# Why People Immigrate from Their Countries

Immigration has long been one of the buildings blocks of the global community. From the archetypical images of people immigrating from their countries and landing on New York’s Ellis Island in search of a better life, immigration has often been associated with hope and optimism, as well as the search for a better future. Still, while immigration between countries occurs throughout the world everyday, few people have stopped to consider the factors that truly motivate immigration between such countries. In fact, such migratory patterns oftentimes have deep implications that speak to some of the most relevant issues of the world. The present research examines why people immigrate from their countries, arguing that the most prominent reasons are economic, political, and environmental.

Particularly in the contemporary world, economic factors constitute among the most substantial driving forces of immigration. In gaining a better understanding on this factor, as well as other contributing factors to immigration, sociologists have identified push and pull components to immigration. Push factors of immigration are those that result in an individual being motivated to leave his or her country. Conversely, pull factors are those in which an individual migrates to a new country somewhat independent of circumstances in their current country. When considering economic factors of immigration, both push and pull factors play a critical role in motivating individuals to immigrate. In this respect, a frequent motivation for immigration from ones’ home country is the pull factor of the promise of a better life in another nation. Although in recent years the United States has become an increasingly more difficult place to immigrate, this country has long operated as a pull factor for immigration as people hope to take advantage of the country’s robust economy.

Of course, economic drivers of motivation have not only occurred in relation to pull factors, but have also taken place in relation to push factors. In this respect, many countries have experienced states of bankruptcy or economic deprivation that have resulted in an increased amount of people suddenly wanting to leave. For example, in the last decade Greece underwent such a substantial debt crisis that it resulted in increased amounts of people wanting to leave the country, seeking a better life. Also highly significant are increased levels of immigration that are taking place from people living in the developing world. While staggering income disparities have long existed between people in the developed versus the developing world, researchers have indicated that the that has “changed since the 1980s is much greater awareness of these income gaps” (Milanovic). As such, with the developing world’s increased recognition of the income disparities that are taking place between their country and more economically developed nations such as the United States, France, and Great Britain, increased motivation for immigration has emerged.

While economic factors represent among the most significant elements that have motivated people to immigrate, political and religious factors also continue to motivate migratory patterns. Regarding such forces of immigration, one scholar has noted that, “Forced international migration has historically occurred for two main cultural reasons: slavery and political instability” ("Migration Push/Pull Factors"). Although some forms of slavery continue to exist in the modern world, clearly political factors are a larger motivator of immigration. Such political factors occur in a multitude of shapes and forms. For example, migration out of North Korea constitutes a major factor that has long-motivated people to leave the country to escape political oppression. Similarly, women have oftentimes sought to migrate from Iran or the Middle East as a means of finding countries with more liberal policies towards gender roles. Political factors of immigration have long constituted such powerful factor of movement that in many instances the United States has implemented policies that open its doors to political prisoners.

Finally, environmental factors have emerged that have also resulted in increased forms of immigration taking place. Such forms of migration frequently have been motivated in relation to natural disasters or other similar challenges. For instance, a tsunami that occurred across Asian in 2004 resulted in a substantial amount of immigration from people who were motivated to seek a new living area after much of the habitable spaces where they had been living had been destroyed. Similarly, in the Sahel region of Africa, significant forms of migration had to occur because of substantial water shortages and drought in the region. While environmental factors may not be the largest determinants of immigration, they do remain significant.

In conclusion, the present research has examined different factors that motivate immigration. Within this spectrum of investigation, the research has argued that the most prominent factors are economic, political, and environmental. Although the world has changed a substantial amount in the past decade, and different streams of immigration has occurred, these fundamental reasons have largely remained at the core of such demographic change. Ultimately, it seems these factors will remain the most prominent well into the future.

## Works Cited

Milanovic, Branko. "The Economic Causes Of Migration - The Globalist." *The Globalist*, 2017,

"Migration Push/Pull Factors." *Lewishistoricalsociety.Com*, 2016.