

MIGRATION



ring people to care about the planet

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ABOUT THIS SERIES

The *Global Issues* series supports the National Geographic mission by exploring 21st-century geographic issues that affect countries across the world. Each of the books shown on the back cover of *Migration* focuses on a contemporary challenge in two different regions of the world. Those challenges are common to all of us, no matter where we live. In fact, it's not where a problem occurs that is important—it's how we work together to solve it. Even big problems can be solved through human effort, commitment, and education.

ABOUT THE ISSUE OF MIGRATION

From the beginning of human history, people have moved from one place to another. They seek better jobs and schools and leave behind unstable political conditions and limited opportunities. These factors often cause people to immigrate from less developed countries to more developed countries. The same factors also lead people to migrate within a country. *Migration* examines the forces behind migration, the challenges that migrants face, and the ways in which new populations enrich their communities.



Every year, thousands of people carry passports and immigration visas as they migrate from one part of Earth to another.
(cover)

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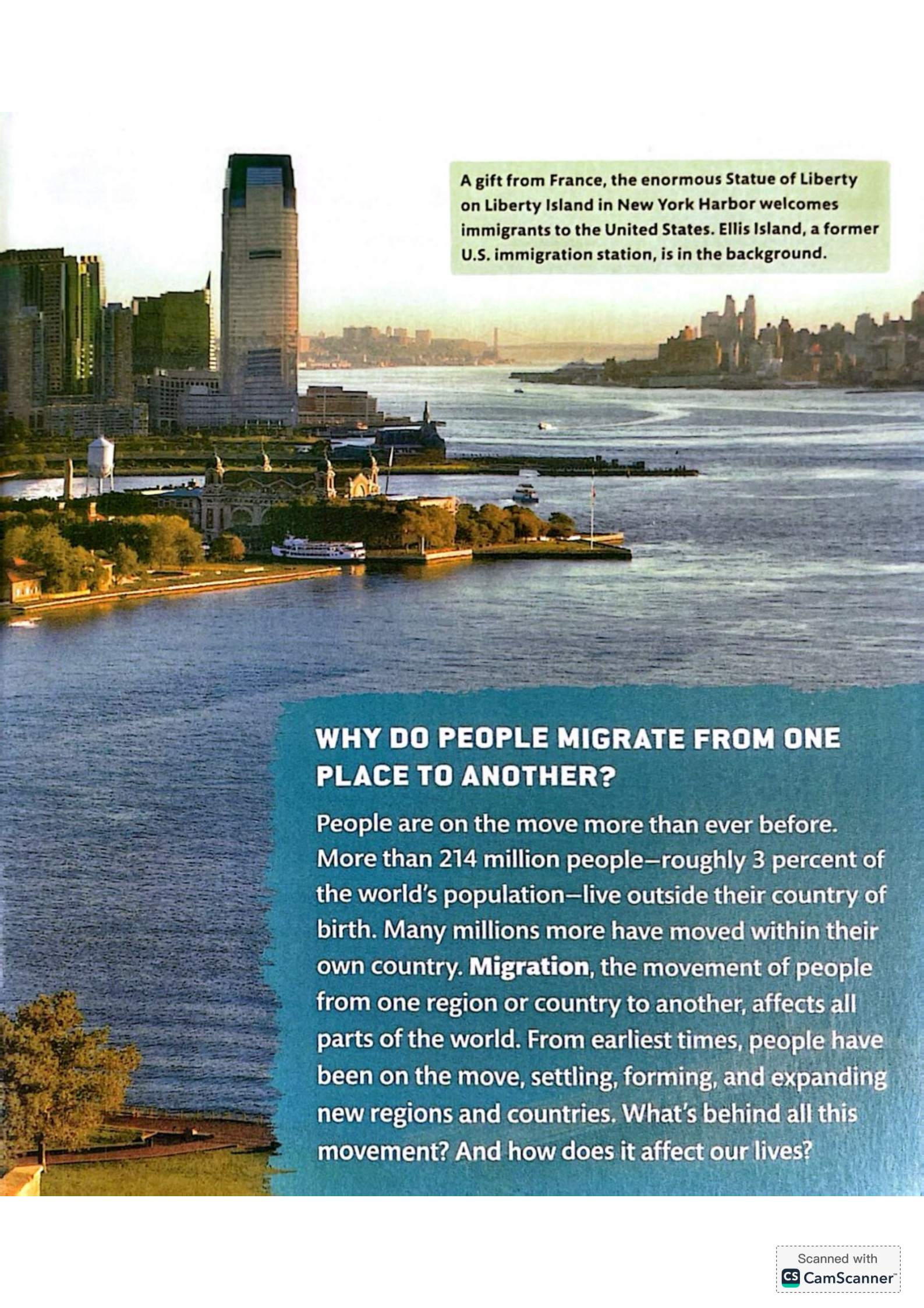
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A gift from France, the enormous Statue of Liberty on Liberty Island in New York Harbor welcomes immigrants to the United States. Ellis Island, a former U.S. immigration station, is in the background.

WHY DO PEOPLE MIGRATE FROM ONE PLACE TO ANOTHER?

People are on the move more than ever before. More than 214 million people—roughly 3 percent of the world's population—live outside their country of birth. Many millions more have moved within their own country. **Migration**, the movement of people from one region or country to another, affects all parts of the world. From earliest times, people have been on the move, settling, forming, and expanding new regions and countries. What's behind all this movement? And how does it affect our lives?

STARTING OVER

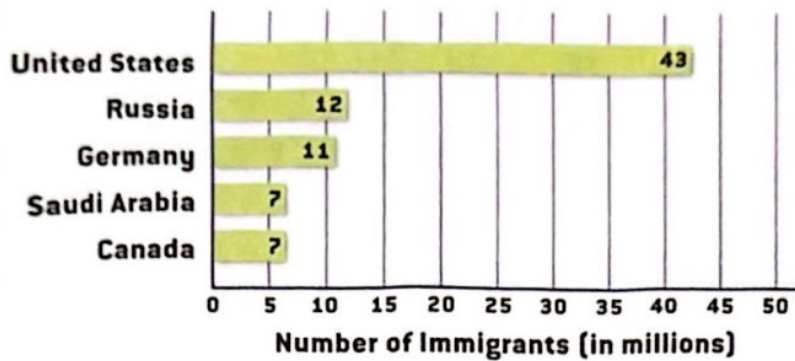
Migrants are people who move from one region or country to another. **Immigrants** are people who move specifically to a new country. Some immigrants are unskilled workers. Others are scientists, doctors, engineers, teachers, and students.

Why would people uproot their lives and start over in a new place? Geographers often use the theory of push-pull factors to explain the reasons for migration. Push factors are conditions that *drive people away* from an area, such as a low standard of living or war. Pull factors are conditions that *attract people* to a new area, such as high-paying jobs and good schools.



Changi Airport in Singapore is a major center of activity for immigration in Southeast Asia. Centrally located, the airport handles regional traffic as well as overseas flights.

COUNTRIES WITH MOST IMMIGRANTS



Source: Migration Policy Institute, 2010

GATEWAYS TO MIGRATION

The chief reason people move is to find jobs. So it makes sense that most international migration consists of people moving from poorer countries to wealthier countries. The majority of immigrants settle in cities and suburbs where there is demand for both skilled and unskilled workers. Cities that attract large numbers of immigrants are called **gateway cities**.

Immigrants contribute to a gateway city by performing necessary jobs and by paying taxes. They also pay rent, buy homes, and purchase goods, all of which feed the local economy. They often revive city neighborhoods by starting new businesses and renovating buildings. Equally significant are their cultural contributions. Residents of a gateway city might listen to reggae music from Jamaica, eat Vietnamese spring rolls, or watch baseball players from the Dominican Republic.

CHALLENGES AND REWARDS OF MIGRATION

At age 12, Luincys Fernandez (fer-NAN-dez) migrated to the United States from the Dominican Republic. She recalls her struggle to learn English in school: "I became mute. I just listened and listened and I couldn't figure it out, not even a word of what they were saying." Learning a new language is just one challenge immigrants face. You'll find out more about the challenges—and rewards—of migration as you read about two cities with large migrant populations: Mexico City in North America and Amsterdam in Europe.

Explore the Issue

1. **Analyze Causes** What are some push-pull factors that lead people to migrate?
2. **Make Inferences** Why might the United States attract many immigrants?