little economic opportunity in Ireland for my ancestors and some of them did starve to death.

My mother's parents are from Germany. They moved to the United States in the late nineteenth century. They left Germany because they were farmers and needed their own land. The U.S. Homestead Act was a big pull factor for my mother's ancestors. My mother's family is ethnically Jewish, so relatives on my mother's side of the family theorize that discrimination against Jews might have played a role in them wanting to leave Germany. Economic and political push factors motivated my mother's ancestors to move to the United States.

3.4: Should the United States admit more or fewer immigrants for family reunification, or for job skills, or by random lottery?

The United States is a nation of immigrants. My ancestors moved to this country because they thought there was an opportunity for them to succeed here. Hard working and innovative immigrants have always been the backbone of our nation's economy. We should definitely let more skilled workers migrate to this country because we need more skilled people, especially in medicine and technology. These skilled migrants contribute greatly to our country's overall economic health. They are a huge asset to our country, and we should be thrilled that they want to immigrate to the United States.

Family members should not be kept apart. The United States government has always had strong morals, and to keep loved ones separated from each other seems out of character. I could not imagine moving to another state for a job and my wife and son being forced to remain in California. I would be miserable. Immigrants in this country will feel more connected to United States when their families are living with them. Immigrants let into this country for family reunification will improve the overall well-being of the immigrant population.

Pause and Reflect Questions

3.1.1: How many times have you moved? How many of those moves were international?

I have moved five times in my life. I have made two intraregional moves, I have made three interregional moves, and no international moves. I am thirty-four years old and have moved less than most people my age.

3.1.2: In what stage of the demographic transition were European countries in when they sent the most immigrants to the United States?

Almost all the countries in Europe were in stage 2 of the demographic transition when they had the most out-migration.

3.2.1: What means of transportation were available to migrants crossing the United States during the different eras?

Previous to the 1800s, settlers had to cross the United States using horses and wagons. By the early 1800s canals started to help open up the interior. In the late 1800s the railroads helped people settle previously inaccessible areas in the west. By the 1900s the U.S. federal highway system helped people easily migrate across the country.

3.2.2: Does Canada have an equivalent pattern to the migration from north to south in the United States?

Very few people live in Northern Canada. The vast majority of Canadians live within one hundred miles of the U.S./Canadian border. Many Canadians are moving out of the Atlantic Provinces and moving to Alberta and British Columbia. Canadians are moving to Alberta because of the strong economic climate of the province due to the oil boom. Many Canadians move to British Columbia because of the mild weather and attractive landscape.

3.2.3: What changes in communications and transportation might make counterurbanization easier or harder?

Counterurbanization has become easier because of telecommunication. Many people now work from home. They can make a decent living and live in an extremely isolated place because of the Internet. I think counterurbanization will become more common in the future.

3.3.1: What would it take for Ireland to once again have net in-migration?

The economy in Ireland must improve if they are going to have any significant in-migration. If they find oil offshore they may have another period of in-migration.

3.3.2: Why are street cleaning and construction jobs attractive for immigrants to Europe and Southwest Asia?

These jobs are undesirable to the native people of Europe and Southwest Asia, but are attractive to immigrants. Many immigrants are coming from places where there is not any economic opportunity and at least these jobs represent some sort of an opportunity. Street cleaning and construction jobs pay poorly by European and Southwest Asian standards, but the pay is good for a person coming from Sudan or Chad. Many times these immigrants will send remittances home to family members and the money that is sent can go a long way in these less developed countries.

3.4.2: Which border crossing between Mexico and the United States shown here does the border crossing between Mexico and Guatemala most resemble?

The U.S.-Mexico border crossing between Matamoros, Mexico, and Brownsville, Texas, resembles the border between Guatemala and Mexico. In both border areas a river is used as the boundary separating the two countries.

3.4.3: In what ways are reactions to immigrants today similar to those of a century ago?

The game is completely the same. Only the players have changed.

3.4.4: How are attitudes towards immigrants similar in the United States and Europe?

Both the United States and Europe have similar immigration concerns. The Anglo populations in both regions are not having many children, so immigrants are coming in take the low-pay and low-skilled jobs that are necessary but not desirable to the residents of the country. The new immigrants are having large families and their population is sharply increasing while the rest of the country's population is decreasing.

Google Earth Questions

GOOGLE EARTH 3.1 *The Lower East Side Tenement Museum, at 103 Orchard St. in New York City, shows what life was like for European immigrants. Which of the three principal eras of immigration to the United States does the Tenement Museum describe?*

1905-1914.

GOOGLE EARTH 3.2 *The Donner Pass, through the Sierra Nevada Mountains, was one of the most difficult obstacles for early immigrants to the west. What is now the principal route through the area?*

I-80.

GOOGLE EARTH 3.3 *This is Gulfport, Mississippi, on August 29, 2005, just after Hurricane Katrina hit. Set the time slider for July 11, 2005. What evidence of flood damage can be seen in the August 29 image?*

Destroyed docks; sand on inland properties; damaged ships.

GOOGLE EARTH 3.4 *Gerrard Street is the center of Chinatown in London, England. Why do you think the street has been closed to vehicular traffic?*

It's busy with pedestrians shopping and eating in the restaurants.

Resources

Understand Katrina: Perspectives from the Social Sciences

A great collection of essays on Katrina from the Social Science Research Council:

understandingkatrina.ssrc.org/

United Nations High Commission on Refugees

www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home

Map and text-based information about refugees, photos, news, publications, and educational material, including the excellent "The State of the World's Refugees 2006: Human Displacement in the New Millennium" (www.unhcr.org/4a4dc1a89.html) and the "UNHCR Global Report 2008" (www.unhcr.org/gr08/index.html#/home).

Cultural Landscape Report for Ellis Island

Stakely, J. T. (2003). Cultural Landscape Report for Ellis Island. Brookline, Mass: National Park Service Olmstead Center for Landscapers Preservation.

The document is a detailed analysis of the changes to the landscape of Ellis Island and its cultural history. Available online at www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/elis/clr.pdf (requires Adobe Reader).

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis

This is the official U.S. government site for immigration policy and applications.

U.S. Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration

www.state.gov/g/prm/

This is a U.S. government site for official news and views on immigration and refugee issues.

Connections between Chapters

Back to Chapter 2

Students have an extremely difficult time connecting Chapter 2 with Chapter 3. A great number seem to have memorized, mantralike, that migrants came to the United States “to escape religious persecution.”

Address this misconception by asking whether students believe that all 40-some-odd million European migrants to the United States were fleeing religious persecution. It is amazing how durable elementary tales of Pilgrims can be.

Forward to Chapter 4

A natural connection to Chapter 4 is the observation that migrants frequently bring unique elements of their culture with them in the form of unique foods, dress, and social customs.

This observation can be made even more poignant by emphasizing the most common destination of new migrants, large urban areas, are locations which feature cultural diversity.