



Migration Case Studies

This Factsheet outlines the causes and consequences of looks at migration in 5 parts of the world.

Terms and Definitions

- Migration :** a movement of people **from** a **source** area to a **receiving** area.
- Emigrants:** people who move **from** or out of an area.
- Immigrants:** people who move **into** an area.
- Refugees:** people who are forced to migrate owing to 'a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or opinion.'
- Push Factors:** those which encourage people to **leave** the **source** area.
- Pull Factors:** those that attract people to **go to** the **receiving** area.

Classification

Migration can be classified according to three criteria:

Length of stay:

- Temporary - when the migrant **intends to return** to the source area at some time in the future.
- Permanent - when the migrant **intends to stay** in the receiving area.

Distance travelled:

- Internal - within the boundaries of a particular country
- International - from one country to another; crossing a political frontier.

Reason for movement

- Forced - when the migrant **has to leave** for racial, religious, political etc. reasons and would be at risk if they remained.
- Voluntary - when the migrant **chooses** to move, usually for economic reasons.

The classification of the case studies is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Classification of case studies

Case study	Length	Distance	Reason
Long distance commuting (LDC) in Australia	Temp	Internal	Voluntary
Transmigration in Indonesia	Perm	Internal	Forced (econ/political)
Vietnamese 'Boat People'	Perm	International	Forced (econ/political)
Jewish people to Israel	Perm	International	Forced (religious/racial)
Mexicans to the USA	Perm	International	Voluntary

Case Study: Mexicans to the USA

A large-scale permanent, international, voluntary migration from Mexico to the USA began over thirty years ago. At this time the southern states, especially Texas and California were undergoing a period of rapid economic growth. Mexicans crossed the border and went to work as farm labourers at harvest time, in Texas or California in the new factories or as cleaners, maids etc. in large cities such as Los Angeles. The Americans were happy for the migrants to have these dirty, poorly paid jobs, often with long or unsociable hours, which they did not particularly want to do but which were important to the region's growth. The migrants, on the other hand, were very happy to have any job in the USA as unemployment rates remain high in Mexico (40% are unemployed and 20% are underemployed). The way of life and standard of living are also much better in the USA. (See Table 2) It was assumed that the Mexicans would return to Mexico after a few years but many have stayed.

Table 2. Comparison of characteristics for USA and Mexico

	USA	Mexico
GNP (per capita)	26 000 bn	4000 bn
Total population (million)	264	95
Urban % / Rural %	76% / 24%	74% / 26%
Life expectancy	76	72
Infant mortality (per 1000)	8	28
Patients per doctor	500	2000
TVs per 1000	814	127
Cars per 1000	570	69
Education (primary / secondary / tertiary)	100% / 88% / 60%	99% / 53% / 15%

In the late 1970s and early 1980s the world was hit by an economic recession. Unemployment increased in these southern states of the USA and feelings of resentment started to build up against the immigrants who were working in jobs that the Americans now wanted. Control on the number of immigrants coming from Mexico was tightened but many Mexicans tried to enter the country illegally. In 1990 one million were caught and returned home but many more managed to get into the USA. Some entered on visas but did not return home when they expired. By the early 1990s, there were over 12 million Mexicans living in the USA, about 10% of whom were illegal immigrants.

During the 1990s further laws have been passed to make migration into the USA from Mexico more difficult. In California, in 1994, people voted to withdraw most of the welfare services from the illegal immigrants believing this would save the state money as many of the immigrants were categorised as unskilled, poorly educated with large families. Such measures may also discourage further migration. Many people in California feel that the Mexicans are taking over their state as Spanish is widely spoken and there are many Spanish restaurants, shops and bars.

So, this large-scale movement, which started by being of benefit to both the source and receiving country has become perceived as a problem for the USA, which it is finding difficult to solve.

Case Study: Transmigration in Indonesia

Indonesia, made up of a collection of 13677 islands over 3000 miles long, is found in the South China Sea to the north of Australia (see Fig 1). It has an equatorial climate and most of the islands are covered by Tropical Rainforest vegetation.

Fig 1. Migration in Indonesia



Most of Indonesia's 200 million people live on Java, Bali, Lombok and Madura which make up the densely-populated core area. Java has 60% of the country's population in 7% of its area and it is here that the capital, Jakarta, is found. The four main islands all have fertile, volcanic soils which are ideal for intensive, subsistence, rice cultivation.

Transmigration i.e. the movement of people from the densely populated core to the outlying islands, was first started one hundred years ago, in colonial times, by the Dutch authorities and has continued throughout the century. Its main aims have been:

- to encourage a more balanced distribution of population within the country .
- to reduce population pressure in the core by moving people to the peripheral islands.
- to improve living standards for the migrants

Between 1900 and the country's independence in 1949 over half a million people were moved. Despite various governments since then setting quite high targets only a further two million people have been moved.

Exam Hint: Most questions do not expect you to be able to reproduce a detailed map of the location of a case-study to illustrate your answer, so do not spend time learning maps. The maps in this Factsheet only here to help make the text 'come alive'!

The scheme offers:

- free transport to the new area.
- free land allocation of two hectares.
- free housing in the new area.
- free equipment, fertilisers etc. and enough food to keep the family going until the first harvest.

There have been several issues associated with transmigration in recent years:

- It is very costly and over £200 million has been loaned by the World Bank so far to help with the scheme. Many people feel that its limited success does not justify this spending. Its impact on Indonesia's population problems has been minimal. In the 1980s, Java's population increased by 18% in spite of out-movements. In 1995 the country's population was growing by 3.2 million per year! This is more than the entire number of people who had moved out from the core in the whole of the transmigration movement. Also, up to 20% of the migrants have since returned home because of problems in the new areas.
- Many people are alarmed at the effects on the environment. Over 120 million hectares of Tropical Rainforest have been felled to create land for the new settlers. Soil erosion and soil exhaustion also occurred once the delicate balance of the Tropical Rainforest ecosystem has been disturbed.
- There have been conflicts between the immigrants and the local residents because:
 - (i) Traditional farmers are worried that the incomers will take over their area and destroy their way of life. They also complain that the new settlers are given more financial help than they receive.
 - (ii) Local shifting cultivators have had to move as their land is being used by the newcomers.

However, transmigration has brought some advantages.

- Improved infrastructure on the peripheral islands, e.g. better roads, more schools and health facilities, although in many areas they are still not adequate for the numbers of people who actually live there.
- People from the core who had no land or jobs now have a future in their new homes.
- Some spontaneous migration to the outer islands has been stimulated.

In the future, transmigration policy will probably focus on providing rural infrastructure to attract people and encourage migration and less on large-scale organised schemes. It may be better for the country to try to solve the problems linked with its rapid population growth by more family planning programmes, intensifying agricultural production, developing the country's plentiful oil and gas reserves and industries, rather than by organised transmigration.

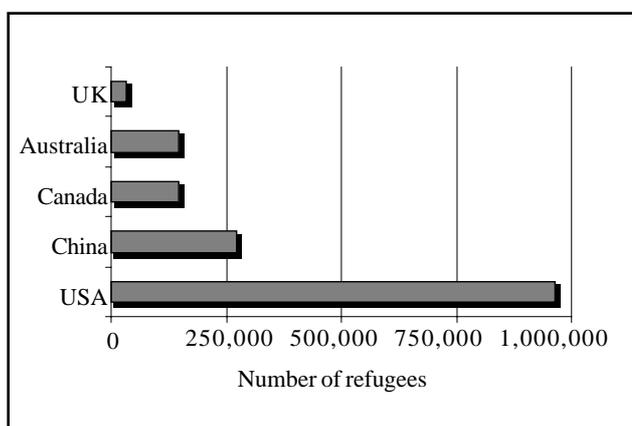
Exam Hint: When you are answering a question about push and pull factors be careful that you do not use the same factor twice e.g. the lack of jobs 'pushes' people and the possibility of employment 'pulls' people

Case Study: Vietnamese Boat People

The Vietnamese war (1957 to 1975) was a conflict between the people of South Vietnam, supported by the USA and capitalist countries, and those of the north supported by the USSR and communist countries. In 1975, the communists overran Vietnam, and one of the largest mass-migrations of all time started from south Vietnam.

Since then two million refugees have migrated to settle in over twenty five different countries. Most of these people moved by sea and so were termed 'boat people'. It was not cheap to leave on a boat and many of them were the richer professionals who could afford to pay. Some of the boat people, in their very overcrowded vessels, were picked up by foreign ships. Others landed in nearby south east Asian countries such as Malaysia, Thailand and Hong Kong, where they were housed in refugee camps whilst awaiting a decision on their future. Many then moved to live in East ern Europe, Middle Eastern countries, the USA, China, Canada, Australia and the UK. (see Fig 3).

Fig 3. Leading receiving areas for Vietnamese refugees



Once living in these countries the immigrants often suffered from various problems as they had been subsistence rice-farmers at home. They often did not have the necessary job skills for the new countries and were unused to their climates and customs.

The first wave of around half a million migrants were political refugees. Many feared for their lives, especially those who had been active in the war, under the new regime. They were subjected to:

- political persecution from the communist government.
- a clampdown on capitalist activities
- racial persecution, as the new government had a poor relationship with China which affected the large ethnic Chinese community in Vietnam.

However, since 1979, more and more of those leaving have been lower and middle class ethnic Vietnamese. These 'economic migrants' wanted a better way of life than the traditional farming economy at home. Conditions in Vietnam were worsened by natural disasters such as in the early 1980s there were several typhoons and food shortages. It has been said that the first migrants were pushed but later ones were pulled!

In 1989 there was an international meeting in Geneva to plan the future of these Vietnamese refugees. It was suggested that future emigrants should be screened as to the exact reason for wanting to leave their country and only true refugees should be allowed to leave. Several suggestions have been made on what should happen to the refugees who are still in over-crowded camps in various south east Asian countries such as Hong Kong.

A. Forcible Repatriation:

Vietnamese in Hong Kong who do not have true political status are being told that they must return home. In 1989, shortly after the Geneva meeting, there were negotiations for the forcible repatriation of some of the economic migrants but there were many international objections to such measures. There was one airlift of 51 people in December 1989 and also voluntary repatriation of about 2000 people. These measures acted as a short-term deterrent and immigration figures went down, but increased again when the immigrants thought that mandatory repatriation was not going to occur on a large-scale. By the early 1990s boatloads of illegal emigrants were once again reaching other south east Asian countries and being towed back out to sea.

B. Improve conditions in Vietnam:

Some people would be happy to return home if they felt that their futures were secure. The government is trying to attract people, especially some of the more educated classes, that are vital to the economy, by offering financial incentives such as doubling their incomes.

C. Other countries could accept more immigrants.

Unfortunately, many MEDCs are suffering from what has been termed 'compassion fatigue' due to constant requests for help from all over the world.

Case Study: Long distance commuting in Australia

Long distance commuting (LDC) may be defined as: "employment in which the work is so isolated from the workers' homes that it is impossible to travel there daily, and so food and accommodation are provided for workers at the work site. Schedules are established whereby employees spend a fixed number of days working at the site, followed by a fixed number of days at home."

Examples of LDC may be found in the UK, involving workers on the North Sea oil-rigs and also in Canada, Australia etc.

LDC has increased recently because:

- there is an increasing demand for new supplies of minerals and some of these are in remote, inhospitable areas away from a suitable, local labour supply.
- air transport has improved e.g. small, fast, fuel-efficient aircraft, which has made LDC a financially viable and practical proposition.
- improved tele-communications has meant that remote areas can be kept in close contact with the headquarters of the operations.

LDC is common in Western Australia, (see Fig 4), where it offers many advantages to the operating company:

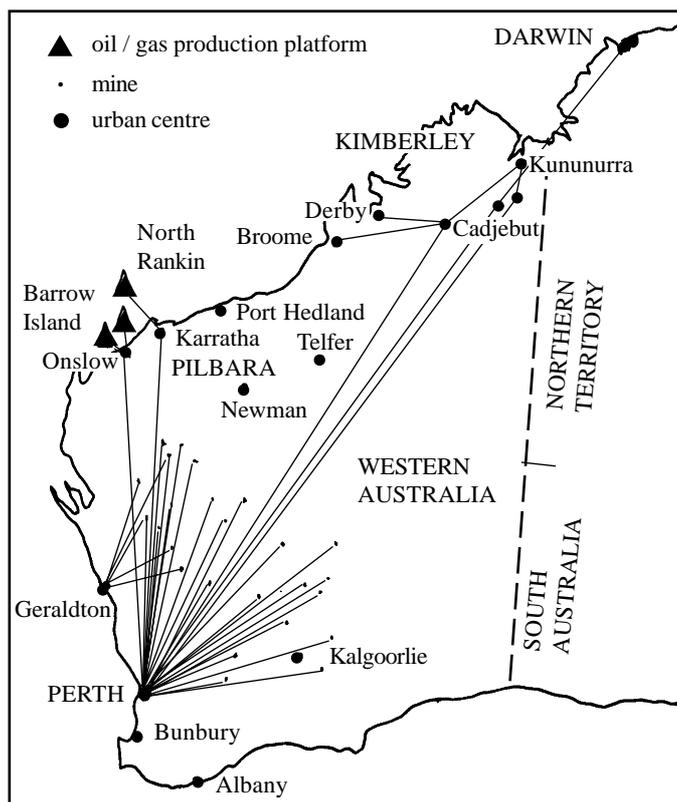
- 1 It is more cost-effective to set up a temporary settlement, especially if the life of the mine is uncertain or likely to be short, rather than build a more permanent settlement which would need family dwellings, schools etc.
- 2 In Australia companies have to pay taxes to the government if they give their workers fringe benefits such as low cost, permanent accommodation but not if the accommodation is temporary and their employees commute to the work area.

- 3 If the settlements are permanent, the companies are also expected to provide and finance some of the necessary infrastructure e.g. roads, electricity supply etc., which can be costly.
- 4 LDC gives greater flexibility to the companies. It is much easier to close down a mine for whatever reason if there is no permanent settlement attached to it. Less upheaval for the workers and families would also be involved.
- 5 Companies which use LDC find that there are often better labour relations with their workers. This is because:
 - many of the workers are not married, or if they are, there is no family friction caused by e.g. working late etc.
 - regular rest periods give the workers a break from the work environment and so grievances against the management do not build up.

There are also advantages for the long-distance commuters:

- 1 The families of such workers do not have to move house each time the location of the father's work changes, and so there is limited upheaval in children's lives and education.
- 2 Many workers find that the extra income earned by working for companies using LDC, and the longer concentrated rest periods, more than compensate for the long hours and spartan living conditions. The main social burden often falls on the workers' wives who have to cope with raising a family when their husbands are away for extended periods. However, they do not have to move house or live long distances from the luxuries of city life.

Fig 4. Long distance commuting in Western Australia



LDC also means that it is less expensive for the local authorities where the mining is taking place as they do not need to build schools and permanent facilities for the newcomers.

However, one of the major criticisms of LDC is that there are few, if any, benefits for the region in which the mining is taking place because:

- most workers at the mines are long-distance commuters and there are few jobs for the local population.
- supplies for the workers, such as food, tend to be brought in so there is no extra local trade.

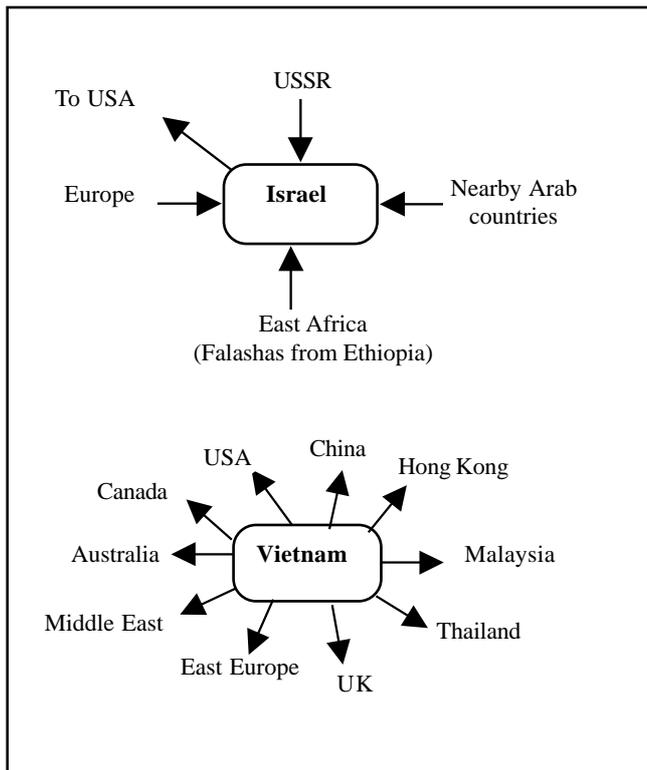
This lack of local benefits and involvement is a concern in areas with poor economic prospects or where there are large numbers of aborigines. Resentment may result, as the locals can see people from outside the area benefiting from their resources, and sometimes disturbing the local environment, causing pollution etc., whilst giving little back in return.

The future of LDC may be more in the LDCs where lack of suitable local labour and technical know-how may favour its usage. In 1993, Queensland, in the Northern Territory of Australia, became an important base for flying workers one hundred kilometres northwards to the gold mines in New Guinea.

Case Study: Migration into Israel

During the Second World War there was much persecution and mass-killing of Jewish people in Europe. After the war they claimed Palestine as their homeland and in 1948 the state of Israel was created, replacing the country of Palestine. Israel has grown by the immigration of Jewish people from all over the world, some migrants being forced to move and some doing so voluntarily. It differs from many migrations where people move from one place to several others as it involves many people from all over the world moving to one place. (Fig 5)

Fig 5. Comparison of migration patterns to Israel and from Vietnam



Since 1948 there have been several large waves of migration.

- 1 In the 1950s poor Jews moved to Israel from nearby Arab countries.
- 2 In the 1970s many Soviet Jews moved to Israel.
- 3 In the 1980s and 1990s Ethiopian Jews, known as Falashas, migrated into Israel from East Africa. During the 1980s and 1990s nearly 30,000 of them were evacuated using two airlift programmes. Two thirds of these migrants were under 18. There are now only three thousand Jewish people still in Ethiopia.
- 4 In the early 1990s more Jews migrated from the USSR.

Until 1989 most Soviet Jews went to Israel, acquired Israeli citizenship and then migrated to the USA. After 1989 the government of the USSR relaxed its policy on exit permits and the numbers of Soviet Jews moving to Israel increased from 12,000 in 1989 to 200,000 in 1990. The USA thus had to control the numbers of immigrants to 50,000 per year and many Soviet Jews then stayed in Israel.

By 1995 Soviet Jews made up one fifth of Israel's population.

These large-scale migrations have created several problems:

1. Most Soviet immigrants are well-educated and highly qualified. There are not enough suitable jobs for them in Israel and so there are high levels of unemployment within this group.
2. It has been difficult for the Falashas to be absorbed into the Israeli way of life as they tend to have large families, their Hebrew is limited and they have few skills which are relevant to their new way of life.
3. It has been very costly for the government to build enough accommodation and other facilities for the immigrants. Israel receives one of the largest amounts of foreign aid per capita, especially from the USA.

Israel is thus a relatively new country and will probably continue to have a range of problems in the future as it develops as an independent nation.

Exam Hint: When describing the advantages and disadvantages of a particular population movement try to consider all the various groups of people who are affected by the migration and not just the migrants themselves.

Practice Questions

1. What is meant by the statement that the first Vietnamese refugees were pushed whilst the second wave were pulled?
(4 marks)
2. Using Table 1 and your own knowledge Identify the main push and pull factors for Mexican migrants to the USA.
(6 marks)
3. Describe the types of companies which would favour the use of LDC.
(5 marks)

Answers

1. After the war in Vietnam, when the communists moved south, people who had fought against them or worked alongside the Americans would be in some danger and thus would be 'pushed' from their homes. They would be 'political refugees' and forced to move to another country in the hope of rebuilding their lives.

The people who left Vietnam a few years later were mainly 'economic migrants' i.e. they wanted to leave their country whose economy had been damaged in the war and try to find a better life in another country. Having experienced the American way of life during the war they realised that developed countries may be able to offer them a much higher standard of living. Such migrants can thus be said to have been 'pulled' from their country by the attractions of the more developed countries.

Two marks each for an awareness of the meaning of 'pushed' and 'pulled' in this context.

2. The main push factors in the movement of Mexicans from their homeland are:
- * low standards of living, with a low GNP and a high infant mortality
 - * the numbers of consumer goods e.g. TVs and cars, per thousand are quite low which is related to the amount of disposable income and so indicates that people are poor, unemployment is high etc.
 - * poor health service provision with only one doctor per 2000 patients.
 - * education provision in the secondary and tertiary sectors is limited which means that there are fewer opportunities to become qualified in some of the more highly paid occupations.

Pull Factors:

- * the USA has a high GDP and so will be able to provide better living conditions such as housing with all the basic facilities for its people.
- * there are more opportunities in the USA as it is wealthier. There are social and welfare services so that few people live in real poverty.
- * the USA has many industries and services which offer a variety of employment.

One mark each for a valid push or pull factor.

3. L.C.D. is used:

- * in primary activities such as mining which may have a short operational life.
- * in remote areas away from other suitable sources of labour
- * in areas where the environment is difficult e.g. frozen north of Canada, North Sea etc.
- * where the main type of jobs involves men
- * where the cost of commuting into the area is lower than the costs of a permanent development.

One mark each for any relevant point made.

Acknowledgements:

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