



New IZA World of Labor Report: Understanding the Push and Pull Factors of Migration is essential for Policymakers

A new [IZA World of Labor](#) report publishing today looks at the key determinants of migration such as the availability of migrant networks, differences in income across countries, and demographic factors

The growth in the migrant stock worldwide increased by 4.6 million between 2000 and 2010. In 2015 alone an unprecedented 1.82 million unauthorized migrants arrived in the European Union. The economist Nicole Simpson of Colgate University, USA, considers the forces that motivate people and their families to leave. Migrants can be “pushed” out of their home countries due to deteriorating economic conditions or political unrest. Conversely, migrants are often “pulled” into destinations that offer high wages, good health care, and strong educational systems. Understanding the key determinants of migration patterns is, according to Simpson, essential when considering the implications of immigration policy.

The net benefits to migration include the increase in income gained by migrating. Workers in poorer countries are looking for higher wages and better employment opportunities, which can usually be found in richer countries. Furthermore, research consistently finds a strong, positive effect of migrant networks on new migrant flows. That is, migrants are often attracted to host countries with large populations of migrants (diasporas) from the same country of origin. Estimates suggest that if the stock of migrants from a specific country increases by 1,000 people, then the flow of migrants will increase by 4.7 people per year.

According to Simpson, income differentials, migrant networks, and demographic factors are found to be robust predictors of migrant flows. But other determinants such as taxes and government transfers, education, remittances functioning as an insurance mechanism for the family back in the home country, instability in the home country, or natural disasters are also contributing to migration flows. War has been among the leading causes of large migrant flows historically. On the other hand there are several factors that make migration more difficult such as the cost of migration as well as the immigration policies in the destination countries. It is important to note that some factors play bigger roles for certain migrant groups.

Simpson says: “Policymakers must carefully consider the key set of determinants for the particular flow of migrants entering their country. It would be difficult to set effective policy without first understanding both the push and pull factors.”

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Notes for editors:

IZA World of Labor (<http://wol.iza.org>) is a global, freely available online resource that provides policy makers, academics, journalists, and researchers, with clear, concise and evidence-based knowledge on labor economics issues worldwide.

The site offers relevant and succinct information on topics including diversity, migration, minimum wage, youth unemployment, employment protection, development, education, gender balance, labor mobility and flexibility among others.

Established in 1998, the Institute of Labor Economics (www.iza.org) is an independent economic research institute focused on the analysis of global labor markets. Based in Bonn, it operates an international network of about 1,500 economists and researchers spanning more than 45 countries.