

**INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION PROCESSES AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE IN
THE ECONOMY OF COUNTRIES**

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Abstract: This article examines the processes of international migration and their significance for national economies. It presents statistical data on the top ten countries globally in terms of remittance inflows and outflows generated by labor migrants. The analysis focuses on the economic impact of migration on both “sending” and “receiving” countries.

Keywords: International migration, migrant, trend, immigrant, emigrant, gross domestic product (GDP), export.

Introduction. Human migration is an age-old phenomenon relevant to virtually every society across the globe, yet it continues to evolve in diverse ways. Shifts in scale, direction, demographics, and frequency enable us to observe how migration is dynamically developing over time.

The term migration encompasses various legally defined categories of individuals – such as labor migrants with formal status – as well as those who fall under specific forms of movement regulated by law, including irregular or undocumented migrants. It also includes groups whose legal status or means of movement are not explicitly defined under international law, such as foreign students¹.

To facilitate the collection of migration-related data, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) defines an international migrant as “any person who changes his or her country of usual residence.” This definition deliberately excludes individuals who move for purposes such as tourism, visits to friends and relatives, business travel, medical treatment, or religious pilgrimage².

The causes of contemporary migration are diverse and complex. However, the primary motivations can broadly be categorized as economic and social. These two categories are so deeply intertwined that distinguishing between them is often difficult; thus, it is more appropriate to refer to them collectively as socio-economic factors. The major determinants of present-day migration include:

- economic factors – wage differentials, employment availability;

¹ WORLD MIGRATION REPORT 2022.

² WORLD MIGRATION REPORT 2022.

- social factors – access to healthcare, quality of life, family relations, children's welfare;
- religious and ethnic factors – affiliation with a particular ethnic group or religious belief system;
- environmental factors – climate, weather conditions, ecological stability;
- administrative factors – migration policies, regulatory frameworks.

Migration may be triggered by both “push” and “pull” factors. Push factors, which operate in sending (donor) countries, include:

- economic reasons - unemployment and lack of job opportunities, low wage levels;
- social reasons - lack of future prospects, absence of educational opportunities, deteriorating criminal situation, personal sense of insecurity;
- ethno-religious reasons - discrimination based on ethnic, racial, or religious affiliation, conflicts between ethnic groups, "ethnic cleansing";
- administrative-political reasons - persecution for political views, deportation;
- natural causes - natural disasters, deterioration of ecological conditions and climate.

"Pull" factors in receiving countries include the following:

- economic factors - the possibility of finding employment, high wage levels, access to developed infrastructure;
- social factors - opportunities for education, presence of family members and relatives;
- ethno-religious factors - religious freedom, policies of ethnic and religious diversity;
- administrative and political factors - programs for attracting migrants;
- natural factors - favorable climate, good ecological conditions.

Review of Relevant Literature. In the study of modern population migration, significant differences exist between domestic and international scholarly traditions. Each school of thought reflects distinct characteristics shaped by its historical and theoretical context.

A pivotal contribution to migration theory was made by British geographer and statistician Ernst Georg Ravenstein, whose influential article titled “The Movement of Population Between Cities” was published in 1946 in the *American Sociological Review*³. In this work,

³ Zipf G. The (P1P2 / D) hypothesis: on the intercity movement of persons // *American Sociological Review*. 1946. № 11. P. 677–686.

Ravenstein explored the impact of distance on interurban migration, laying the foundation for spatial migration theory.

He sought to explain such movements through the principle of least effort or least resistance, which posits that individuals tend to pursue outcomes that require the least expenditure of energy or resources. In the context of migration, this means people are more likely to relocate to destinations that are geographically closer or socially and economically more accessible.

The American sociologist Everett S. Lee made a significant contribution to the study of population migration theory. In 1966, in his article “Theory of Migration”, he revised Ravenstein's theory, focusing on push and pull factors⁴.

American economists John Harris and Michael Todaro also placed high importance on migration issues. Their work was published in 1970 in the American Economic Review journal in an article titled “Migration, Unemployment and Development: A Two-Sector Analysis”⁵.

Another scholar who has studied migration is the American sociologist Samuel Stoffer, who believes that distance and population are not the main factors determining the migration flow between them⁶.

It is also worth noting Nobel laureate William Arthur Lewis, the author of the two-sector economic model, which provides for the separation of rural and urban sectors. In this model, the author paid special attention to rural-urban migration against the backdrop of increased production and employment in third-world countries⁷.

American sociologist Saskia Sassen is a prominent researcher of globalization, urbanization, and international migration, and is the author of the term “global city” and several books.

In his book “The Mobility of Labor and Capital”, Sassen argues that foreign investment in developing countries only contributes to an increase in emigration⁸.

⁴ Lee E. A Theory of Migration // Demography. 1966. № 3. P. 47–57

⁵ Harris J., Todaro M. Migration, Unemployment, and Development: A Two-Sector Analysis // The American Economic Review. 1970. № 60. P. 126–142.

⁶ Stouffer S. Intervening Opportunities: A Theory Relating Mobility and Distance // American Sociological Review. 1940. № 5. P. 845–867

⁷ . Lewis W.A. The Theory of Economic Growth. — N.Y., 1959. — P. 402.

⁸ Sassen S. The Mobility of Labor and Capital: A Study in International Investment and Labor Flow. New York : Cambridge University Press. 1988. P. 240.

The influence of the globalization process on migration is described in detail in the book "The Age of Migration" by theorists Stefan Kasls and Mark Miller⁹.

Research methodology. Familiarization with scientific research on migration processes and solving their problems, the study of statistical data and economic comparison and analysis, logical thinking, scientific abstraction, data grouping, and methods of analysis and synthesis were widely used.

Analysis and Findings. According to recent estimates, in 2019, there were approximately 169 million labor migrants worldwide, accounting for nearly 62% of the 272 million international migrants recorded at the time¹⁰. It is important to note that these figures precede the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had a profound impact on international labor migration. Therefore, these pre-pandemic statistics serve as a useful baseline for future assessments of COVID-19's long-term effects on global migration flows.

Among the global population considered to be of working age (defined as individuals aged 15 and older), international labor migrants represented approximately 68.8%, or 245.6 million people.

In terms of distribution by income groupings of destination countries, the data reveal that:

- 67% of labor migrants (approximately 113.9 million individuals) resided in high-income countries;
- an additional 49 million migrants (29%) lived in upper-middle-income countries;
- only 6.1 million migrants (3.6%) resided in low-income countries.

These patterns underscore the strong correlation between labor migration and economic disparities at the global level, where high-income nations continue to serve as primary destinations for economically motivated migrants.

Migrants make a substantial contribution to the financial systems of their host countries, not only by paying taxes but also by spending approximately 85% of their income within the economies of the receiving nations. The remaining 15% is typically sent back to their countries of origin in the form of remittances¹¹.

In recent years, the volume of remittances sent by migrants to their home countries has seen a dramatic increase. In 2000, total global remittances amounted to USD 128 billion, whereas by 2019, this figure had risen to USD 719 billion. This significant growth underscores the

⁹ Castles S., Miller M. The age of migration: international population movements in the modern world. London : Macmillan. 1993. 306 p.

¹⁰ World Bank, 2020.

¹¹ "Foreign Economic Activity and Competition Management" Rakhmatullayeva F.M., Abdulloyev A.J., Giyazova N.B., Narzullayeva G.S. Study Guide, Part I "Durdona" Publishing House, Bukhara-2021.

expanding role of remittances as a critical source of external finance for many developing economies.

In 2020, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, global remittance flows experienced a slight decline of 2.4%, amounting to USD 702 billion. This represented a drop from the USD 719 billion recorded in 2019, marking the first downturn following three consecutive years of growth.

Between 2016 and 2019, global inward remittance flows steadily increased:

- from USD 597 billion in 2016 to USD 640 billion in 2017, reflecting a 7.2% rise;
- from USD 640 billion in 2017 to USD 694 billion in 2018, a further 8.4% increase;
- and from USD 694 billion in 2018 to USD 719 billion in 2019, which represented a 3.6% increase.

In alignment with this upward trend, remittances to low- and middle-income countries had also been increasing before the pandemic. However, in 2020, these flows declined significantly, reversing the positive trajectory observed from 2016 to 2018.

In 2020, the top five recipient countries in terms of remittance volume were India, China, Mexico, the Philippines, and Egypt, with both India and China receiving over USD 59 billion each in total remittance inflows (see Table 1). Among the G7 economies, France and Germany have consistently remained in the global top ten list of remittance-receiving countries since 2005, maintaining their positions in 2020 as well (see Table 2).

However, when ranked by the share of remittances in national GDP, a different set of countries emerge as the top recipients. The leading five countries in this regard are: Tonga – 35.2% of GDP, Kyrgyzstan – 33.6%, Tajikistan – 31.0%, Haiti – 30.7%, Nepal – 28.0%. This disparity illustrates that while large emerging economies may dominate in absolute remittance volumes, low-income and small developing countries often rely on remittances as a critical component of national income, representing a significant share of their gross domestic product (GDP).

Table 1
Leading countries receiving remittances, billion USD, 2005-2020 (billion USD)

Top Countries Receiving Remittances, billion USD							
2005		2010		2015		2020	
	23.63	India	53.48	India	68.91	India	83.15
China							
Mexico	22.74	China	52.46	China	63.94	China	59.51
India	22.13	Mexico	22.08	Philippines	29.80	Mexico	42.88
	14.64	Philippines	21.56	Mexico	26.23	Philippines	34.91

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Nigeria							
France	14.21	France	19.90	France	24.07	Egypt	29.60
Philippines	13.73	Nigeria	19.74	Nigeria	20.63	Pakistan	26.11
	6.88	Germany	12.79	Pakistan	19.31	France	24.48
Belgium							
Germany	6.86	Egypt	12.45	Egypt	18.33	Bangladesh	21.75
Spain	6.66	Belgium	10.99	Germany	15.58	Germany	17.90
Poland	6.47	Bangladesh	10.85	Bangladesh	15.30	Nigeria	17.21

Source: World Migration Report (WMR), 2022

Table 2

Leading countries in remittance outflows, billion USD, 2005-2020

Leading countries sending money transfers							
2005		2010		2015		2020	
USA	47,75	USA	50.53	USA	68.91	USA	68.00
Saudi Arabia	14,30	Saudi Arabia	27.07	United Arab Emirates	63.94	United Arab Emirates	43.24
Germany	12.71	Russia	21.45	Saudi Arabia	29.80	Saudi Arabia	34.60
Switzerland	10.86	Switzerland	18.51	Switzerland	26.23	Switzerland	27.96
Buyuk Britanya	9.64	Germany	14.68	Rossiya	24.07	Germany	22.02
France	9.47	Italy	12.88	Germany	20.63	China	18.12
South Korea	6.90	France	12.03	Kuwait	19.31	Russia	16.89
Russia	6.83	Kuwait	11.86	France	18.33	France	15.04
Luxembourg	6,74	Luxembourg	10.66	Qatar	15.58	Luxembourg	14.20
Malaysia	5.68	United Arab Emirates	10.57	Luxembourg	15.30	Netherlands	13.92

Source: World Migration Report (WMR), 2022

Currently, the remittance-to-GDP ratio of 29 countries (out of 177 countries reported) is more than 10%. Although many countries maintained the same level in 2020 as in 2019, Lebanon's share of GDP tripled in 2020 due to a sharp decline in GDP. Conversely, Haiti's remittance economy saw its share of GDP halved due to limited use of local currencies. Serious dependence on remittances can foster a culture of dependency in the receiving country, which can reduce labor force participation and slow down economic growth¹².

¹² "Foreign Economic Activity and Competition Management" Rakhmatullayeva F.M., Abdulloyev A.J., Giyazova N.B., Narzullayeva G.S. Study Guide, Part I "Durdona" Publishing House, Bukhara-2021.

Excessive reliance on remittances makes the economy more vulnerable to sharp fluctuations in remittance inflows.

High-income countries are almost always the primary sources of international remittances. For decades, the United States has held the leading position among remittance-sending countries, including in 2020, when the total amount reached 68 billion USD, followed by the United Arab Emirates (43.24 billion USD), Saudi Arabia (34.60 billion USD), and Switzerland (27.96 billion USD). In 2019 and 2020, Germany ranked fifth in remittance volumes, with total remittances amounting to 23.94 and 22.02 billion USD, respectively (see Table 2). In addition to its role as a major remittance-receiving country, China also ranks among the leading countries sending remittances. In 2016, China sent remittances totaling 20.29 billion USD, and in 2017, 16.18 billion USD¹³.

Throughout 2020, numerous analysts worldwide closely monitored the latest data and analyses to understand the impact of COVID-19 on international remittances, migration, and mobility. Data on remittances from several countries during 2020 contradicted the World Bank's global forecasts of a significant decline in remittance volumes. Some countries reported monthly record-high remittance inflows after mid-2020. According to the World Bank's May 2021 report, remittance flows remained resilient during the COVID-19 crisis. Officially recorded remittance flows in 2020 amounted to USD 702 billion, representing only a 2.4% decrease compared to USD 719 billion in 2019.

According to the UN methodology, the category of highly skilled migrants includes researchers, engineers, medical doctors, and others. In the United States during the 1980s, foreigners accounted for 10% of engineers and 24% of medical doctors; additionally, 23% of the members of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences and 33% of Nobel Prize laureates were immigrants to the United States.

Conclusion and Recommendations. A positive aspect for exporting countries is that when emigrants return to their homelands, they often possess significantly higher qualifications and can establish their own businesses, transferring the professional skills acquired abroad to others. Thus, the country effectively receives "enriched" labor resources. However, it is essential to create favorable socio-economic conditions that enable returnees to realize their entrepreneurial potential and generate new employment opportunities. At the same time, the emigration of highly skilled specialists and scientists from less developed countries further weakens their economies and slows their development, while strengthening the positions of the recipient countries. This dynamic leads to increased polarization and widens the gap between developed and developing countries.

Xulosa o'rnida shuni aytish mumkinki, migratsiya jamiyat uchun ham, migrantlar uchun ham ijobiy ijtimoiy-iqtisodiy natijalar berishi mumkin. Mamlakatlar ushbu imtiyozlardan foydalanishlari uchun ularning siyosati va amaliyoti muhojirlar va jamiyatning ijtimoiy-iqtisodiy farovonligini oshirishi, shu bilan birga davlat hududidagi shaxslarning inson

¹³ WORLD MIGRATION REPORT 2022.

huquqlarini hech qanday kamsitishlarsiz hurmat qiladigan, himoya qiladigan va bajaradigan xalqaro standartlarga rioya qilishi kerak.

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