



INVESTIGATING THE CAUSES OF MASSIVE GLOBAL MIGRATION AND PROFFERED SOLUTIONS

¹Ejuchegahi A. Angwaomaodoko and ^{2*}Edime Yunusa, Ph.D

¹Department of Education, College of Education, Kean University, Union, NJ, USA

²Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba,
Kogi State - Nigeria

Orchid: <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-6300-2017>

Orchid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0399-9169>

Correspondence: yunusaedime@gmail.com

Abstract

Massive global migration has emerged as one of the most significant international issues of the twenty-first century, influencing global security, economic development, humanitarian protection and international relations. This paper investigated the causes of massive global migration and proffered practical solutions for addressing the factors driving large-scale cross-border population movements. Specifically, the paper examined the major causes of massive global migration, assessed the influence of armed conflict, economic conditions, political instability and environmental factors on migration, examined the socio-economic and humanitarian implications of massive global migration on countries of origin and destination, and proposed practical measures for promoting safe, orderly and sustainable migration. The paper was anchored on the Aspirations–Capabilities Theory of Migration and Migration Systems Theory. A systematic desk review design was adopted. Data were obtained from recent scholarly books and peer-reviewed journal articles. The paper revealed that armed conflict, economic inequalities, political instability and environmental degradation remain the principal drivers of massive global migration, while established migration networks further sustain international migration flows. The paper further found that migration generates both developmental opportunities and humanitarian challenges, including remittances, labour mobility, brain drain, pressure on public services and protection concerns for displaced populations. The paper concluded that sustainable migration governance requires integrated policies that address the structural causes of migration rather than relying primarily on restrictive border measures. It recommended strengthened peacebuilding and good governance, expanded economic and climate-resilience programmes in countries of origin, and



enhanced international cooperation through safe and regular migration pathways, migrant protection and coordinated migration governance.

Keywords: Massive global migration, armed conflict, economic conditions, political instability, environmental factors, migration governance.

Introduction

International migration has become one of the defining demographic and social issues of the twenty-first century. Human mobility across national borders has increased steadily because of armed conflicts, political instability, economic hardship, environmental degradation, demographic pressures and the search for better educational and employment opportunities. Although migration has existed throughout human history, recent years have witnessed a marked increase in the number of people leaving their countries of origin under conditions that are often involuntary. According to International Organization for Migration (2024), there were approximately 304 million international migrants worldwide in 2024, accounting for about 3.7 per cent of the global population. While many migrants move through regular channels for education, employment and family reunification, an increasing proportion consists of refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons fleeing violence, persecution and humanitarian emergencies (McAuliffe & Oucho, 2024).

Recent scholarly literature identifies armed conflict as one of the strongest drivers of large-scale migration. Wars in Ukraine, Sudan, Syria and parts of the Sahel have displaced millions of people within and across international borders. Researchers have shown that prolonged insecurity destroys livelihoods, weakens public institutions and compels households to seek safety elsewhere (Betts & Collier, 2017; Czaika & Reinprecht, 2022). The conflict in Sudan, which began in 2023, has produced one of the world's largest displacement crises, while the continuing effects of the war in Ukraine have altered migration patterns across Europe. These developments demonstrate that forced migration has become increasingly associated with prolonged conflicts rather than temporary humanitarian emergencies (McAuliffe & Oucho, 2024).

Economic conditions also continue to shape international migration decisions. Persistent unemployment, income inequality, inflation and limited opportunities for social mobility encourage many people, particularly young adults, to migrate in search of better living conditions. Czaika and Reinprecht (2022) argue that migration decisions are often influenced by differences in wages, labour market opportunities and expected improvements in quality of life between countries of origin and destination. In many developing countries, weak economic growth and inadequate public services increase the desire to migrate, while developed economies continue to attract skilled and unskilled workers because of labour shortages arising from ageing populations. These differences have sustained migration flows despite increasingly restrictive immigration policies in several destination countries.

Environmental change has also emerged as a significant factor influencing migration. Rising temperatures, prolonged droughts, floods, desertification and sea-level rise have reduced agricultural productivity and threatened livelihoods in many regions. Hoffmann et al. (2020) found that climate-related environmental changes increasingly influence migration decisions, particularly where communities depend heavily on agriculture and natural resources. Although environmental factors seldom act alone, they often intensify existing economic and social pressures that eventually encourage migration. In regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, climate-related shocks



have contributed to both internal displacement and cross-border migration, especially among vulnerable rural populations.

Global migration has generated important economic and social benefits alongside significant policy challenges. Migrants contribute to economic growth, innovation and labour market development in host countries, while remittances remain an important source of income for many households in countries of origin. At the same time, uncontrolled migration places pressure on housing, healthcare, education, border management and social cohesion in receiving societies. Growing concerns over irregular migration, human trafficking, migrant exploitation and border security have stimulated renewed academic and policy debates on how migration can be managed more effectively (de Haas, Castles, & Miller, 2020). These debates increasingly emphasise the need to address the structural conditions that compel people to migrate rather than relying solely on restrictive immigration measures.

Understanding the causes of massive global migration is therefore important for developing sustainable responses that balance humanitarian obligations with national development priorities. Current scholarly work suggests that reducing forced migration requires coordinated efforts to promote peace, improve governance, strengthen economic opportunities, address climate vulnerability and expand safe and legal migration pathways (de Haas et al., 2020; McAuliffe & Oucho, 2024). Investigating these causes provides an evidence-based foundation for identifying practical solutions capable of reducing involuntary migration while supporting orderly, safe and regular human mobility across regions.

Statement of the Problem

The sustained increase in global migration has become a major concern for governments, international agencies and researchers because of its implications for economic development, security, humanitarian protection and international cooperation. Despite increased policy attention, the number of people displaced by conflict, persecution, environmental disasters and economic hardship continues to rise. Recent estimates indicate that more than 304 million people were living outside their countries of birth in 2024, while forced displacement has reached historically high levels because of continuing conflicts and humanitarian emergencies (McAuliffe & Oucho, 2024). This trend suggests that existing national and international responses have not sufficiently addressed the conditions that compel large populations to migrate.

Existing studies have examined individual drivers of migration such as armed conflict, poverty, climate change or political instability. However, many of these studies focus on specific countries or regions without examining how these factors combine to produce large-scale migration across different parts of the world. As a result, policy responses frequently concentrate on border enforcement and migration control rather than addressing the underlying conditions that encourage involuntary migration (de Haas et al., 2020). Such approaches have achieved only limited success because they do not adequately reduce insecurity, unemployment, weak governance or environmental pressures that influence migration decisions.

Another concern is that the increasing scale of irregular migration has created serious humanitarian challenges, including migrant deaths during dangerous journeys, human trafficking, forced labour and exploitation of vulnerable populations. Destination countries continue to experience pressure on public infrastructure and social services, while countries of origin lose skilled workers needed for national development. Although migration contributes positively through remittances and labour



mobility, persistent large-scale migration raises important questions regarding sustainable development, regional stability and international responsibility sharing (Czaika & Reinprecht, 2022).

There is therefore a need for further investigation into the major causes of massive global migration and the identification of practical solutions capable of reducing forced movements while promoting safe, orderly and regular migration. Such a study will contribute to scholarly understanding by integrating current evidence on conflict, economic conditions, governance and environmental change as interconnected factors influencing migration. The findings are expected to provide useful recommendations for policymakers, international organisations and development partners seeking sustainable approaches that address the root causes of global migration rather than merely responding to its consequences.

Aim of the Paper

The aim of this paper was to investigate the causes of massive global migration and proffer practical solutions for addressing the factors driving large-scale human movement across international borders.

Specific Objectives of the Paper

The specific objectives of this paper were to:

- i. Examine the major causes of massive global migration.
- ii. Assess the influence of armed conflict, economic conditions, political instability and environmental factors on massive global migration.
- iii. Examine the socio-economic and humanitarian implications of massive global migration on countries of origin and destination.
- iv. Proffer practical solutions for addressing the causes of massive global migration and promoting safe, orderly and sustainable migration.

Materials and Methods

This paper adopted a systematic desk review design. The design was considered appropriate because the paper sought to investigate the causes of massive global migration and proffer practical solutions through the critical examination, synthesis and interpretation of existing scholarly literature rather than through the collection of primary data. The desk review approach enabled the paper to draw evidence from credible academic sources and empirical studies published on global migration, migration governance, forced displacement, conflict, economic migration, political instability and environmental migration.

Data for the paper were obtained entirely from secondary sources. These included peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, edited books, conference papers and other credible academic publications relevant to the objectives of the study. Priority was given to recent and traceable scholarly works published by recognised researchers in migration studies to ensure the reliability, validity and relevance of the information reviewed. The selected literature was critically examined to identify areas of convergence and divergence in existing knowledge relating to the causes of massive global migration, its socio-economic and humanitarian implications, and practical strategies for promoting safe, orderly and sustainable migration.

The reviewed literature was selected through a purposive search strategy based on its relevance to the study objectives, methodological quality and contribution to migration research. Only scholarly publications directly addressing migration drivers, conflict-induced migration, economic migration,



political instability, environmental migration and migration governance were included in the review, while publications lacking sufficient academic rigour or direct relevance to the study were excluded.

Information extracted from the selected literature was organised according to the specific objectives of the paper and subjected to critical thematic analysis. Similar findings were synthesised, contrasting perspectives were interrogated, and emerging patterns were identified to provide an integrated understanding of the causes of massive global migration and appropriate policy responses. The findings were further interpreted within the framework of the Aspirations–Capabilities Theory of Migration and Migration Systems Theory, which provided the theoretical basis for explaining the dynamics of contemporary global migration and the policy measures required to address its underlying causes. This methodological approach provided a coherent and evidence-based analysis of the subject and ensured that the conclusions and recommendations were firmly grounded in existing scholarly evidence.

Literature Review

Literature for the paper was reviewed in tandem with the aim and objectives and under conceptual review, empirical review and theoretical framework as follows:

Conceptual Review

The key concepts in this paper were thematically reviewed as follows:

Migration

Migration has attracted considerable scholarly attention because it remains one of the principal processes through which populations redistribute across geographical space. Recent scholarship generally defines migration as the movement of individuals or groups from one place of residence to another with the intention of establishing temporary or permanent residence at the destination. De Haas et al. (2020) describe migration as a process involving the relocation of people across administrative or international boundaries for varying durations and for reasons including employment, education, family reunification, conflict and environmental pressures.

Similarly, Triandafyllidou (2022) argues that migration encompasses both voluntary and forced movements, stressing that migration decisions are shaped by individual aspirations as well as structural conditions such as labour demand, governance, insecurity and environmental change. Carling and Collins (2018) further contend that migration should not merely be understood as physical movement but as a social process influenced by people's aspirations and their capacity to move under prevailing political and economic conditions.

While these perspectives agree that migration involves a change in habitual residence, they differ in emphasis. De Haas et al. (2020) place greater attention on the forms and drivers of movement, Triandafyllidou (2022) broadens the discussion to include governance and policy dimensions, whereas Carling and Collins (2018) focus on migrants' agency and the conditions that either enable or constrain movement. For the purpose of this paper, migration is regarded as the movement of individuals or groups from their usual place of residence to another location, either within or across national borders, for temporary or permanent settlement as a result of economic, political, social, environmental or security-related factors.

Global Migration

Global migration refers to the movement of people across international borders on a worldwide scale and the patterns, trends and consequences associated with such movements. De Haas et al. (2020)



explain that global migration involves international population movements driven by differences in economic opportunities, demographic conditions, political institutions and social networks that connect countries across regions. Triandafyllidou (2022) similarly views global migration as an international phenomenon shaped by globalisation, technological advancement, labour market integration, geopolitical conflicts and increasingly restrictive migration governance.

In a more recent contribution, Czaika (2024) argues that global migration should be understood as a dynamic international system in which migration flows are continuously influenced by changing political, economic, environmental and demographic conditions across countries. These scholarly positions converge on the understanding that global migration extends beyond isolated cross-border movements to include interconnected migration systems operating across continents. However, they differ in analytical emphasis.

De Haas et al. (2020) focus on the structural determinants of migration, Triandafyllidou (2022) highlights the influence of global governance and policy responses, while Czaika (2024) emphasises the changing nature of international migration systems and their responsiveness to global events. Drawing from these perspectives, this paper adopts the view that global migration is the large-scale movement of people across international borders, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, resulting from economic, political, environmental, social and security conditions that connect countries within an increasingly interdependent global system.

Major Causes of Massive Global Migration

The increasing scale of global migration has generated sustained academic interest because of its implications for development, labour markets, governance and international security. Recent studies have moved beyond the traditional distinction between push and pull factors to explain migration as a product of interacting economic, political, demographic, environmental and social conditions. According to de Haas et al (2020) migration is not caused by a single determinant but by the interaction between people's aspirations to migrate and their capabilities to do so within particular institutional and structural contexts.

Their analysis demonstrates that migration decisions emerge from changing development levels, labour market conditions, political institutions and migration policies rather than poverty alone. Some of the major causes are identified and discussed as follows:

i. Armed conflict and insecurity

One of the most significant causes of massive global migration is armed conflict and insecurity. Violent conflicts destroy livelihoods, public infrastructure and social institutions, leaving affected populations with limited alternatives other than displacement. Recent conflicts in Syria, Ukraine, Sudan and Afghanistan illustrate this reality (De Haas et al., 2020). The Syrian civil war, which began in 2011, generated one of the largest refugee movements in modern history, with millions seeking protection in neighbouring countries and Europe. Likewise, the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 produced unprecedented displacement across Europe within a short period, while the conflict in Sudan has forced millions to flee internally and across borders into Chad, Egypt and South Sudan. These cases demonstrate that migration associated with conflict frequently continues long after active fighting has subsided because insecurity, damaged infrastructure and limited economic opportunities delay return migration. De Haas et al. (2020) argue that conflict rarely operates independently; instead, it intensifies existing economic and governance failures that further encourage migration.

ii. Economic inequality



Economic inequality remains another major driver of migration. Earlier explanations frequently attributed migration to poverty, but recent empirical studies provide a more refined understanding. De Haas et al. (2019) demonstrate that international migrants are seldom drawn from the poorest populations because migration requires financial resources, education, information and social networks. Instead, migration is highest in middle-income societies undergoing economic transformation where increasing education and income expand people's ability to migrate while employment opportunities remain inadequate. This finding challenges the long-standing assumption that poverty alone generates international migration. Instead, disparities in wages, employment opportunities, standards of living and prospects for social mobility between origin and destination countries create incentives for migration, particularly among young adults and skilled workers.

The migration experiences of Venezuela and several West African countries illustrate this relationship. Venezuela's prolonged economic crisis, characterised by hyperinflation, shortages of essential commodities and declining public services, has encouraged millions to migrate to Colombia, Peru, Brazil and other Latin American countries. Similarly, persistent youth unemployment, inflation and limited industrial growth have encouraged increasing numbers of educated Nigerians, Ghanaians and Kenyans to seek employment opportunities in Europe, North America and the Gulf States. These migration movements are influenced not merely by low income but by expectations of improved career prospects, social security and long-term economic stability. Czaika and Reinprecht (2022) maintain that perceived opportunity gaps between countries frequently exert greater influence on migration decisions than absolute income differences.

iii. Political instability and weak governance

Political instability and weak governance also constitute important causes of massive migration. Electoral violence, authoritarian governance, persecution, human rights violations, corruption and weak public institutions reduce public confidence in the state's capacity to provide security and economic opportunities. Under such conditions, migration becomes a strategy for personal safety and social advancement (De Haas et al., 2019). Afghanistan provides a notable example where decades of political instability and changes in government have sustained refugee movements into Pakistan, Iran and Europe. Likewise, political repression in Myanmar contributed significantly to the displacement of the Rohingya population into Bangladesh. These examples suggest that migration frequently reflects failures of governance rather than isolated political events. De Haas et al. (2019) observe that political institutions shape migration by influencing security, economic performance and individual freedoms simultaneously.

iv. Environmental change

Environmental change has become increasingly recognised as an important migration driver. Climate variability, prolonged droughts, desertification, flooding and rising sea levels have reduced agricultural productivity and increased livelihood insecurity in many parts of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Rather than acting independently, environmental pressures often interact with poverty, weak governance and resource competition (Czaika & Reinprecht, 2022). In the African Sahel, recurrent droughts have reduced agricultural output, intensified farmer–herder conflicts and contributed to increasing rural-urban and cross-border migration. Similarly, coastal erosion and cyclones in Bangladesh have displaced thousands of households, many of whom subsequently migrate internally or internationally. Recent meta-analytical evidence by Soto et al. (2024) indicates that environmental factors increase migration primarily where communities have limited adaptive capacity and where economic vulnerability already exists.



v. *Migration networks*

Migration networks have also become influential in sustaining large-scale migration. Existing migrants provide information, financial assistance, accommodation and employment opportunities to prospective migrants, thereby reducing the costs and risks associated with migration. Over time, these networks create self-sustaining migration systems linking specific origin and destination countries. Mexican migration to the United States, Turkish migration to Germany and Indian migration to the Gulf States illustrate how historical migration networks continue to facilitate contemporary migration irrespective of changing immigration policies. De Haas et al. (2019) argue that such social networks frequently explain the persistence of migration even when governments introduce stricter border controls because interpersonal relationships reduce uncertainty and encourage chain migration.

Recent meta-analytical evidence further strengthens this understanding. Reviewing more than one hundred empirical studies, Soto et al. (2024) conclude that migration is consistently influenced by nine broad categories of drivers, including economic conditions, demographic characteristics, environmental change, governance, security, education, socio-cultural factors, human development and supranational influences. Their findings indicate that no single factor adequately explains global migration patterns because migration results from interactions among several structural conditions operating simultaneously. This synthesis provides strong empirical support for integrated explanations of migration rather than mono-causal interpretations.

In all, current evidence demonstrates that massive global migration arises from the combined effects of armed conflict, economic disparities, political instability, environmental pressures, demographic changes and established migration networks. Although individual circumstances vary across countries, migration decisions generally reflect the interaction between people's aspirations for improved living conditions and their capacity to pursue those aspirations within changing political, economic and environmental contexts. Consequently, effective migration policies require coordinated interventions that address these underlying structural conditions instead of concentrating solely on border enforcement.

The Influence of Armed Conflict, Economic Conditions, Political Instability and Environmental Factors on Massive Global Migration

Recent studies agree that massive global migration is rarely the result of a single factor. Rather, large-scale population movements arise from the interaction of armed conflict, economic conditions, political instability and environmental change, with each factor reinforcing the effects of the others. Contemporary migration research has shifted from explaining migration through isolated push-and-pull factors to examining how structural conditions influence both people's aspirations to migrate and their capacity to do so. De Haas et al. (2019) argue that migration is best understood as a dynamic process shaped by the interaction between individual decision-making and broader political, economic and social structures. Consequently, countries experiencing persistent insecurity, economic decline, weak governance and environmental stress are more likely to witness sustained outward migration than countries affected by only one of these conditions.

Among these factors, armed conflict remains the most immediate trigger of forced migration. Violent conflicts expose civilian populations to death, persecution, destruction of property, disruption of livelihoods and the collapse of public institutions. Such conditions compel people to seek safety either within their own countries or across international borders. Betts and Collier (2017) contend that contemporary conflicts differ from those of previous decades because they tend to be protracted,



thereby extending displacement over many years rather than months. The Syrian civil war provides one of the clearest examples. More than a decade after the outbreak of the conflict in 2011, millions of Syrians remain displaced across Türkiye, Lebanon, Jordan and Europe. Research by Aksoy and Poutvaara (2021) shows that the prolonged nature of the conflict significantly altered migration patterns across Europe by increasing asylum applications and reshaping migration governance within the European Union. Rather than producing temporary humanitarian movements, the Syrian crisis generated long-term migration with lasting demographic, economic and political consequences.

The war in Ukraine further illustrates the influence of armed conflict on global migration. Since the Russian invasion in February 2022, millions of Ukrainians have crossed into neighbouring European countries, making it one of the largest displacement crises in Europe since the Second World War. Although many displaced persons initially expected to return quickly, continuing insecurity, destruction of housing and uncertainty regarding reconstruction have prolonged displacement. Ivlevs and King (2023) argue that conflict-induced migration from Ukraine demonstrates how displacement decisions evolve over time as individuals respond not only to immediate threats but also to changing economic opportunities and security conditions in host countries. Similar patterns have emerged in Sudan following the outbreak of armed conflict in 2023, where violence between rival military factions has forced millions of civilians to flee into Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia and South Sudan. These cases indicate that armed conflict not only generates immediate humanitarian emergencies but also creates conditions that sustain migration long after hostilities decline.

Economic conditions remain another major influence on global migration. Earlier migration theories associated migration primarily with poverty; however, recent evidence presents a more balanced explanation. De Haas et al. (2019) demonstrate that international migration generally increases during periods of economic development rather than extreme poverty because migration requires financial resources, education and access to migration networks. Consequently, income inequality, unemployment, labour market segmentation and limited opportunities for career advancement often encourage migration more strongly than absolute poverty. Czaika and Reinprecht (2022) similarly argue that migration decisions are shaped by expected improvements in income, employment prospects and social mobility rather than by present economic hardship alone.

This pattern is evident in several regions. Persistent youth unemployment across many African countries has encouraged increasing migration among highly educated professionals seeking employment abroad. Nigeria has experienced sustained emigration of medical doctors, nurses, engineers and university lecturers to the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and the United States. Ebuenyi et al. (2023) observe that deteriorating working conditions, inadequate remuneration and limited opportunities for professional development have accelerated the migration of healthcare professionals from Nigeria, thereby contributing to shortages within the domestic health sector. Comparable trends have been observed in Ghana, Zimbabwe and Kenya, where skilled migration reflects differences in wages, working environments and career progression between origin and destination countries.

Economic crises also produce large-scale migration through declining purchasing power and reduced household welfare. Venezuela offers an important illustration. Following prolonged economic contraction, hyperinflation and shortages of essential goods, millions of Venezuelans migrated to neighbouring Latin American countries. Bahar et al. (2020) argue that this migration was driven by the combined effects of economic collapse, political instability and declining public services rather



than by economic factors in isolation. The Venezuelan experience therefore demonstrates how economic deterioration frequently interacts with governance failures to generate sustained migration. Political instability exerts an equally important influence on migration by undermining public confidence in state institutions and reducing citizens' sense of security. Political violence, electoral crises, human rights abuses, authoritarian governance and ethnic persecution increase the likelihood that individuals will migrate to protect their lives and secure better opportunities elsewhere. Afghanistan remains one of the most enduring examples of politically driven migration. Decades of political instability, armed conflict and institutional fragility have generated successive waves of refugees into Pakistan, Iran and Europe. Likewise, military coups and prolonged insecurity in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger have contributed to increasing migration within West Africa and towards Europe. Triandafyllidou (2022) argues that governance failures often intensify migration by limiting economic growth, weakening public service delivery and increasing insecurity, thereby reinforcing the effects of conflict and unemployment.

Environmental factors have become increasingly significant in explaining migration patterns during the past decade. Climate variability, prolonged droughts, flooding, desertification, coastal erosion and sea-level rise affect agricultural production, water availability and household livelihoods. Hoffmann et al. (2020), in a global meta-analysis, conclude that environmental change influences migration primarily where populations depend heavily on climate-sensitive livelihoods and possess limited adaptive capacity. Environmental stress therefore acts less as an independent driver than as a factor that amplifies existing economic and social vulnerabilities.

The African Sahel illustrates this relationship. Increasing temperatures and recurrent droughts have reduced agricultural productivity while intensifying competition over land and water resources. Benjaminsen and Ba (2019) found that environmental degradation contributes indirectly to migration by increasing resource-related conflicts between farming and pastoral communities, thereby encouraging both internal displacement and cross-border migration. Bangladesh provides another important example. Frequent flooding, cyclones and coastal erosion have displaced large numbers of households, many of whom migrate to urban centres or seek employment abroad. These cases indicate that environmental pressures often become migration drivers when combined with poverty, weak infrastructure and limited government capacity to support adaptation.

Current empirical evidence increasingly rejects explanations that isolate these factors from one another. Instead, migration outcomes are understood as the cumulative result of interacting structural conditions. The conflict in Syria, for instance, was preceded by severe drought, rural livelihood declines and socio-economic grievances that interacted with political instability before violence escalated (Kelley et al., 2015). Similarly, migration from the Central American Northern Triangle has been linked to the combined effects of organised violence, unemployment, governance challenges and climate-related agricultural losses (Clemens, 2021). These examples demonstrate that the causes of migration rarely operate independently; rather, they reinforce one another to produce sustained population movements.

In sum, available evidence indicates that armed conflict, economic conditions, political instability and environmental change remain the principal influences on massive global migration. Their relative importance differs across countries and over time, but migration is most pronounced where these factors converge. Consequently, effective responses require integrated policies that simultaneously promote peace, strengthen governance, expand economic opportunities and improve resilience to environmental change instead of treating each driver in isolation.



The Socio-economic and Humanitarian Implications of Massive Global Migration on Countries of Origin and Destination

The consequences of massive global migration extend beyond the movement of people and affect economic development, labour markets, demographic structures, public service delivery, social cohesion and humanitarian protection in both countries of origin and destination. Recent studies demonstrate that migration generates both opportunities and challenges depending on the characteristics of migrants, the institutional capacity of receiving countries and the prevailing socio-economic conditions in countries of origin. Rather than viewing migration as either wholly beneficial or entirely detrimental, contemporary literature presents its effects as context-specific and influenced by migration policies, labour market integration and governance. De Haas (2023) argues that the developmental outcomes of migration depend largely on how migration is governed and on the economic and political environments within which migrants and host communities interact. This perspective has shifted academic discussions away from simplistic assessments towards a more balanced understanding of migration outcomes.

One of the most widely discussed socio-economic implications for countries of origin is the loss of skilled human capital through sustained emigration. The migration of professionals, including medical practitioners, engineers, academics, scientists and information technology specialists, reduces the availability of skilled personnel required for national development. This phenomenon has become particularly evident across many low- and middle-income countries where investments in education often benefit destination countries through the migration of highly trained workers. Docquier and Rapoport (2012) maintain that while skilled migration may create incentives for investment in education, excessive emigration can weaken domestic productive capacity where replacement rates remain low.

In recent years, Nigeria has experienced significant emigration of healthcare professionals to the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia. Ebuenyi et al. (2023) found that inadequate remuneration, poor working conditions, insecurity and limited opportunities for professional advancement remain major factors encouraging the migration of Nigerian doctors. The resulting shortages have placed additional pressure on healthcare delivery and reduced the capacity of hospitals to provide specialised services.

Despite concerns regarding brain drain, migration also generates important economic benefits for countries of origin through remittances. Financial transfers from migrants contribute substantially to household consumption, education, healthcare, housing and investment in small businesses. Adams and Cuecuecha (2013) found that remittance-receiving households generally experience improved welfare outcomes and increased expenditure on human capital development compared with non-recipient households.

In several developing countries, remittances have become an important source of foreign exchange and contribute to macroeconomic stability during periods of economic uncertainty. Beyond direct financial support, migrants frequently facilitate technology transfer, entrepreneurship, investment and international business connections that promote economic development. De Haas (2021) argues that these contributions demonstrate that migration can stimulate development when supported by sound institutional and economic policies.

Migration also influences demographic structures within countries of origin. Sustained emigration of economically active adults reduces labour force participation in certain sectors and contributes to



population ageing in some regions. Rural communities are particularly affected where younger populations migrate to urban centres or foreign countries in search of employment, leaving behind older adults and children. This pattern has been documented in parts of Eastern Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, where migration has altered family structures and increased the dependency burden on remaining household members (Castles et al., 2020). Although remittances may offset some economic challenges, prolonged family separation has been associated with psychosocial stress, changes in parental roles and reduced social support systems.

For destination countries, migration contributes significantly to economic growth by addressing labour shortages and improving productivity. Many developed countries face ageing populations and declining fertility rates, creating increasing demand for migrant workers in healthcare, agriculture, construction, manufacturing and information technology. Dustmann and Frattini (2014) demonstrate that migrants often contribute more in taxes than they receive in public benefits, particularly where immigration systems facilitate labour market participation. Highly skilled migrants also contribute to scientific innovation, entrepreneurship and technological advancement through research, investment and knowledge transfer. The experiences of Canada, Germany and Australia illustrate how carefully managed migration programmes can complement domestic labour markets and support long-term economic growth.

Migration has equally enhanced cultural diversity and international cooperation in destination countries. Increased interaction among different nationalities encourages cultural exchange, innovation and broader international networks. Universities, multinational corporations and research institutions have benefited from the movement of students, academics and professionals across national boundaries. Vertovec (2023) argues that increasing diversity resulting from migration has transformed urban societies by expanding cultural interaction and creating new forms of social and economic participation. Nevertheless, these benefits depend largely on successful integration policies that promote equal opportunities and social inclusion.

Alongside these positive outcomes, destination countries also encounter significant socio-economic challenges associated with large-scale migration. Sudden increases in migrant populations may place pressure on housing, healthcare, education, transportation and other public services, particularly where migration occurs over a short period. The arrival of millions of Ukrainian refugees across Europe following the Russian invasion in 2022 required substantial public expenditure on accommodation, education and healthcare. Similar pressures have been observed in countries neighbouring Syria and Sudan, where refugee inflows have strained already limited public resources. These experiences indicate that humanitarian responses require sustained financial commitments and effective coordination among governments and international partners.

Migration may also influence labour market dynamics within destination countries. Although empirical evidence generally finds limited long-term negative effects on native employment, competition for low-skilled jobs may increase in certain sectors where migrant workers and local populations possess similar qualifications. Peri (2016) argues that migrants frequently complement rather than substitute native workers by filling labour shortages in occupations that domestic workers are unwilling or unable to occupy. However, public perceptions regarding employment competition have often contributed to anti-immigration sentiments and political polarisation in several countries despite limited empirical support for widespread labour displacement.

The humanitarian implications of massive global migration remain particularly significant. Refugees, asylum seekers and irregular migrants frequently experience exploitation, human trafficking, forced



labour, gender-based violence and limited access to healthcare, education and legal protection during migration journeys and upon arrival in destination countries. Crawley and Skleparis (2018) argue that increasingly restrictive migration policies have unintentionally encouraged irregular migration by reducing legal pathways for mobility, thereby exposing migrants to greater risks during transit. The Mediterranean migration route provides a notable example where thousands of migrants have died while attempting dangerous sea crossings in search of protection or better economic opportunities. Similar humanitarian concerns have been documented along migration routes through the Sahara Desert and across Central America.

Children and women constitute particularly vulnerable groups during displacement. Family separation, interrupted education, inadequate healthcare and exposure to exploitation increase long-term developmental risks among displaced children. Women frequently encounter heightened risks of sexual violence, trafficking and discrimination during migration. Kraler and Katsiaficas (2021) observe that gender-sensitive migration policies remain essential for addressing the specific vulnerabilities experienced by female migrants and unaccompanied minors throughout the migration process.

Another important implication concerns social cohesion and political stability within destination societies. Large-scale migration has increasingly influenced political discourse, electoral campaigns and public debates on national identity, border security and immigration policy. While migration contributes positively to economic development, misconceptions regarding migrants' economic and social impacts have occasionally fuelled xenophobia, discrimination and social exclusion. Triandafyllidou (2022) argues that successful integration depends not only on migrants' adaptation but also on inclusive public policies, effective institutions and public acceptance within receiving communities.

Therefore, this evidence indicates that massive global migration produces significant socio-economic and humanitarian consequences for both countries of origin and destination. Countries of origin benefit from remittances, investment and international knowledge transfer but may experience shortages of skilled professionals, demographic imbalances and family separation. Destination countries gain through labour force expansion, innovation and economic growth while simultaneously facing increased demands on public services, integration challenges and humanitarian responsibilities. These findings suggest that the overall impact of migration depends largely on the effectiveness of migration governance, labour market policies and international cooperation in protecting migrants' rights while maximising the developmental benefits of human mobility.

Practical Solutions for Addressing the Causes of Massive Global Migration and Promoting Safe, Orderly and Sustainable Migration

The increasing scale of global migration has reinforced the need for policy responses that address the underlying conditions driving population movements rather than concentrating primarily on border enforcement. Recent literature demonstrates that restrictive immigration policies alone have not significantly reduced irregular migration because they fail to address the structural factors that compel people to leave their countries of origin. Instead, effective migration governance requires coordinated interventions that promote peace, economic development, good governance, environmental resilience and international cooperation. De Haas (2023) argues that migration should not be viewed solely as a problem requiring restriction but as a normal component of social and economic development that should be governed through evidence-based policies capable of maximising its benefits while reducing forced and irregular migration.



Some of the practical solutions are highlighted and discussed as follows:

a. Prevention and peaceful resolution of armed conflicts

One of the most effective strategies for reducing massive migration is the prevention and peaceful resolution of armed conflicts. Contemporary conflicts have become increasingly protracted, resulting in prolonged displacement and delayed return migration. Betts and Collier (2017) observe that sustainable solutions to forced migration depend on restoring security, rebuilding public institutions and creating opportunities for displaced populations to rebuild their lives within their countries of origin. Peacebuilding initiatives, post-conflict reconstruction, transitional justice and community reconciliation are therefore essential for reducing future displacement. The reconstruction programmes implemented in parts of the Balkans after the conflicts of the 1990s demonstrate that sustained investment in infrastructure, governance and local economic recovery can encourage voluntary return and reduce long-term refugee dependence. Likewise, the gradual stabilisation experienced in parts of Colombia following the 2016 peace agreement contributed to reductions in internal displacement in several conflict-affected regions, although important challenges remain (Arjona, 2020). These examples indicate that durable peace remains the most sustainable response to conflict-induced migration.

b. Strengthening economic opportunities

Strengthening economic opportunities within countries of origin is equally important. Persistent unemployment, low incomes, poor working conditions and limited opportunities for social mobility continue to encourage migration, particularly among young people and skilled professionals. De Haas et al. (2019) contend that economic development policies capable of expanding productive employment, improving education and supporting entrepreneurship reduce the pressures that encourage involuntary migration. Investment in agriculture, manufacturing, technology and small-scale enterprises can improve household incomes while reducing dependence on migration as a livelihood strategy. Several East Asian economies demonstrate how sustained economic transformation, industrialisation and human capital development gradually reduced emigration pressures as domestic employment opportunities expanded. Although economic development does not eliminate migration, it contributes to transforming migration into a voluntary choice rather than a necessity.

c. Improving governance and strengthening democratic institutions

Improving governance and strengthening democratic institutions also constitute essential components of sustainable migration management. Weak governance, corruption, political instability, human rights abuses and inadequate public service delivery reduce public confidence in national institutions and encourage outward migration. Triandafyllidou (2022) argues that accountable governance promotes political stability, strengthens public trust and improves citizens' confidence in domestic opportunities. Electoral integrity, judicial independence, respect for human rights and transparent public administration create conditions that reduce politically motivated migration. Countries that have successfully strengthened democratic governance frequently experience lower levels of forced migration than those characterised by prolonged political instability. Consequently, governance reforms should form an integral part of migration management strategies.

d. Addressing environmental degradation and climate vulnerability

Addressing environmental degradation and climate vulnerability has become increasingly important in reducing environmentally induced migration. Climate change has intensified droughts, flooding, desertification, coastal erosion and declining agricultural productivity in many regions. Hoffmann et



al. (2020) conclude that environmental pressures become significant migration drivers where populations possess limited adaptive capacity and depend heavily on climate-sensitive livelihoods. Consequently, governments should invest in climate adaptation measures, irrigation systems, drought-resistant agricultural technologies, flood-control infrastructure, sustainable water management and environmental conservation. Community-based adaptation programmes have demonstrated positive outcomes in improving livelihood resilience and reducing displacement risks in several vulnerable regions. Such interventions strengthen household resilience while reducing the need for distress migration following environmental shocks.

e. Expanding safe, regular and well-managed migration pathways

Expanding safe, regular and well-managed migration pathways represents another practical solution supported by recent research. Restrictive immigration policies often encourage irregular migration by limiting lawful opportunities for employment, education and family reunification. De Haas (2023) argues that expanding legal migration channels reduces dependence on human smuggling networks while improving migrant protection and labour market regulation. Bilateral labour agreements, seasonal employment programmes, student mobility schemes and transparent visa systems enable governments to manage migration more effectively while responding to labour shortages in destination countries. Canada's points-based immigration system and Australia's skilled migration programme illustrate how carefully designed legal pathways can simultaneously satisfy labour market demands and reduce incentives for irregular migration. Such approaches demonstrate that migration management should balance national interests with humanitarian responsibilities.

f. Strengthening international cooperation

Strengthening international cooperation remains indispensable because migration increasingly transcends national boundaries. No single country possesses sufficient capacity to manage contemporary migration challenges independently. Castles et al. (2020) argue that migration governance requires cooperation among countries of origin, transit and destination through information sharing, coordinated border management, refugee protection, anti-trafficking measures and development partnerships. Regional frameworks have demonstrated the value of collaborative approaches in facilitating migration management while protecting migrants' rights. Effective cooperation also enhances responsibility-sharing during humanitarian emergencies and improves coordination in responding to large-scale displacement resulting from conflicts and natural disasters.

g. Protecting the rights and welfare of migrants

Protecting the rights and welfare of migrants throughout the migration process is equally essential. Irregular migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons remain vulnerable to exploitation, trafficking, forced labour, discrimination and gender-based violence. Crawley and Skleparis (2018) argue that migration policies should prioritise human security alongside border management by ensuring access to legal protection, healthcare, education and humanitarian assistance. Destination countries should strengthen asylum procedures, improve reception facilities and facilitate social integration through language education, vocational training and equal access to employment opportunities. Such measures not only protect migrants but also contribute to social cohesion and long-term economic participation.

h. Combating human trafficking and migrant smuggling

Combating human trafficking and migrant smuggling also requires coordinated policy interventions. Criminal networks exploit restrictive migration regimes by facilitating dangerous migration routes that expose migrants to abuse and exploitation. Gallagher (2017) maintains that effective responses



require stronger international law enforcement cooperation, improved border intelligence, financial investigations targeting trafficking networks and expanded legal migration opportunities that reduce reliance on smugglers. Public awareness campaigns within countries of origin can further educate prospective migrants about the dangers associated with irregular migration while promoting safer alternatives.

i. Investment in education and human capital development

Investment in education and human capital development provides another long-term strategy for reducing involuntary migration. Quality education enhances employability, entrepreneurship and innovation, thereby expanding opportunities within countries of origin. At the same time, education promotes civic participation, democratic values and social inclusion, all of which contribute to political stability and sustainable development. Countries that invest consistently in education and vocational training are generally better positioned to retain skilled professionals while benefiting from knowledge exchange with diaspora communities.

j. The role of diaspora engagement

The role of diaspora engagement should not be overlooked. Rather than viewing emigrants solely as a loss of human capital, governments can develop policies that encourage skilled migrants to contribute to national development through investment, technology transfer, research collaboration and temporary return programmes. De Haas (2021) argues that diaspora engagement strategies strengthen links between migrants and their countries of origin while promoting knowledge exchange and economic development. Countries such as India and China have successfully implemented programmes encouraging diaspora investment and technological collaboration, demonstrating that migration can contribute positively to national development when supported by appropriate institutional frameworks.

In summary, all these Evidence from recent studies therefore indicates that sustainable solutions to massive global migration require integrated approaches rather than isolated policy interventions. Peacebuilding, economic development, accountable governance, environmental adaptation, expanded legal migration pathways, international cooperation, migrant protection and investment in human capital operate most effectively when implemented together. Addressing only the symptoms of migration through stricter border controls is unlikely to produce lasting results because migration reflects broader political, economic and environmental conditions. Consequently, governments and development partners should adopt long-term, evidence-based policies that reduce the structural conditions compelling involuntary migration while promoting safe, orderly and sustainable human mobility.

Empirical Reviews

de Haas et al. (2019) investigated international migration with emphasis on its major determinants and policy effects using evidence drawn from several regions of the world. The study covered Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas with the objective of examining the principal factors influencing international migration and assessing the effectiveness of migration policies. The study was anchored on the Aspirations-Capabilities Framework of migration. It adopted a quantitative cross-national research design using secondary longitudinal data obtained from internationally recognised migration databases and published demographic datasets covering several decades. Since the investigation relied on macro-level international datasets, probability sampling was not applicable because the study utilised complete national-level observations from available migration records. Data were collected through documentary analysis of international migration statistics and demographic



indicators and analysed using econometric and comparative statistical techniques. The study found that migration is influenced by the interaction of economic development, labour market opportunities, demographic changes, governance quality, education, political stability and migration policies rather than by poverty alone. It further established that development often increases migration in the short and medium term because improved education and income expand people's capacity to migrate. The study concluded that migration policies focusing solely on border restrictions cannot effectively reduce migration unless the structural conditions driving migration are addressed.

Although the study provides broad empirical evidence on migration determinants across countries, it relied mainly on macro-level secondary datasets and paid limited attention to recent humanitarian crises such as the conflicts in Sudan and Ukraine. Furthermore, its emphasis was on explaining migration determinants generally rather than identifying practical solutions for reducing massive global migration. The present paper therefore filled this gap by investigating both the causes of massive global migration and practical measures for addressing them using current global evidence.

Hoffmann et al. (2020) examined the relationship between environmental change and migration through a global meta-analysis covering studies conducted across Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. The study was based on migration systems theory, which explains migration as an outcome of interacting environmental, economic and social conditions. The researchers adopted a meta-analytical research design by systematically reviewing empirical studies published over several decades. The sample consisted of more than one hundred peer-reviewed empirical studies selected through clearly defined inclusion and exclusion criteria rather than conventional probability sampling. Data were collected through systematic literature review and documentary analysis, while quantitative meta-analytical techniques were employed to synthesise findings across the selected studies. The findings revealed that environmental change significantly influences migration, especially in areas experiencing drought, flooding and declining agricultural productivity. However, the study further established that environmental factors rarely operate independently but interact with economic deprivation, political instability and weak institutional capacity to produce migration. The authors concluded that climate adaptation policies should complement economic development and governance reforms if environmentally induced migration is to be reduced.

Although the study offers robust empirical evidence on environmental influences, it concentrates principally on climate-related migration and gives comparatively less attention to armed conflict and political instability as interacting migration drivers. The current paper addressed this limitation by examining the combined influence of armed conflict, economic conditions, political instability and environmental change on massive global migration within a unified analytical framework.

Betts and Collier (2017) examined global refugee movements and sustainable responses to forced migration using evidence from refugee-hosting countries in Africa, the Middle East and Europe. The study covered countries including Jordan, Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia with the objective of identifying practical approaches for improving refugee protection while promoting sustainable development. The study was guided by the humanitarian-development approach to forced migration. It adopted a qualitative comparative case study design involving multiple refugee-hosting countries. The study did not employ statistical sampling because it relied on purposively selected country case studies, policy documents and existing empirical evidence relating to refugee management. Data were collected through documentary review, field observations, interviews with policymakers and analysis of published migration reports. The findings indicated that long-term dependence on humanitarian aid does not provide sustainable solutions to forced migration. Instead, expanding employment opportunities, improving access to education, supporting local economic development, strengthening



international cooperation and integrating refugees into national labour markets produced better outcomes for both refugees and host communities. The authors concluded that migration management should shift from emergency humanitarian assistance towards development-oriented interventions capable of addressing the root causes of displacement.

While the study provides practical policy recommendations for managing forced migration, its primary focus is refugee protection rather than the broader causes of massive global migration, including economic migration, environmental migration and political migration. The present study therefore extends existing knowledge by investigating the broader causes of massive global migration and proposing integrated solutions that address conflict, economic inequality, political instability and environmental pressures simultaneously.

Theoretical Framework

This paper was anchored on Aspirations–Capabilities Theory of Migration and Migration Systems Theory

i. Aspirations–Capabilities Theory of Migration

The Aspirations–Capabilities Theory of Migration was developed by Hein de Haas (2021) as a contemporary framework for explaining migration beyond the limitations of traditional push–pull models. The theory argues that migration occurs through the interaction between people's aspirations to migrate and their capabilities to realise those aspirations. According to de Haas (2021), migration is neither an automatic response to poverty nor an inevitable consequence of economic inequality. Instead, individuals develop aspirations to migrate based on their perceptions of opportunities, security, quality of life, education, employment prospects and political conditions, while their ability to migrate depends on the availability of financial resources, education, social networks, legal migration opportunities and institutional support.

The theory further posits that development may initially increase migration because improvements in income, education and access to information enhance people's capability to migrate. Consequently, migration cannot be explained solely by economic deprivation, since the poorest populations frequently lack the resources necessary for international migration. The framework therefore views migration as a product of human agency operating within broader political, economic, environmental and social structures.

The major strength of the Aspirations–Capabilities Theory lies in its ability to provide a comprehensive explanation of contemporary migration by integrating economic, political, environmental and demographic factors within a single analytical framework. Unlike earlier migration theories that concentrated primarily on income differentials or labour market conditions, this theory recognises that migration decisions are shaped by individual choices operating within structural constraints. It also explains why migration frequently increases during periods of socio-economic development rather than declining immediately as living conditions improve. Furthermore, the theory has received substantial empirical support from comparative migration studies conducted across different regions of the world, making it particularly suitable for analysing present-day migration patterns.

Despite these strengths, the theory has certain limitations. Although it explains why individuals aspire to migrate and how they acquire the capability to do so, it pays comparatively less attention to sudden humanitarian crises such as wars, natural disasters and political persecution that compel people to migrate regardless of their aspirations. In situations involving forced displacement, migration decisions are often made under extreme pressure rather than through deliberate evaluation of available



opportunities. The framework also gives limited attention to international legal obligations governing refugee protection and humanitarian intervention during large-scale displacement.

The Aspirations–Capabilities Theory is highly applicable to the present paper because it provides an integrated explanation for the causes of massive global migration. The topic seeks to investigate the causes of global migration and propose practical solutions. The theory explains how armed conflict, economic hardship, political instability and environmental degradation create aspirations to migrate, while education, financial resources, migration networks and immigration policies determine whether individuals possess the capability to migrate. It also supports the argument that sustainable solutions should address the structural conditions that shape migration aspirations instead of relying exclusively on restrictive immigration policies. Consequently, the theory provides a suitable framework for examining both the causes of massive global migration and the policy measures required to promote safe, orderly and sustainable migration.

ii. Migration Systems Theory

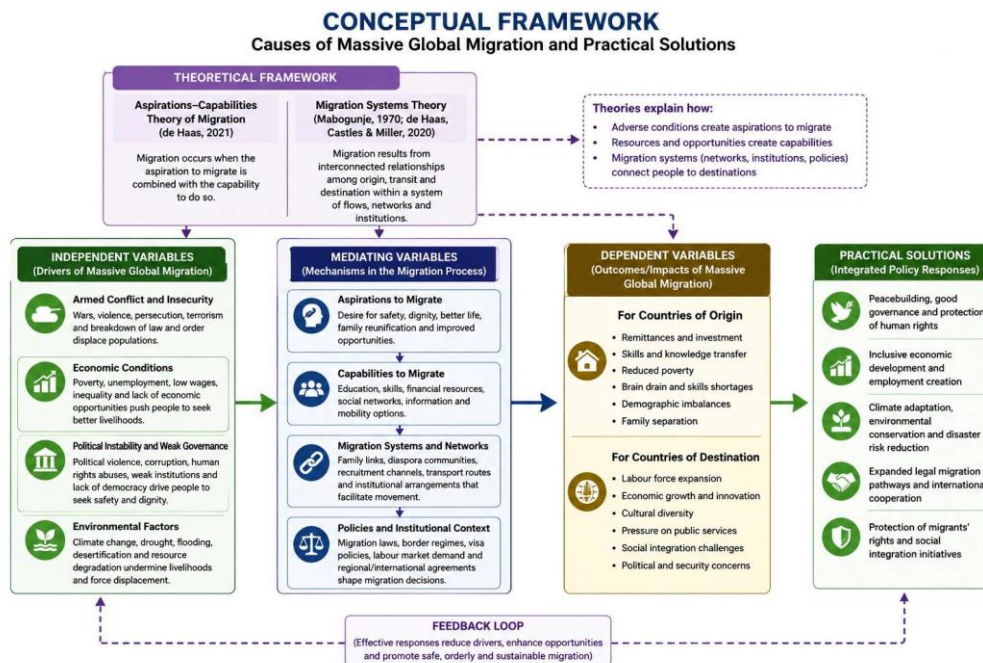
Migration Systems Theory was advanced by Akin Mabogunje (1970) and has subsequently been refined by later migration researchers, particularly Hein de Haas (2010, 2021) and Stephen Castles, Hein de Haas and Mark J. Miller (2020). The theory explains migration as a process occurring within interconnected systems linking countries of origin and destination through historical, economic, political, cultural and social relationships. It assumes that migration flows do not occur randomly but develop through enduring relationships established by trade, colonial ties, labour recruitment, education, family connections and migrant networks. Once migration begins between two countries, these linkages become self-sustaining because earlier migrants provide information, accommodation, financial assistance and employment opportunities to new migrants, thereby reducing the costs and risks associated with migration. The theory further argues that changes occurring within one part of the migration system, including conflict, economic recession, environmental disasters or changes in immigration policies, influence migration patterns throughout the entire system.

One of the principal strengths of Migration Systems Theory is that it explains why migration persists even when governments introduce stricter immigration controls. It demonstrates that migration is sustained by established social networks, family reunification, labour market demand and historical relationships rather than by economic conditions alone. The theory also provides a useful explanation for regional migration systems such as migration between Mexico and the United States, North Africa and Europe, South Asia and the Gulf States, and West Africa within the ECOWAS region. Furthermore, it accommodates both voluntary and forced migration by recognising that political, economic and environmental changes within one country frequently generate consequences beyond national borders.

However, the theory also possesses certain weaknesses. It places considerable emphasis on existing migration networks and historical relationships while giving less attention to individual decision-making and personal aspirations. Consequently, it may not adequately explain new migration routes that emerge in response to sudden humanitarian crises or rapid geopolitical changes. The theory likewise provides limited guidance regarding policy interventions capable of reducing migration pressures within countries of origin because its principal concern is explaining the functioning of migration systems rather than prescribing solutions.

Migration Systems Theory is directly relevant to the present study because massive global migration occurs through interconnected international systems influenced by conflict, economic inequality, political instability and environmental change. Current migration movements involving Ukraine, Sudan, Syria, Venezuela and the African Sahel demonstrate that migration extends beyond national

boundaries and affects neighbouring countries as well as distant destination states through established migration networks. The theory therefore assists in explaining how migration flows become sustained over time and why global cooperation is necessary for addressing migration challenges. It further supports the study's emphasis on identifying practical solutions that require coordinated action among countries of origin, transit and destination in order to promote safe, orderly and sustainable migration.



Source: Angwaomaodoko and Yunusa, (2026)

Discussions

The findings of this paper indicated that massive global migration is driven primarily by armed conflict, economic conditions, political instability and environmental factors, with these drivers operating simultaneously rather than independently. The review demonstrates that armed conflict remains one of the strongest determinants of forced migration, as wars and violent conflicts destroy livelihoods, public infrastructure and social institutions, compelling populations to seek safety beyond their places of habitual residence. This finding is consistent with the position of Betts and Collier (2017), who argued that contemporary conflicts generate prolonged displacement because insecurity and institutional collapse often persist long after active hostilities have ceased. Similarly, de Haas et al. (2019) maintained that migration decisions emerge from the interaction of several structural conditions, with conflict intensifying existing economic and governance challenges. The experiences of Syria, Ukraine and Sudan provide practical illustrations of this finding, as millions of people have remained displaced because the restoration of security, economic activities and public services has been slow despite humanitarian interventions. The finding therefore suggests that conflict-induced migration cannot be effectively addressed through border management alone but requires sustained peacebuilding and institutional reconstruction.

The paper further found that economic conditions significantly influence massive global migration by encouraging individuals to relocate in search of improved employment opportunities, better incomes and enhanced living standards. This finding supports the argument advanced by Czaika and Reinprecht (2022), who observed that migration is more strongly influenced by expected improvements in socio-economic welfare than by absolute poverty. Likewise, de Haas et al. (2019)



demonstrated that migration frequently increases during periods of socio-economic development because education, financial resources and access to information improve individuals' capacity to migrate.

This finding explains the increasing migration of skilled professionals from countries such as Nigeria, Ghana and Zimbabwe despite improvements in educational attainment. Rather than the poorest populations, migration is increasingly undertaken by educated individuals possessing the resources required for international mobility. The sustained migration of healthcare professionals from Nigeria to the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia illustrates how disparities in remuneration, working conditions and career opportunities influence migration decisions. The finding therefore reinforces the argument that sustainable economic development and employment creation remain essential for reducing involuntary migration.

Another important finding revealed by this paper is that political instability and weak governance significantly contribute to massive global migration. Political violence, weak democratic institutions, corruption, human rights abuses and declining public confidence in government increase citizens' willingness to seek protection and opportunities elsewhere. This finding agrees with Triandafyllidou (2022), who argued that governance quality directly influences migration by shaping economic performance, security and citizens' confidence in public institutions. The experiences of Afghanistan, Myanmar and several countries within the Sahel demonstrate how prolonged political instability has generated sustained refugee flows and internal displacement. The finding therefore indicates that migration is frequently a consequence of governance failures rather than economic hardship alone. Consequently, strengthening democratic institutions, promoting accountability and protecting human rights are indispensable components of sustainable migration management.

The paper also established that environmental factors have become increasingly important drivers of migration, particularly where climate change, drought, flooding and desertification undermine livelihoods dependent on agriculture and natural resources. This finding corroborates the conclusions of Hoffmann et al. (2020), whose meta-analysis demonstrated that environmental change influences migration primarily where communities possess limited adaptive capacity and experience existing socio-economic vulnerability. The findings further indicate that environmental pressures rarely operate independently but interact with economic deprivation and weak governance to intensify migration. The experiences of the African Sahel and Bangladesh provide practical examples where recurrent droughts, declining agricultural productivity and flooding have contributed to increasing internal and cross-border migration. The study therefore suggests that climate adaptation, environmental conservation and rural development should form integral components of migration management policies.

With respect to the socio-economic and humanitarian implications of massive global migration, the paper revealed that migration produces both positive and negative outcomes for countries of origin and destination. Countries of origin benefit through remittances, technology transfer, international investment and knowledge exchange, while simultaneously experiencing shortages of skilled professionals, demographic imbalances and family separation. This finding supports the position of de Haas (2021), who argued that migration can contribute to development where appropriate institutional frameworks exist to harness migrants' financial and intellectual resources. Similarly, Docquier and Rapoport (2012) acknowledged that although migration may encourage investment in education, excessive emigration of skilled workers can weaken domestic productive capacity. The migration of Nigerian healthcare professionals provides an appropriate illustration, as remittances



contribute positively to household welfare while shortages of medical personnel reduce the capacity of the national health system.

The paper equally demonstrated that destination countries derive considerable economic benefits from migration through labour force expansion, innovation and increased productivity. However, they also encounter challenges associated with increased demand for housing, healthcare, education and social integration. This finding supports the work of Dustmann and Frattini (2014), who found that migrants contribute positively to economic performance, particularly where labour market integration is effective.

Nevertheless, the paper recognises that sudden and large-scale migration may generate humanitarian and administrative pressures, especially during emergencies involving refugees and asylum seekers. The experiences of European countries receiving displaced persons from Ukraine and neighbouring countries accommodating refugees from Sudan and Syria illustrate the financial and institutional demands associated with humanitarian protection. These observations indicate that successful migration management requires balancing humanitarian obligations with national development priorities.

The paper further revealed that addressing the causes of massive global migration requires integrated policy responses rather than isolated interventions. The review indicates that peacebuilding, employment creation, democratic governance, climate adaptation, expanded legal migration pathways, international cooperation and protection of migrants' rights collectively offer more sustainable solutions than restrictive immigration policies alone. This finding is consistent with Betts and Collier (2017), who argued that humanitarian assistance should be complemented by development-oriented interventions capable of restoring self-reliance among displaced populations. Likewise, de Haas (2023) maintained that migration should be governed through evidence-based policies that address the structural conditions compelling migration rather than concentrating exclusively on border control. The experiences of Canada and Australia, where regulated labour migration complements economic development while reducing irregular migration, provide practical illustrations supporting this conclusion.

The findings of this paper are strongly supported by the Aspirations–Capabilities Theory of Migration developed by de Haas (2021). The theory explains that migration occurs through the interaction between individuals' aspirations to migrate and their capabilities to achieve migration. This perspective is consistent with the findings that conflict, unemployment, political instability and environmental degradation create aspirations to migrate by reducing security and opportunities within countries of origin. At the same time, education, financial resources, migration networks and legal opportunities determine whether migration aspirations can be translated into actual migration. The theory therefore provides a convincing explanation for why not all individuals facing similar adverse conditions migrate and why migration frequently increases during periods of socio-economic development. It equally supports the study's recommendation that sustainable migration management should focus on improving living conditions within countries of origin while expanding safe and regular migration opportunities.

Similarly, Migration Systems Theory, originally proposed by Mabogunje (1970) and subsequently refined by de Haas et al. (2020), provides substantial theoretical support for the findings. The theory explains that migration develops through interconnected social, economic and political relationships linking countries of origin and destination. This proposition aligns closely with the findings that migration flows from Syria, Ukraine, Venezuela, Sudan and the Sahel have been sustained through



established migration networks, labour market demands and historical relationships. The theory further explains why migration frequently continues despite increasingly restrictive immigration policies because existing migrant communities facilitate subsequent migration through information sharing, financial support and social connections. Consequently, the theory reinforces the study's conclusion that effective solutions require coordinated international cooperation involving countries of origin, transit and destination rather than unilateral national policies.

Conclusion

This paper concludes that human mobility has become an enduring feature of the international system rather than a temporary response to isolated crises. Evidence reviewed in this paper showed that migration is fundamentally shaped by the combined effects of armed conflict, economic inequalities, political instability and environmental change, all of which weaken people's ability to sustain secure and productive lives within their countries of origin. These conditions have continued to generate large-scale movements of refugees, asylum seekers, labour migrants and environmentally displaced persons across regions, with significant implications for development, governance, security and humanitarian protection.

The paper further establishes that migration should not be viewed solely as a challenge to be controlled but as a phenomenon that requires balanced and evidence-based governance capable of addressing its underlying causes while safeguarding the rights and dignity of migrants. Sustainable responses therefore demand greater investment in peacebuilding, accountable governance, inclusive economic development, environmental resilience and international cooperation instead of relying predominantly on restrictive border policies. Where governments create secure political environments, expand employment opportunities, strengthen public institutions and implement climate adaptation measures, the pressures that compel involuntary migration are substantially reduced.

At the same time, destination countries should continue to develop well-regulated migration systems that facilitate lawful mobility, promote social integration and protect vulnerable migrants from exploitation and discrimination. Addressing massive global migration therefore requires long-term commitment by national governments, regional organisations and the international community to policies that promote human security, shared responsibility and sustainable development, recognising that the effective management of migration ultimately depends on improving the conditions that influence people's decision to leave their countries in the first place.

Recommendations

1. Governments of countries experiencing high levels of outward migration should prioritise peacebuilding, strengthen democratic institutions, combat corruption and improve public security while implementing employment-generation programmes, industrial development policies and investment in education and healthcare to address the structural conditions that compel people to migrate.
2. National governments, regional bodies and development partners should invest in climate adaptation initiatives, sustainable agricultural development, disaster risk reduction and environmental conservation programmes, particularly in environmentally vulnerable regions, in order to reduce livelihood insecurity and minimise environmentally induced migration.
3. Countries of origin and destination should strengthen international cooperation by expanding safe and legal migration pathways, enhancing bilateral labour agreements, improving refugee



protection mechanisms, intensifying efforts against human trafficking and migrant smuggling, and implementing effective migrant integration policies that promote social inclusion while protecting the rights and dignity of migrants.

Article Publication Details

This article is published in the **International Journal of Public Service Governance, Intergovernmental & Policymakers**, ISSN 3139-1427 (Online). In Volume 2 (2026), Issue 3 (July - September). The journal is published and managed by **Erudexa Publishing**.

Copyright © 2026, Authors retain copyright. Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/> (CC BY 4.0 deed)

Acknowledgements

We sincerely thank the editors and the reviewers for their valuable suggestions on this paper.

Authors' contributions

All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Data availability

No datasets were generated or analyzed during the current study.

Declarations

Ethics approval and consent to participate

Not applicable. This study did not involve human or animal subjects.

Funding

The authors declare that no funding was received for this work.

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

References

- Adams, R. H., Jr., & Cuecuecha, A. (2013). The impact of remittances on investment and poverty in developing countries. *World Development*, 50, 94–108.



- Aksoy, C. G., & Poutvaara, P. (2021). Refugees' and irregular migrants' self-selection into Europe. *Journal of Development Economics*, 152, 102681.
- Arjona, A. (2020). *Wartime institutions: A research agenda*. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*.
- Bahar, D., Dooley, M., & Selee, A. (2020). *Venezuelan migration, crime, and misperceptions: A review of the evidence*. Migration Policy Institute.
- Benjaminsen, T. A., & Ba, B. (2019). Why do pastoralists in Mali join jihadist groups? A political ecological explanation. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 46(1), 1–20.
- Betts, A., & Collier, P. (2017). *Refuge: Transforming a broken refugee system*. Allen Lane.
- Carling, J., & Collins, F. (2018). Aspiration, desire and drivers of migration. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44(6), 909–926. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2017.1384134>
- Castles, S., de Haas, H., & Miller, M. J. (2020). *The age of migration: International population movements in the modern world* (6th ed.). Red Globe Press.
- Clemens, M. A. (2021). *The real root causes of Central American migration*. Center for Global Development.
- Crawley, H., & Skleparis, D. (2018). Refugees, migrants, neither, both: Categorical fetishism and the politics of bounding in Europe's migration crisis. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44(1), 48–64.
- Czaika, M. (Ed.). (2024). *The Routledge handbook of migration studies* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Czaika, M., & Reinprecht, C. (2022). Migration drivers: Why do people migrate? In M. Czaika (Ed.), *Introduction to migration studies*. Springer.
- Czaika, M., & Reinprecht, C. (2022). Drivers of migration: A synthesis of knowledge. In M. Czaika (Ed.), *Handbook of migration and globalisation* (pp. 41–58). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- de Haas, H. (2010). Migration and development: A theoretical perspective. *International Migration Review*, 44(1), 227–264.
- de Haas, H. (2021). A theory of migration: The aspirations–capabilities framework. *Comparative Migration Studies*, 9(1), Article 8.
- de Haas, H. (2023). *How migration really works: A factful guide to the most divisive issue in politics*. Basic Books.
- de Haas, H., Castles, S., & Miller, M. J. (2020). *The age of migration: International population movements in the modern world* (6th ed.). Red Globe Press.
- de Haas, H., Czaika, M., Flahaux, M.-L., Mahendra, E., Natter, K., Vezzoli, S., & Villares-Varela, M. (2019). International migration: Trends, determinants, and policy effects. *Population and Development Review*, 45(4), 885–922.
- Docquier, F., & Rapoport, H. (2012). Globalisation, brain drain and development. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 50(3), 681–730.
- Dustmann, C., & Frattini, T. (2014). The fiscal effects of immigration to the UK. *The Economic Journal*, 124(580), F593–F643.



- Ebuenyi, I. D., Adebayo, E. F., et al. (2023). Factors influencing migration intentions among Nigerian doctors: A cross-sectional study. *Human Resources for Health*, 21, 64.
- Gallagher, A. T. (2017). *The international law of migrant smuggling*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hoffmann, R., Dimitrova, A., Muttarak, R., Cuaresma, J. C., & Peisker, J. (2020). A meta-analysis of country-level studies on environmental change and migration. *Nature Climate Change*, 10(10), 904–912. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-020-0898-6>
- Ivlevs, A., & King, R. (2023). Ukrainian refugee migration: Evidence and emerging research agenda. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*.
- Kelley, C. P., Mohtadi, S., Cane, M. A., Seager, R., & Kushnir, Y. (2015). Climate change in the Fertile Crescent and implications of the recent Syrian drought. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 112(11), 3241–3246.
- Kraler, A., & Katsiaficas, C. (2021). Gender, migration and integration: Current trends and future perspectives. In A. Triandafyllidou (Ed.), *Routledge handbook of immigration and refugee studies*. Routledge.
- Mabogunje, A. L. (1970). Systems approach to a theory of rural–urban migration. *Geographical Analysis*, 2(1), 1–18.
- McAuliffe, M., & Oucho, L. A. (Eds.). (2024). *World migration report 2024*. International Organization for Migration.
- Peri, G. (2016). Immigrants, productivity and labour markets. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 30(4), 3–30.
- Soto Nishimura, A., & Czaika, M. (2024). Exploring migration determinants: A meta-analysis of migration drivers and estimates. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 25(2), 621–643.
- Triandafyllidou, A. (Ed.). (2022). *Routledge handbook of immigration and refugee studies*. Routledge.
- Vertovec, S. (2023). *Super-diversity*. Routledge.

Publisher's Note

ERUDEXA PUBLISHING remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations. The statements, opinions, and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of ERUDEXA PUBLISHING and/or the editor(s). ERUDEXA PUBLISHING disclaims responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions, or products referred to in the content.