

Migration, globalisation and families

Distinguish immigration, emigration and net migration, then explain how migration and globalisation shape family practices, care and inequality.

Core learning

- Migration changes family life through movement, separation, reunion, remittances and transnational care.
- Net migration is immigration minus emigration; it does not tell us who moves, why they move, or how family life changes.
- Globalisation can stretch family relationships across borders, but policy, class, gender and legal status shape who can maintain those ties.

Concepts, studies and perspectives

- Transnational families: Families can maintain care, emotional support and responsibility across national borders through visits, money, communication and kin networks.
- Global care chains: Care work can be reorganised internationally, often connecting migration, gender and class inequality.
- ONS evidence lens: Migration data are useful for population change, but cannot directly show lived family relationships.
- Functionalist question: How does migration affect population structure, labour needs and social integration?
- Feminist question: Who does care work when family members migrate, and how is that gendered?
- Marxist question: How do labour markets and global inequality shape movement and family dependence?
- Personal life question: How do families actively sustain belonging, intimacy and obligation across distance?

Concept	Meaning	Exam use
Mechanism	The process connecting cause and outcome	Use it to move beyond description
Differentiated effect	Policy or social change affects groups differently	Use for AO3
Evidence limit	What the data cannot show	Use to qualify judgement

Source / accuracy note

Source note: ONS long-term international migration provisional estimates, year ending December 2024.