



Regional Characteristics and Migration in Developing Economies: Evidence from Nigeria

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Abstract: Given the economic objective of attracting and retaining skilled migrants in a globally competitive economy and the social objective of ensuring a socially cohesive society, this research examines the whole issue about the North- South divide in poverty and other characteristics and how these affect migration. The impact of migration on child education, the impact on ownership of assets, etc on migration are also investigated. Furthermore, this paper also identified which regional economic factors influence the individual's migration decision, taking into account personal characteristics. For empirical analysis, we used data from the Nigerian Migration Survey by the World Bank. The micro data allowed us to identify household factors that influence migration decisions. In doing this, we controlled for different individual propensities to migrate and also assessed the genuine impact of regional economic factors on migration. The results showed that individual, regional and country specific factors make significant impact on migration decisions and dynamics.

Keywords: Regional, Characteristics, Migration, Outcomes, Developing Economy, Survey Data, Nigeria

JEL Classification: F22; F24; O15; R23

INTRODUCTION

Theoretically and empirically, human migration has long been recognised as a vital element of population dynamics which can have significant impact on both areas of origin and destination. The relationship between migration and the characteristics of both areas of origin and destination has received some attention in the literature (Dustmann et al, 2010). Although the findings are not yet conclusive, there is evidence that the peculiarities of migrant's areas of origin and migration outcomes. Studies such as Hammer et al. (2002) and Rustenbach (2010) suggest that the existence of a strong relationship between migration and development can have a decisive impact on the direction and speed of development on both origin and

destination. According to Oderth (2002) characteristics of migrant's place of origin and migration outcomes have shaped the nature of both receiving and places of origin more than any other phenomenon in human geography. Some cross-country studies done in Germany and in the United Kingdom, using European data also find similar results (Dustmann et al, 2010). However, others show that the result of regional characteristics and migration outcomes can defer depending on the relative emphasis on economic, social, and psychological and cultural factors (Schneider, 2008).

In developing countries, the gap between demographic characteristics and economic welfare seems to be a major determinant of worker emigration to the developed countries. Also, the dynamics of migration have been largely dependent cultural and historical issues (Agu, 2009). As the demographic giant in Africa, Nigeria has become increasingly involved in international migration to different parts of Asia, U.S.A, Europe, and South Africa. In line with this, Fadeyi (2010) argued that Nigeria is also a source and destination country within West Africa. In the Nigerian context, it has also been emphasized that cross-border labour migration has been on the increase. Trade is also being stimulated between Nigeria and the host countries. On the other hand, World Migration (2003) stresses that cross-border migration leads to a lack of skilled manpower in key sectors of national development. On the social front, long term migration negatively affects the male/female ratio and leads to disrupted family structures, which in turn, might affect the growing feminization of migration in Africa.

In view of this, highly skilled migrants from Nigeria and other developing countries are also becoming a more attractive resource for industrial countries as these countries experience demographic shifts characterized by skilled labour force shortages in certain sectors of their economies. Although there are a number of regional characteristics that may affect migration outcomes, in this paper we also include individual-level factors in our analyses, such as education, gender and age. Generally, research in the area of the impact of regional characteristics and labour migration is generally inconclusive. In the some countries of destination, Nigerian migrants are respected, while in others, they are generally regarded negatively. For example some Migrants have been blamed for or are feared to cause various problems such as; spread of diseases, driving down wages of local workers, rise in crimes and displacing or taking away jobs from local workers. Thus, given the economic objective of attracting and retaining skilled migrants in a globally competitive market and the social objective of ensuring a socially cohesive society, this research examines the whole issue about the North- South divide in poverty and other characteristics and how these affect migration. The impact of migration on child education, etc on migration are also investigated.

The rest of the paper is organised as follows. Section II describes the methodology of the survey. The results and findings are presented and discussed in Section III. Section IV gives some policy recommendations and section V concludes the paper.

METHODOLOGY OF THE SURVEY

The study followed a structured methodology with the 2006 National Population Census providing the sampling frame. The NBS frame has 23,070 enumeration areas in the 776 Local Government Areas of the country, politically consisting 36 states and Abuja Federal Capital Territory. For the purpose of the study, the States were classified into either high or low migration and regrouped into four regions – the North, South East, South South and South West (the three political regions in the North was grouped into one given that relatively fewer number of states were selected from the North generally on account of being predominantly a low migration zone).