5 Migration

5.1 Migration as a component of population change

☐ Movements of populations: definitions

Migration is more volatile than fertility and mortality, the other two basic demographic variables. It can react very quickly indeed to changing economic, political and social circumstances. However, the desire to migrate may not be achieved if the constraints imposed on it are too great.

Migration is defined as the movement of people across a specified boundary, national or international, to establish a new permanent place of residence (Figure 5.1). The United Nations defines 'permanent' as a change of residence lasting more than one year. Movements with a time scale of less than a year are termed 'circulatory movements'.


Figure 5.1 Chinatown in San Francisco – the Chinese community is long established in this city

It is customary to subdivide the field of migration into two areas: internal migration and international migration. International migrants cross international boundaries; internal migrants move within the frontiers of one nation. The terms immigration and emigration

are used with reference to international migration. The corresponding terms for internal movements are in-migration and out-migration. Internal migration streams are usually on a larger scale than their international counterparts. Net migration is the number of migrants entering a region or country less the number of migrants who leave the same region or country. The balance may be either positive or negative.

Migrations are embarked upon from an area of origin and are completed at an area of destination. Migrants sharing a common origin and destination form a migration stream. For every migration stream, a counterstream or reverse flow at a lower volume usually results as some migrants dissatisfied with their destination return home. Push and pull factors (Figures 5.2 and 5.3) encourage people to migrate. Push factors are the observations that are negative about an area in which the individual is presently living, while pull factors are the perceived better conditions in the place to which the migrant wishes to go. Once strong links between a rural and an urban area are established, the phenomenon of chain migration frequently results. After one or a small number of pioneering migrants have led the way, others from the same rural community follow. In some communities, the process of relay migration has been identified, whereby at different stages in a family's life cycle different people take responsibility for migration in order to improve the financial position of the family. Another recognisable process is stepped migration, whereby the rural migrant initially heads for a familiar small town and then after a period of time moves on to a larger urban settlement. Over many years, the migrant may take a number of steps up the urban hierarchy.

+ Positive factors — Negative factors
O Factors perceived as unimportant to the individual
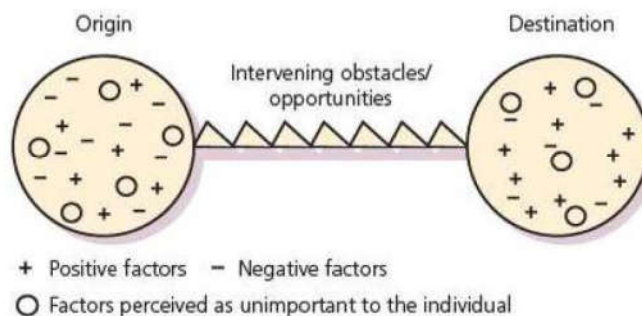
Source: *IGCSE Geography* by P. Guinness & G. Nagle (Hodder Education, 2009), p.23
Figure 5.2 Push and pull factors

Figure 5.3 Push and pull factors

migration occurs when the individual or household has little or no choice but to move. This may be due to environmental or human factors. Figure 5.4 shows that there are barriers to migration. In earlier times, the physical dangers of the journey and the costs involved were major obstacles. However, the low real cost of modern transportation and the high level of safety have reduced these barriers considerably. In the modern world, it is the legal restrictions that countries place on migration that are the main barriers to international migration. Most countries now have very strict rules on immigration, and some countries restrict emigration.
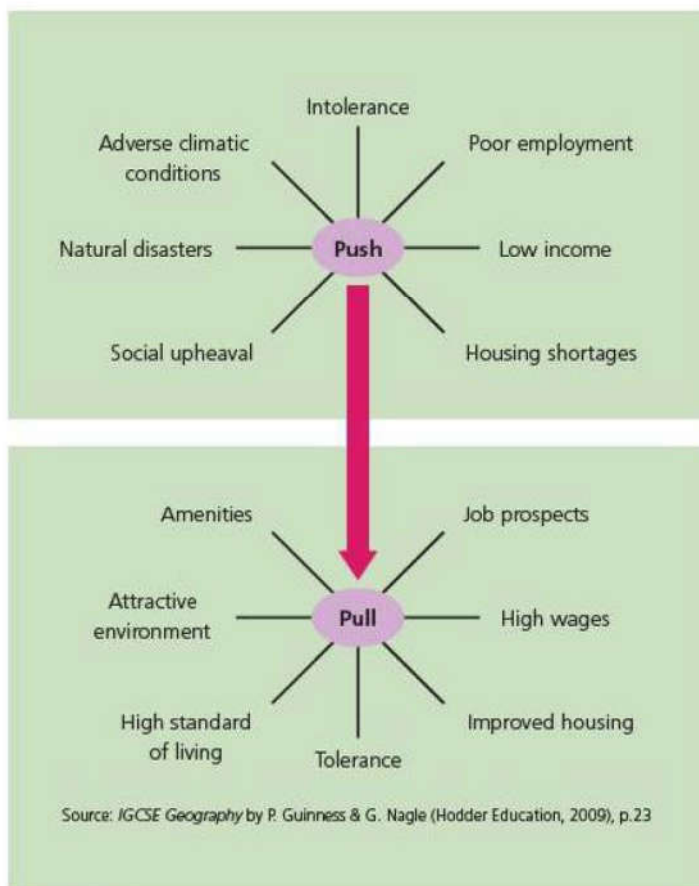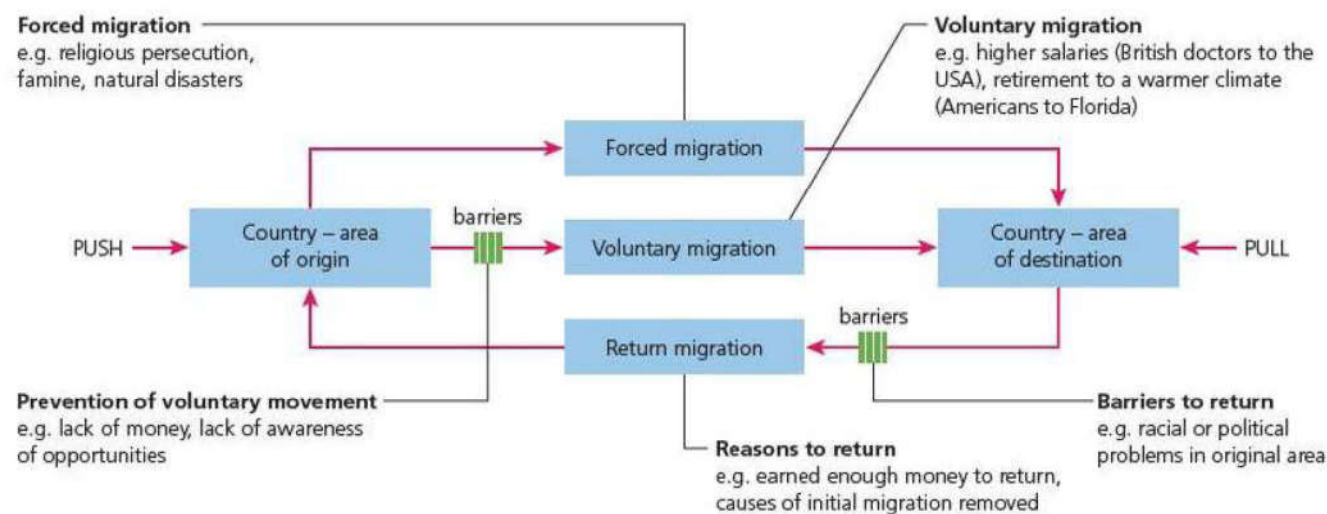
The most basic distinction drawn by demographers is between voluntary and forced migration (Figure 5.4). Voluntary migration is where the individual or household has a free choice about whether or not to move. Forced

☐ Causes of migration

Various attempts to classify migration have helped improve understanding of its causes. In 1958, W. Peterson noted the following five migratory types: primitive, forced, impelled, free and mass.

Figure 5.4 Voluntary and forced migration

- The nomadic pastoralism and shifting cultivation practised by the world's most traditional societies are examples of primitive migration. Physical factors such as seasonal rainfall and the limits of soil fertility govern such migratory practices.

- The abduction and transport of Africans to the Americas as slaves was the largest forced migration in history. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, 15 million people were shipped across the Atlantic Ocean as slaves. The expulsion of Asians from Uganda in the 1970s, when the country was under the dictatorship of Idi Amin, and the forcible movement of people from parts of the former Yugoslavia under the policy of 'ethnic cleansing', are much more recent examples. Migrations may also be forced by natural disasters (volcanic eruptions, floods, drought, and so on) or by environmental catastrophe such as nuclear contamination in Chernobyl.

- Impelled migrations take place under perceived threat, either human or physical, but an element of choice lacking in forced migrations remains. Arguably the largest migration under duress in modern times occurred after the partition of India in 1947, when 7 million Muslims fled India for the new state of Pakistan and 7 million Hindus moved with equal speed in the opposite direction. Both groups were in fear of their lives but they were not forced to move by government, and minority groups remained in each country.

- The distinction between free and mass migration is one of magnitude only. The movement of Europeans to North America was the largest mass migration in history.

Within each category, Peterson classed a particular migration as either innovating or conservative. In the former, the objective of the move was to achieve improved living standards, while in the latter the aim was just to maintain present standards.

E.S. Lee (1966) produced a series of Principles of Migration in an attempt to bring together all aspects of migration theory at that time. Of particular note was his origin-intervening obstacles-destination model, which emphasised the role of push and pull factors (Figures 5.2 and 5.3). Here, he suggests there are four classes of factors that influence the decision to migrate:

1 those associated with the place of origin (Figure 5.5)
2 those associated with the place of destination
3 intervening obstacles that lie between the places of origin and destination
4 a variety of personal factors that moderate 1, 2 and 3.

Each place of origin and destination has numerous positive, negative and neutral factors for the individual. What may constitute a negative factor at destination

Figure 5.5 A severe winter in Mongolia caused great loss to animal herds, forcing farmers to leave the countryside for the capital city, Ulaanbaatar

for one individual – a very hot climate, say – may be a positive factor for another person. Lee suggested that there is a difference in the operation of these factors at origin and destination, as the latter will always be less well known: 'There is always an element of ignorance or even mystery about the area of destination, and there must always be some uncertainty with regard to the reception of a migrant in a new area'. This is particularly so with international migration. Another important difference noted by Lee between the factors associated with area of origin and area of destination related to stages of the life cycle. Most migrants spend their formative years in the area of origin enjoying the good health of youth with often only limited social and economic responsibilities. This frequently results in an overvaluation of the positive elements in the environment and an undervaluation of the negative elements. Conversely, the difficulties associated with assimilation into a new environment may create in the newly arrived a contrary but equally erroneous evaluation of the positive and negative factors at destination. The intervening obstacles between origin and destination include distance, the means and cost of transport and legal restraints (mainly in the form of immigration laws).

Akin Mabogunje, in his analysis of rural–urban migration in Africa, attempted to set the phenomenon in its economic and social context as part of a system of interrelated elements (Figure 5.6). The systems approach does not see migration in over-simplified terms of cause and effect, but as a circular, interdependent and self-modifying system.

In Mabogunje's framework, the African rural–urban migration system is operating in an environment of change. The system and the environment act and react upon each other continuously. For example, expansion in

Environment
Economic conditions – wages, prices, consumer preferences, degrees of commercialisation and industrial development

Environment
Social welfare, development
Education, health, etc.

Environment
Technology
Transportation, communication, mechanisation, etc.

Urbanite

Urban adjustment mechanism

Urban control sub-systems

Urban subsystem

Positive feedback channels

Migration channels

Negative feedback channels

Potential migrant

Rural control subsystem

Rural adjustment mechanism

Environment
Governmental policies, agricultural practices, marketing organisations, population movement, etc.

Source: *Access to Geography: Migration* by P. Guinness (Hodder Education, 2002), p.18

Figure 5.6 A systems approach to migration

the urban economy will stimulate migration from rural areas, while deteriorating economic conditions in the larger urban areas will result in a reduction of migration flows from rural areas.

If the potential migrant is stimulated to move to an urban area by the positive nature of the environment, he/she then comes under the influence of the 'rural control subsystem'. Here the attitudes of the potential migrant's family and local community come into strong play, either encouraging or restraining movement. If movement occurs, the migrant then comes under the influence of the 'urban control subsystem'. The latter will determine, by means of the employment and housing opportunities it offers, the degree to which migrants assimilate.

In addition, there are adjustment mechanisms. For example, at the rural point of origin a positive adjustment resulting from out-migration might be increased income per head for the remaining villagers. The most likely negative adjustment will be the reduced level of social interaction between the out-migrants and their families. At the urban destination, the in-migrant may benefit from the receipt of regular wages for the first time, but as a result may be drawn into the negative aspects of lower-income urban life such as gambling, excessive drinking and prostitution.

The flow of information between out-migrants and their rural origin is an important component of the system. Favourable reports from the new urban dwellers will generally increase the migration flow, while negative perceptions will slow down the rate of movement. The trans-Siberian railway (Figure 5.7) is an important routeway for people moving between the Asiatic and European parts of Russia. Many small communities in Asiatic Russia have been abandoned because of high out-migration.

Figure 5.7 The trans-Siberian railway

1 What is meant by *primitive migration*?
2 What is the difference between *forced migration* and *impelled migration*?
3 With reference to Figure 5.2:
   a Explain the terms *origin*, *destination* and *intervening obstacles*.
   b Suggest how intervening obstacles between origin and destination have changed over time.
4 Look at Figure 5.6.
   a What do you understand by a systems approach to migration?
   b Suggest how the 'rural control subsystem' might affect a potential migration decision.
   c Outline three ways in which the urban subsystem can have an impact on rural–urban migration.
   d Explain the influence of positive and negative feedback channels on new potential migrants.

Recent approaches to migration

Figure 5.8 summarises the main differences in the most recent approaches to migration, each of which is briefly discussed below.

Determinants of migration	Effects	Unit of analysis		
		Individual	Household/family	Institutions
Economic	Positive	Todaro Push–pull	Stark and others; 'new economics' of migration	
	Negative			Marxism Structuralism
Sociological/ anthropological		← Structuration theory →		
		← Gender analyses →		

Figure 5.8 Recent approaches to migration studies

The Todaro model: the cost–benefit approach

In the post-1950 period, there has been a huge movement of population from rural to urban areas in LICs. For many migrants, it appeared that they had just swapped rural poverty for urban poverty. The simplistic explanation put forward was that many rural dwellers had been attracted by the 'bright lights' of the large urban areas without any clear understanding of the real deprivation of urban life for those at or near the bottom of the socio-economic scale. They had migrated due to false perceptions picked up from the media and other sources. The American economist Michael Todaro challenged this view, arguing that migrants' perceptions of urban life were realistic, being strongly based on an accurate flow of information from earlier migrants from their rural
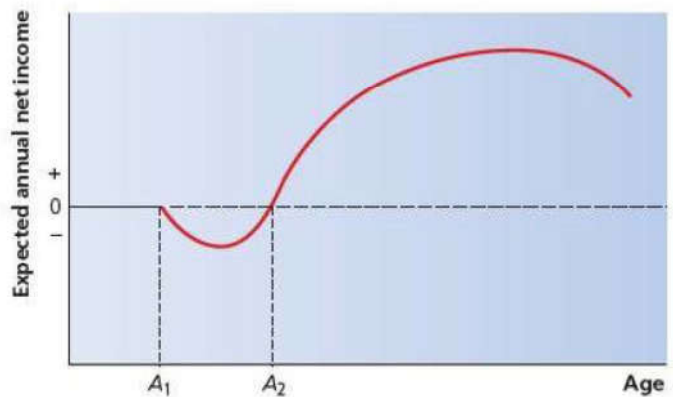

Figure 5.9 A typical net-income stream

community. Potential migrants carefully weighed up the costs and benefits of moving to urban areas, including the 'anticipated income differential'. They were very aware that in the short term they might not be better off but, weighing up the odds, the likelihood was that their socio-economic standing would improve in the long term. Thus people were willing to endure short-term difficulties in the hope of better prospects eventually, if not for themselves then for their children. Expected wages were discounted against the prospects of remaining unemployed for any length of time.

Figure 5.9 summarises the typical net-income stream of a young rural–urban migrant. While at school, the young rural dweller's net income is zero. At A_1 he migrates to a large urban area but is initially unable to find work because of the intense competition for employment and the limited nature of his contacts. His net income is negative as he has no option but to live on savings or borrowed money. However, in time, as his knowledge of the city improves and his contact base widens, he finds employment and his net income becomes positive (A_2), rising to a peak and then decreasing with age as his productivity begins to fall.

Stark's 'new economics of migration'

Stark, in what is often referred to as the 'new economics of migration', has extended the Todaro model by replacing the individual with the household as the unit of analysis. Stark, along with others, argued that insufficient attention had been paid to the institutions that determine migration. For example, in the Todaro model it is assumed that migrants act individually according to a rationality of economic self-interest. However, migration, according to Stark, is seen as a form of economic diversification by families whereby the costs and rewards are shared. It is a form of risk spreading. She asserts that 'even though the entities that engage in migration are often individual agents, there is more to labour migration than an individualistic optimising behaviour. Migration by one person can be due to, fully consistent with, or undertaken by a group of persons, such as the family.'

So often the initial cost of establishing the rural migrant in an urban area is carried by the family in the expectation of returns in the form of remittances. The migrant also has expectations in maintaining the link, for example in the form of inheritance. A number of studies have described how families invest in the education of one member of the family, usually the firstborn son, for migration to the urban formal sector. The expectation is that the remittances received will be crucial to the up-bringing of the remaining children and have an important effect on the general standard of living of the family.

The Stark model also takes account of: incomplete and imperfect information; imperfections in rural capital markets and transaction costs; and stresses the importance in migration decisions of relative deprivation in the local income distribution rather than absolute deprivation.

Marxist/structuralist theory

Some writers, often in the tradition of Marxist analyses, see labour migration as inevitable in the transition to capitalism (Figure 5.10). Migration is the only option for survival after alienation from the land. Structuralist theory draws attention to the advantages of migrant labour for capitalist production and emphasises the control that capitalism has over migrant labour. For example, employers in destinations do not bear the cost of their workers' reproduction as the latter maintain ties with their rural communities, and employers use migrant labour to reduce the bargaining power of local labour. In the international arena, migration is seen as a global movement in which labour is manipulated in the interest of HICs to the detriment of LICs. According to Rubenstein, remittances are 'a minor component of surplus labour extraction, a small charge to capital in a grossly unequal process of exchange between core and peripheral societies'.

Figure 5.10 Eastern European food shop in London – the population of Eastern Europeans in the UK has increased rapidly since Poland and other Eastern European countries joined the EU in 2004

Structuration theory

Structuration theory incorporates both individual motives for migration and the structural factors in which the migrants operate. It stresses that rules designed to regulate behaviour also provide opportunity and room for manoeuvre for those they seek to constrain. This approach also builds in an awareness of cultural factors.

Gender analyses

In recent decades, gender has come to occupy a significant place in migration literature. According to Arjan de Haan, 'There is now much more emphasis on the different migration responses by men and women, which themselves are context dependent, and on gender discrimination in returns to migrant labour.'

Case Study: Push and pull factors in Brazil

While recognising that individuals can react differently to similar circumstances, it is still important to consider the negative factors that act to 'push' people from rural areas of origin, and the positive influences that 'pull' them towards towns and cities. In Brazil, the push factors responsible for rural–urban migration can be summarised as follows:

- The mechanisation of agriculture has reduced the demand for farm labour in most parts of the country.
- Farms and estates have been amalgamated, particularly by agricultural production companies. In Brazil, as elsewhere in Latin America, the high incidence of landlessness has led to a much greater level of rural–urban migration than in most parts of Africa and Asia.
- Conditions of rural employment are generally poor. Employers often ignore laws relating to minimum wages and other employee rights.

- There is desertification in the north-east and deforestation in the north.
- Unemployment and underemployment are significant.
- Social conditions are poor, particularly in terms of housing, health and education.

The pull factors for internal migrants in Brazil revolve around individuals wanting to better their own and their children's lives. Within the larger urban areas such as São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte and Brasilia, migrants hope to find particular advantages:

- A greater likelihood of paid employment – many people will be unable to find work in the formal sector, but opportunities in the informal sector, even if only part-time, may be available. Developing skills in the informal sector may open the way to work in the formal sector at a later date. Paid ⇨

employment provides the opportunity to save money, even if the amounts initially are very small.
- Greater proximity to health and education services – this factor is particularly important for migrants with children. There is a clear urban/rural divide in standards for both health and education.
- Most migrants end up in *favelas* or *corticos* (deteriorating formal inner-city housing). However, even *favela* housing may be better than that found in some rural areas. Many *favelas* show substantial signs of upgrading over time and develop an important sense of community.

- Greater access to retail services than in rural areas – Competition in the urban retail services sector can result in lower prices, enabling the individual/household to purchase a wider range of goods.
- The cultural and social attractions of large cities may be viewed as important factors in the quality of life.
- Access to internet services is often lacking in rural areas. This is often an important factor for younger migrants.

☐ The role of constraints, obstacles and barriers

Brief reference has already been made to factors that can either prevent migration or make it a difficult process. Here a distinction has to be made between internal and international migration. In most countries, there are no legal restrictions on internal migration. Thus the main constraints are distance and cost. In contrast, immigration laws present the major barrier in international migration where national borders have to be crossed.

The cost of migration can be viewed in three parts.

1 'Closing up' at the point of origin – this will vary considerably according to the assets owned by an individual or household. In LICs, the monetary value may be small, although the personal value may be high. In HICs, costs such as those of estate agents and legal fees for selling a house and selling possessions that cannot be transported at below market value, and other associated costs, can be substantial.
2 The actual cost of movement itself will depend on the mode of transport used and the time taken on the journey. Costs may involve both personal transport costs and the freight costs of transporting possessions.
3 The costs of 'opening up' at the point of destination – many HICs impose a 'stamp duty' on the purchase of a house above a certain value. This is in addition to estate agents' and legal fees. Other legal costs may also be required to begin life at the destination. If the migration is linked to employment, costs may be paid by an employer. In poorer countries, such costs may appear low in monetary value, but may be substantial for the individuals concerned because of their very low income.

The consideration of distance usually involves the dangers associated with the journey. Such dangers can be subdivided into physical factors and human factors. Physical factors include risks such as flood, drought, landslide and crossing water bodies (Figure 5.11). Human factors centre around any hostility from other people that may be encountered on the journey, and the chances of an accident while travelling. For example, in recent years people fleeing Zimbabwe for South Africa have

Figure 5.11 Iguaçu Falls, Brazil – the physical environment is much less of a barrier to migration than it once was

encountered bandits on both sides of the border, waiting at these locations to rob them. Ethnic tensions along a migration route may also result in significant danger.

In terms of international migration, government attitudes in the form of immigration laws usually present the most formidable barrier to prospective migrants. A number of reasonably distinct periods can be recognised in terms of government attitudes to immigration:

- Prior to 1914, government controls on international migration were almost non-existent. For example, the USA allowed the entry of anybody who was not a prostitute, a convict, a lunatic and, after 1882, Chinese. Thus the obstacles to migration at the time were cost and any physical dangers that might be associated with the journey.
- Partly reflecting security concerns, migration was curtailed between 1914 and 1945. During this period, many countries pursued immigration policies that would now be classed as overtly racist.
- After 1945, many European countries, facing labour shortages, encouraged migrants from abroad. In general, legislation was not repealed but interpreted very liberally. The Caribbean was a major source of labour for the UK during this period. The former West Germany

attracted 'guest workers' from many countries but particularly from Turkey.

■ In the 1970s, slow economic growth and rising unemployment in HICs led to a tightening of policy that, by and large, has remained in force. However, in some countries immigration did increase again in the 1980s and early 1990s, spurring the introduction of new restrictions.

Thus over time the legal barriers to immigration have generally become more formidable. Most countries favour immigration applications from people with skills that are in short supply and from people who intend to set up businesses and create employment.

☐ Migration data

There are three principal sources of migration data: censuses, population registers and social surveys. For all three, moves are recorded as migration when an official boundary used for data collection is crossed. Moves that do not cross a boundary may go unrecorded even though they may cover longer distances. This is one of the major problems encountered by the researcher in the study of migration.

Population censuses are important sources of information because they are taken at regular intervals and cover whole countries. The two sorts of data generally provided are:

■ birthplaces of the population
■ period migration figures (movement over a particular period of time).

Birthplace data tells us a great deal about the broad picture of migration but it is not without its deficiencies. For example, there is no information about the number of residential moves between place of birth and present residence. In terms of period migration, recent British censuses have asked for place of residence a year before as well as place of birth. When these are compared with the present addresses of people at the time of the census, we can begin to trace migration patterns. However, again, intervening moves during the one-year period and between censuses (every ten years in the UK) will go unrecorded.

Japan and a number of European countries (including Norway, Sweden and Switzerland) collect 'continuous data' on migration through population registers. Inhabitants are required to register an address with the police or a civic authority and to notify all changes of residence. Population registers aim to record every move, rather than just those caught by the rather arbitrary administrative and period framework of the census. In the UK and many other countries, only partial registers exist to record movements for some parts of the population. Examples are electoral rolls, tax registers and school rolls. Social

researchers have argued for the introduction of population registers in countries like the UK but strong opposition has focused on possible infringements of individual liberties. Thus it was only under the exceptional circumstances of the Second World War and its immediate aftermath that a national register operated in the UK.

Specific social surveys can do much to supplement the sources of data discussed above. An example from the UK is the International Passenger Survey, a sample survey carried out at seaports and airports. It was established to provide information on tourism and the effect of travel expenditure on the balance of payments, but it also provides useful information on international migration. The annual General Household Survey of 15 000 households also provides useful information, as does the quarterly Labour Force Survey. Questionnaire-based surveys are perhaps the only means by which the relationship between attitudes and behaviour in the migration process can be fully analysed.

Even when all the available sources of information are used to analyse migration patterns, the investigator can be left in no doubt that a large proportion of population movements go entirely unrecorded; and even in those countries with the most advanced administrative systems, there is only partial recording of migrants and their characteristics.

☐ Conclusion

Migration has been a major process in shaping the world as it is today. Its impact has been economic, social, cultural, political and environmental. Few people now go through life without changing residence several times. Through the detailed research of geographers, demographers and others, we have a good understanding of the causes and consequences of the significant migrations of the past, which should make us better prepared for those of the future whose impact may be every bit as great. We can only speculate about the locations and causes of future migrations. Causal factors may include the following: continuing socio-economic disparity between rich and poor nations; global warming and all its implications; nuclear catastrophe; civil wars; and pandemics due to current and new diseases.

Section 5.1 Activities

1 Briefly discuss the cost–benefit approach of the Todaro model.
2 What are the main elements of Stark's new economics of migration?
3 Discuss the principal sources of migration data.

5.2 Internal migration (within a country)

☐ Distance, direction and patterns

Figure 5.12 provides a comprehensive classification of population movements in LICs and MICs, covering distance, direction and patterns. The 'distance continuum' ranges from relatively limited local movements to very long-distance movements, often crossing international frontiers. The majority of the movements shown in Figure 5.12 are internal migrations. In terms of settlement size, the following movements are included:

- rural–rural
- rural–urban
- urban–rural
- urban–urban.

Figure 5.13 Rural depopulation in northern Spain as a result of out-migration

different areas. There is also a broad relationship between social/cultural change and distance. A change of dialect or differences in the social organisation of groups may make the migrant seem an obvious 'outsider'. To avoid such changes, the prospective migrant may decide on a shorter-distance movement. Long-distance movement may also involve entry into areas with different ethnicity, colour or religion, which may all hinder the process of assimilation.

In terms of direction, the most prevalent forms of migration are from rural to urban environments and from peripheral regions to economic core regions. Thus the main migration streams are from culturally traditional areas to areas where rapid change, in all its manifestations, is taking place. In LICs and MICs, the socio-economic differences between rural and urban areas are generally of a much greater magnitude than in HICs. This may necessitate some quite fundamental forms of adaptation by rural–urban migrants in the poorer nations of the world.

Although of a lesser magnitude, rural–rural migration is common in LICs and MICs for a variety of reasons, including employment, family reunion and marriage. In some instances, governments have encouraged the agricultural development of frontier areas such as the Amazon basin in Brazil.

Movements between urban areas consist in part of stepped migration up the urban hierarchy as migrants improve their knowledge base and financial position, adding to a range of other urban–urban migrations for reasons such as employment and education. Urban–rural migration is dominated by counterstream movement; that is, urbanites who are returning to their rural origins. Very few people, apart from the likes of government officials, teachers and doctors, move to the countryside for the first time to live or work. Apart from perhaps Brazil and a few other more affluent developing nations, counterurbanisation has yet to gain any kind of foothold in LICs.

Distance	Direction
Intra-national	Rural–rural
Local	Rural–urban
Intra-district	Urban–rural
Inter-district	Urban–urban
Intra-provincial	Periphery–core
Inter-provincial	Core–periphery
Intra-regional	Traditional–modern spheres
Inter-regional	
International	**Patterns**
LEDCs–LEDCs	Step migration
LEDCs–MEDCs	Migration stream
	Counter-stream

Figure 5.12 Spatial dimensions of population movements in LICs and MICs

In this section, particular consideration will be given to rural–urban migration in LICs and urban–rural movements in HICs (Figure 5.13).

As Parnwell states in relation to Figure 5.12, 'Distance provides a useful basis for differentiating between types of movement and types of mover, because the distance over which a person travels can also be used as a proxy for other important variables'. As cost is a significant factor in the distance over which migration takes place, the relative distance of movements may have a filtering effect upon the kinds of people who are moving between

◻ The causes of internal migration

The reasons why people change their place of permanent residence can be viewed at three dimensions of scale: macro-level, meso-level and micro-level.

The macro-level

This dimension highlights socio-economic differences at the national scale, focusing particularly on the core–periphery concept. The development of core regions in many LICs had its origins in the colonial era, which was characterised by the selective and incomplete opening-up of territories, supporting development in a restricted range of economic sectors. At this time, migration was encouraged to supply labour for new colonial enterprises and infrastructural projects, such as the development of ports and the construction of transport links between areas of raw-material exploitation and the ports through which export would take place.

The introduction of capitalism, through colonialism, into previously non-capitalist societies had a huge influence on movement patterns. The demand for labour in mines, plantations and other activities was satisfied to a considerable extent by restricting native access to land and by coercing people into migration to work either directly through forced labour systems or indirectly through taxation. The spread of a cash economy at the expense of barter into peripheral areas further increased the need for paid employment that, on the whole, could only be found in the economic core region (Figure 5.14).

In the post-colonial era, most LICs and MICs have looked to industrialisation as their path to a better world, resulting in disproportionate investment in the urban-industrial sector and the relative neglect of the rural economy. Even where investment in agriculture has been considerable, either the objective or the end result was to replace labour with machinery, adding further to rural out-migration.

The macro-level perspective provides a general explanation of migration patterns in LICs and MICs. However, this approach has two weaknesses:

- it fails to explain why some people migrate and others stay put when faced with very similar circumstances in peripheral areas
- it offers no explanation as to why not all forms of migration occur in the direction of economic core regions.

Figure 5.14 The Ger district in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, which is expanding rapidly due to high levels of rural–urban migration

The meso-level

The meso-level dimension includes more detailed consideration of the factors in the origin and destination that influence people's migration decisions. E.S. Lee's origin-intervening obstacles-destination model, which is discussed in the previous section, is a useful starting point in understanding this level of approach, which looks well beyond economic factors and recognises the vital role of the perception of the individual in the decision-making process.

Lee argues that migration occurs in response to the prevailing set of factors both in the migrant's place of origin and in one or a number of potential destinations. However, what is perceived as positive and what is viewed as negative at origin and destination may vary considerably between individuals, as may the intervening obstacles. As Lee states, 'It is not so much the actual factors at origin and destination as the perception of these factors which results in migration'. Lee stressed the point that the factors in favour of migration would generally have to outweigh considerably those against, due to the natural reluctance of people to uproot themselves from established communities.

High population growth is often cited as the major cause of rural–urban migration. However, in itself population growth is not the main cause of out-migration. Its effects have to be seen in conjunction with the failure of other processes to provide adequately for the needs of growing rural communities. Even when governments focus resources on rural development, the volume of out-migration may not be reduced. The irony in many LICs and MICs is that people are being displaced from the countryside because in some areas change is too

slow to accommodate the growing size and needs of the population, or because in other areas change is too quick to enable redundant rural workers to find alternative employment in their home areas. In such circumstances, out-migration does indeed provide an essential 'safety valve'.

The evidence in Table 5.1 and in other similar studies is that the economic motive underpins the majority of rural–urban movements. During the 1960s, most demographers cited the higher wages and more varied employment opportunities of the cities as the prime reasons for internal migration. It was also widely held that the level of migration was strongly related to the rate of urban unemployment. However, while rural/urban income differentials are easy to quantify, they do not take into account the lower cost of living in the countryside and the fact that non-cash income often forms a significant proportion of rural incomes.

Table 5.1 Reasons for migration from rural areas in Peru and Thailand

PERU	
Reason	% respondents citing reason
To earn more money	39
To join kin already working	25
No work in the villages	12
Work opportunities presented themselves	11
Dislike of village life	11
To be near the village and family	11
To support nuclear and/or extended family	9
Poor	8
To pay for education	7

Source: J. Laite 'The migrant response in central Peru', in J. Gugler (ed.) The Urbanization of the Third World, OUP 1988

NORTH-EAST THAILAND		
Principal reason	No. respondents citing reason	% respondents citing reason
To earn more money for the household	138	52.9
To earn more money for self	57	21.8
To earn more money for parents	31	11.9
To further education	12	4.6
To earn money to build a house	10	3.8
To earn money to invest in farming	4	1.5
For fun	3	1.1
To earn money to purchase land/land title	2	0.8
To earn money to repay a debt	1	0.4
To earn money to pay for hired labour	1	0.4
To see Bangkok	1	0.4
To earn money to get married	1	0.4
Total	261	100.0

Source: M. Parnwell, Population Movements and the Third World, Routledge, 1993

In the 1970s, as more and more cities in LICs experienced large-scale in-migration in spite of high unemployment, demographers began to reappraise the situation. Michael Todaro was one of the first to recognise that the paradox of urban deprivation on the one hand and migration in pursuit of higher wages on the other could be explained by taking a long-term view of why people move to urban areas. As the more detailed consideration of the Todaro model in the previous section explains, people are prepared to ensure urban hardship in the short term in the likelihood that their long-term prospects will be much better in the city than in the countryside. Apart from employment prospects, the other perceived advantages of the cities are a higher standard of accommodation, a better education for migrants' children, improved medical facilities, the conditions of infrastructure often lacking in rural areas and a wider range of consumer services. The most fortunate migrants find jobs in the formal sector. A regular wage then gives some access to the other advantages of urban life. However, as the demand for jobs greatly outstrips supply, many can do no better than the uncertainty of the informal sector.

Of all the factors that migrants take into account before arriving at a decision, the economic perspective invariably dominates the decision to leave the countryside. However, all the evidence shows that other factors, particularly the social environment, have a very strong influence on the direction that the movement takes. This largely explains why capital cities, with their wide range of social opportunities, attract so many rural migrants.

The micro-level

The main criticisms of the macro- and meso-level explanations of migration are that:

■ they view migration as a passive response to a variety of stimuli
■ they tend to view rural source areas as an undifferentiated entity.

The specific circumstances of individual families and communities in terms of urban contact are of crucial importance in the decision to move, particularly when long distances are involved. The alienation experienced by the unknown new migrant to an urban area should not be underestimated and is something that will be avoided if at all possible. The evidence comes from a significant number of sample surveys and of course from the high incidence of 'area of origin' communities found in cities. For example:

■ A sample survey of rural migrants in Mumbai found that more than 75 per cent already had one or more relatives living in the city, from whom 90 per cent had received some form of assistance upon arrival.
■ A survey of migration from the Peruvian Highlands to Lima found that 90 per cent of migrants could rely

on short-term accommodation on arrival in the city, and that for about half their contacts had managed to arrange a job for them.

The importance of established links between urban and rural areas frequently results in the phenomenon of 'chain migration'. After one or a small number of pioneering migrants have led the way, subsequent waves of migration from the same rural community follow. The more established a migrant community becomes in the city, the easier it appears to be for others in the rural community to take the decision to move and for them to assimilate into urban society.

Apart from contact with, and knowledge of, urban locations, differentiation between rural households takes the following forms:

- level of income
- size of land holding
- size of household
- stage in the life cycle
- level of education
- cohesiveness of the family unit.

All of these factors have an influence on the decision to migrate (Figure 5.15). Family ties and commitments may determine whether or not someone is able to migrate, and may also influence who from a family unit is most likely to take on the responsibility of seeking employment in the city. Here the stage in the life cycle is crucial and it is not surprising that the great majority of migrants in LICs and MICs are aged between 15 and 25 years. In some communities, the phenomenon of 'relay migration' has been identified, whereby at different stages in a family's life cycle, different people take responsibility for migration.

It is only by examining all three dimensions – macro, meso and micro – that the complexity of the migration process can be fully understood. As elsewhere in geographical analysis, there is a tendency to over-simplify.

Figure 5.15 Migrants from north-east Brazil farming a smallholding in the Amazon basin

This is often useful in the early stages of enquiry, but unless we are careful the understandable generalisation may mask essential detail.

☐ The impacts of internal migration

Socio-economic impact

Figure 5.16 provides a useful framework for understanding the costs and benefits of migration. It highlights the main factors that determine how rural areas are affected by migration; namely, the two-way transfers of labour, money, skills and attitudes. However, while all of the linkages seem fairly obvious, none is easy to quantify. Therefore, apart from very clear-cut cases, it is often difficult to decide which is greater – the costs or benefits of migration.
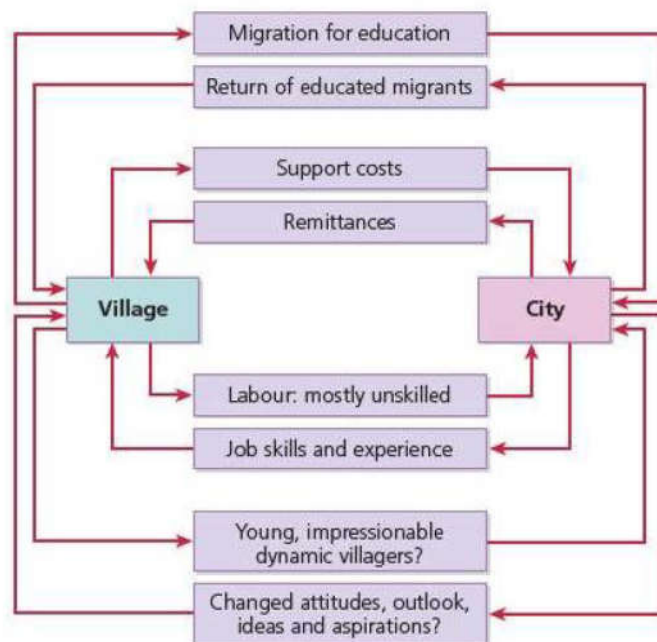

Figure 5.16 The costs and benefits of migration

Remittances from internal migration are even more difficult to estimate than those arising from international migration. Thus it is not surprising that research has produced a fairly wide range of conclusions, of which the following are but a sample:

- Williamson (1988) put urban–rural remittances at 10–13 per cent of urban incomes in Africa.
- Reardon (1997) noted that in rural areas in Africa not close to major cities, migrant earnings accounted for

only 20 per cent of total non-farm earnings, whereas it reached as high as 75 per cent of total non-farm earnings in areas close to major cities.
- Adepoju and Mbugua (1997) noted that migrants often remit up to 60 per cent of their income.

However, it is important to note that the flow of money and support in general is not always one-way. Some studies have highlighted village-to-town remittances to support education or the search for employment.

Helweg (1983) studied the changing use of remittances over time, noting three stages: initially, they are spent on family maintenance and improving land productivity; in the following stage, spending tends to be on 'conspicuous' consumption; in the third and final stage, remittances are also invested to start commercial, non-agricultural activities.

The relationship between migration and development is complex and still the subject of much debate. The four questions that have been the subject of much research are:

1 How does development in areas of destination affect migration?
2 How does development in the area of origin affect migration?
3 How does migration affect development in areas of destination?
4 How does migration affect development in areas of origin?

The first question is the least problematic. The importance of pull factors in explaining both national and international movements is widely accepted. Clearly migrants do move in reaction to newly developed opportunities. However, a number of recent studies have shown that people in the poorest areas of LICs and MICs do not exhibit the highest levels of out-migration. In such regions, levels of literacy and skill may be so low that access to even very menial urban jobs can be difficult.

It is in many ways ironic that development in rural areas of origin often acts as a stimulus to out-migration. In China, the development of rural enterprises appears to increase rates of out-migration. In the Punjab, the Green Revolution witnessed both high rates of out-migration by the resident population and in-migration from a number of poorer Indian states. Development often acts as an important stimulus, widening the horizons of a significant number among the rural population.

There is some evidence that internal migration in LICs and MICs is beneficial for receiving regions. The fact that rural migrants are often the most dynamic young adults from their communities should be of benefit to the receiving urban areas, providing enough opportunities are available for most to gain reasonable employment. However, newcomers can place a massive burden on over-stretched urban amenities and services, particularly if large numbers are unemployed.

The impact of out-migration on areas of origin is not at all clear. The traditional view has been that by reducing unemployment and underemployment, and providing inputs such as remittances and newly acquired skills, migration promotes development in rural areas of origin, narrows regional disparities and eventually makes migration unnecessary. However, recent research on this issue has in some respects been contradictory and the possibility of such mobility having an adverse effect on the economy of labour-exporting areas cannot be ruled out. Lipton, with reference to the Indian Village Studies Programme, emphasised the inequality-increasing effects of rural–urban migration in areas of origin. High emigration from a village was strongly related to the unequal distribution of resources, usually land. Migration frequently involved both the richest and poorest households in the village. Richer potential migrants were 'pulled' towards fairly firm job prospects in the formal sector, whereas the poor were 'pushed' by rural poverty and labour-replacing methods. The much higher remittances from rich migrants compared with those from poorer migrants from the same community acted to increase inequalities in villages and between villages in the same region.

An important issue is the impact of out-migration on local agriculture. In some cases, out-migration undoubtedly causes a shortage of labour, although in other instances it clearly alleviates unemployment and underemployment. In some areas, large numbers of women now perform agricultural tasks that were once the preserve of men. This 'new' work is frequently in addition to an existing heavy household workload. Although remittances help, they are often too low to hire in labour. There is also a tendency for land to become concentrated in the hands of migrant families who gradually turn into non-farmers, resulting in a fall in agricultural production.

Whether the impact of out-migration on agriculture is positive or negative depends on the complex interaction of a range of social and economic factors that may be subject to change over time.
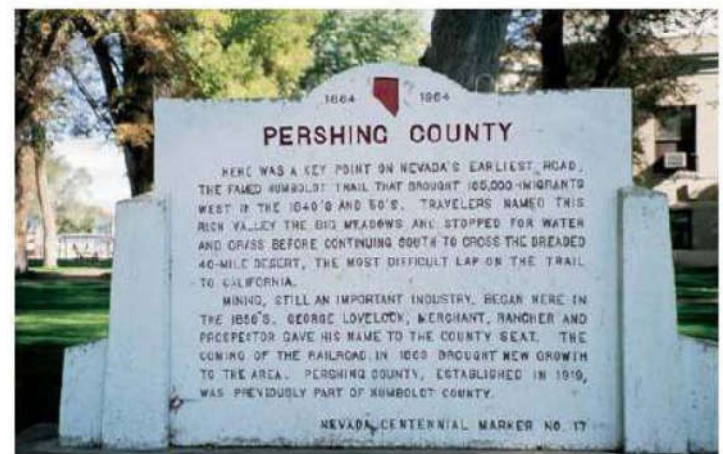

Figure 5.17 Lovelock, Nevada – on the historic Humboldt Trail

Political impact

Internal migration at a significant scale can have considerable political repercussions. For example:

■ Where migration results in depopulation, the reduced number of people in a region can reduce the 'political voice' of the community. A lower population can also result in decreased funding from central government. Such a downward spiral may result in a region becoming more and more peripheral to its country as a whole.

■ In contrast, where population is growing rapidly, partly at least as a result of in-migration, the political voice of such regions will become more important. In some LICs and MICs in particular, capital cities have grown rapidly, attaining an increasingly dominant political and economic role. Such economic and political primacy may be of considerable benefit to the residents of the capital city, but to the detriment of the rest of that country.

■ Internal migration can significantly change the ethnic composition of a region or urban area, which may result in tension. In the Niger Delta, many local people feel that most jobs go to members of the country's majority ethnic groups – the Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa and Fulani, who traditionally come from elsewhere in Nigeria. The local ethnic groups, whose numbers are small in national terms, feel that they have been largely overlooked by the government. This has resulted in a high level of resentment and is certainly one cause of the development of armed groups that have become a major threat to the large oil industry in the region.

Case Study: Tibet's changing ethnic balance

In some countries, governments have been accused of deliberately using internal migration to change the ethnic balance of a region. Tibet is an example where the in-migration of large numbers of Han Chinese has had a huge impact. Prior to the Chinese occupation of Tibet in 1950, very few Chinese lived in what is now the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR). This has changed completely, with Chinese migrants now in the majority in some parts of Tibet. In the capital Lhasa, there are 200 000 Chinese and 100 000 Tibetans. If the present influx continues, Tibetans could become the minority population within a few decades. Most Tibetans see this as an immense threat to the survival of their culture and identity. The Dalai Lama, Tibet's exiled spiritual leader, has stated that this policy of 'demographic aggression' has led to 'cultural genocide'.

Most in-migrants to Tibet are Han Chinese, by far the largest ethnic group in China. They fall into two general groups:

■ government officials and technical experts who can be thought of as involuntary migrants
■ economic migrants – miners, construction workers, retail and other service workers.

Incentives provided by the government for Han Chinese to go to Tibet include tax incentives, allowances, higher wages and better housing.

In 2006, the world's highest railway, the Qinghai–Tibet line, was opened. It runs from Golmud to Lhasa (Figure 5.18). China says the 1140kilometre line will bring economic opportunities to Tibet. However, many Tibetans fear it will encourage even more in-migration.

Figure 5.18 The Qinghai–Tibet railway

☐ Environmental impact

Large-scale rural–urban migration has led to the massive expansion of many urban areas in LICs and MICs (Figure 5.19), which has swallowed up farmland, forests, floodplains and other areas of ecological importance. In turn, the increased impact of these enlarged urban areas is affecting environments even further afield, in a variety of different ways. These include:

■ deforestation due to the increasing demand for firewood
■ increasing demands on regional water supplies and other resources

■ the expansion of landfill sites
■ air and water pollution from factories, households, power stations, transportation and other sources.

Internally displaced people and refugees can have a considerable impact on the environment. They often concentrate in marginal and vulnerable environments where the potential for environmental degradation is high. Apart from immediate problems concerning sanitation and the disposal of waste, long-term environmental damage may result from deforestation
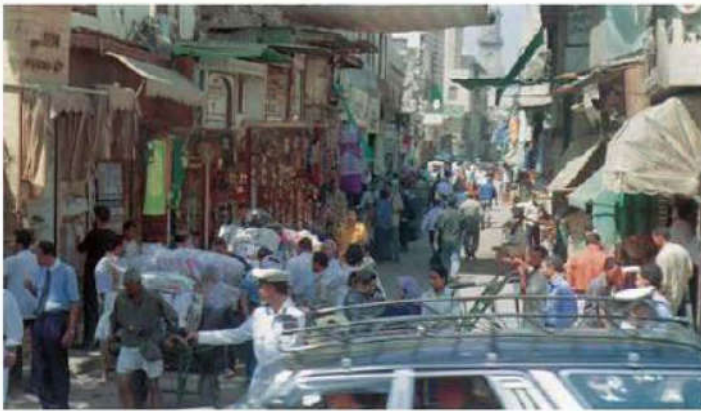
Figure 5.19 Cairo has expanded rapidly due both to high in-migration and high natural increase

associated with the need for firewood and building materials. Increased pressure on the land can result in serious soil degradation.

A study of high in-migration into the coastal areas of Palawan in the Philippines found that the historical social processes that helped maintain reasonable patterns of environmental use had been overwhelmed by the rapid influx of migrants. The newcomers brought in new resource extraction techniques that were more efficient but also more destructive than those previously employed by the established community. The study concluded that high in-migration had caused severe environmental damage to the coastal environment.

☐ Impact on population structures

The age-selective (and often gender-selective) nature of migration can have a very significant impact on both areas of origin and destination. This is no more so than in rural areas of heavy out-migration and urban areas where heavy in-migration is evident.

Age/sex structure diagrams for rural areas in LICs and MICs frequently show the loss of young adults (and their children) and may also show a distinct difference between the number of males and females in the young-adult age group, due to a higher number of males than females leaving rural areas for urban destinations. However, in some rural areas female out-migration may be at a higher level than male out-migration, as Figure 5.20 illustrates. In contrast, urban population diagrams show the reverse impact, with age-selective in-migration.

In Figure 5.20, women aged 20 to 35 years in Grant County, USA comprise just 4.3 per cent of the population. This is a mainly rural area. The county's ageing population lowers the birth rate and increases the death rate. Here, out-migration has caused depopulation – an actual fall in the population. In contrast, in Orange County, Florida, 12 per cent of the population are women aged 20 to 35 years. Orange County is a predominantly urban area.
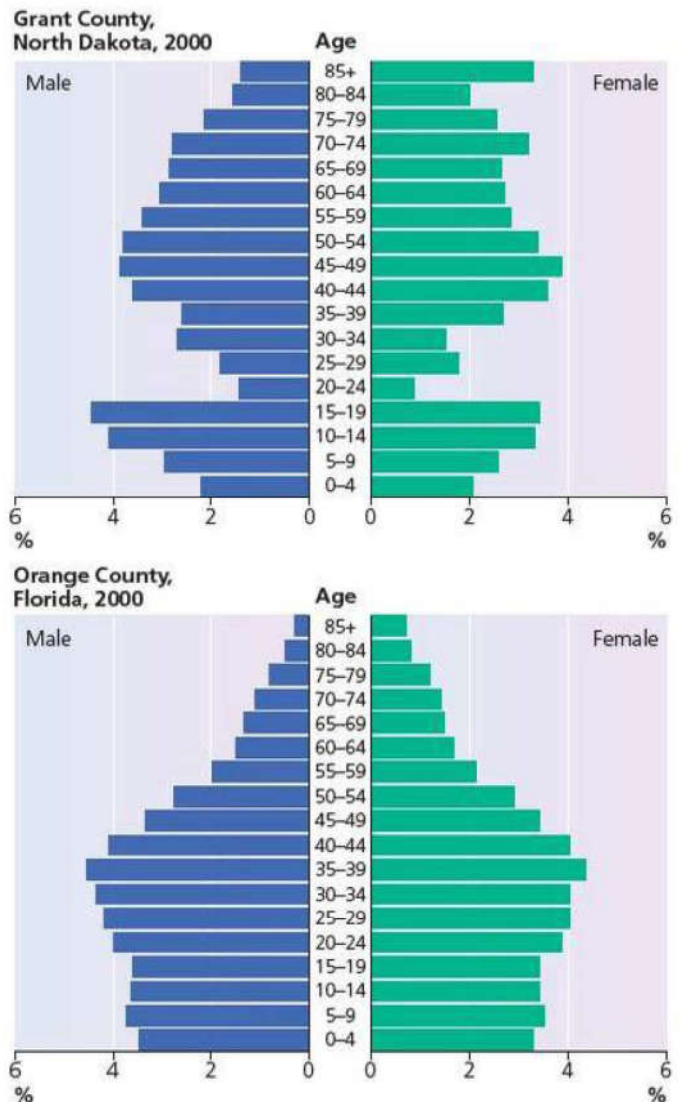
Source: *OCR A2 Geography* by M. Raw (Philip Allan Updates, 2009), p.135

Figure 5.20 Age/sex structure diagrams for Grant County, North Dakota and Orange County, Florida in the USA

□ Stepped migration and urban–urban movements

A number of analyses of internal migration, for example in Nigeria, have recognised a stepped structure to such movements, with migrants from rural areas often moving to a local town before later making a move further up the urban hierarchy. Figure 5.21 shows three ways stepped migration might occur in a LIC.
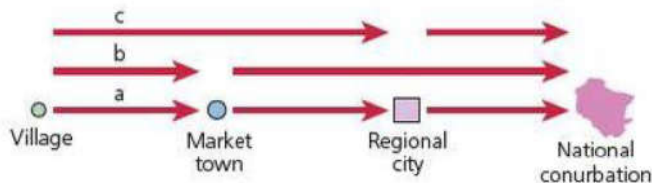

Figure 5.21 Stepped migration

During the initial move from a rural environment to a relatively small urban area, migrants may develop skills and increase their knowledge of and confidence in urban environments. They may become aware of better employment opportunities in larger urban areas and develop the personal contacts that can be so important in the migration process. For those working in the formal sector, a move up the urban hierarchy may be linked to a promotion within the company in which they work, or a transfer linked to public-sector employment.

Another important form of urban–urban migration is from towns and cities in economic periphery areas to urban areas in the economic core. An example is Brazil, with significant movement in the last 50 years from urban areas in the relatively poor north east such as Fortaleza, Natal, Recife and Salvador to the more prosperous cities of the south east, such as São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Belo Horizonte. Greater employment opportunities and higher average wages have been the main reason for such movements, but many of the other push and pull factors discussed earlier have also been significant.

□ Causes and impacts of intra-urban movements

Demographic analysis shows that movements of population within cities are closely related to stages in the family life cycle, with the available housing stock being a major determinant of where people live at different stages in their life. Studies in Toronto show a broad concentric zone pattern (Figure 5.22). Young adults frequently choose housing close to the central business district (CBD), while older families occupy the next ring out. Middle-aged families are more likely to reside at a greater distance from the central area; and farther out still, in the newest suburban areas, young families dominate. This simplified model applies particularly well to a rapidly growing metropolis like Toronto where an invasion and succession process evolves over time.
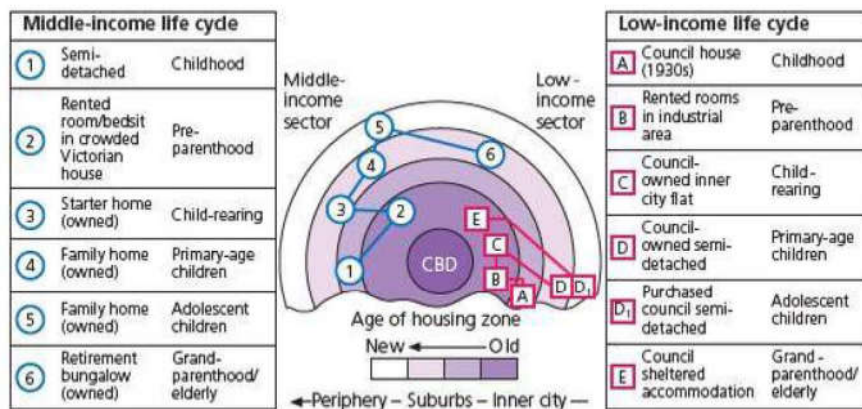
Toronto's inner city has a much higher percentage of rented and small-unit accommodation than the outer regions, which, along with the stimulus of employment and the social attractions of the central area, has attracted young adults to the area. Most housing units built in the inner area in recent decades have been in the form of apartments.

Studies in the UK have highlighted the spatial contrasts in life cycle between middle- and low-income groups (Figure 5.23). With life cycle and income being the major determinants of where people live, residential patterns are also influenced by a range of organisations, foremost of which are local authorities, housing associations, building societies and landowners. On top of this is the range of choice available to the household. For those on low income this is frequently very restricted indeed. As income rises, the range of choice in terms of housing type and location increases.
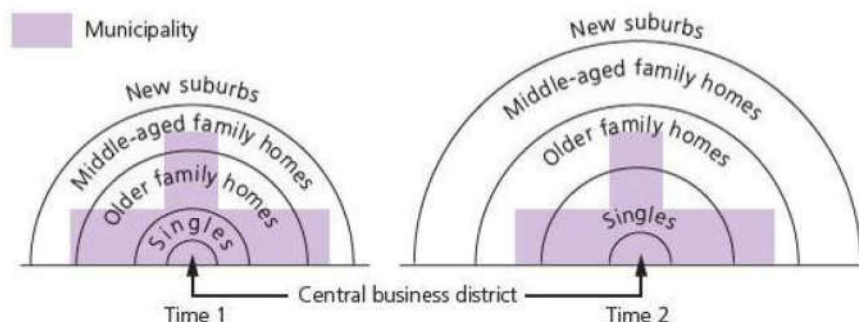
Source: *Toronto in Transition*, City of Toronto Planning and Development Dept. Policy and Research Division, April 1980, p. 21

Figure 5.22 Toronto – changing social structure in a growing city

Middle-income life cycle			Low-income life cycle		
1	Semi-detached	Childhood	A	Council house (1930s)	Childhood
2	Rented room/bedsit in crowded Victorian house	Pre-parenthood	B	Rented rooms in industrial area	Pre-parenthood
3	Starter home (owned)	Child-rearing	C	Council-owned inner city flat	Child-rearing
4	Family home (owned)	Primary-age children	D	Council-owned semi-detached	Primary-age children
5	Family home (owned)	Adolescent children	D₁	Purchased council semi-detached	Adolescent children
6	Retirement bungalow (owned)	Grand-parenthood/ elderly	E	Council sheltered accommodation	Grand-parenthood/ elderly

Housing choice is based on life cycle and income. Residential patterns are influenced by building societies, landowners, local authorities/housing associations, and free choice.

Source: *Advanced Geography: Concepts & Cases*, P. Guinness & G. Nagle (Hodder Education, 1999), p.104

Figure 5.23 Middle- and low-income models of the family life cycle in the UK

☐ Counterurbanisation

According to G.J. Lewis, 'counterurbanisation involves a series of fundamental changes in the redistribution of population including a population shift out of core industrial regions and into the peripheral regions as well as movements down the urban hierarchy'. Changes in telecommunications in particular have helped to diversify many non-metropolitan economies so that they are now viable locations for employers and residents in search of less congestion, lower costs and a better quality of life.

The general consensus is that counterurbanisation first became clearly evident in the USA in the 1970s and that since then most countries of western Europe as well as Australia, New Zealand, Canada and Japan have followed suit. However, this is not to say that evidence of counterurbanisation could not be found to some degree before 1970 in various parts of the developed world. It seems the starting point of counterurbanisation was the transformation of the most accessible rural settlements within the metropolitan hinterland into commuter communities. As a 'rural' lifestyle became more popular amongst urbanites, its spatial impact gradually diffused into more remote regions.

In all the countries affected, the movement of urbanites into rural areas has reduced differences in culture, lifestyle and population composition. There has been much debate about the causes of counterurbanisation. The most plausible explanations are as follows:

- The 'period' explanation emphasises the role of the peculiar economic and demographic circumstances of the 1970s. The energy crisis, periods of recession, the sharp growth in retirees and the impact of the post-war baby boom combined to weaken metropolitan growth. In metropolitan areas, push factors had never been stronger, while – perhaps for the first time – rural location was a viable alternative for many. This perspective viewed counterurbanisation as a very temporary phenomenon, which would subside once economic and demographic conditions returned to 'normal'.

- The 'regional restructuring' explanation emphasises the role of the new organisation of production, the changing spatial division of labour and the increasing importance of service industries. All these factors stimulated a greater spread of activities and population towards smaller places and the rural periphery.

- The 'de-concentration' explanation highlights the lowering of institutional and technological barriers to rural location. Long-standing preferences for lower-density environments are now much less constrained than in the past and an increasing number of businesses and households have felt free to leave the metropolitan areas, confident that their prospects were more likely to improve rather than diminish. The key factor here is the convergence, across size and place, in the availability of amenities that were previously accessible only in larger places.

While all three explanations have their merits, it would appear from the literature on the subject that the third argument is viewed as the most important.

Section 5.2 Activities

1 Describe and explain Figure 5.21.
2 a What is the *family life cycle*?
  b Describe and explain the two family life cycles shown in Figure 5.23.
3 a What is *counterurbanisation*?
  b What are the reasons for this process occurring?
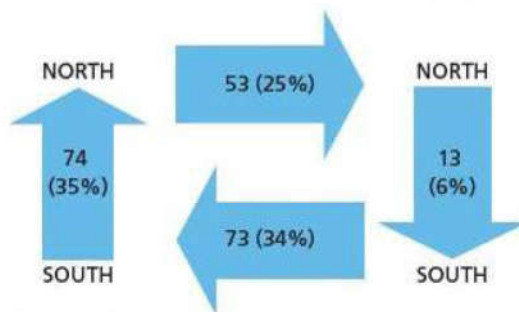
5.3 International migration

□ Voluntary migration

International migration is a major global issue. In the past, it has had a huge impact on both donor and receiving nations. In terms of the receiving countries, the consequences have generally been beneficial. But today, few countries favour a large influx of outsiders, for a variety of reasons.

In terms of voluntary migration, it is useful to differentiate between 'independent' and 'dependent' movements. In independent movements, the decision to move to a new location is made by the individual, whereas in dependent movements the decision is taken collectively by the household. In the latter case, the individual concerned may or may not have a significant say in the final decision, often depending on the age and gender of the prospective migrant.

Currently, about 3 per cent of the world's population live outside the country of their birth. This amounts to about 213 million people, higher than ever before. Recent migration data shows that:

- with the growth in the importance of labour-related migration and international student mobility, migration has become increasingly temporary and circular in nature; the international mobility of highly skilled workers increased substantially in the 1990s and 2000s
- the spatial impact of migration has spread, with an increasing number of countries affected either as points of origin or destination; while many traditional migration streams have remained strong, significant new streams have developed
- the proportion of female migrants has steadily increased (now almost 50 per cent of all migrants); for some countries of origin, for example the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Indonesia, women now make up the majority of contract workers
- the great majority of international migrants from HICs go to other affluent nations; migration from LICs and MICs is more or less equally split

Figures in millions and percentages

Source: *IGCSE Geography* 2nd edition, P. Guinness & G. Nagle (Hodder Education, 2014) p.21

Figure 5.24 International migrant stock by origin and destination, 2010
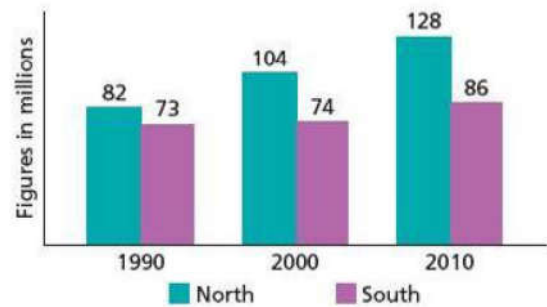
The terms 'North' and 'South' are sometimes used in international reports to refer to the developed countries (**HICs**) and developing countries (**MICs** and **LICs**) respectively.

Source: *IGCSE Geography* 2nd edition, P. Guinness & G. Nagle (Hodder Education, 2014) p.22

Figure 5.25 International migrant stock in the North and South, 1990–2010

between HICs and LICs/MICs (Figures 5.24 and 5.25); however, there is an important qualification here in that the movement between LICs/MICs is usually from weaker to stronger economies

- HICs have reinforced controls, in part in response to security issues, but also to combat illegal immigration and networks that deal in trafficking and exploitation of human beings.

Globalisation in all its aspects has led to an increased awareness of opportunities in other countries. With advances in transportation and communication and a reduction in the real cost of both, the world's population has never had a higher level of potential mobility (Figure 5.26). Also, in various ways, economic and social development has made people more mobile and created the conditions for emigration.

Figure 5.26 The development of air transport (Air China) has been a significant factor in high levels of international migration in recent decades

Each receiving country has its own sources, the results of historical, economic and geographical relationships. Earlier generations of migrants form networks that help new ones to overcome legal and other obstacles. Today's tighter rules tend to confine immigration to family members of earlier 'primary' migrants.

Section 5.3 Activities

1 In terms of voluntary migration, distinguish between independent and dependent movements.
2 Describe and comment on the information illustrated in Figures 5.24 and 5.25.

☐ Forced migration

In the historical writings on migration in LICs, there is an emphasis on the forced recruitment of labour. The abduction and transport of Africans to the Americas as slaves was the largest forced migration in history. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, 15 million people were shipped across the Atlantic Ocean as slaves.

Even in recent times, the scale of involuntary movement in LICs is considerably higher than most people think. However, giving due consideration to such movements should not blind us to the increasing scale of free labour migration that has occurred in recent decades. Here the focal points have been the most dynamic economies of the LICs, which have sucked in labour from more laggard neighbouring countries.

In the latter part of the twentieth century and at the beginning of the twenty-first century, some of the world's most violent and protracted conflicts have been in the LICs, particularly in Africa and Asia. These troubles have led to numerous population movements of a significant

scale. Not all have crossed international frontiers to merit the term refugee movements. Instead, many have involved internal displacement. This is a major global problem, which is showing little sign of abatement.

A number of trends appear to have contributed to the growing scale and speed of forced displacement:

- the emergence of new forms of warfare involving the destruction of whole social, economic and political systems
- the spread of light weapons and land mines, available at prices that enable whole populations to be armed
- the use of mass evictions and expulsions as a weapon of war and as a means of establishing culturally and ethnically homogeneous societies – the term 'ethnic cleansing' is commonly used to describe this process.

In a number of locations around the world, whole neighbourhoods of states have become affected by interlocking and mutually reinforcing patterns of armed conflict and forced displacement, for example in the Caucasus and Central Africa. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) is responsible for guaranteeing the security of refugees in the countries where they seek asylum and aiding the governments of these nations in this task. The UNHCR has noted a growing number of situations in which people are repeatedly uprooted, expelled or relocated within and across state borders, forcing them to live a desperately insecure and
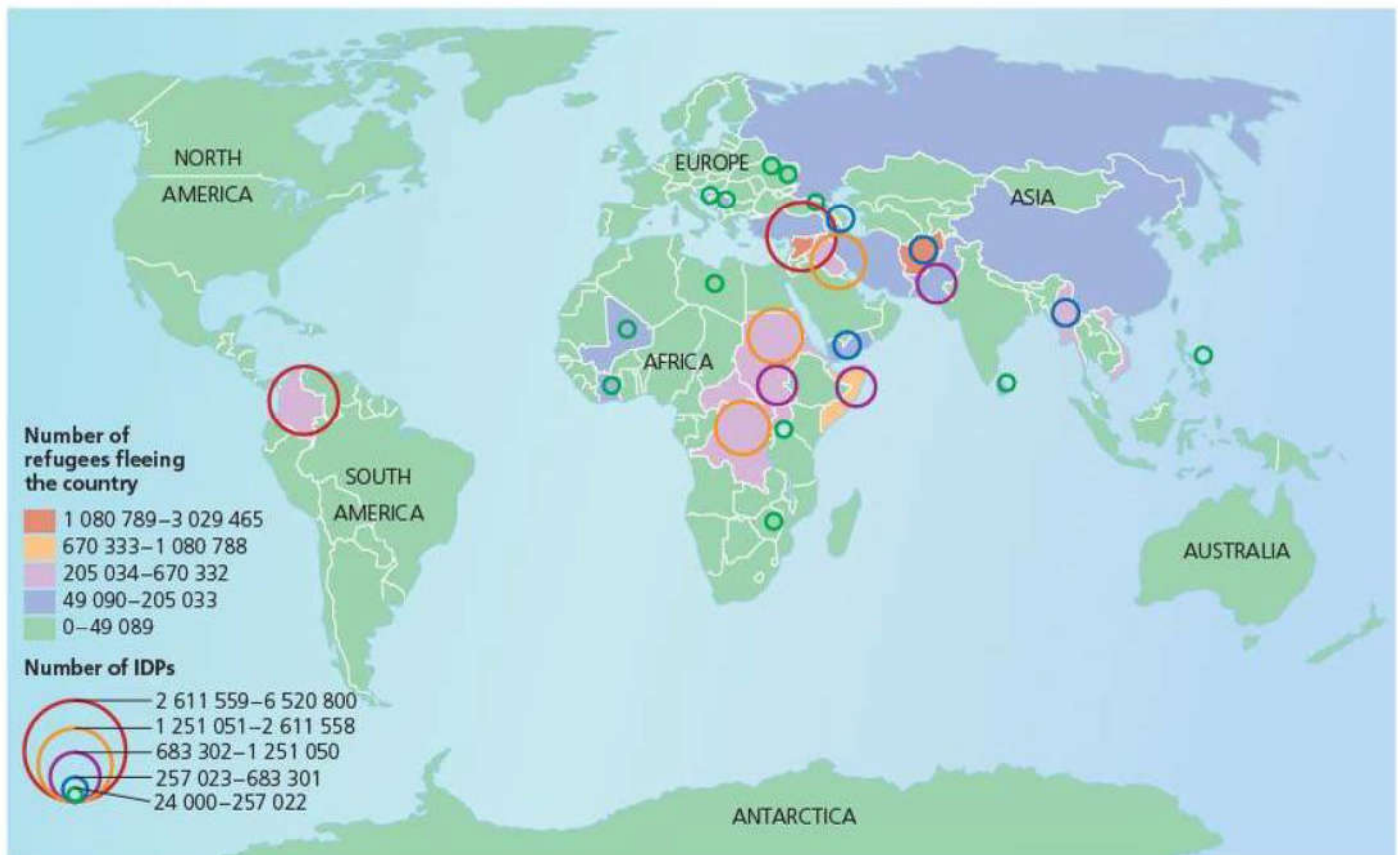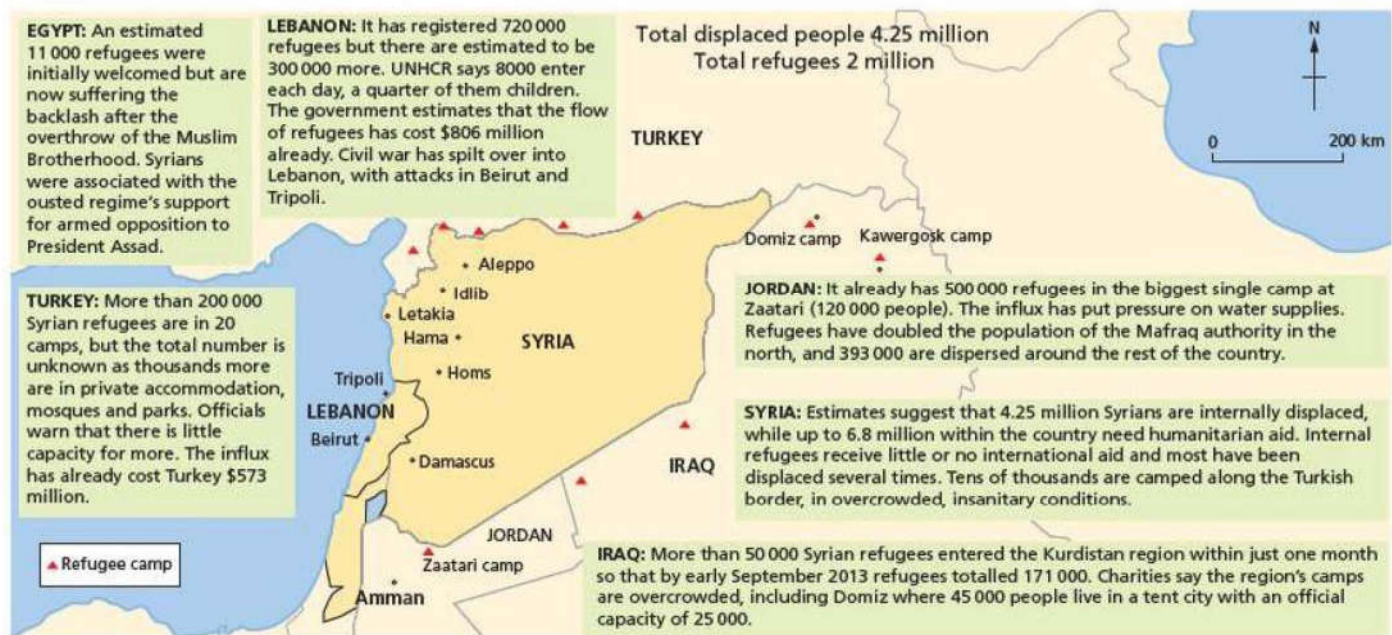

Figure 5.27 Map of world refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs), 2014

EGYPT: An estimated 11 000 refugees were initially welcomed but are now suffering the backlash after the overthrow of the Muslim Brotherhood. Syrians were associated with the ousted regime's support for armed opposition to President Assad.

LEBANON: It has registered 720 000 refugees but there are estimated to be 300 000 more. UNHCR says 8000 enter each day, a quarter of them children. The government estimates that the flow of refugees has cost $806 million already. Civil war has spilt over into Lebanon, with attacks in Beirut and Tripoli.

Total displaced people 4.25 million
Total refugees 2 million

TURKEY

N

0   200 km

Domiz camp   Kawergosk camp

TURKEY: More than 200 000 Syrian refugees are in 20 camps, but the total number is unknown as thousands more are in private accommodation, mosques and parks. Officials warn that there is little capacity for more. The influx has already cost Turkey $573 million.

Aleppo
Idlib
Letakia
Hama
SYRIA
Tripoli
Homs
LEBANON
Beirut
Damascus
IRAQ
JORDAN
Zaatari camp
Amman

▲ Refugee camp

JORDAN: It already has 500 000 refugees in the biggest single camp at Zaatari (120 000 people). The influx has put pressure on water supplies. Refugees have doubled the population of the Mafraq authority in the north, and 393 000 are dispersed around the rest of the country.

SYRIA: Estimates suggest that 4.25 million Syrians are internally displaced, while up to 6.8 million within the country need humanitarian aid. Internal refugees receive little or no international aid and most have been displaced several times. Tens of thousands are camped along the Turkish border, in overcrowded, insanitary conditions.

IRAQ: More than 50 000 Syrian refugees entered the Kurdistan region within just one month so that by early September 2013 refugees totalled 171 000. Charities say the region's camps are overcrowded, including Domiz where 45 000 people live in a tent city with an official capacity of 25 000.

Source: *IGCSE Geography* 2nd edition, P. Guinness & G. Nagle (Hodder Education, 2014) p.20

Figure 5.28 Syria – refugees and internally displaced people, September 2013

nomadic existence. The UNHCR has observed that 'the forced displacement of minorities, including depopulation and repopulation tactics in support of territorial claims and self-determination, has become an abominable characteristic of the contemporary world'. Figure 5.27 shows world refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) as of mid-2014. The UNHCR put the number of forcibly displaced people worldwide at 42.5 million. This includes 15.4 million refugees, the remainder being internally displaced people. The current conflict in Syria has produced large numbers of both refugees and internally displaced people (Figure 5.28). An increasing number of people have fled the conflict in Syria and other conflict situations such as in Eritrea, Iraq and Afghanistan, many to seek sanctuary in Europe.

Many LICs are prone to natural disasters. Because poor nations do not possess the funds to minimise the consequences of natural disaster, forced migration is often the result. Some areas have been devastated time and time again, often eliciting only a minimal response from the outside world. Ecological and environmental change are a common cause of human displacement. Much of central Asia is affected by problems such as soil degradation and desertification, a situation created by decades of agricultural exploitation, industrial pollution and overgrazing. The worst situation is in and around the Aral Sea, a large lake located between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. In a large-scale effort to increase cotton production in the region, most of the river water flowing into the Aral Sea was siphoned off for irrigation. Since 1960, the surface area of the sea has been reduced by half. Dust from the dried-up bed of the sea, containing significant amounts of agricultural and industrial chemicals, is carried long distances by the wind, adding

further to the pollution, salinisation and desertification of the land. Agricultural production has fallen sharply and food has increased in price, the fishing industry has been almost totally destroyed and local people are plagued by significant health problems. It has been estimated that more than 100 000 people have left the Aral Sea area since 1992 because of these problems.

Semipalatinsk in Kazakhstan, where almost 500 nuclear bombs were exploded between 1949 and 1989, 150 of them above ground, is another environmental disaster zone. Here, 160 000 people decided to leave, due to concerns about the consequences of nuclear radiation. Around half of these people moved to other parts of Kazakhstan, with the remainder going to a number of other former Soviet states. Tackling environmental degradation in this region will not be an easy task. The problem is so deep-rooted and was kept hidden for so long under Soviet rule that it may in some instances be too late for effective remedial action to be taken.

Increasingly large numbers of people have been displaced by major infrastructural projects and by the commercial sector's huge appetite for land. In LICs, the protests of communities in the way of 'progress' are invariably ignored for reasons of 'national interest' or pure greed. The World Bank and other international organisations have been heavily criticised in recent decades for financing numerous large-scale projects without giving sufficient consideration to those people directly affected.

It is predicted that climate change will force mass migrations in the future. In 2009, the International Organization for Migration estimated that worsening tropical storms, desert droughts and rising sea levels will displace 200 million people by 2050.

1 What is the difference between a *refugee* and an *internally displaced person*?

2 Describe the extent of global human displacement shown in Figure 5.27.

3 Briefly describe the refugee situation in Syria (Figure 5.28).

4 Suggest how climate change may cause forced migrations in the future.

The impacts of international migration

Socio-economic impact

Recent international migration reports have stressed the sharp rise in the number of people migrating to the world's richest countries for work. Such movement is outpacing family-related and humanitarian movements in many countries. The rise in labour-related migration has included both temporary and permanent workers and been across all employment categories – skilled workers, seasonal employees, trainees, working holiday-makers, transfers of staff within TNCs and cross-border workers. Of the major industrial economies, only Japan has not had a significant influx of migrant workers.

While the inflow of skilled labour remains the priority for HICs, some countries also welcome less skilled workers, particularly in agriculture, construction, care for elderly people and other business and household services. The distribution of immigrants in receiving countries is far from uniform, with significant concentration in economic core regions. Factors that influence the regional destination of immigrants into OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries are:

■ the extent of economic opportunities
■ the presence of family members or others of the same ethnic origin
■ the point of entry into the country.

The socio-economic status of OECD immigrants was frequently low. Immigrants were more likely to:

■ be unemployed compared to nationals – in most European countries, unemployment rates for foreigners are twice as high as for native workers
■ have '3D' jobs – that is jobs that were 'dirty, dangerous and dull/difficult'
■ be over-represented in construction, hospitality and catering, and in household services.

Although many migrants rely on family contacts and migrant networks, others may have little choice but to use a labour broker who will try to match a potential migrant to a job in a richer country. For example, in Bangladesh

workers can pay up to $2000 to a broker for a job in Saudi Arabia.

Some international labour migration takes the form of commuting. Examples include:

■ workers travelling daily from Malmo in Sweden to Copenhagen, the Danish capital city
■ German, French and Belgian 'frontaliers' commuting daily into Luxembourg, where they account for a quarter of the labour force.

The World Bank estimates that international remittances totalled $529 billion in 2012, of which just over $400 billion went to LICs and MICs. The value of remittances has increased significantly in recent decades from about $30 billion a year in the early 1990s.

Figure 5.29 shows (a) the top recipients of remittances by value in 2012 and (b) countries where remittances formed the highest percentage of GDP in 2011. Research in a number of countries such as Nepal has linked rising remittance payments to reduced levels of poverty.
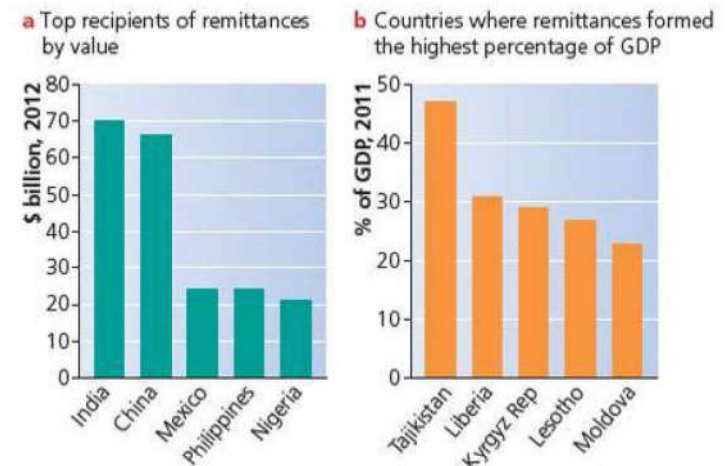

Figure 5.29 Top recipients of remittances, 2012

Some economists argue that remittances are the most effective source of financing in LICs and MICs. Although foreign direct investment (FDI) is larger, it varies with global economic fluctuations. Remittances exceed considerably the amount of official aid received by LICs and MICs. Remittances have been described as 'globalisation bottom up'.

Migration advocates stress that these revenue flows:

■ help alleviate poverty
■ spur investment
■ cushion the impact of global recession when private capital flows decrease.

The major sources of remittances are the USA, Western Europe and the Gulf (Figure 5.30). The number of foreigners working in these areas is rising significantly. About 1.3 million migrants settle in the USA annually, around one-third of them illegally. The top destinations of

Figure 5.30 MoneyGram sign – remittances are an important element of international migration

remittances are India, China, Mexico and the Philippines. The 20 million people who make up the Indian diaspora are scattered over 135 countries. In 2012, they sent back to India $70 billion. The Indian state of Kerala has nearly 1 million 'Gulf wives' living apart from their husbands.

Apart from the money that migrants send directly to their families, their home communities and countries also benefit from:

- donations by migrants to community projects
- the purchase of goods and services produced in the home country by migrants working abroad
- increased foreign exchange reserves.

All three forms of economic benefit mentioned above combine to form a positive multiplier effect in donor countries.

In the past, the perceived major disadvantage of emigration has been that it will lead to a 'brain drain' in which countries will lose their best workers. However, the direct and indirect effects of remittances may more than compensate for this. For some countries, the proportion of graduates working overseas is high – 25 per cent for Iran, 26 per cent for Ghana, 10 per cent for the Philippines, 6 per cent for South Korea. It has been estimated that about $60 billion worth of LIC investment in tertiary education has been 'drained' to OEDC countries. However, it should be noted that some LICs have more graduates in some areas than they need.

Social assimilation usually follows on the back of economic assimilation, although the speed and degree to which it is achieved tends to be strongly related to the socio-political maturity of the host society, as well as to the degree of difference between an immigrant community and the host society. Racial differences create the greatest barrier to social assimilation, but differences in language, religion and culture can also be important. As social

barriers decline, the benefits that different cultures can bring to society as a whole become more apparent. One of the great attractions of cities such as London and New York is their multiculturalism. The social impact on the donor country can also be considerable. This tends to occur in two stages. The first stage is the initial loss of many of its most dynamic individuals. The second stage occurs as new ideas from the adopted country filter back to the home country, often clashing with traditional values.

Section 5.3 Activities

1 Comment on the socio-economic status of immigrants in OECD countries.
2 Produce tables to present the data shown in Figure 5.29.
3 How do remittances benefit receiving communities?

The cultural impact

Migration has played a major role in shaping the global cultural map. The phenomenon is essentially a series of exchanges between places. The impact of migration on population change has been greatest where mass migrations have overwhelmed relatively small indigenous populations, as exemplified by the demographic histories of the Americas and of Australia and New Zealand. In turn, the old colonial powers have relatively cosmopolitan populations compared with most of their non-colonial counterparts, as significant numbers of people from former colonies have sought a higher standard of living in the 'mother' country. The Afro-Caribbean and Asian elements of the British population are a reflection of this process. In countries such as the UK, France, Germany, Italy and the USA, there is a considerable difference in ethnic composition between the large metropolitan areas and rural regions as most immigrants invariably head for large urban areas where the greatest concentration of employment opportunities can be found.

Significant diaspora populations have been established in many HICs, resulting in growing cultural hybridity. An example is the enlargement of the European Union in 2004 to include Eastern European countries such as Poland. A considerable number of Polish workers migrated to the UK. In areas such as London and Reading where the Polish community concentrated, shops providing goods and services to the expanding Polish community opened up and a number of Catholic churches began offering a weekend mass conducted in the Polish language. The building industry and hotels, pubs and catering attracted particularly large numbers of Polish workers. High immigration from Poland and a number of other countries increased the birth rate in the UK and widened the range of first languages spoken by children in schools. This placed considerable demands on many education authorities.

In the USA, the large inflow of migrants from Latin America has resulted in a substantial increase in the proportion of Spanish speakers in the country. Many areas in the southern part of the USA, in states such as California, New Mexico, Texas and Florida, are effectively bilingual. Many other traits of Latin American culture are also evident in the region. In turn, the contact that migrant workers have with their families and communities elicits a certain reverse flow of cultural traits, as workers relate their experiences and send money home.

The political impact

Significant levels of international migration can have a considerable political impact, both within and between countries. In many countries, there is a clear trend of immigrants being more likely to vote for parties of the centre and the left as opposed to political parties to the right of centre. In HICs, immigrants tend to head for economic core regions and to inner-city areas within these regions. Such concentrations can have a big impact on voting patterns.

Over time, immigrants gradually assimilate into host societies. In general, economic assimilation comes first, followed by social assimilation and then political assimilation. When immigrant groups reach a certain size and standing they begin to develop their own politicians, as opposed to voting for politicians from the host society. This process is more likely to happen in mature democracies where there is a long history of immigration. The UK and the USA are examples of countries where this process has been evident.

High levels of international migration between one country and another can lead to political tension. The high level of Mexican migration into the USA, both legal and illegal, has created tensions between the US and Mexican governments. In recent years, the USA has greatly increased the size of its Border Patrol. Critics refer to the 'militarisation of the Mexican border', which is costing $3 billion a year.

In a number of EU countries in recent decades, high levels of immigration have created sizeable immigrant populations. Such populations have been assimilated more successfully in some countries than others. Where and how people are housed is a big factor in assimilation.

Many LICs and MICs are looking to HICs to adopt a more favourable attitude to international migration. The subject is brought up regularly at international conferences. This political pressure is known as 'the pro-migration agenda of developing nations'.

Living within a new political system can also affect the attitudes of immigrant communities to what goes on back in their home country. The harshest critics of authoritarian governments in the Middle East and Asia are invariably exiles living in other countries.

The environmental impact

In an article entitled 'The Environmental Argument for Reducing Immigration to the United States', Winthrop Staples and Philip Cafaro argue that 'a serious commitment to environmentalism entails ending America's population growth by implementing a more restrictive immigration policy. The need to limit immigration necessarily follows when we combine a clear statement of our main environmental goals – living sustainably and sharing the landscape generously with other species – with uncontroversial accounts of our current demographic trajectory and of the negative environmental effects of U.S. population growth, nationally and globally.'

Staples and Cafaro explain how population growth contributes significantly to a host of environmental problems in the USA. They also argue that a growing population increases America's large environmental footprint beyond its borders and creates a disproportionate role in stressing global environmental systems.

There have been growing environmental concerns about immigration in other countries too, as the concept of sustainability has become understood in a more detailed way. However, some critics see such arguments as a disingenuous way of attempting to curtail immigration.

Figure 5.31 is a summary of the possible impacts of international migration. Many of these factors are also relevant to internal migration. Because migration can be such an emotive issue, you may not agree with all of these statements, and you may consider that some important factors have been omitted.

Section 5.3 Activities

1 With brief reference to one country, describe the cultural impact of international migration.
2 Give two examples of the way international migration can have a political impact.
3 How can international migration have an impact on the environment?

The impact of international migration		
Impact on countries of origin	**Impact on countries of destination**	**Impact on migrants themselves**
Positive		
• Remittances are a major source of income in some countries. • Emigration can ease the levels of unemployment and underemployment. • Reduces pressure on health and education services and on housing. • Return migrants can bring new skills, ideas and money into a community.	• Increase in the pool of available labour may reduce the cost of labour to businesses and help reduce inflation. • Migrants may bring important skills to their destination. • Increasing cultural diversity can enrich receiving communities. • An influx of young migrants can reduce the rate of population ageing.	• Wages are higher than in the country of origin. • There is a wider choice of job opportunities. • A greater opportunity to develop new skills. • They have the ability to support family members in the country of origin through remittances. • Some migrants have the opportunity to learn a new language.
Negative		
• Loss of young adult workers who may have vital skills, e.g. doctors, nurses, teachers, engineers (the 'brain-drain' effect). • An ageing population in communities with a large outflow of (young) migrants. • Agricultural output may suffer if the labour force falls below a certain level. • Migrants returning on a temporary or permanent basis may question traditional values, causing divisions in the community.	• Migrants may be perceived as taking jobs from people in the long-established population. • Increased pressure on housing stock and on services such as health and education. • A significant change in the ethnic balance of a country or region may cause tension. • A larger population can have a negative impact on the environment.	• The financial cost of migration can be high. • Migration means separation from family and friends in the country of origin. • There may be problems settling into a new culture (assimilation). • Migrants can be exploited by unscrupulous employers. • Some migrations, particularly those that are illegal, can involve hazardous journeys.

Source: *IGCSE Geography* 2nd edition, P. Guinness & G. Nagle (Hodder Education, 2014) p.23

Figure 5.31 Matrix showing the impact of migration

Case Study: Diasporas in London

London is undoubtedly the most cosmopolitan city in Europe (Figures 5.32 and 5.33). Some commentators go further and view London as the most multiracial city in the world. The diverse ethnicity of the capital is exemplified by the fact that over 200 languages are spoken within its boundaries. The lobby group Migration Watch estimates that two-thirds of immigration into the UK since the mid-1990s has been into London. Within the UK, the process of racial assimilation is much more advanced in London than anywhere else. Almost 30 per cent of people in London were born outside the UK, compared with 2.9 per cent in north-east England. London has the highest proportion of each ethnic minority group apart from Pakistanis, of whom there is a higher proportion in Yorkshire.

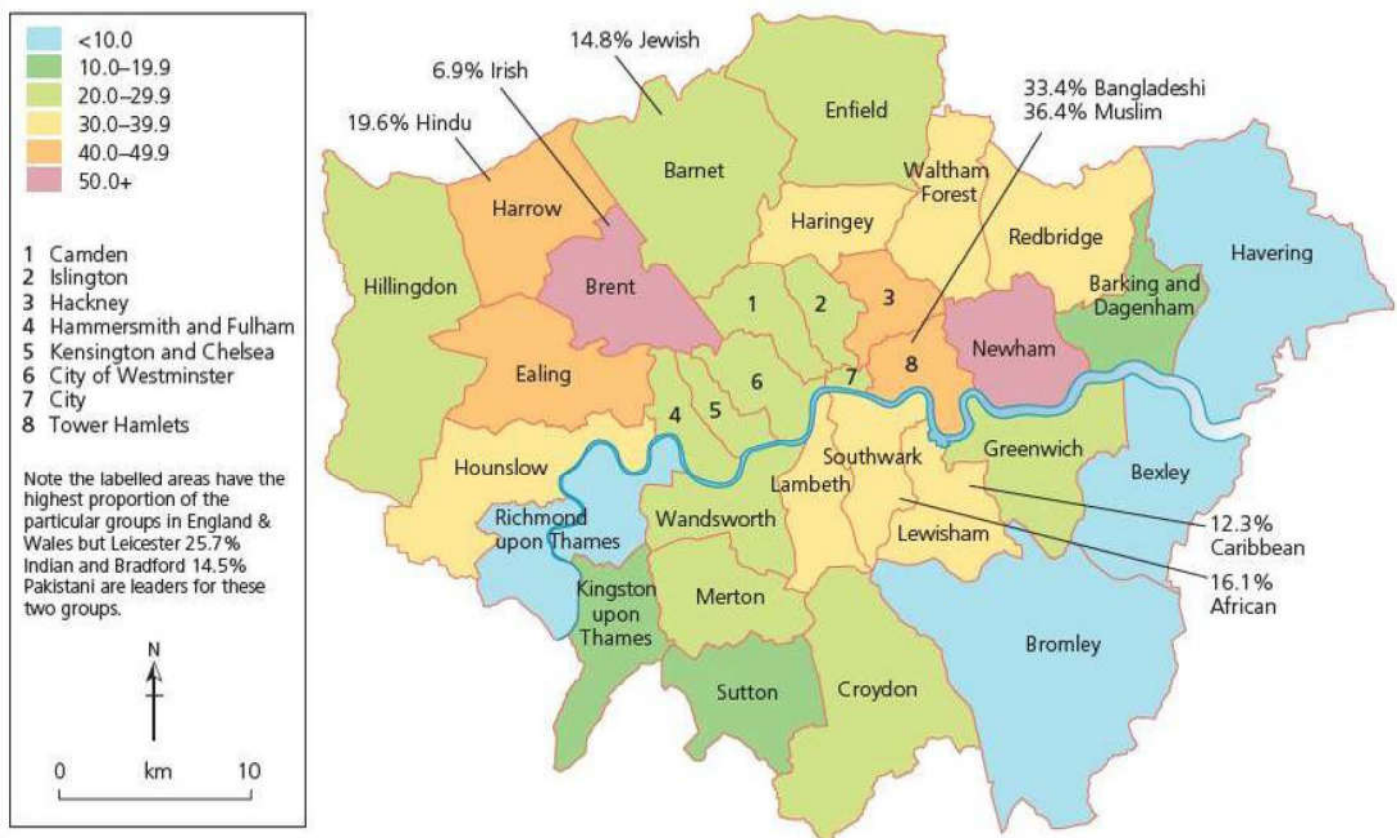**Figure 5.32** An Indian pub in Southall – the largest Indian community in the UK

⇨

Figure 5.33 Percentage populations of non-white ethnic groups in London, and the highest proportion of particular ethnic groups in England and Wales

Figure 5.34 A Nepalese restaurant in South London

Just over 50 per cent of London's population described themselves as white British in the 2001 census. A further 14 per cent are either white Irish or white Other (Europeans, Americans, Australians, New Zealanders, and so on). There are now more ethnically African residents (8 per cent) in London than black Caribbean. The largest Asian community is Bangladeshis (5 per cent).

London's non-white population – 28.8 per cent of the capital's total – is the largest of any European city. The highest proportion of most ethnic groups in the UK can be found in one London borough or another (Figure 5.33). A range of factors affect ethnic concentration:

- There is a tendency for more recent immigrants to live in wards with a high ethnic-minority concentration.
- Those who are not fluent in English are more likely to live in areas with a high ethnic-minority concentration.
- Those in the highest social classes live in areas with a lower concentration of ethnic-minority communities.
- Higher levels of qualification are also associated with lower levels of ethnic-minority concentration.
- The more paid workers there are in a household, the less likely they are to live in areas with a high concentration of ethnic-minority population.

Ethnic villages

The concept of **ethnic villages** often appears in newspapers, magazines and academic journals. Ethnic villages to a greater or lesser extent show clear evidence of the groups residing within their areas in terms of shops, places of worship, schools, cinemas, newspapers, social facilities, advertising and, of course, street presence. The following list of ethnic villages in London comes from a variety of recent publications including *The Economist* and various articles in the *London Evening Standard*:

- Arabs in Bayswater
- West Indians in Brixton

- Punjabis in Southall
- Bangladeshis in Tower Hamlets
- Algerians and Moroccans in Finsbury Park
- Kosovans and Albanians in Enfield and Newham
- Iraqis in Barnet
- Congolese in Croydon

- Germans in Richmond
- Brazilians in Bayswater
- Turks in Hackney and Haringey
- Chinese in Soho
- Koreans in New Malden (Figure 5.35).

Figure 5.35 There are many Korean businesses in New Malden, which has the largest concentration of Koreans in the UK

5.4 A case study of international migration

☐ Mexicans to the USA: a major migration stream

One of the largest international migration streams in the world over the last 40 years has been from Mexico to the USA. This significant movement of people has been primarily a labour migration and has largely been the result of a very large gap in:

- **average income** – the income gap has been a powerful stimulus to movement and emigration has tended to surge during periods of wage decline in Mexico
- **unemployment rates** – weak growth in Mexico's labour demand has resulted in high levels of unemployment and underemployment
- **the growth of the labour force** – with significantly higher population growth in Mexico compared with the USA
- **the overall quality of life** – for virtually every aspect of the quality of life, conditions are better in the USA than in Mexico.

About 30 per cent of legal immigrants in the USA and an estimated half of all unauthorised foreigners in the country are from Mexico. The ties between the two countries go back to the 1800s, when what is now the south-western USA was part of Mexico. However, there was only very limited movement across the US/Mexican border until the twentieth century. In fact, most migration has taken place in the last three decades. Although previous surges occurred in the 1920s and 1950s, persistent mass migration between the two countries did not take hold until the late twentieth century. Table 5.2 summarises the main push and pull factors influencing migration from Mexico to the USA. Mexico is Latin America's major emigration country, sending up to 500 000 people – half of its net population increase – to the USA each year. Most emigrants make unauthorised entries.

☐ Early and mid-twentieth-century migration

In the early part of the twentieth century, the American government allowed the recruitment of Mexican workers as guest workers. Young Mexican men known as *braceros* were allowed into the USA legally between 1917 and 1921, and then later between 1942 and 1964. Both guest worker programmes began when US farms faced a shortage of labour during periods of war. US farmers were strong supporters of allowing the entry of Mexican labour, as the increased supply of labour kept wages low and this contributed to higher land prices. Trade unions and many

Table 5.2 Factors encouraging migration from Mexico, by type of migrant

Type of migrant	Demand–pull	Supply–push	Network/other
Economic	Labour recruitment (guest workers)	Unemployment or underemployment; low wages (farmers whose crops fail)	Job and wage information flows
Non-economic	Family unification (family members join spouse)	Low income, poor quality of life, lack of opportunity	Communications; transport; assistance organisations; desire for new experience/adventure
Note: All three factors may encourage a person to migrate. The relative importance of pull, push and network factors can change over time.			

religious groups were against the programmes. Congress agreed with what was then a common view in the USA – that the inflow of Mexican workers was holding down the wages of US farm workers – and ended the programme.

The end of the *bracero* programme saw farm wages rise, along with the increasing mechanisation of US agriculture. Re-adjusting the labour market in America after several decades of significant dependence on Mexican workers was not easy. On the other side, the loss of US jobs and wages was a difficult adjustment for many Mexican workers. Under the *bracero* programme, American farmers were required to pay for the transportation of Mexican workers from the US/Mexican border. This was an incentive for many Mexicans to move to the border area in the hope of being selected for work in the USA. When the programme ended they returned to border communities in Mexico where unemployment was extremely high.

☐ The establishment of *maquiladoras*

The US and Mexican governments made changes to their trade laws to allow the establishment of *maquiladoras*. These were factories in Mexico that imported components and used Mexican labour to assemble them into goods such as televisions for export to the USA. The logical location for the *maquiladoras* was in towns just over the border in Mexico so that they were as close to their US markets as possible. As the number of factories grew, more Mexicans migrated from other parts of the country to the border towns, putting them in competition with returning *braceros* for jobs. The establishment of *maquiladoras* only solved the returning *bracero* problem to a certain extent, as many of the jobs in the factories went to women.

☐ The increase in illegal migration

Although many rural Mexicans had become dependent on US employment, there was very little illegal migration from Mexico to the USA in the 1960s and 1970s. However, high population growth and the economic crisis in the early 1980s resulted in a considerable increase in illegal migration across the border. Networks were soon established between Mexican communities and US employers. At this time, there were no penalties placed on American employers who knowingly hired illegal migrants. During this period, Mexican workers spread out more widely in the USA than ever before. They were employed mainly in agriculture, construction, various manufacturing industries and in low-paid services jobs. The US Border Patrol was responsible for apprehending illegal workers, but their numbers were limited and they only had a modest impact on the spread of illegal workers

Figure 5.36 US Border Patrol

(Figure 5.36).

As attitudes in America again hardened against illegal workers, Congress passed the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986. This imposed penalties on American employers who knowingly hired illegal workers.

The objective was to discourage Mexicans from illegal entry. Much of the opposition of the unions to guest workers was because they saw the process creating 'bonded workers' with very limited rights.

However, the Act also legalised 2.7 million unauthorised foreigners. Of this number, 85 per cent were Mexican. The legalisation substantially expanded network links between Mexican workers and US employers.

The formation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) lowered barriers to trade and investment flow between Mexico, the USA and Canada. At the time, the Mexican government expected Mexico's export trade to increase and Mexico–USA migration to fall due to NAFTA. However, this proved not to be the case and migration from Mexico to the USA increased. Labour migration continued at a high rate even after economic and employment growth in Mexico improved in the late 1990s.

Since 1980, Mexicans have been the largest immigrant group in the USA. In 2013, approximately 11.6 million Mexican immigrants lived in the USA, up from 2.2 million in 1980 (Figure 5.37).

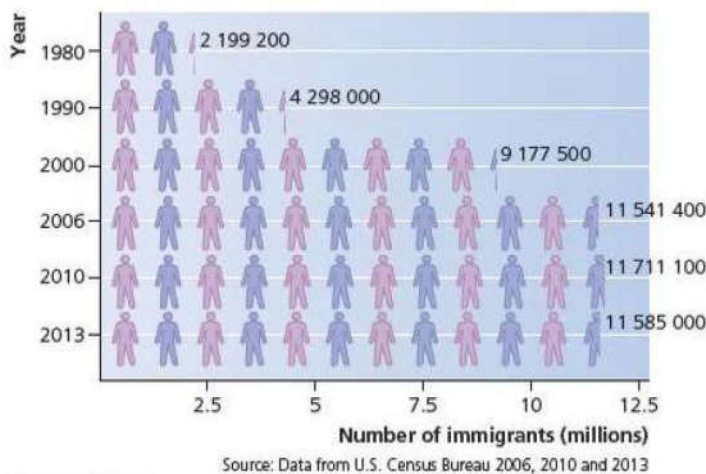Source: Data from U.S. Census Bureau 2006, 2010 and 2013

Figure 5.37 Mexican immigration to the USA, 1980–2013

The US Census in 2000 found an estimated 8.4 million, mostly Mexican, unauthorised foreigners. This stimulated new attempts to regulate migration between the two countries. George Bush, elected President in 2000, stated that he favoured a guest-worker programme to permit more Mexicans to work in America. In 2001, Mexican President Vicente Fox pressed the US government to endorse what was known as the 'whole enchilada'. This would involve legalisation for unauthorised Mexicans in the USA, a new guest-worker programme, improved conditions along the border and exempting Mexico from immigrant visa ceilings. These discussions were halted by the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks.

Legal and illegal migration from Mexico continued as before. By 2006, there were an estimated 11.5 million

Mexican-born people living in the USA. This amounted to around 11 per cent of living people born in Mexico. With their children also taken into account, the figure increased to more than 20 million. This was equivalent to almost a fifth of the population of Mexico. The next four leading countries of origin were the Philippines, India, China and Vietnam, with between 1.1 and 1.6 million people each. This illustrates the size and impact of Mexican immigration into the USA.

Figure 5.38 shows the distribution of the Mexican population in the USA by county. Counties are subdivisions of states in the USA. There is a very strong concentration of the US Mexican population in the four states along the Mexican border – California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. The concentration is particularly strong in California and Texas. Other western states, including Washington, Oregon, Colorado, Nevada and Idaho, also have above-average concentrations. The main reasons for this spatial distribution are:

■ proximity to the border
■ the location of demand for immigrant farm workers
■ urban areas where the Mexican community is long-established.

Figure 5.39 illustrates the distribution of the Mexican population in the Los Angeles region. Within the urban area itself, the Mexican population is concentrated in areas of poor housing and low average income. In more peripheral areas, the Mexican population is concentrated in low-cost housing areas where proximity to farm employment is an important factor.

Mexican culture has had a sustained impact on many areas in the USA, particularly urban areas close to the border. As a result, many Mexican migrants find reassuring similarities between the two countries. One study on labour migration from Mexico to the USA stated: 'Many Mexicans find adapting to Los Angeles as easy as navigating Mexico City.'

There is no doubt that the Mexican population in the USA has undergone a process of assimilation over time. There are three facets to assimilation:

■ economic
■ social
■ political.

Assimilation tends to occur in the order presented above, with economic assimilation occurring first. While most migrants from Mexico would be in the low skills category, their children and grandchildren usually aspire to, and gain, higher qualifications and skills. Such economic mobility inevitably results in greater social contact with the mainstream population. Eventually, more people from migrant populations get involved in politics and the migrant community gains better political representation.
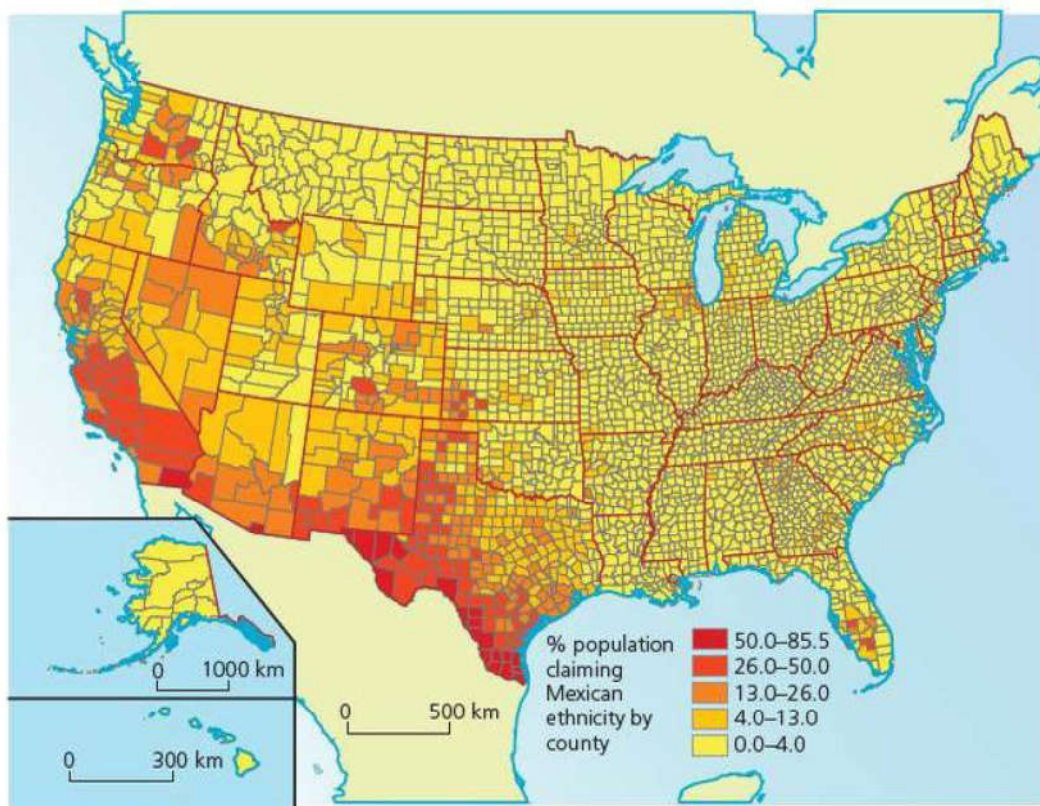
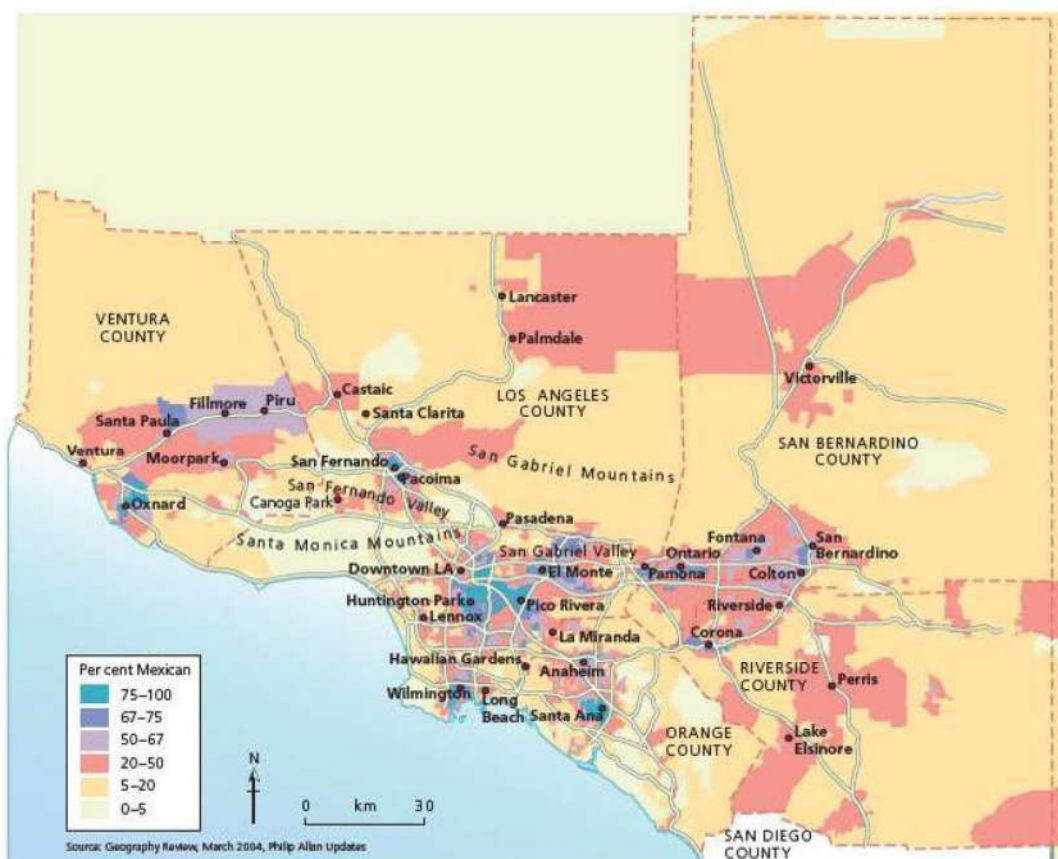Figure 5.38 Distribution of the Mexican population in the USA by county

Figure 5.39 Distribution of the Mexican population in the Los Angeles region

☐ The demography of Mexican migration to the USA

In an article entitled 'The demography of Mexican migration to the US', G.H. Hanson and C. McIntosh highlight the fact that with the US baby boom peaking in 1960, the number of US native-born people coming of working age actually declined in the 1980s. In contrast, high levels of fertility continued in Mexico in the 1960s and 1970s. The sharp increase in Mexico–USA relative labour supply coincided with the stagnation of Mexico's economy in the 1980s, after significant economic progress in the 1960s and 1970s. This created ideal conditions for an emigration surge.

However, the conditions behind recent emigration from Mexico are unlikely to be sustained. Today, Mexico's labour supply growth is converging to US levels. Between 1965 and 2000, Mexico's total fertility rate fell from 7.0 to 2.5, close to the US rate of 2.1. Thus, labour supply pressures for emigration from Mexico peaked in the late 1990s and are likely to fall in coming years.

Figure 5.40 is a simulation of migration from Mexico to the USA based on differences in labour supply and wage differentials between the two countries. Population projections are used to estimate future labour supply.
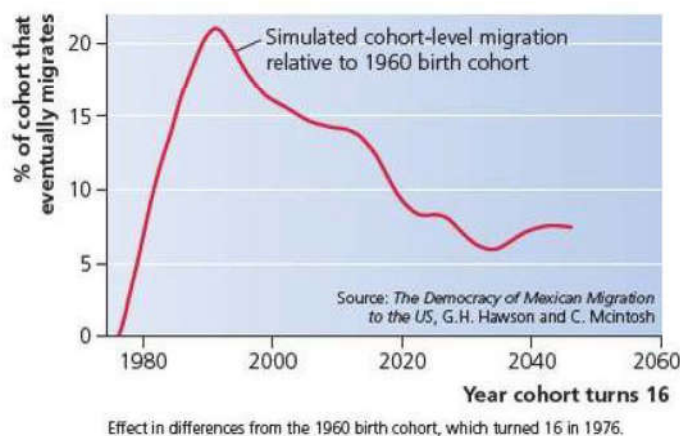

Figure 5.40 Labour supply pressures for Mexican migration to the USA

☐ Opposition to Mexican migration into the USA

In the USA, the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) argues that unskilled newcomers:

- undermine the employment opportunities of low-skilled US workers
- have negative environmental effects
- threaten established US cultural values.

The recent global economic crisis saw unemployment in the USA rise to about 10 per cent, the worst job situation for 25 years. Immigration always becomes a more sensitive issue in times of high unemployment. FAIR has also highlighted the costs to local taxpayers of illegal workers in terms of education, emergency medical care, detention and other costs that have to be borne.

Those opposed to FAIR see its actions as uncharitable and arguably racist. Such individuals and groups highlight the advantages that Mexican and other migrant groups have brought to the country.

☐ An ethnographic case study

A. Mountz and R. Wright (1996) presented an interesting ethnographic account of the transnational migrant community of San Agustín, a village in the Mexican state of Oaxaca, and Poughkeepsie, a city in New York state. The link between the two communities began with the migration of a lone Oaxacan to Poughkeepsie in the early 1980s. In classic network fashion, the Mexican population of Poughkeepsie, predominantly male, grew to well over a thousand over the next decade. Most Oaxacans found employment as undocumented workers in hotels, restaurants and shops and as building workers and landscapers. Their remittances transformed village life in their home community.

What struck Mountz and Wright most was the high level of connectedness between San Agustín and Poughkeepsie, with the migrant community keeping in daily contact with family and friends via telephone, fax, camcorders, videotape and VCRs – communications technology that was rapidly being introduced to San Agustín. Rapid migration between the two communities was facilitated by jet travel and systems of wiring payments. In effect, the community of San Agustín had been geographically extended to encompass the Oaxacan enclave in Poughkeepsie. This is a classic example of time–space distanciation – the stretching of social systems across space and time.

Migrant remittances were used not only to support the basic needs of families but also for home construction, the purchase of consumer goods and financing *fiestas*. The last provided an important opportunity for migrants to display continued village membership. However, as out-migration became more established, tensions began to develop between some migrants and the home community. The main point of conflict was over the traditional system of communal welfare that requires males to provide service and support to the village. Where this could not be done in terms of time, a payment could be substituted. This was increasingly resented by some migrants who saw 'their money as their own'. The traditionalists in the village cited migration as the major cause of the decline of established values and attitudes.

The researchers found that a migrant culture had now become established in San Agustín, as it had in so many other Mexican communities, for four main reasons:

- economic survival
- rite of passage for young male adults

- the growing taste for consumer goods and modern styles of living
- the enhanced status enjoyed by migrants in the home community.

What started out as an exception was now well on the way to becoming the rule for San Agustín's young males.

☐ The impact on Mexico

Sustained large-scale labour migration has had a range of impacts on Mexico, some of them clear and others debatable. Significant impacts include:

- the high value of remittances, which totalled $22 billion in 2013 – as a national source of income, this is only exceeded by oil exports; it represents about 2 per cent of the country's GDP – remittances from the USA to Mexico have increased 14-fold since 1985!
- reduced unemployment pressure as migrants tend to leave areas where unemployment is particularly high
- lower pressure on housing stock and public services as significant numbers of people leave for the USA
- changes in population structure with emigration of young adults, particularly males

- loss of skilled and enterprising people
- migrants returning to Mexico with changed values and attitudes.

Women and children often assume the agricultural labour previously performed by now-absent men. Sometimes, if no-one is able to work the land, agricultural plots are either sold or abandoned. In general, women and children's psychological health has been greatly affected by family members' migration.

Section 5.4 Activities

1 With reference to Table 5.2, discuss the factors that encourage migration from Mexico by type of migrant.
2 Comment on the information presented in Figure 5.37.
3 Describe the distribution of the Mexican population in the USA shown in Figure 5.38.
4 What impact has such a high rate of emigration had on Mexico?