

Migration

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Identify Ravenstein's principles of migration.
2. Explain Lee's migration theory.
3. Explain how transnationalism relates to migration.
4. Distinguish between an unauthorized immigrant, an asylum seeker, a refugee, and an internally displaced person.

Thus far, we have focused our discussion of population change on the relationship between births and deaths in a given population. There is, however, another important factor that contributes to population change: migration. Geographers distinguish between migration and circulation. For example, if you spend the academic year at college but return home during the summers, your movement is classified as a kind of circulation rather than a migration. Geographers consider migration and circulation two kinds of *spatial mobility*.

Migration always involves **emigration**, the out-migration or departure of people from a location, and **immigration**, the in-migration or arrival of people to a location. **Net migration** accounts for changes to the population of a location (e.g., state, province, country, or region) as a result of immigration and emigration:

Net migration = Number of immigrants – Number of emigrants.

Population change in a region can then be calculated using the **demographic equation**, defined as natural increase plus net migration over a specified period of time. The following equation shows how to calculate population change from 2008 to 2009:

$$2009 \text{ Population} = 2008 \text{ Population} + \underbrace{(\text{Births} - \text{Deaths})}_{\text{Natural Increase}} + \text{Net Migration}$$

Forced and Voluntary Migration

We can group most migrations into one of two categories: forced or voluntary. **Forced migration** occurs when a person, group, government, or other entity insists that another individual or group must relocate. The people being forced to move have no say about where they are

moving, when, or other conditions of the move. The Five Civilized Tribes were forced from their homelands in the southeastern United States to Indian Territory—now Oklahoma—in the 19th century. During the late 1990s, Germany forcibly returned several thousand refugees from the war in the former Yugoslavia to Bosnia. The most notorious example of forced migration is the trans-Atlantic African slave trade, which resulted in the forcible relocation of nearly 12 million Africans to destinations in the Caribbean and North, Central, and South America between 1450 and 1900.

In contrast, a **voluntary migration** is a long-term or permanent move that stems from choice. Decisions about voluntary migration may be made during times of considerable hardship and migrants may have limited options, but there is still an element of choice involved in the decision that distinguishes a voluntary from a forced migration. Most migration is voluntary migration and shares several characteristics, which were called the *laws of migration* when first proposed in 1885 by the British demographer E. G. Ravenstein. Ravenstein enumerated several laws, and some included multiple ideas that can be distilled into the following seven principles:

1. Most migrations cover short distances and do not cross international boundaries.
2. Migrants moving to towns and cities create gaps or open spaces that are filled by migrants moving from more distant places.
3. Migration involves two opposite processes: dispersion (the departure of migrants from a place of origin) and absorption (the arrival of migrants in a place of destination).
4. Migration flows produce counterflows.
5. Urban areas are common destinations of long-distance migrants.

migration The long-term or permanent relocation of an individual or group from one place to another.

circulation The temporary, often cyclical, relocation of an individual or group from one place to another.

6. Urban residents tend to be less likely to migrate than rural residents.
7. Women migrate more than men within their country of birth, whereas men more frequently migrate beyond their country of birth.

Ravenstein was one of the first researchers to draw attention to gender differences in migration. Recent trends, however, suggest that women increasingly participate in international migration and may do so as frequently as men. Ravenstein also observed that, as the distance traveled during a move increases, the number of migrants decreases. Thus, he highlighted the role of distance decay in migration flows and noted that all migrations, through the processes of absorption and dispersion, involve spatial interaction. Still, an important question remains unanswered: What specific factors influence people's decision to move? These are the subject of the next section.

Push and Pull Factors

The decision to migrate is a complex one. People must consider many things, such as the opportunities a new place presents, the challenges of living and working away from one's home community, the cost of the move, as well as how and when the move will occur. Often, social networks—systems of personal ties and communication—play an important role in migration.

push factors

Unfavorable conditions or attributes of a place that encourage migration.

pull factors

Favorable conditions or attributes of a place that attract migrants.

All voluntary migrants confront a combination of **push factors** and **pull factors**. In 1966, the social scientist Everett Lee revisited Ravenstein's work in order to develop a theory of migration. An important part of Lee's theory centered on migration as a decision-making process that is compelled by the personal perception

of many different variables (Figure 3.13).

Patterns of Global Migration

International migration occurs when people cross international boundaries and take up long-term or permanent residence in another country. Despite the fact that international migration attracts a great deal of media

attention, most people in the world will never move away from the country in which they were born. Today, there are roughly 168 million international migrants, who represent 3% of the global population. Why is this percentage so small? One reason is that international migration typically introduces additional complexities, including citizenship status, the need for a passport and/or visa, and other costs. International migration is also more stringently regulated today than ever before.

Migration occurs on a global scale when migrants cross an ocean. This type of international migration is a relatively recent phenomenon that has grown in conjunction with European colonization and globalization. As we have seen, the trans-Atlantic slave trade raised global migration to a new level in terms of the sheer numbers of people involved. Then, in the 19th and early 20th centuries, Europe experienced the greatest outpouring of individuals ever, when—as the result of political strife, famine, and other factors—approximately 20 million Europeans crossed the Atlantic Ocean between 1880 and 1914.

Globally, about 60% of all international migrants move from developing countries to developed countries and about 40% of international migrants move from one developing country to another developing country. Three world regions—Asia, Africa, and Latin America—are major sources of international migrants. Because more migrants leave these regions than enter them, they are said to have *net emigration*. Conversely, North America, Europe, and Oceania are regions of *net immigration*. That is, more people are admitted to these places than depart from them in a year.

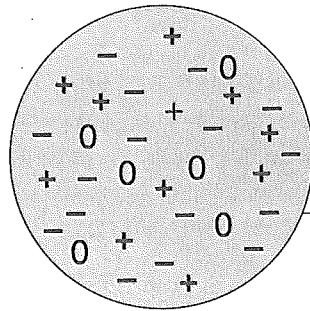
Northern America Both the United States and Canada are major destination countries, regularly admitting more than half of all immigrants in the world. Today most immigrants to Northern America come from Asia and Latin America. This pattern differs from the historical one—from about 1750 to 1950—in which Europeans dominated the flow of immigrants to Northern America.

The United States and Canada set quotas—maximum limits—on the number of immigrants admitted, as do numerous other countries. Prior to 1965, the United States set quotas for individual countries. These quotas demonstrated a preference for European immigrants, but country-specific quotas were abolished by the Immigration and

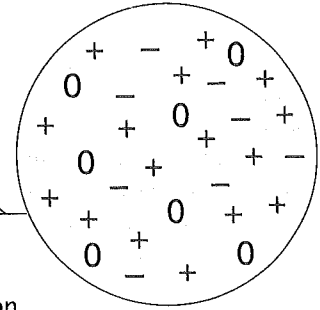
Migration theory • Figure 3.13

Everett Lee's migration theory still informs studies of migration today. He developed a simple conceptual framework to help comprehend the diverse factors that affect the decision to migrate. He grouped these factors into four categories, illustrated in the diagram.

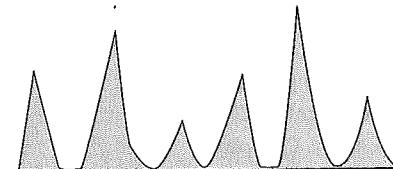
- ① **Area of origin**
Positive, negative, and neutral factors shape the nature of people's attachment to a place.



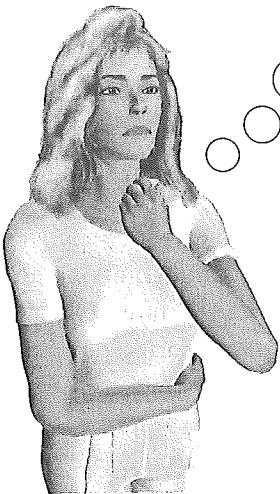
- ② **Area of destination**
Positive, negative, and neutral factors also influence the attractive pull that destinations have on people. Prospective migrants typically have only partial information about the area of destination since they do not know it firsthand.



- ③ **Intervening obstacles**
These are factors that complicate migration, including transportation costs, distance, moving expenses, and if it is an international migration, the ability to get a passport or visa. Intervening obstacles vary from person to person. They also vary in terms of how difficult they are to overcome.



Stage in life or career;
Attitude toward a move
or to change more generally;
Other individual perceptions
and circumstances



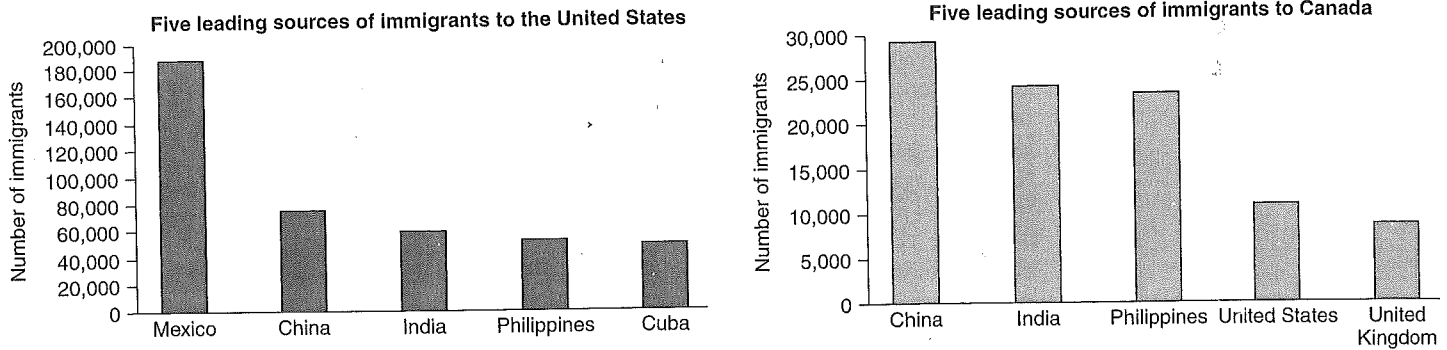
- ④ **Personal factors**
These are the considerations that make every migration decision a personal one, such as how children may be affected or even one's personal attitude toward change. Deciding to migrate involves more than a simple weighing of pros and cons—it involves perceptions, emotions, and sometimes information that may not be entirely accurate.

Nationality Act Amendments of 1965. Since that time the United States has used category-based quotas, including family-sponsored and employment-based immigrants.

In the United States **authorized immigrants** are legal permanent residents, also called green-card holders. U.S. statistics count new arrivals and status adjusters (those already in the country) as immigrants. An employer

can sponsor for legal permanent residence someone who arrives on a temporary work visa. If approved, this person is counted as a status adjuster. In contrast, **unauthorized immigrants**, also called undocumented or illegal immigrants, are people who come to the United States on a temporary visa but remain in the country after their visa expires, or they cross the border without being detected.

Immigration to the United States and Canada • Figure 3.14



a. In 2008, 1,107,126 immigrants (466,558 new arrivals plus 640,568 status adjusters) gained legal permanent residence in the United States. Canada admits about 250,000 immigrants annually. Compare and contrast the main source countries sending immigrants to Canada and the United States. More than 10 million Latin Americans have legally immigrated to the United States since the 1960s. (Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2009 and U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2009.)

b. The controversial fence along the U.S.-Mexico border attempts to block undocumented immigrants, thought to number 11.9 million, or 4% of the population in 2008. Many migration specialists maintain that the flow of these illegal immigrants will continue until the root causes—the economic and political push and pull factors—are addressed.

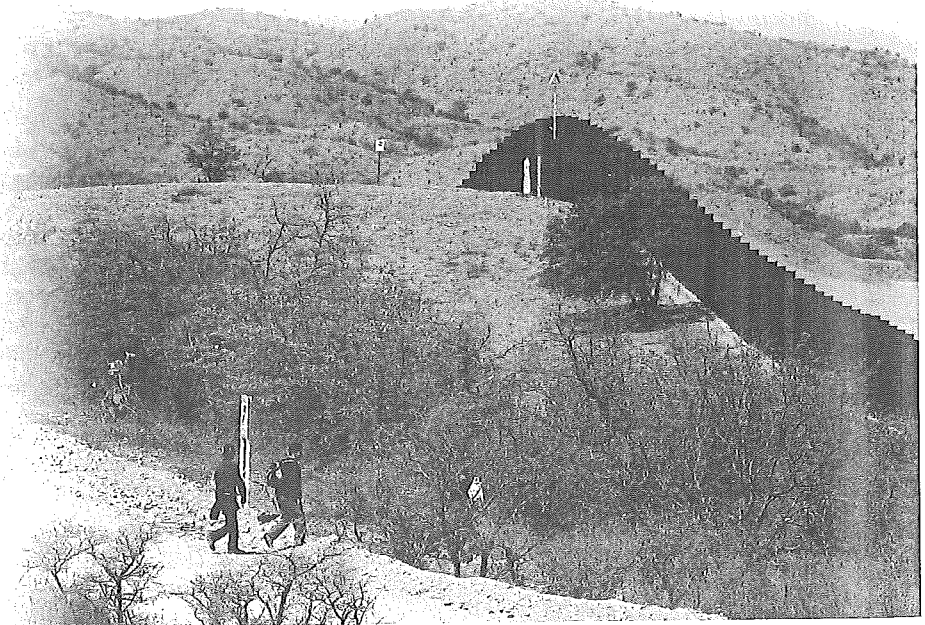


Figure 3.14 illustrates some of the trends in migration to the United States and Canada.

Latin America Prior to 1950, Latin America was a leading destination for immigrants, with the largest migration streams flowing from Spain, Portugal, and Italy. Immigrants also came from Japan, Germany, Russia, and a host of other countries. Since 1950, however, Latin America has become a region of emigration, largely because of political and economic instability. For example, civil unrest in some Central American countries in the late 1980s contributed to heightened levels of emigration from the region. The number of emigrants from El Salvador, for instance, peaked in 1990 when some 80,000 left for the United States. Since that time the numbers of El Salvadorans migrating to the United States has dropped to about 20,000 per year.

Mexico is the leading source of immigrants to the United States, and in 2008 the United States officially admitted 190,000 Mexican immigrants, nearly four times as many immigrants as came from Cuba, the next largest Latin American source area (refer again to Figure 3.14a). Some of the world's highest net emigration rates occur in the Caribbean, mostly to the United States, but also to Canada. Limited economic opportunities, especially in the small island states of the Caribbean, are important push factors. The reasons for emigration are quite different for the people of Colombia, however, where violence and armed confrontations associated with a decades-long uprising continue to wrack the country. This internal strife has uprooted more than 3 million people, forcing them to move from the countryside into towns and cities for their safety. It also continues to sustain emigration from the country. Figure 3.15 illustrates some of these aspects of Latin American migration.

transnationalism
In migration studies, the process by which immigrants develop and cultivate ties to more than one country.

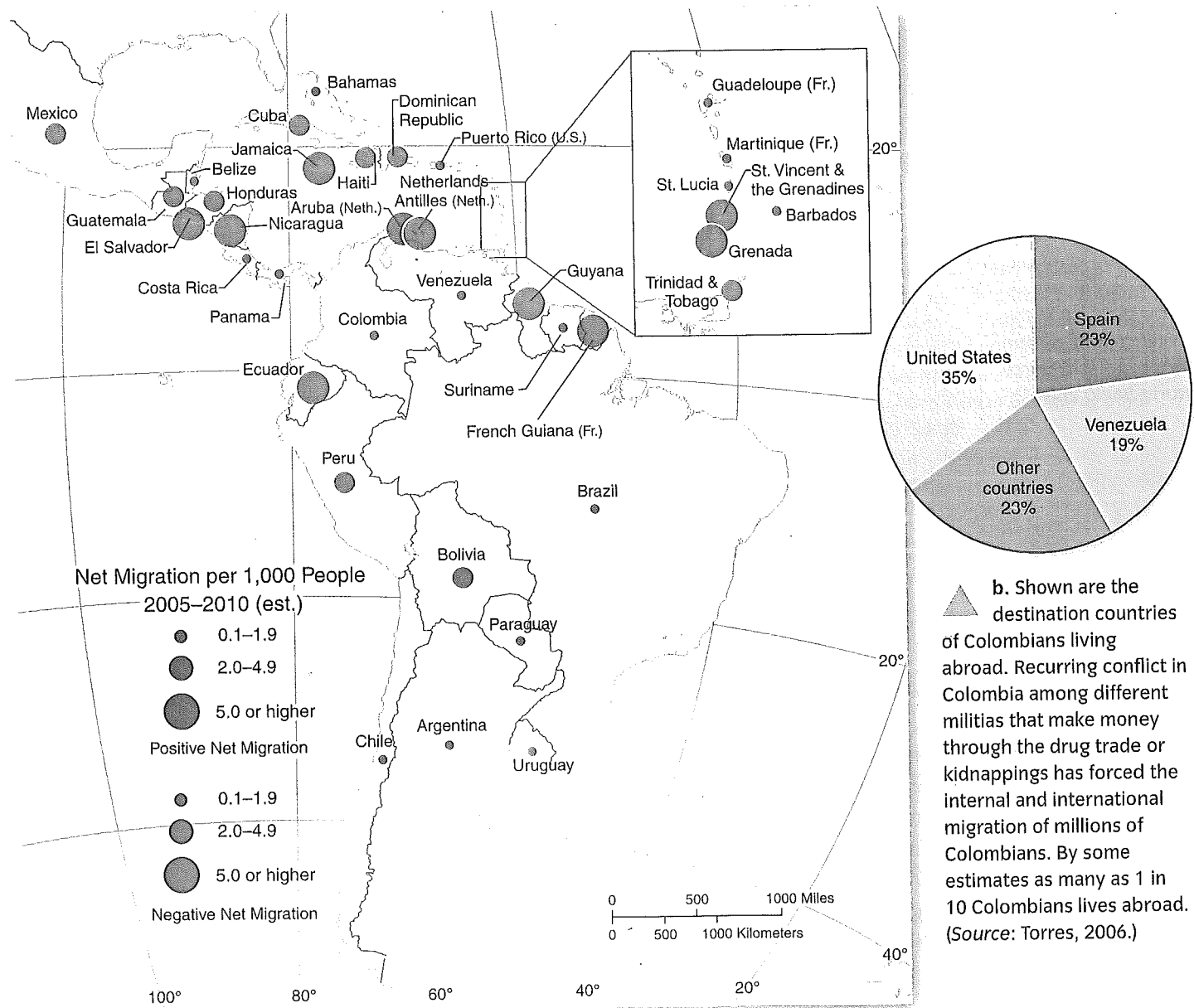
Beginning in the 1990s, a number of scholars began questioning the impact of globalization on international migration, specifically within the context of Latin American migration. What these scholars found is that transnationalism is often a key aspect of an immigrant's identity. Globalization and the greater

connectivity among places facilitate the development of transnationalism.

From the standpoint of geography and geodemography more specifically, transnationalism is significant because it demonstrates that migration involves a system of circulation. Ravenstein hinted at this when he noted that migrations are not just one-way movements of people but also trigger counterflows. Perhaps the strongest evidence of these counterflows can be seen in **remittances**,

Latin American migration patterns • Figure 3.15

a. Blue circles on the map indicate that a country loses more people to emigration than it admits. Some of these migrations have been strongly channelized. Most Dominicans, for example, have moved to New York City and most Cubans to southern Florida. (Source: United Nations Population Division, 2009.)



b. Shown are the destination countries of Colombians living abroad. Recurring conflict in Colombia among different militias that make money through the drug trade or kidnappings has forced the internal and international migration of millions of Colombians. By some estimates as many as 1 in 10 Colombians lives abroad. (Source: Torres, 2006.)

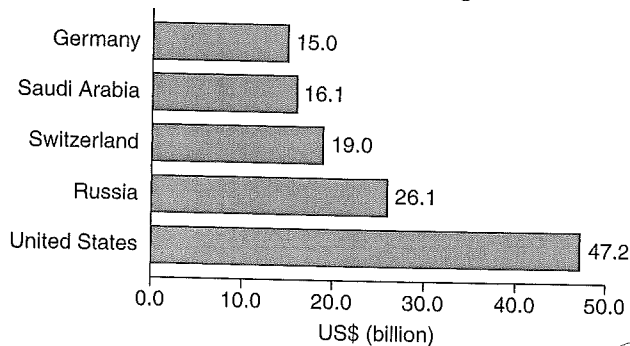
WHAT A GEOGRAPHER SEES

Economic and Sociocultural Transnationalism

In Chapter 2 we learned that economic transnationalism or multinationalism involves the establishment of branch offices of a corporation in other countries. With respect to migration, however, economic transnationalism focuses on the financial and monetary connections between an immigrant and her or his home country.

When immigrants create political, social, or family-based ties that are rooted in the values and practices of their home country and community, they forge a kind of sociocultural transnationalism. Geographers can detect different kinds of transnationalism by tracking remittances and analyzing changes in the cultural landscape.

Top five remittance-sending countries

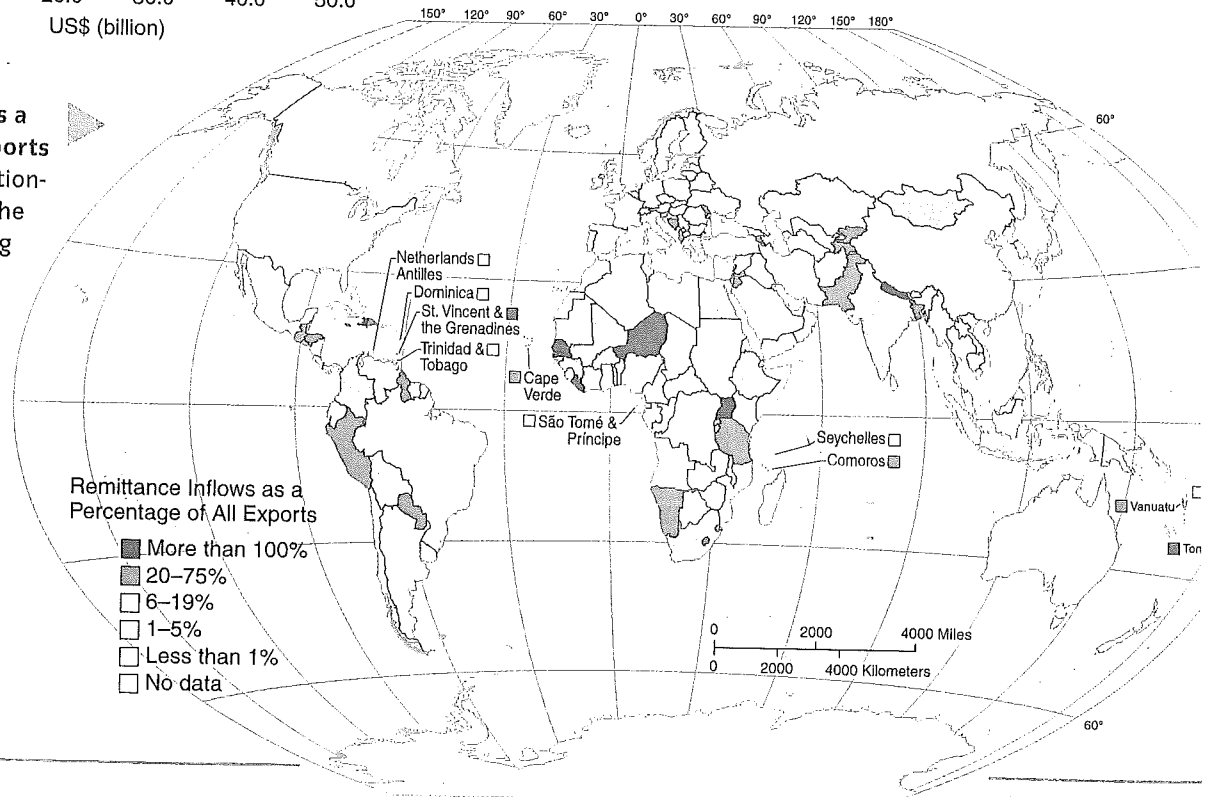


a. Leading remittance-sending countries

In 2008, migrants sent approximately \$433 billion in remittances, compared with \$132 billion sent in 2000. The amounts that are remitted change frequently and decline in periods of economic recession. The United States and Russia are, respectively, the leading remittance-sending countries. (Source: World Bank, 2009.)

b. Remittance inflows as a percentage of total exports

Remittances are proportionally more important to the economies of developing countries and in several instances exceed the earnings from a country's exports. (Source: World Bank, 2009.)



the money, goods, or services sent by immigrants to their home countries. In other cases, however, transnationalism has influenced the cultural landscape (see *What a Geographer Sees*).

Europe As we have seen, Europe historically was a source of significant out-migration. Within the past 50 years, however, this pattern has been reversed, and Europe has been

transformed into a region of in-migration. This transformation began in the 1960s when countries such as Germany and France faced labor shortages. People were needed to fill jobs, and southern Europe, with high unemployment, could meet that need. These push and pull factors created a major south-to-north flow of migrants that lasted until 1974.

Initially, most migrants moved from within Europe (Italy, Spain, and Greece), but subsequently Turkey, Morocco, and

c. Brazilian transnational landscapes in the United States
Higher wages constitute a powerful pull factor. A Brazilian bakery in Marietta, Georgia.



d. Transnational landscapes in Brazil

In the city of Piracanjuba, one of the important source communities for Brazilians in Marietta, the landscape suggests that ideas about architecture may have been influenced by Brazilians who have lived in Georgia or other parts of the U.S. South.

Think Critically

1. What are some other ways immigrants might express transnationalism?
2. Can you think of any circumstances in which a migration does not produce a counterflow?

Algeria became important source countries. These migrants came largely as *guest workers*, receiving temporary permits to live and work in the host country. Once their employment ended, however, many guest workers did not return home. Subsequent *chain migrations* brought family members and others from their community or town to join them.

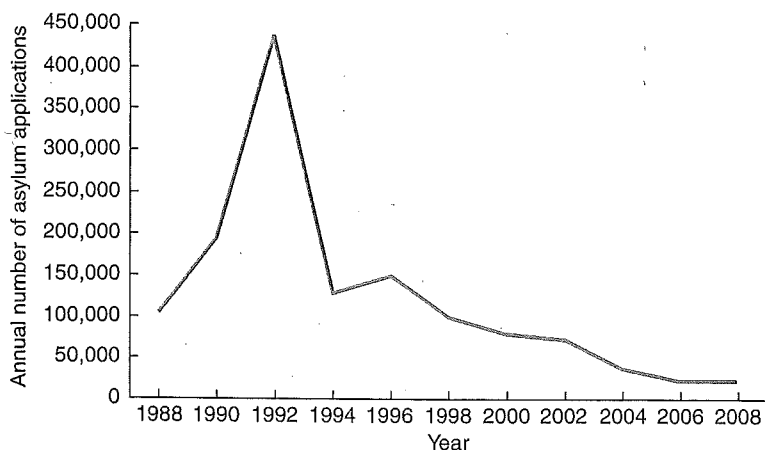
refugee One who flees to another country out of concern for personal safety or to avoid persecution.

ed, however, many guest workers did not return home. Subsequent *chain migrations* brought family members and others from their community or town to join them.

This pattern of immigration took on a different form in the 1980s for two reasons. First, the fall of communism meant that controls on the movement of East Europeans were loosened. Second, millions of foreigners, including many Bosnian **refugees** from the war that developed as Yugoslavia broke apart, sought **asylum** in various European countries.

asylum Protection from persecution granted by one country to a refugee from another country.

Asylum applications in Germany • Figure 3.16



a. After peaking at 438,191 in 1992, the number of asylum applications in Germany has plummeted and in 2008 was just over 21,000. By comparison, the United States received about 49,000 asylum applications in 2008. (Source: UNHCR, 2009; Juchno, 2007.)



b. The Turkish market in Berlin, Germany
Two of the leading sources of Germany's asylum applications at the end of the 20th century were Turkey and the former Yugoslavia.

People fearing persecution in their home country can apply for asylum when they enter another country—at a border, in an airport, or in an embassy of the country in which they wish to seek asylum—and a judge will hear their case. Most applications for asylum are rejected. Nonetheless, while a case is being reviewed or appealed, the state is responsible for housing the asylee and meeting their basic daily needs.

Germany provides a good example of a country impacted by the flow of asylum seekers in the 1990s. In most of the decade, Germany received more asylum applications than any other European country. Why was Germany so popular with asylum seekers? An important reason was that Germany provided a fairly generous living allowance for asylum applicants. However, the German government reformed its asylum laws when public sentiment turned against asylum seekers and immigrants in general. Since 1993, Germany has applied the *safe country policy* in which it can deny asylum to people who have passed through another safe country on their way to Germany. In practice, the first safe country asylees pass through is the country where they should seek asylum. As a result of this policy, Germany has the right to return the asylum seeker to that country. **Figure 3.16** depicts the changing trends in applications for asylum in Germany.

Immigration into Europe adds between 300,000 and 500,000 newcomers each year, and most European countries

have had positive net migration recently. As discussed earlier in the chapter, Europe is characterized by natural population decline. In 2009, for example, deaths in Europe exceeded births, giving the region a natural decrease of -0.3 per 1,000 population. For that same year, however, in-migrants exceeded out-migrants and the net migration rate for Europe was 1.2 per 1,000 population. Thus, population growth in Europe is being fueled by immigration, not by natural increase.

This pattern of immigration raises three key issues. First, the flow of immigrants into Europe is spatially uneven, with Southern Europe the preferred destination. In particular, Cyprus, Spain, Italy, and Portugal have recorded some of the largest population increases from immigration. Second, Europe has not historically been a region of immigration, and many countries have witnessed the resurgence of anti-immigrant political parties. Third, although immigration into Europe is expected to continue, it is not likely to solve the problem of Europe's declining population. Current estimates indicate that France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom would need to admit nearly 700,000 immigrants just to keep their population at the level it was in 1995. There is, however, little public support in Europe for such high levels of immigration.

Africa Africans make up about 9% of international migrants. Their movement from one African country to another and their emigration from the continent have been shaped by colonialism. Mines and plantations established by European colonialists drew heavily on African labor and established enduring patterns of migration. In southern Africa, for example, employment in the coal, copper, diamond, and gold mines has long shaped the flow of people, and in West Africa a well-established migration stream carries agricultural laborers from interior to coastal regions or, increasingly, into cities. Western Europe and North America have been the main destination regions of emigrating Africans. The movement of Nigerians to the United Kingdom or of Algerians to France reflects the colonial connections established between these places.

Virtually all developing regions confront challenges associated with **brain drain**—the migration of skilled professionals (for example, teachers, engineers, doctors) to another country, where they can obtain a higher paying job and better quality of life. Experts agree, however, that Africa has one of the most serious problems with brain drain. Annually, more than 10% of the health professionals in some African countries emigrate. Such departures

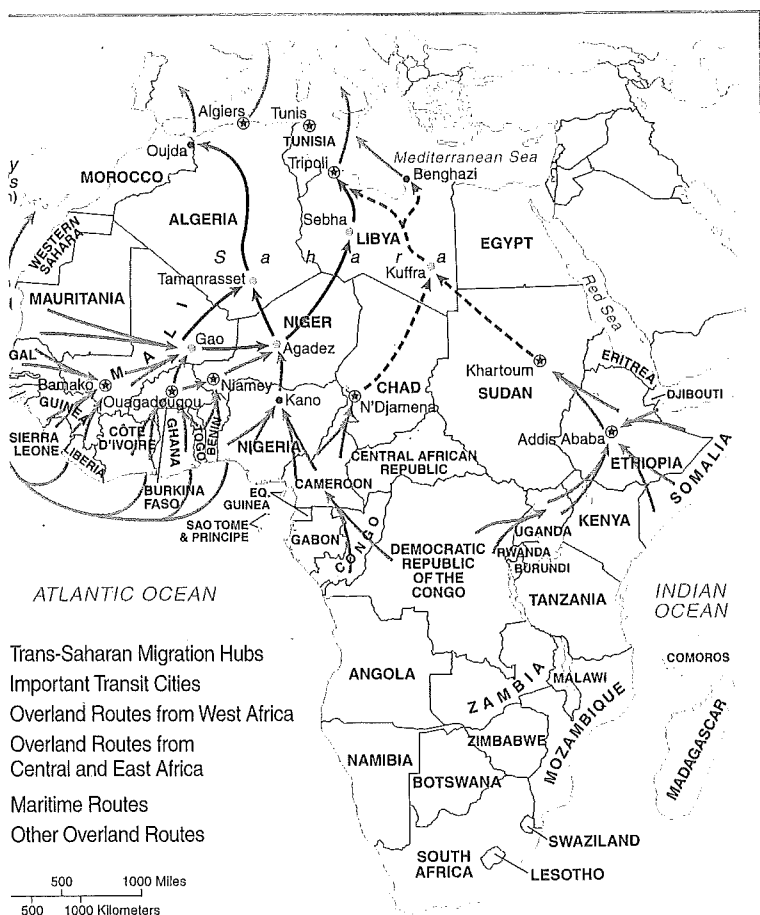
compromise the ability of many African countries to deal with the HIV/AIDS epidemic and other public health concerns.

Conflict in Africa continues to have a major impact on migration, prompting forced migrations and displacing large numbers of people. In 1994 the conflict in Rwanda prompted approximately 2 million people to flee into neighboring portions of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire) and Tanzania. Many of these refugees have since returned to Rwanda, but their mass migration is the largest in recent history. Sudan is estimated to have nearly 5 million internally displaced persons, the result of ongoing civil unrest.

internally displaced persons
People forcibly driven from their homes into a different part of their country.

Other important migration trends in Africa include a growing south-to-north flow of migrants and an increase in the proportion of women who are migrants. Since the 1980s there has been a more significant flow of Sub-Saharan Africans into North Africa. Three countries—Morocco, Tunisia, and Libya—have become a destination as well as a temporary stop for migrants on their way to Europe (Figure 3.17).

African migration • Figure 3.17



Common routes used by Sub-Saharan Africans. Each journey presents a different set of perils, whether crossing the Sahara Desert or plying the waters of the Atlantic Ocean or Mediterranean Sea often in small fishing boats, like this one arriving in Malta.



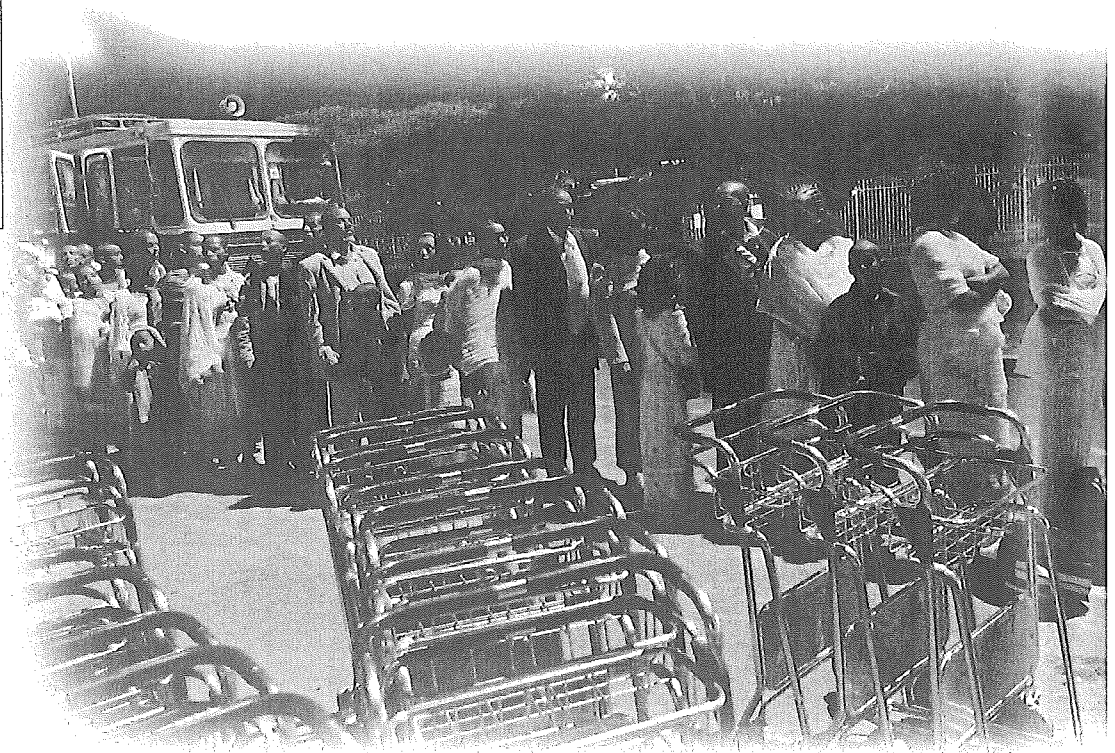
Foreign-born • Figure 3.18

Country	Percent Foreign-Born
Qatar	81
United Arab Emirates	70
Kuwait	69
Bahrain	38
Saudi Arabia	27
Oman	26
Iran	3
Yemen	2
Iraq	1

(Source: UN Population Division, 2009.)

a. Immigration has substantially altered the demographic composition of several of the Middle Eastern countries around the Persian Gulf, with the result that some of them have very high percentages of foreign-born individuals. In comparison, the foreign-born population in the United States is about 12%. (Source: United Nations Population Division, 2009.)

b. Israel is another Middle Eastern country with a high percentage of individuals who are foreign-born (28%), but for different reasons. Israel—much like the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand—has been a country of immigration since its establishment. By law, any Jew can immigrate to Israel and become a citizen. On different occasions since the 1980s, the Israeli government has flown Ethiopian Jews to Israel, shown here, through a kind of assisted immigration.



Asia Asia supplies about 25% of the world's migrants, the largest percentage from any world region. Most of these migrants move from one Asian country to another. Within the past 10 to 15 years, an eastward flow of Asians to countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia has emerged. Asia is also a major source region for immigrants to the United States, Canada, and Europe.

The reasons for Asian migration are complex and varied, but many Asians move in search of jobs, creating sizable streams of labor migration. Beginning in the 1970s, oil-producing Middle Eastern countries with expanding economies attracted millions of migrants, mostly other Asians, who sought work in the oil fields and in construction (Figure 3.18).

Like other Middle Eastern countries, Israel has relied on foreign laborers—usually Palestinians—in agriculture and construction. Following the start of the *intifada*, or Palestinian uprising, in 1987, however, restrictions were placed on the movement of Palestinians, many of whom commuted to work in Israel. Because of security concerns,

Israel has reduced its reliance on Palestinian laborers and turned to other labor migrants from such diverse places as Romania, Ghana, and Thailand.

The movement of refugees from countries such as Afghanistan and Iraq has also shaped Asian migration. In recent years, more refugees have originated in Asia than in any other region of the world. Within southern and eastern Asia, internal migration—particularly rural-to-urban migration—dominates. In China, for example, a recent estimate indicates that the country possesses some 130 million internal migrants, most of whom are moving in search of jobs.

The Asian countries that have the largest populations living abroad are China (40 million), India (20 million), the Philippines (8 million), and Pakistan (4 million). Women dominate the flow of migrants from the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia. It is not unusual for 60% or more of the migrants from these countries to be women. In parts of Asia some women and children are forced to move as a result of human trafficking and are often sold into prostitution. **Human trafficking** uses

force, violence, or coercion to recruit people for work in exploitative conditions. We lack comprehensive statistics on the global volume of human trafficking, but estimates indicate that between 2 and 4 million people are trafficked annually. Southeast Asia is the leading region from which victims are trafficked, and they are moved to destinations including Japan, Thailand, Malaysia, and Cambodia, among other countries. Human traffickers use many different routes; one of these routes takes women and children from Bangladesh and Nepal into India and Pakistan, with some being transported to the Middle East. Young Vietnamese women are also frequently trafficked across the border into China.

CONCEPT CHECK

STOP

1. How did Ravenstein relate absorption and dispersion to migration?
2. What are intervening obstacles, and how do they factor in Lee's migration theory?
3. Why is transnationalism associated with migration, and in what ways might transnationalism be expressed?
4. What similarities and differences exist between Germany's experience with asylum seekers and concerns in the United States about unauthorized immigrants?

Summary



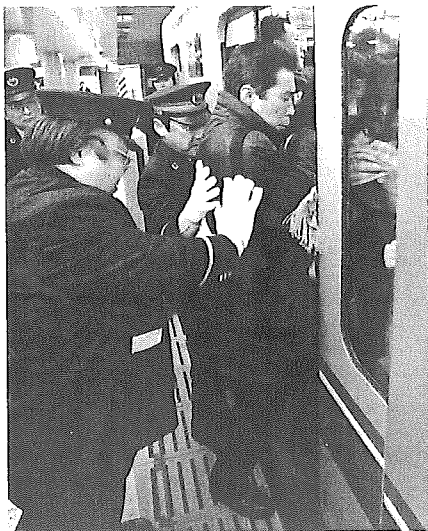
Population Fundamentals 66

- Geodemography is the study of the spatial variations of human populations. People are unevenly distributed on the world's landmasses and tend to be concentrated in coastal lowlands.
- Two important geodemographic measures of population density are **arithmetic density**, depicted here, and **physiological density**, which takes the amount of arable land into consideration.

Globally, TFRs have fallen dramatically, and in many countries they are at or below **replacement level**.

- The **crude death rate (CDR)** measures the mortality within a population. Information about the quality of life of a population can be gleaned from its **life expectancy** and **infant mortality rate**.

Population densities • Figure 3.2



- A variety of cultural, economic, and political factors influence the patterns of birth and death around the world. The **crude birth rate (CBR)** provides one measure used to track birth-related trends in populations. Another measure with more predictive power is the **total fertility rate (TFR)**.

Population Composition and Change 73

- **Population pyramids**, like this one, help show the age and gender makeup of a particular population. Population pyramids can be grouped into one of three categories: rapid population growth, slow population growth, and population decline.

Population pyramids • Figure 3.6

