

Migration: Causes and Consequences

Human migration is the movement of people from one place to another with the intentions of settling, permanently or temporarily, at a new location (geographic region). The movement is often over long distances and from one country to another, but **internal migration** is also possible; indeed, this is the dominant form globally. People may migrate as individuals, in family units or in **large groups**. There are four major forms of migration: invasion, conquest, colonization and immigration.

A person who moves from their home due to **forced displacement** (such as a natural disaster or civil disturbance) may be described as a displaced person or, if remaining in the home country, an **internally displaced person**. A person who is seeking refuge in another country can, if the reason for leaving the home country is political, religious, or another form of persecution, make a formal application to that country where refuge is sought and is then usually described as an **asylum seeker**. If this application is successful this person's legal status becomes that of a **refugee**.

Migration in geography usually refers to the movement of humans from one place to another. It occurs when the perceived interaction of Push and Pull factors overcome the friction of moving. Push factors: elements of the origin that are perceived negatively leading to a desire to leave. Pull factors: elements of the destination that are perceived positively leading to place-attraction. Friction of Moving: costs in time, finance and emotions in leaving one location and moving to another. The strength of the Pull and/or Push factors need to overcome these costs to cause potential migrants to turn that into an actual relocation.

Perception: how a geographical feature may be received by each individual. A quiet coastal resort may be seen as 'boring' by a teenager (and the 'quietness' a Push factor), but attractive to a retired couple (so a Pull factor). This may result in coastal resorts seeing a net out-migration of young people and net in-migration of the recently retired.

Net Migration: the sum change in migrant numbers between those coming into an area (in-migrants) and those leaving (out-migrants). If migration crosses international borders a person is an Emigrant from the country they leave and an Immigrant to the country they are going to.

Migration Classification

Migration types can be classified according to a range of criteria:

1. Migration Based on Distance

Intra-building: Movement within a building (e.g. user-movements in an airport terminal or hospital)

Inter-building: Pedestrian patterns between a complex of buildings (e.g. students moving over a University campus)

Local scale: Moving house to another within a town or city

Regional scale: Migrating within a country from one county/state to another

International scale: Migrating from one country to another (emigration/immigration)

Global scale: Migrating between distant continents

2. Migration Based on Duration

Daily: Commuting to and from work each day often resulting in 'rush hours'

Seasonal: Winter snow-sport enthusiasts to the Alps; Summer sun-seekers to the Mediterranean; nomadic herders to fresh grazing pastures.

Medium-term temporary: Working in an overseas TNC branch office for a few years; taking up a university course; working in a developing city to pay off rural debts.

Permanent: Emigrating to another country with no intention of returning.

3. Migration Based on Motive

Forced (Environment): Fleeing a region of drought / flood / desertification / eruption

Forced (Political): Threats to freedom, safety and liberty due to religious, ethnic, racial or political persecution, conflict or war. (Leads to Refugees and Asylum-Seekers)

Collective Behaviour: Moving as part of an identified group to maintain group cohesion (Traveller communities, nomadic groups, ethnic groups)

Personal Aspiration: Desiring an improved standard of living for yourself or your family through gaining economic and social benefits; Economic migrants.

Personal Well-Being: Migration for health reasons (retirees to Florida), or perceived quality of life (relocating to rural areas for a less frenetic pace of life)

Some key migrations affecting the geography of contemporary regions:

- Rural-Urban migration in developing economies resulting in rapid urbanization.
- Suburbanization and Counter-urbanization from the cities of mature economies leading to urban sprawl or diffusion of urban characteristics into the rural-urban fringe.
- Refugee migrations from areas of conflict in the Middle East (Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan)

- Economic migrations between areas of highly contrasting economic situations (from north Africa to Europe, from Mexico to the USA)
- Tourism migrations as more people have disposable income to spend on travel and leisure.

Causes of Migration:

People migrate for many different reasons. These reasons can be classified as economic, social, political or environmental:

- economic migration - moving to find work or follow a particular career path
- social migration - moving somewhere for a better quality of life or to be closer to family or friends
- political migration - moving to escape political persecution or war
- environmental causes of migration include natural disasters such as flooding

Some people choose to migrate, eg someone who moves to another country to enhance their career opportunities. Some people are forced to migrate, eg someone who moves due to war or famine.

A refugee is someone who has left their home and does not have a new home to go to. Often refugees do not carry many possessions with them and do not have a clear idea of where they may finally settle.

Push and pull factors

Push factors are the reasons why people leave an area. They include:

- lack of services
- lack of safety
- high crime
- crop failure
- drought
- flooding
- poverty
- war

Pull factors are the reasons why people move to a particular area. They include:

- higher employment
- more wealth
- better services
- good climate
- safer, less crime
- political stability

- more fertile land
- lower risk from natural hazards
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Migration usually happens as a result of a combination of these push and pull factors.

Consequences of Migration

Migration is a consequence of the uneven – distribution of opportunities over space. People : tends to move from place of low opportunity and low safety to the place of higher opportunity and ; better safety. Results can be observed in i economic, social, cultural, political and, demographic terms.

Economic Consequences

These consequences are positive as well as negative:

Positive Remittances are important for economy of a country. As migrants sent remittances to their family members for food, repayment of loans/debts, treatment, marriages, children’s education, agricultural inputs, construction of houses, etc.

Green Revolution in the rural areas of Punjab, Haryana, Western Uttar Pradesh was a success because of the migrants from rural areas of ‘ Eastern Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha.

Negative: Over crowding due to unregulated migration. Development of unhygienic slums in industrially developed states like Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Delhi.

Demographic consequences

These consequences can be both positive or negative:

Positive Redistributing of population within a country. The process of urbanization is dependent on rural-urban migration.

Negative Imbalance in demographic structure. Age and skill selective out migration created an imbalance in demographic structure of rural areas. Age and sex-composition is seriously affected in states of Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Eastern Maharashtra due to migration. The same situation happens in the recipient states.

Social consequences

These consequences are both positive as well as negative:

Positive Migrants work as an agent of social change. They diffuse new ideas of science and technology, family planning, girls education, etc from one place to another place. People also

bring different cultures with them which help to break the narrow considerations and broaden up the mental horizon of the people.

Negative Anonymity increases and creates social vacuum and feeling of ejection. This feeling ultimately results in anti-social activities such as crime, drug abuse, theft, etc.

Environmental consequences

Negative Large scale rural-urban migration leads to overcrowding in the cities and puts tremendous pressure on the infrastructure. It also results in unplanned and haphazard growth of cities in which slums and shanty colonies are very common. Overcrowding is also related to over-exploitation of natural resources and cities are facing serious problems of water shortage, air and water pollution, problem of sewage disposal and management of solid wastes.

Other consequences

- When male migrants leave their wives in rural areas, this puts extra physical and mental pressure on women.
- Migration of women for education and employment gives them more freedom, on the other hand it also adds to their vulnerability