

## Why do people

# MIGRATE?

## Theories of migration

International migration is such a diverse and complex phenomenon that no single theory has been able to provide a satisfactory all-encompassing explanation. The causes of international migration are better understood by incorporating a variety of perspectives and factors. Outlined below are eight of the main theories developed by experts to explain the main drivers behind the decision to migrate. The two charts at the bottom show, first, the different reasons for the authorization permits granted to

third country migrants in the EU, and, second, that the distinction between forced and voluntary migration has become increasingly blurred.

Theories can be characterized based on the level at which their components operate

- Macro
- Equilibrium
- Meso
- Structural
- Micro

### Neoclassical

This theory assumes that labor markets and economies move towards equilibrium in the long run through trade and migration. It considers migrants as purely rational actors. Migrants move from societies where labor is abundant and wages are low, to societies where labor is scarce and wages are high. Decisions to migrate are taken at the individual level and consider that higher earnings in the long run compensate for the cost and risk of relocating.



### New Economics

A variation of the Neoclassical, this theory incorporates the societal dimension in the decision to migrate. The migration decision is often taken collectively, especially within households. Migration of selected family members may be used to mitigate risks and diversify income resources for the entire family. If things go well for the ones who migrate, they will provide support for their families in the country of origin, and vice versa.



### Migration Systems and Networks

This theory focuses on the nexus between people at origin and destination. Migratory movements are often connected to prior long-standing links between sending and receiving countries, like commercial or cultural relationships. These give birth to migration systems, i.e. two or more countries exchanging migrants, and migration networks, such as circular and diaspora-based migrations. People move where they can rely on someone they know. The processes are cumulative and do not necessarily tend to an equilibrium: the more the diaspora expands the more it will attract new migrants.



### Institutional

According to this theory, organizations that developed alongside international migration started to play a role in nurturing and encouraging further migration. The imbalance between the scarcity of visas or other legal channels to enter destination countries and the amount of people who wish to migrate helped to create a migration economy and a specific market whose actors range from immigration attorneys, travel and recruitment agencies, to smugglers.



Stock of migrants in 2015 based on citizenship

Mobility from within EU

**15.3 million**

Migrants from Third Countries

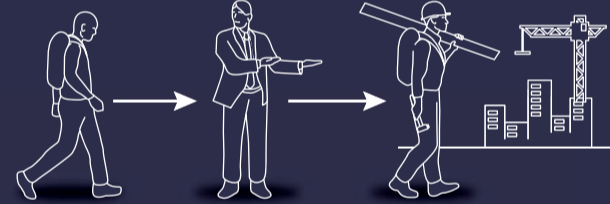
**19.8 million**

representing 3.9% of the EU-28 population



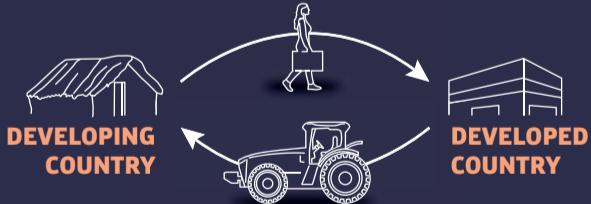
### Dual or Segmented Labour Market

The need for cheap workers in modern societies is the main factor explaining migration, according to this theory. The demand for labor in developed economies pulls migrants independently from the labor or wage conditions at the origin societies. At the receiving economy, the labor market is segmented: the native-born have access to careers, good pays and safe working conditions; migrants are channeled to labor-intensive secondary or tertiary sectors that provide precarious jobs, low pays and hazardous working conditions.



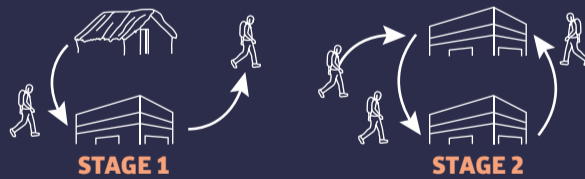
### World System

This theory emphasizes migration from peripheral developing countries to core capitalist ones. Migrants flow from the periphery to the core while capital, machinery, and goods flow from the core to the periphery. This often creates a loop: capital and machinery, for instance, may increase agricultural productivity, forcing people to move internally to cities and cause high youth unemployment in urban areas. These youths may end up migrating to more advanced economies.



### Mobility Transition

The focus here is on the transition of countries through a series of demographic and societal stages. In the early stages featuring strong demographic growth there is mostly rural-to-urban mobility followed by high net migration towards developed countries. As countries become advanced economies, rural-to-urban mobility shrinks, demographic growth slows down, while urban-to-urban mobility and circular migration increase significantly. Advanced economies often become net importers of low-skilled labor from less developed countries.



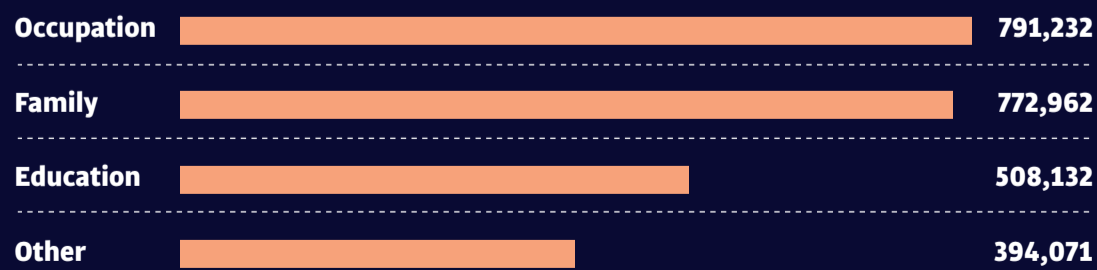
### Policy

In addition to the 'classic' theories outlined above, experts have progressively stressed the role played by immigration policies. Especially after World War II, international migration has been taking place within an increasingly complex set of national and international policies aimed at regulating and controlling immigration, admissions and flows.



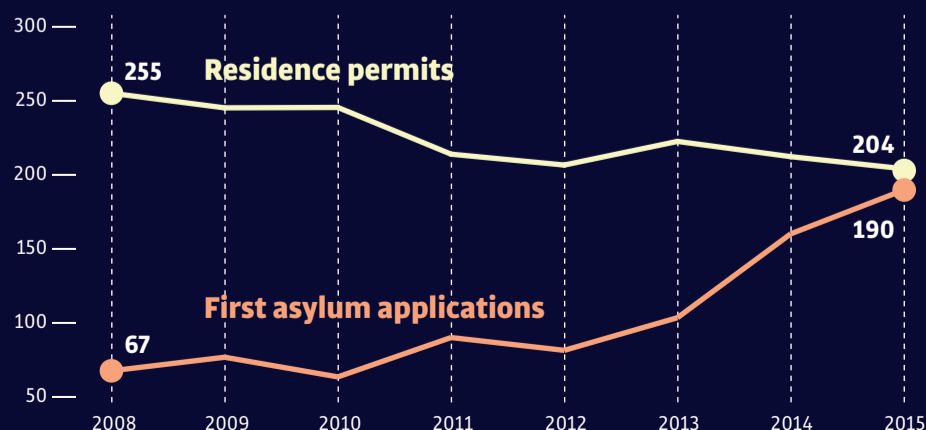
## Forms of migration: Third countries to the EU (2015)

For the nearly 2.5 million migrants from third countries into the EU, here are the reasons used to obtain their authorization permits



## Voluntary and forced migration flows are becoming blurred. The case of Sub-Saharan Africa

Residence permits and first asylum applications from Sub-Saharan Africa to the EU. Thousands per year



SOURCES: EUROSTAT First time asylum applications by citizenship and residence permits (bottom graphs) and migrant stocks by citizenship (center graph) last update November 2016

EUROSTAT First time asylum applications by citizenship and residence permits, last update November 2016.

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