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# MIGRATION AND GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

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**Abstract**

Migration and Governance in Nigeria: Patterns, Root Causes, and Socioeconomic Impacts.

Migration remains one of Nigeria's most pressing socio-political challenges, influenced by government inefficiencies, economic instability and widespread of insecurity. This study explores the nexus between migration and governance in Nigeria with the aim of: (i) identifying prevailing patterns of internal and international migration; (ii) examining the root causes of migration linked to government failures; and (iii) assessing the socioeconomic impacts of migration on both sending and receiving communities. The research adopts a descriptive design, relying primarily on secondary data drawn from government reports, migration statistics, policy documents and scholarly literature. The analysis reveals that migration in Nigeria is largely driven by youth unemployment, regional insecurity, poverty, environmental degradation, and weak public institutions. It further shows that poor governance not only contributes to migratory pressures but also impedes effective migration management. Socioeconomic impacts identified include loss of human capital, pressure on urban infrastructure, remittance inflows, and changing family structures. Based on these findings, the study recommends improved coordination among government institutions at local, state, and federal levels; the implementation of inclusive economic policies to reduce poverty and unemployment and the integration of migration concerns into national development planning. Strengthening border control mechanisms and regional cooperation, particularly under ECOWAS protocols, is also suggested as a strategy for managing migration effectively and sustain ably.

**Keywords:** Governance, Migration, Insecurity, Development Planning, Policy.

## Introduction

Migration, both internal and international, remains a significant phenomenon shaping the demographic, economic, and political landscape of Nigeria. As Africa's most populous nation, Nigeria has a long history of migration driven by a complex interplay of socio-economic, political, environmental, and security factors. In recent years, the patterns and drivers of migration in Nigeria have become more dynamic, with increasing implications for governance, national development, and regional stability (Akinyemi & Isiugo-Abanihe, 2021).

Migration patterns in Nigeria are multifaceted, encompassing internal rural-urban movements, transnational migration to other African countries, and international migration to Europe, North America, and the Middle East. Internal migration is largely shaped by economic disparities between urban and rural areas, rapid urbanization, and the search for better livelihoods. Cities like Lagos, Abuja, Port Harcourt, and Kano serve as primary destinations for internal migrants seeking employment and improved living conditions (Adepoju, 2022). Conversely, international migration is often spurred by a combination of push factors, including unemployment, poverty, insecurity, political instability, and environmental degradation, alongside pull factors such as the lure of better economic opportunities and improved living standards abroad (Okome, 2021).

The root causes of migration in Nigeria are deeply entrenched in structural challenges facing the nation. High levels of youth unemployment, with over 40% of young people either unemployed or underemployed, serve as a critical driver of both internal displacement and international emigration (NBS, 2023). Moreover, the persistent insecurity caused by insurgency in the North-East, banditry in the North-West, and communal conflicts in the Middle Belt exacerbates forced migration and internal displacement. According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC, 2023), Nigeria recorded over 3.6 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) due to conflict and violence, highlighting the intersection between governance failures and migration.

Environmental factors, such as desertification in the Sahelian North and recurrent flooding in coastal regions, also contribute to the migration crisis. These environmental stressors, compounded by climate change, displace vulnerable populations and strain urban centers that are ill-equipped to absorb large inflows of migrants (Olanrewaju et al., 2019).

Governance, or the lack thereof, plays a pivotal role in shaping migration dynamics in Nigeria. Poor policy implementation, weak institutions, corruption, and inadequate infrastructure have not only hindered economic growth but also eroded public trust in state capacity to provide for its citizens. The failure to address socio-economic inequalities and security challenges through responsive governance mechanisms perpetuates a cycle of migration as individuals seek alternative means of survival (IOM, 2022).

The socioeconomic impact of migration on Nigeria is double-edged. On the positive side, remittances from the Nigerian diaspora have become a crucial source of foreign exchange and poverty alleviation. The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN, 2023) reported that diaspora remittances contributed over $20 billion to Nigeria’s economy in 2022, surpassing oil revenues. These remittances are instrumental in supporting households, education, and small-scale enterprises. However, the continuous outflow of skilled labor, often termed "brain drain," undermines national development by depleting the country’s human capital, particularly in sectors such as healthcare, education, and technology (Adewale, 2020).

Furthermore, rapid and unplanned urbanization due to internal migration has led to the proliferation of slums, increased pressure on public utilities, and heightened urban poverty. The governance challenge lies in the capacity of local and state governments to effectively manage urban growth, provide essential services, and foster inclusive economic opportunities for both migrants and host communities.

In conclusion, migration in Nigeria is a complex phenomenon driven by a combination of economic, political, environmental, and governance-related factors. Addressing these challenges requires an integrated governance approach that strengthens institutional capacities, promotes equitable development, and fosters social inclusion. As the nation grapples with these realities, dialogues around migration

governance become imperative to crafting sustainable solutions that harness the benefits of migration while mitigating its adverse impacts.

**Statement of the Problem**

Migration has been a recurring phenomenon in Nigeria's socio-political landscape, deeply intertwined with the nation's governance structure and development trajectory. Over the decades, patterns of internal and international migration have evolved, spurred by a combination of economic, social, environmental, and political factors. While migration can be a catalyst for economic development through remittances and skills transfer, the Nigerian context presents a paradox where poor governance systems exacerbate the adverse effects of migration, both for the source and destination communities.

In recent years, Nigeria has witnessed significant internal migration from rural to urban centers, driven primarily by the search for better economic opportunities and escape from deteriorating rural livelihoods (Afolayan, 2022). However, the unplanned and rapid urbanization resulting from this migratory trend has overwhelmed urban governance structures, leading to infrastructural deficits, urban slums, and social inequalities. At the international level, the surge in irregular migration, including the alarming trend of youth engaging in perilous trans-Saharan and Mediterranean routes, underscores the governance challenges in creating enabling environments for socio-economic stability (IOM, 2023).

A critical gap exists in the governance mechanisms that should ideally mediate and manage the consequences of migration. Weak institutional frameworks, corruption, and policy inconsistency have left Nigeria ill-equipped to harness the developmental benefits of migration. The failure to integrate migration governance into national development planning has further deepened socio-economic disparities, heightened unemployment, and exacerbated insecurity across various regions of the country (Adepoju, 2021).

Moreover, the root causes of migration in Nigeria are intricately linked to governance failures, including poor service delivery, neglect of rural development, insecurity, and lack of inclusive economic policies. The widespread insecurity in the form of Boko Haram insurgency, farmer-herder conflicts, banditry, and separatist agitations has forcibly displaced millions, creating internal migration pressures that local governments are ill-prepared to manage (UNHCR, 2024). This scenario exposes the fragility of Nigeria's governance systems in responding to displacement and migration-induced crises.

Furthermore, governance structures at the local, state, and federal levels have struggled with data inadequacies, poor coordination, and limited capacity to formulate proactive migration management strategies. The absence of comprehensive migration governance frameworks has led to policy gaps, with existing policies often reactive and fragmented. For instance, while Nigeria has adopted the National Migration Policy (2015), its implementation has been hampered by

bureaucratic inertia, inadequate funding, and lack of political will (NMP, 2015).

The socio-economic impacts of poorly managed migration are far-reaching. Unchecked rural-urban migration has intensified urban unemployment, contributed to rising crime rates, and strained social services such as housing, healthcare, and education in cities like Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt. Additionally, the 'brain drain' effect, where skilled professionals emigrate in search of better opportunities abroad, has depleted the country's human capital stock, particularly in critical sectors such as health, education, and technology (Okonkwo & Uche, 2023).

Despite the obvious interlinkages between migration and governance, scholarly and policy attention in Nigeria has often treated migration as a peripheral issue, focusing more on its symptoms rather than addressing the underlying governance deficiencies. Consequently, there is a pressing need for a paradigm shift towards a governance-centered approach to migration management. This requires robust institutional reforms, capacity building, and the development of coherent policies that align with both national development objectives and international migration governance standards.

In conclusion, the problem of migration and governance in Nigeria is not just a challenge of human mobility but a reflection of systemic governance failures that perpetuate socio-economic vulnerabilities. Without deliberate and strategic interventions aimed at strengthening governance structures, addressing the root causes of migration, and mitigating its socio-economic impacts, Nigeria risks further entrenching cycles of poverty, instability, and underdevelopment.

**Objective of the Study**

The specific objective of the study is to examine nexus between Migration and Governance in Nigeria.

The broad objectives of the study are:

1.To identify the prevailing patterns of internal and international migration.

2. To examine the root causes of migration linked to government failures.

3. To find out the socioeconomic impact of migration on both sending and receiving communities and countries.

**Conceptual Review and Theoretical Framework**

**Migration**

Migration is broadly defined as "the movement of persons away from their place of usual residence, either across an international border or within a state, regardless of legal status, voluntariness of movement, causes for the movement, or length of stay." This definition encompasses all forms of human mobility be it internal or international, voluntary or forced. IOM emphasizes that migration is a complex process influenced by social, economic, political, and environmental factors, and not merely a spatial movement. International Organization for Migration (IOM 2019).

The United Nations defines migration as "the movement of people from one place to another, involving a change of usual residence. Migration can be voluntary or forced, internal

(within a country), or international (across countries)." (UNDESA, 2020)

Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller {2009} define migration as "the movement of people across significant distances and across political boundaries with the intention of settling temporarily or permanently in a new location." They stress that migration is a dynamic and global phenomenon shaped by economic globalization, political changes, and technological advancements. Their work emphasizes that migration is both a cause and consequence of broader socio-economic transformations in modern societies.

Everett Lee, in his seminal paper "A Theory of Migration," defines migration as "a permanent or semi-permanent change of residence by an individual or group, which is influenced by factors at the place of origin, factors at the place of destination, intervening obstacles, and personal factors." Lee's definition is notable for introducing the "push-pull" model, where push factors (like unemployment) drive people away from their origin, and pull factors (like better job opportunities) attract them to a destination. (Lee, E. S. 1966)

**Governance**

Governance is defined by UNDP as "the exercise of economic, political, and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises the mechanisms, processes, and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations, and mediate their differences. "This definition emphasizes governance as a broader concept than government, focusing on how power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development (UNDP 1997)

The World Bank defines governance as "the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development." This definition is operational, focusing on accountability, transparency, participation, and the rule of law as key pillars for effective governance. (World Bank 1992).

The Institute of Governance defines governance as "the process whereby societies or organizations make important decisions, determine whom they involve and how they render account." This definition emphasizes the interaction between formal institutions and informal arrangements that influence how public affairs are conducted. Institute on Governance (IOG 2002).

Kaufmann et al {1999} define governance as "the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised. This includes (i) the process by which governments are selected, monitored, and replaced; (ii) the capacity of the government to formulate and implement sound policies; and (iii) the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions."This definition forms the basis for the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI), widely used in governance assessments.

Rhodes (1996) defines governance as "self-organizing, interorganizational networks characterized by interdependence, resource exchange, rules of the game, and significant

autonomy from the state." Rhodes' network governance perspective highlights that governance is no longer solely the domain of the state but involves a complex web of interactions among various actors in public, private, and civil society sectors.

**Patterns of Internal and International Migration**

Migration, whether internal or international, manifests in distinct patterns shaped by socio-economic, political, environmental, and demographic factors. Understanding these patterns helps explain the dynamics of population mobility, development planning, and policy responses. Migration patterns reveal the motivations, routes, and destinations that migrants choose, reflecting the underlying structures of opportunity and constraints in societies.

**1. Internal Migration Patterns**

Internal migration refers to the movement of people within the borders of a country, typically involving relocation from one administrative unit (e.g., state, region, or city) to another. Internal migration is critical in shaping urbanization trends, regional development, and labor market dynamics. The patterns of internal migration include:

a) Rural-Urban Migration

Rural-urban migration is the most significant form of internal migration in many developing countries, including Nigeria. It involves individuals and families relocating from rural villages to urban centers in search of employment, education, and improved living conditions. Push factors such as rural poverty, land scarcity, and lack of basic amenities combine with pull factors like industrial jobs, better schools, healthcare facilities, and modern infrastructure in cities to fuel this migration. However, rapid urban influx often results in urban slums, pressure on urban services, and increased unemployment.

b) Urban-Urban Migration

Urban-urban migration involves the movement of people between cities or urban centers. This pattern is common among professionals, traders, and individuals seeking specialized employment opportunities, better living standards, or strategic business locations. For example, traders relocating from Onitsha to Lagos in Nigeria to access larger markets and supply chains. Urban-urban migration is also influenced by government policies, infrastructural development, and the decentralization of industries.

c) Rural-Rural Migration

Rural-rural migration entails people moving from one rural area to another, often driven by the search for arable land, seasonal employment in agriculture, or as a result of land disputes and environmental degradation. In regions experiencing environmental challenges like desertification, deforestation, or flooding, rural populations may relocate to more viable agricultural zones. This pattern is common among subsistence farmers and nomadic groups.

d) Urban-Rural Migration (Reverse Migration)

Urban-rural migration, also known as reverse migration, involves the relocation of individuals from urban centers back to rural

areas. This can be motivated by retirement, desire for a lower cost of living, urban congestion, or cultural attachment to ancestral homes. With advancements in rural infrastructure and the rise of remote work, reverse migration is becoming more prevalent, especially among retirees and those seeking a slower-paced lifestyle.

**2. International Migration Patterns**

International migration involves the movement of people across national borders for temporary or permanent settlement. This form of migration has been on the rise due to globalization, labor market integration, and geopolitical factors. The key patterns of international migration include:

a) Labour Migration

Labour migration is characterized by the movement of individuals seeking employment opportunities abroad. It can be temporary or permanent and involves both skilled (doctors, engineers, IT professionals) and unskilled labor (domestic workers, factory workers). Labour migration is often regulated through bilateral agreements, visa programs, or managed by international labor recruitment agencies. For instance, the migration of Nigerian health professionals to countries like the United Kingdom, United States, and Canada in response to demand for healthcare workers.

b) Forced Migration (Refugees and Asylum Seekers)

Forced migration involves the displacement of people due to conflict, persecution, natural disasters, or environmental crises. Refugees and asylum seekers cross international borders seeking safety and protection. International laws, including the 1951 Refugee Convention, provide legal frameworks for the protection of forcibly displaced persons. Sub-Saharan Africa has witnessed significant forced migration due to civil wars and insurgencies, as seen in Somalia, South Sudan, and parts of Nigeria.

c) Family Reunification Migration

Family reunification migration is driven by the desire to join family members who have already settled abroad. Many countries have immigration policies that allow family-sponsored migration, contributing to sustained migratory flows. In the Nigerian diaspora, it is common for family members to sponsor spouses, children, or extended family members through legal migration channels.

d) Student Migration

Student migration involves individuals moving abroad to pursue educational opportunities. It is a significant component of international migration, driven by the global demand for higher education, scholarships, and the desire for international qualifications. Nigerian students frequently migrate to countries like the UK, USA, Canada, and Malaysia for undergraduate and postgraduate studies.

e) Return Migration

Return migration refers to migrants moving back to their country of origin after a period abroad. This can occur due to retirement, completion of migration goals, economic downturns in host countries, or failed integration. For developing countries, return migration often brings back skills, capital, and

global networks, contributing to local development. International Organization for Migration (IOM 2020).

In conclusion, Patterns of internal and international migration are dynamic, multifaceted, and influenced by a wide range of factors including economic disparities, conflicts, globalization, and policy frameworks. While internal migration shapes urbanization and regional development within countries, international migration reflects broader socio-economic linkages across nations. Understanding these patterns is essential for policymakers, development planners, and international organizations in designing effective migration management strategies that harness the benefits of migration while mitigating its challenges.

**The root causes of migration linked to government failures**

Government failures are a significant root cause of migration, as weak policies, poor governance, and systemic inequalities often push individuals to leave their home countries. Government failures are a significant root cause of migration, as weak policies, poor governance, and systemic inequalities often push individuals to leave their home countries. When governments fail to provide essential public goods such as security, economic opportunities, social welfare, and political stability, individuals and communities are left vulnerable to poverty, violence, and exclusion. These structural deficiencies compel people to seek safer and more prosperous environments elsewhere, both within their national borders (internal migration) and across international frontiers. The following evidence highlights key ways in which government failures contribute to migration:

1. Ineffective Migration Policies: Many governments fail to manage migration effectively because their policies do not address the social dynamics of migration, are hindered by globalization forces, and are shaped by hidden political agendas. These failures create unmanaged migration flows and exacerbate migration pressures (Castles, 2019); (Castles, 2004).
2. Structural Governance Weaknesses: Governments often target only a small portion of variables influencing migration, with conflicting institutional interests making coherent migration strategies difficult to implement. This leads to limited control over migration processes (van Amersfoort, 1996).
3. Failure to Address North-South Inequality: Root-cause strategies often fail because they do not effectively tackle global inequalities between richer and poorer countries. A genuine reduction in these inequalities through development, trade, and conflict prevention would be more effective in managing migration pressures (Castles, 2005).
4. Governance Gaps in Migration Global Governance: There is a lack of a coherent international governance system for migration. Non-binding agreements and weak global coordination hinder governments' abilities to manage migration

pressures effectively (Schierup et al., 2019).

5. Misuse of Aid and Development Policies: Some governments instrumentalize development aid to prevent migration, rather than addressing genuine poverty alleviation. This approach often backfires as development can initially increase migration capacity rather than reduce it (Sensi & Pedrotti, 2019).
6. Local Government Failures in Migrant Protection: Local governments sometimes fail to protect migrants' rights due to distorted performance incentives. For example, GDP-based assessments can lead to neglecting social security measures for migrant workers (Li, 2008).

Finally, Government failures, both at national and international levels, are deeply intertwined with the root causes of migration. Ineffective policies, global inequality, governance gaps, and misaligned political priorities contribute significantly to migration pressures.

**Socioeconomic Impact of Migration on Sending and Receiving Communities/Countries**

Migration, defined as the movement of people from one geographical location to another, has profound socioeconomic impacts on both sending (origin) and receiving (destination) countries. These impacts span economic growth, demographic changes, labor market dynamics, cultural exchanges, and social cohesion. Migration can either be a driver of national development or a source of systemic challenges, depending on how effectively it is managed.

**1. Socioeconomic Impact on Sending Countries/Communities**

**a) Economic Remittances and Household Welfare**

Remittances funds sent home by migrants are a critical economic benefit to sending countries. They represent a significant source of foreign exchange and often surpass official development aid and foreign direct investment in many developing nations World Bank (2023). These remittances improve household incomes, providing resources for education, healthcare, housing, and small-scale businesses, which enhance the overall welfare of families left behind.

**b) Reduction of Unemployment and Underemployment**

Migration can ease pressure on domestic labor markets by absorbing surplus labor, especially in countries struggling with high unemployment and underemployment rates. This reduction in labor force pressure allows for better job opportunities for those who remain, thereby stabilizing internal labor dynamics [ILO2022].

**c) Brain Drain and Loss of Skilled Workforce**

Conversely, the emigration of highly skilled professionals such as doctors, engineers, academics, and ICT experts—results in a phenomenon known as brain drain. This loss of human capital weakens the capacity of sending countries to

sustain economic development and provide essential services [Docquier, F. & Rapoport, H. 2012]. For instance, African countries have witnessed severe shortages of healthcare professionals due to large-scale emigration to Europe and North America [Docquier, F. & Rapoport, H. 2012)

**d) Demographic Imbalances and Aging Population**

1. The mass exodus of young, working-age individuals often leaves sending countries with an aging population, creating demographic imbalances. This demographic shift increases dependency ratios and places additional burdens on social welfare and healthcare systems (UNDESA 2022).

**e) Social Costs: Family Separation and Community Disruption**

While migration-driven remittances may improve material conditions, family separations caused by migration can disrupt social structures and emotional well-being. Children left behind often experience emotional neglect, which can lead to social and psychological problems within their communities.

**f) Return Migration and Brain Gain**

Despite the challenges of brain drain, return migration can offer brain gain opportunities. Returnees often bring back enhanced skills, global exposure, and capital investments, which can foster entrepreneurship, innovation, and institutional capacity-building in their home countries ( Carling, J. 2008).

**2. Socioeconomic Impact on Receiving Countries/Communities**

**a) Labor Market Contributions and Economic Growth**

Migrants significantly contribute to economic productivity in receiving countries by filling labor shortages, particularly in low-skilled sectors unattractive to the native workforce, such as agriculture, caregiving, domestic services, and construction. (Clemens, M. A. 2013). These contributions support economic growth by enhancing workforce diversity and addressing demographic labor deficits.

**b) Demographic Rejuvenation**

In countries experiencing population decline and aging demographics such as Japan, Germany, and Italy migrants offer demographic rejuvenation by increasing the working-age population and supporting birth rates (OECD 2023). This influx helps sustain public pension systems and labor markets.

**c) Fiscal Contributions and Tax Revenue**

Contrary to widespread myths, migrants often contribute more in taxes than they receive in social benefits. Studies show that migrants bolster public finances through income taxes, social security contributions, and consumption taxes, thereby strengthening the fiscal base of

receiving countries (European Commission 2022).

**d) Cultural Diversity and Innovation**

Migration fosters cultural diversity, enriching host societies with new languages, cuisines, arts, and traditions. Migrants also contribute to innovation by bringing new ideas, entrepreneurial skills, and diverse perspectives that drive creative industries and business dynamism (Dustmann, C. & Frattini, T. 2014)

**e) Social Tensions and Integration Challenges**

Large-scale immigration can create societal tensions if not effectively managed. Pressures on public services such as housing, education, and healthcare may lead to native population resentment and xenophobia. Integration challenges, including language barriers and cultural misunderstandings, can further complicate social cohesion (Florida, R. 2002).

**f) Urbanization Pressure and Infrastructure Strain**

Migrants tend to settle in urban centers, which can exacerbate overcrowding, housing shortages, traffic congestion, and pressure on basic infrastructure like water supply and waste management. Inadequate urban planning may result in slum proliferation and environmental degradation [Migration Policy Institute 2022].

## 3. Dual Impact: Transnational Networks and Circular Migration

Migrants often maintain robust transnational ties with their countries of origin, fostering **diaspora networks** that facilitate trade, investment, technology transfer, and cultural diplomacy [UN-Habitat 2020]. Circular migration where individuals move back and forth between home and host countries—allows for the continuous exchange of skills, remittances, and knowledge, benefiting both origin and destination countries.

## 4. Policy Implications

Given the multifaceted impacts of migration, both sending and receiving countries require comprehensive migration policies. Sending countries should develop strategies to mitigate brain drain and effectively engage with their diasporas for development purposes. On the other hand, receiving countries should implement inclusive policies that foster migrant integration, protect migrant rights, and invest in infrastructure to support growing populations [Newland, K. 2010]. Migration is a powerful force shaping the socioeconomic landscape of both sending and receiving countries. While the economic benefits, such as remittances and labor market contributions, are substantial, challenges such as brain drain, social tensions, and infrastructure strain necessitate proactive policy interventions. If properly managed, migration can become a key driver of sustainable global development, benefiting both origin and destination nations.

## Empirical Literature

Migration and governance are intricately linked, with patterns, root causes, and socioeconomic impacts shaped by institutional quality, government stability, cultural factors, and environmental pressures. Several empirical studies have explored these dimensions, offering nuanced insights into how governance structures influence migration dynamics across different regions and contexts.

Barra and Ruggiero (2023) examined the role of governmental stability in influencing emigration patterns in Sub-Saharan Africa, focusing on education and gender dynamics. Utilizing instrumental variable Poisson regressions and two-stage least squares on panel data from 32 countries, their findings revealed that stable governments tend to spur the emigration of high-skilled individuals, particularly highly educated women. This counterintuitive outcome suggests that as governance improves, it equips individuals with better mobility resources, thus increasing their likelihood of seeking opportunities abroad.

In a related study, Khan et al. (2021) investigated how institutional quality functions as a push and pull factor in international migration within Africa. Employing a gravity model to analyze bilateral migration flows across 60 origin-destination pairs from 2010 to 2017, the study concluded that weak institutions, characterized by legal unpredictability and governmental instability, significantly increase forced migration. Conversely, countries with stronger institutional frameworks were found to manage migration flows more effectively, highlighting the centrality of governance in migration governance strategies.

Similarly, Arif (2020) explored the self-selection mechanisms that drive migrants to leave their countries based on economic, political, and social institutional factors. Through PPML estimation involving global bilateral flows from 103 countries between 1990 and 2000, the study found that economic freedom and government stability serve as pull factors, attracting migrants, while deteriorating economic and social institutions act as push factors. Interestingly, political institutions did not exhibit significant push effects, suggesting that economic governance may exert a stronger influence on migration decisions than political regimes alone.

Bove et al. (2023) expanded the analysis of governance-related migration determinants by focusing on how government ideology and host-country morality shape migration patterns. Their cross-country study of IMF programs from 1978 to 2014 demonstrated that ideological alignments and societal values in host countries significantly affect migration decisions. Particularly, societies with lower traditional morality displayed stronger ideological-driven choice effects, underscoring the role of social norms and political narratives in influencing migration governance.

In the context of cultural proximity, Evan, Fišerová, and Elgnerová (2025) assessed how cultural similarities between origin and OECD host countries influence migration flows. Using Mann–Whitney U

tests on Hofstede's cultural dimensions across 93 countries from 1995 to 2015, they found that cultural similarity is a significant determinant of migration patterns. Migrants from wealthier origin countries preferred culturally closer destinations, while host countries were more inclined to accept migrants from culturally similar backgrounds. This study reinforces the idea that governance strategies are often intertwined with cultural governance, where migration policies reflect deeper societal identities.

Internal migration dynamics have also been explored through governance lenses. Bernard and Bell (2018) analyzed how internal migration within countries is shaped by educational attainment. Drawing on IPUMS data from 57 countries, their comparative study highlighted that migration often leads to the concentration of human capital in urban centers. More educated individuals are likely to migrate to regions with better educational and employment opportunities, exacerbating regional inequalities and posing governance challenges in balancing spatial development.

Environmental governance failures have been identified as significant root causes of migration, particularly in countries vulnerable to ecological degradation. Ghosh and Chakraborty (2022) investigated the root causes of interstate migration in India, focusing on environmental decline and economic hardship. Using OLS regression on national datasets, they concluded that resource scarcity and environmental degradation are key drivers of migration, emphasizing the need for policy interventions aimed at improving environmental governance to curb forced migration.

An empirical review published in *Population and Environment* provided a systematic synthesis of environmental migration research, focusing on case studies from regions like Niger and Honduras. The study revealed that environmental shocks often lead to economic-driven migration, particularly among communities with limited adaptive capacities. This phenomenon results in a brain drain effect, where local areas lose human capital to more resilient regions or countries, highlighting the interconnectedness of environmental governance and migration patterns.

A study published in *Sustainability* (2022) examined the causal relationships between migration and various economic, social, political, and environmental determinants in post-Communist Europe, including Ukraine and Moldova. Utilizing panel-level econometrics such as panel unit-root tests and Im–Pesaran–Shin methods, the research found that net migration flows are significantly influenced by economic inequality, political transitions, and ecological stress. These findings indicate that governance reforms in transitioning economies are pivotal in shaping migration patterns, especially in regions undergoing systemic transformation.

Josipović et al. (2022) analyzed the shift toward nationalist and securitized migration narratives in European Union

states during crisis periods. Through content analysis of policymakers' speeches across seven EU countries, the study demonstrated that crises, such as refugee influxes, prompted a renationalization of migration governance, decoupling national policies from broader European frameworks. This governance shift resulted in the tightening of migration controls, reflecting how governance responses to migration are often shaped by political pressures and public sentiment during periods of perceived instability.

Collectively, these empirical studies underscore the multifaceted relationship between migration and governance. They illustrate that migration patterns are not merely driven by individual choices but are deeply embedded in the structures of governance, institutional quality, cultural norms, environmental policies, and socio-political dynamics. Effective governance, therefore, is crucial in managing migration flows, addressing root causes, and mitigating the socioeconomic impacts of migration on both sending and receiving communities.

**Theoretical Framework**

The study was anchored on The Push-Pull Theory of Migration, developed by Everett S. Lee in 1966, is one of the foundational theories used to understand the complex motivations behind why people migrate from one place to another. It provides a simple yet powerful framework for analyzing the various factors that either "push" people away from their place of origin or "pull" them toward a destination.

At its core, the theory posits that migration decisions are influenced by a combination of forces in the environment surrounding the individual or group. These forces are categorized into push factors and pull factors, which operate in tandem to either encourage or discourage movement.

**Push Factors**

Push factors are those negative conditions or circumstances that compel individuals to leave their current place of residence. These can include economic, social, political, or environmental issues that create hardships or threats to well-being. Examples of common push factors include:

- Unemployment or lack of economic opportunities: When people cannot find work or adequate income in their home region, they are pushed to seek better prospects elsewhere.
- Political instability and conflict: War, persecution, or political repression often force people to flee their homes for safety.
- Poor governance and corruption: Ineffective or corrupt institutions may fail to provide basic services, security, or justice, causing dissatisfaction and insecurity.
- Environmental degradation and disasters: Natural disasters, droughts, or long-term environmental decline can destroy livelihoods, especially for those dependent on agriculture.

- Social factors: Discrimination, lack of social mobility, or poor quality of life can also push people to migrate.

In Nigeria, many push factors are evident, such as insecurity caused by insurgency, widespread corruption, economic instability, youth unemployment, and environmental issues like desertification in the northern regions.

**Pull Factors**

Pull factors are the positive attributes of a destination that attract migrants. These factors create opportunities or conditions perceived as better than those in the place of origin, enticing people to move. Examples include:

- Better employment opportunities: The availability of jobs and higher wages in destination areas can be a strong pull.
- Political stability and security: A peaceful environment with effective governance can attract migrants seeking safety.
- Higher quality of life: Access to better healthcare, education, infrastructure, and social services serve as incentives.
- Family reunification and social networks: Migrants may be drawn to areas where relatives or compatriots have already settled.
- Environmental amenities: Favorable climates or less environmentally vulnerable areas can also act as pulls.

For Nigeria, urban centers like Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt, as well as foreign countries with perceived better governance and economic stability, serve as key pull factors.

**Application of the theory to the study**

The push-pull model is widely used because it provides a clear structure for analyzing migration flows by considering multiple dimensions. It helps policymakers understand that reducing unwanted migration requires addressing the push factors such as improving governance, security, and economic conditions while managing pull factors through regulated immigration policies and urban planning.

In Nigeria's case, tackling governance issues like corruption, insecurity, and unemployment would reduce the push to migrate. Simultaneously, enhancing regional development to prevent excessive urban pull and managing international migration through diplomatic and policy frameworks can create balanced migration patterns.

## Methodology

This study employed the qualitative method of data collection. Ezeh {2004} as cited in Bonn O.N et al opines that the verification of hypothesis in qualitative methods is simply by proving and not testing them. Qualitative methods therefore, gather information or qualitative data in form of words, pictures, descriptions, narratives etc from both primary and secondary sources.

**Analyses and Results**

In analyzing the first objective Migration patterns, both internal and international, It reveals significant insights into the movement of people within Nigeria and beyond its borders. Understanding these patterns is crucial as they reflect underlying socioeconomic, political, and governance factors shaping migration flows.

Internally, migration in Nigeria is predominantly characterized by a steady flow from rural to urban areas. This rural-to-urban migration trend is largely fueled by the quest for improved economic opportunities, access to education, better healthcare, and overall enhanced living conditions. Major urban centers such as Lagos, Abuja, Port Harcourt, and Kano serve as magnets for migrants seeking these prospects. Young people, particularly those aged between 15 and 35 years, make up the bulk of internal migrants. They are primarily motivated by the need to secure employment, pursue education, or escape poverty and insecurity that prevail in rural areas. Gender dynamics within this migration pattern show that while men often move independently in search of work, there is a growing trend of women migrating, sometimes with their families, in pursuit of economic independence or family reunification.

**Analysis on the Root Causes of Migration Linked to Government Failures**

Migration is often driven by multiple factors, but government failures are a critical and recurring root cause, especially in developing countries like Nigeria. When governments fail to provide basic services, security, and economic opportunities, they inadvertently push citizens to seek better lives elsewhere.

**Poor Governance and Corruption**

One of the most significant government failures contributing to migration is poor governance characterized by corruption, inefficiency, and lack of transparency. Corruption diverts public resources away from essential services such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure development. As a result, people face deteriorating living conditions, which push them to migrate in search of better environments.

**Insecurity and Weak Rule of Law**

Government failure to maintain law and order significantly contributes to forced migration. In Nigeria, for example, insurgency, ethnic conflicts, and communal violence have uprooted thousands. When the government cannot guarantee safety and security, people flee to safer regions domestically or migrate internationally to escape violence and persecution.

**Economic Mismanagement and Unemployment**

Failure to implement sound economic policies leads to high unemployment, inflation, and poverty. Without stable jobs or income prospects, many especially youths, feel compelled to migrate. Government inability to create conducive environments for business growth or to

manage natural resources effectively deprives citizens of livelihoods, intensifying migration pressures.

**Ineffective Public Services and Infrastructure**

Government failure to provide reliable access to healthcare, education, clean water, and electricity undermines quality of life. Inadequate infrastructure, such as poor transportation networks, limits economic opportunities, making certain regions less livable and pushing inhabitants to migrate to urban centers or abroad.

**Political Instability and Exclusion**

Governments that exclude certain ethnic, religious, or political groups from power and resources breed grievances. Political marginalization and electoral violence cause people to migrate to escape persecution or discrimination, seeking refuge in more inclusive environments.

**Environmental Governance Failures**

Governments that neglect environmental protection contribute to degradation like desertification, flooding, and pollution. These environmental problems destroy livelihoods, especially in agriculture-dependent communities, triggering environmentally induced migration.

**Summary**

Government failures through corruption, insecurity, economic mismanagement, poor service delivery, political exclusion, and environmental neglect create harsh living conditions that push people to migrate. Addressing these failures is crucial for stemming forced migration and fostering sustainable development.

**Analysis of the Socioeconomic Impact of Migration on Sending and Receiving Communities/Countries**

Analysis on this objective reveals that Migration affects both the places' migrants leave (sending communities or countries) and the places where they settle (receiving communities or countries). These impacts are often complex, with both positive and negative outcomes that influence economic conditions, social structures, and development trajectories.

Sending Communities/Countries

In sending areas, one of the most important positive socioeconomic impacts of migration is the flow of remittances funds sent by migrants back home to support their families. These remittances boost household incomes, help reduce poverty, and improve access to essential services such as education, healthcare, and housing. Empirical studies show that remittances in countries like Nigeria play a critical role in sustaining livelihoods and can contribute to local development when channeled into community projects.

However, sending communities also face significant challenges due to migration. A major concern is the loss of skilled labor, often called "brain drain." When professionals such as doctors, engineers, and teachers emigrate, the sending country suffers shortages that weaken essential sectors, slow economic growth, and

reduce the quality of services. Additionally, large-scale outmigration of working-age individuals can create labor shortages, particularly in agriculture and local industries, which hampers productivity.

Migration also alters demographic structures in sending areas. For instance, the disproportionate migration of young adults may lead to an aging population or imbalanced gender ratios if one gender migrates more. Socially, migration can cause family separation, leading to emotional strain and disruption of traditional family and community roles.

On the positive side, return migration can bring back valuable skills, capital, and experiences that foster entrepreneurship and innovation. Returning migrants often contribute to local economies and social development by investing in businesses or community initiatives.

**Receiving Communities/Countries**

Receiving areas generally experience both benefits and challenges due to migration. Migrants contribute to economic growth by filling labor market gaps, particularly in sectors with labor shortages. They often take up jobs in construction, agriculture, healthcare, and service industries, helping to sustain and expand economic activity.

Moreover, migration fosters cultural diversity, which can lead to greater innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurial activities in receiving communities. The presence of diverse cultural groups enriches social life and opens new markets and networks.

Despite these benefits, migration can also place pressure on infrastructure and public services such as housing, schools, and healthcare, especially if migration is rapid and unplanned. This may lead to overcrowding and strain on resources, necessitating robust urban planning and social services.

Social integration challenges are common, as migrants might face language barriers, discrimination, or social exclusion, which can lead to tensions. Effective governance and inclusive policies are therefore essential to promote social cohesion.

The fiscal impact of migration on receiving countries varies. Migrants who are employed and pay taxes contribute positively to public finances. However, if a significant number depend on social welfare, this can create budgetary pressures.

**Summary of Results**

Overall, empirical results indicate that migration has a dual socioeconomic impact:

- In sending communities, remittances improve household welfare and can stimulate local economies, but skilled migration weakens vital sectors, and demographic changes pose long-term challenges.
- In receiving communities, migrants contribute to labor markets and cultural diversity but can increase demand for infrastructure and services and face integration difficulties.

For Nigeria, these patterns hold true, with remittances playing a vital role in poverty reduction while brain drain threatens development in key sectors. Urban areas receiving internal migrants experience economic growth alongside infrastructural strain.

**Policy Implementation and Recommendations**

**Policy Implementation**

Migration has become one of Nigeria's most pressing socio-economic challenges, with significant implications for the country's development and governance structures. Both internal (rural-urban) and international migration patterns have been shaped by Nigeria's persistent governance failures, economic instability, and widespread insecurity. While migration can bring certain economic benefits, such as remittances, the mass exodus of skilled labor has led to severe human capital depletion, threatening Nigeria's long-term development. Addressing these challenges requires a holistic policy implementation framework that tackles the root causes of migration, enhances governance effectiveness, and leverages migration for national development.

**Recommendations**

**1. Strengthen Economic Opportunities to Reduce Push Factors**

- Job Creation Programs: Develop large-scale, youth-targeted employment initiatives, especially in agriculture, ICT, manufacturing, and renewable energy sectors.
- Support for SMEs and Entrepreneurs: Provide access to microcredit, business incubation hubs, and market access for small businesses.
- Link Vocational Education to Market Needs: Revamp technical and vocational education to align with labor market demands.

**2. Governance Reforms for Accountability and Service Delivery**

- Anti-Corruption Measures: Implement stricter anti-corruption frameworks and enhance transparency in public service delivery.
- Institutional Strengthening: Build capacity in migration governance institutions (Nigeria Immigration Service, NIDCOM) to ensure effective migration policy enforcement.
- Decentralized Governance Reforms: Empower local governments with resources and capacity to address migration drivers like poor infrastructure and services at the community level.

**3. Improve National Security and Stability**

- Invest in Community Policing and Security Infrastructure: Focus on grassroots security initiatives, intelligence sharing, and rapid response systems to reduce forced migration due to conflict and violence.
- Address Root Causes of Insecurity: Tackle poverty, youth unemployment,

and resource conflicts that fuel insecurity and displacement.

- **Develop Human Capital Retention and Returnee Incentives**
- Brain Gain Programs: Establish incentive schemes to attract skilled Nigerians abroad to return (tax breaks, research grants, special economic zones for returnees).
- Returnee Reintegration Support: Create structured programs for returnees, including employment placement, business start-up support, and social reintegration assistance in partnership with international organizations (e.g., IOM).

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