

Rural Migration News

Blog 214

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UN: 281 Million Migrants in 2020

The UN estimated that there were 281 million international migrants in 2020, making migrants 3.6 percent of the world's 7.7 billion people. International migrants are persons outside their country of birth for a year or more.

The stock of migrants rose by 48 million between 2000 and 2010, from 173 million to 221 million or by almost five million a year. The migrant stock rose by 60 million between 2010

and 2020, from 221 million to 281 million, up six million a year.

International migration has three major features. First most migrants move from poorer to richer countries, and the top 10 senders and receivers account for over half of the total. Second, migration patterns are becoming more complex, as more migrants arrive in industrial countries as temporary workers or visitors and settle, and as more migrants move

from a poorer to a richer developing country, so-called south-south migration. Third, migration affects the people and economies of both sending and receiving areas, but migration's effects vary over time and across and within countries.

Flows

Most international migrants move short distances, from one country to another within a continent. On migration corridor maps that chart movements by world regions, the thickest arrows represent intra-region migration, as within Africa, Europe, and Eastern Europe. Significant flows between regions include Latin America to North America and Southern Asia to Western Asia.

Europe had 87 million international migrants in 2020, followed by Asia with 86 million, Northern America with 59 million, and Africa with 25 million.

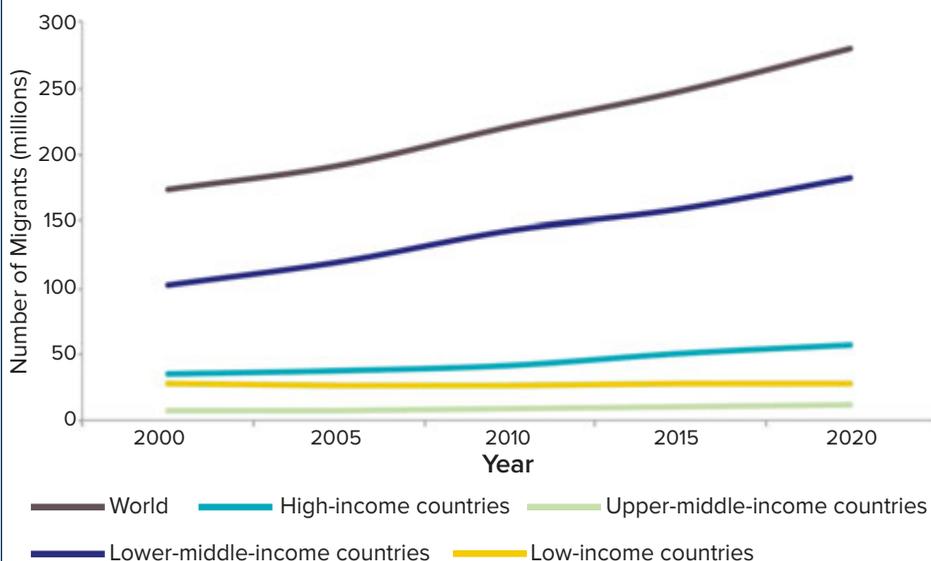
Europe has 10 percent of the world's people and almost a third of the world's migrants. North America has a higher share of migrants than Europe, since Canada and the US have only five percent of the world's people but a fifth of the world's migrants. About 70 percent of Europe's international migrants were born in another European country, while most of the international migrants in North America were born in other regions.

There are several ways to classify countries by their level of income. The UN distinguishes between developed and less developed countries, and reported 157 million migrants in the developed and 123 million migrants in the less developed countries, 56 and 44 percent.

The World Bank defines high income countries as those with per capita incomes of \$12,500 or more in 2019, and they had 182 million or 65 per-

The number of Mexicans Apprehended Just Inside the U.S. Border Peaked at 1.6 Million in FY00

Number of international migrants, by World Bank income group at destination, 2000 to 2020



cent of international migrants. Note that the World Bank calls Argentina, Russia, and Venezuela former high-income countries.

Most migrants, 177 million, are from middle income countries including China, India, Mexico, and Russia. Migrants from China and India are dispersed across many countries, while migrants from Mexico are concentrated in the US.

Half of international migrants are in 10 countries. The US has 51 million migrants or 19 percent of the total (the UN considers Puerto Ricans who have moved to the mainland to be international migrants), followed by Germany and Saudi Arabia, 13 million each, Russia, 12 million, the United Kingdom, 10 million, the United Arab Emirates, 9 million, France, Canada, and Australia, 8 million each, and Italy, 6 million.

A third of international migrants originate from ten countries, led by India with 18 million persons abroad and followed by Mexico with 12 million, China, 11 million, Russia, 10 million, and Syria, 8 million.

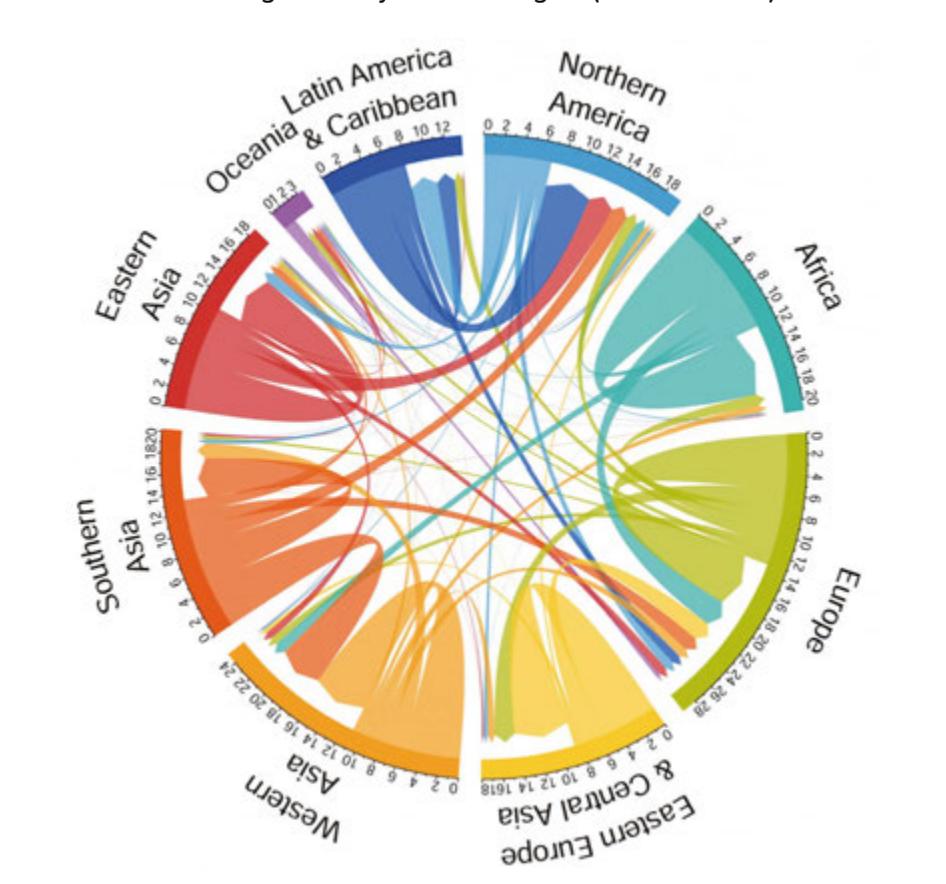
Patterns and Effects

Migration once meant leaving one country, settling in another, and never returning to the country of origin. Today migrants often move between countries, staying abroad for a few months or years before returning, which heightens their impacts in sending and receiving areas.

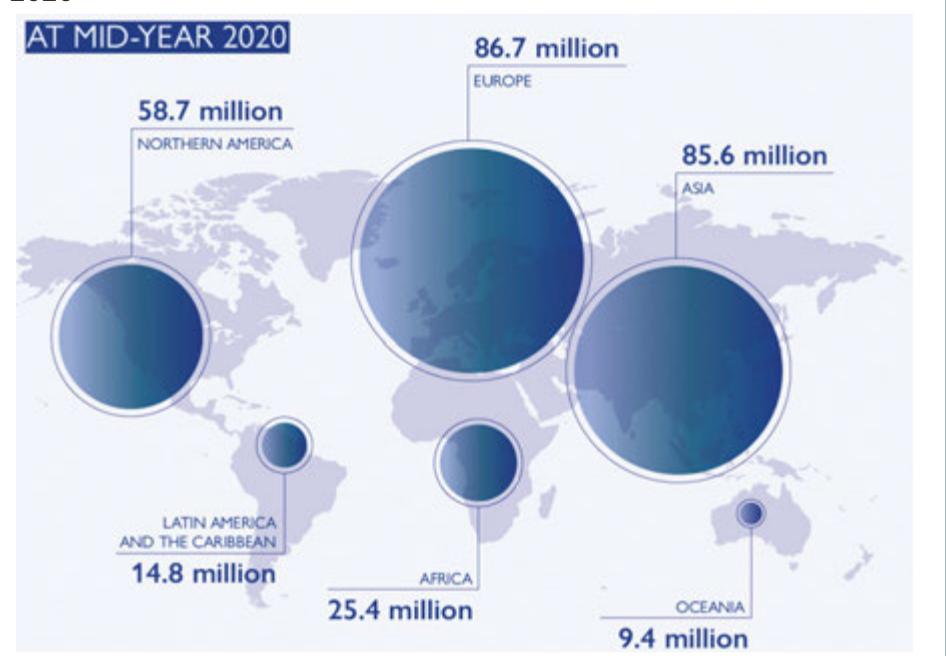
Most migrants move from developing to developed countries, or from one developed country to another. However, the gatekeepers who determine who enters and stays in developed countries have changed.

In the past, governments that attracted settler migrants specified priorities for entry, such as family

Most International Migrants stay Within a Region (2010-15 Flows)



Europe and Asia Each had 30% of the World's 291 International Migrants in 2020



unification in the US or points systems in Australia and Canada. This means that US residents would sponsor their relatives abroad for immigrant visas, while foreigners would apply for immigrant visas

that would allow them to migrate to Australia and Canada. Only foreigners who received sufficient points for their youth, education, knowledge of English or French, and having a local

job offer get immigrant visas.

Consular officials abroad are no longer the gatekeepers that they were in the past. Some foreigners still obtain immigrant visas abroad, but increasingly they are already in the country when they are recognized as immigrants. In the US in FY19, over 55 percent of the immigrant visas granted went to persons already in the US, including 80 percent of the employment-based immigrant visas.

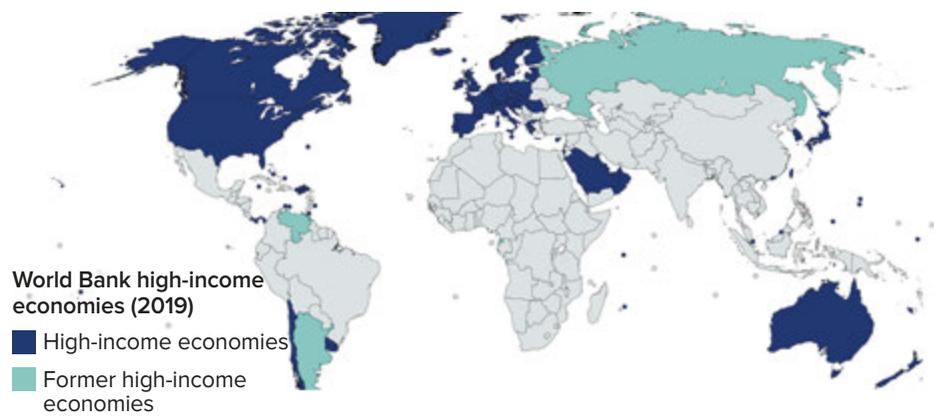
The fact that most immigrant visas go to foreigners already in the country means that immigration gatekeepers are shifting from consular officials adjudicating immigrant visas abroad to employers and universities in the destination countries who select guest workers and students, some of whom later adjust status and become immigrants.

The fact that immigrants are already in the country changes their impacts. Many foreigners have been in the destination country for five or 10 years before becoming immigrants. Increasingly, immigrant visas are the “prize” for foreigners who satisfy their employers as guest workers or pay tuition and complete a program of study that can lead to several years of optional practical training followed by more years as a guest worker and finally an immigrant visa.

The UN Considers Singapore and GCC Countries to be Developing

Developed economies				
Europe				
European Union	New EU member States	Other Europe	Other Countries	Major developed economics (G7)
EU-15	Bulgaria	Iceland	Australia	Canada
Austria	Croatia	Norway	Canada	Japan
Belgium	Cyprus	Switzerland	Japan	France
Denmark	Czech Republic		New Zealand	Germany
Finland	Estonia		United States	Italy
France	Hungary		7,558	United Kingdom
Germany	Latvia			United States
Greece	Lithuania			
Ireland	Malta			
Italy	Poland			
Luxembourg	Romania			
Netherlands	Slovakia			
Portugal	Slovenia			
Spain				
Sweden				
United Kingdom				

The World Bank Includes GCC Countries, Chile, and Singapore Among High-income Countries



References

Rural Migration News Blog. 2019. DESA: 272 Million International Migrants in 2019. October. <https://migration.ucdavis.edu/rmn/blog/post/?id=2361>

UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). International Migration 2020. <https://www.un.org/en/desa/international-migration-2020-highlights>

55% of all immigrants, and 80% of employment-based immigrants, were in the US when they received immigrant visas in FY19

<i>All Immigrants</i>			
Type and Class of Admission	Total	Adjustment of status	New arrivals
Total, all immigrants	1,031,765	572,513	459,252
<i>Employment-Based Preferences</i>			
Type and Class of Admission	Total	Adjustment of status	New arrivals
Employment-based preferences	139,458	110,689	28,769
First: Priority workers	39,471	37,229	2,242
Aliens with extraordinary ability, new arrivals (E11)	614	-	614
Aliens with extraordinary ability, adjustments (E16)	3,439	3,439	-
Outstanding professors or researchers, new arrivals (E12)	17	-	17
Outstanding professors or researchers, adjustments (E17)	1,965	1,965	-
Multinational executives or managers, new arrivals (E13)	142	-	142
Multinational executives or managers, adjustments (E18)	9,497	9,497	-
Spouses of E11, E12, E13, E16, E17, or E18, new arrivals (E14)	621	-	621
Spouses of E11, E12, E13, E16, E17, or E18, adjustments (E19)	11,798	11,798	-
Children of E11, E12, E13, E16, E17, or E18, new arrivals (E15)	848	-	848
Children of E11, E12, E13, E16, E17, or E18, adjustments (E10)	10,530	10,530	-
Second: Professionals with advanced degrees or aliens of exceptional ability	39,506	36,072	3,434
Professionals holding advanced degrees, new arrivals (E21)	1,244	-	1,244
Professionals holding advanced degrees, new arrivals (E26)	18,590	18,590	-
Soviet scientists, adjustments (ES6)	D	D	-
Spouses of E21 or E26, new arrivals (E22)	943	-	943
Spouses of E21 or E26, adjustments (E27)	11,630	11,630	-
Children of E21 or E26, new arrivals (E23)	1,247	-	1,247
Children of E21 or E26, adjustments (E23)	D	D	-
Third: Skilled workers, professionals, and needed unskilled workers	41,787	28,248	13,539
Skilled workers, new arrivals (E31)	4,364	4,364	-
Professionals with baccalaureate degrees, new arrivals (E32)	452	-	452
Professionals with baccalaureate degrees, adjustments (E37)	9,281	9,281	-
Needed unskilled workers, new arrivals (EW3)	818	-	818
Needed unskilled workers, adjustments (EW8)	1,504	1,504	-
Spouses of E31, E32, E36, or E37, new arrivals (E34)	2,828	-	2,828
Spouses of E31, E32, E36, or E37, adjustments (E39)	7,804	7,804	-
Spouses of EW3 or EW8, new arrivals (EW4)	385	-	385
Spouses of EW3 or EW8, adjustments (EW9)	614	614	-
Children of E31, E32, E36, or E37, new arrivals (E35)	4,173	-	4,173
Children of E31, E32, E36, or E37, adjustments (E30)	4,123	4,123	-
Children of EW3 or EW8, new arrivals (EW5)	563	-	563
Children of EW3 or EW8, adjustments (EW0)	558	558	-

Source: <https://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics/yearbook/2019/table7>

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