**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.

**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 social 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 migrate entire families 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., in several 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 lead 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.

**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 wages and employment in the core economy, which will lead to an increase in demand for labor in sectors outside agriculture, thus creating increased unemployment in rural areas. These youths may end up migrating to more advanced economies.

**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: thestable-born have access to good pay and work conditions, while migrants are channeled to labor-intensive secondary or tertiary sectors that provide precarious jobs, low pay, and hazardous working conditions.

**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)**

The chart below identifies the major reasons for the authorization permits granted to third country migrants in the EU. The largest share of permits are based on family reunification (72.2% of 2015 mobility from within the EU and 73.7% of mobility from third countries). Over the years, the number of mobility permits issued has remained relatively stable, with some fluctuation. The largest share of mobility permits in the EU are issued to people from Morocco (25.6%), followed by Turkey (15.5%).

**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.