The nature of migration

Migration involves the movement of people who are changing their permanent residence for a substantial period of time. International migration is the movement of people across international borders. Australia is a nation built on the process of international migration. With more than sixty ethnic groups, the First Fleet itself had a multicultural diversity that typifies Australia’s current identity.

Since the time of the First Fleet, migration has remained a significant source of Australia’s population growth. Population growth is dependent on:
- the rate of natural increase
- net overseas migration levels.

Migration from the Asia-Pacific and the world has played an important role in Australia’s population levels and created links between Australia and the rest of the world. Migrants bring many cultural traits with them and this has led to strong cultural diversity in Australia. Australia is a multicultural nation and our everyday lives are influenced by the diversity of our population [14.3].

Why do people migrate?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Push factors</th>
<th>Pull factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Globalisation</td>
<td>Globalisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>Job opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Famine</td>
<td>Democratic government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War</td>
<td>Labour shortages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural disaster</td>
<td>Education opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drought</td>
<td>Better services (e.g., health)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political, racial or religious</td>
<td>Favourable immigration laws</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>persecution</td>
<td>Environmental amenities (e.g., beaches, climate)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What would it take for you to *emigrate*, or leave your birthplace to live in another country? There are a number of economic, political, social and environmental reasons why people emigrate. These reasons may be categorised as push-pull factors [14.2]. There may be forces pushing people from their homeland and/or there may be forces pulling people to a new country.
This famous photograph, 'European migrants arriving in Sydney', was taken by the renowned photo-journalist David Moore as the Italian ship *Galileo Galilei* berthed at the overseas terminal at Circular Quay, Sydney, in 1966.

Migration may be voluntary. This usually involves the actions of pull factors encouraging people to move to a particular destination. Or it may be forced, such as when political tensions and economic hardship (push factors) create refugee movements [14.4]. For example, after the Vietnam War about two million ‘boat people’, many of whom were ethnic Chinese, fled from persecution in Vietnam to Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia and Australia.

[14.4] Forced migration is usually associated with push factors such as war – women and children on a refugee boat in Darwin Harbour, 1977.

---

**Learning about ...**

1. In your own words, explain the meaning of migration.
2. Discuss the role of migration in shaping Australia’s identity.
3. Outline the difference between the terms ‘immigration’ and ‘emigration’.
4. Use the information in [14.2] to classify the push–pull factors according to whether they are economic, political, social or environmental.
5. Why does globalisation appear as both a push and a pull factor for emigration?
6. Explain the difference between voluntary and forced migration.
Learning to …

1. Working in groups, discuss reasons that would encourage you to emigrate from Australia. List the feelings you would have settling in a new country.
2. Develop a survey for your class, year group or school to determine the ethnic diversity of the group. Process and record your findings.
3. Working in groups, describe the emotions shown on the faces of the different people arriving on "Gallipoli" and the living conditions aboard the boats used by the refugees in [14.4].

Australia's migration patterns

Australia's migration links were truly established in 1788, at which time the first of approximately 160,000 convicts were transported to the Australian colonies. Free immigrants from the early 1790s joined convicts, along with the officials of the penal system.

The next wave of migration to Australia occurred during the goldrush era (1851–70), when many British, American and Chinese migrants arrived in Australia. The number of new arrivals was greater than the number of convicts who had landed here in the previous 70 years. The total population of Australia trebled from 430,000 in 1851 to 1.7 million in 1871. By 1861, Chinese immigrants made up 3.3% of the population [14.5]. However, 60% of Australia's population had been born in the United Kingdom.

Australia's first official migration program began at the end of World War II, in 1945. Agreements were made between Britain and some European countries, and with the International Refugee Organisation (IRO) to encourage migration, including displaced people (refugees) from war-torn Europe. Many displaced migrants arrived from Eastern Europe, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Greece and the Middle East. Ten years later, in 1955, the one-millionth postwar migrant had arrived. Between 1945 and 1965, Australia's population grew from seven million to eleven million [14.6].

From the time of the First Fleet, the United Kingdom remained Australia's main source of migration [14.7]. This trend was unchanged until the 1970s. Between 1963 and 1967, 51% of migrants to Australia came from the United Kingdom and Ireland. By 2000, this group represented only 11% of migrants to Australia. In the last three decades, increasing numbers of migrants have been born in countries of South-East Asia, North-East Asia and South Asia [14.8]. The United Kingdom, however, is currently the largest source of migrants to Australia.

Reproduced by permission of Macmillan Education Australia, from Geography for Australian Citizens 3rd edition by Brian Parker, Kate Lanceley, Debra Owens & Rebecca Fitzpatrick, 2008. Copyrighted images have been removed.