





## Chapter Four

# Analysis of the African Union Migration Policy Framework for Africa within the Context of Securitisation of Migration

*Makinde Mayowa Babatunde* 

*Institute of Governance  
Pan African University   
Lagos, Nigeria*

*Oluyemi O Fayomi* 

*Department of Political Science  
Nigeria Army University Bui   
Bui, Nigeria*

### Abstract

Human migration is an engaging topic and has been studied across many academic fields; therefore, migration is a significant determinant of socio-economic growth in the world. Humans have been migrating since the dawn of humanity; some move for economic reasons, while some are forced to flee from armed conflict, poverty, food hunger, persecution, terrorism, human rights violations and abuses, natural catastrophes, and environmental factors. This paper examines the securitisation of migration within Africa and the African Union's efforts to establish a unified migration strategy. It questions how the linkage between migration and security affects the African Union's efforts to promote migration throughout the continent and points out that decisions made while securitisation is in effect, make it more difficult to develop an efficient immigration strategy. It examines whether these policies were effective or not and inquires as to why the unsuccessful ones failed. This



chapter relies on secondary data sources such as books, articles, journal publications, and government reports. Theoretically, the foundation of this study is examined through the lens of the theory of Push-Pull Factors (Lee's Theory), Network theory, and Securitisation theory. These theories explain how migration occurs, how it is carried out, and how the political actors use legislative processes to discourage and label it a security threat.

## **Introduction**

Approximately 41 million international migrants were moving within, from, or to Africa in 2017, according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Of these, 5 million were immigrants from other parts of the world, 17 million were residents outside the continent, and 19 million were found to be living within the continent (UNCTAD, 2018). However, current research indicates that 80 per cent of Africans considering migration have no interest in leaving the continent and have no intention of going permanently. Reports on African migration have traditionally concentrated on displacement and irregular migration, particularly to Europe. Despite housing 25 per cent of the world's refugees, just two-thirds are African citizens from the 54 nations that make up the continent (IOM, 2017). There is a need for a new narrative on modern African migration that primarily focuses on intra-African migration.

According to Adeola and Fayomi (2012), international migration is a complex phenomenon enhanced by contacts with outside cultures; its dynamism within the studied areas is spurred by new aspirations for economic betterment. The spread of migration is embedded in the primary motive of migration: finding job opportunities. Its transformation into crime-related activities is viewed within the economic or politically induced prism. Migration remains a global phenomenon that most often occurs in less developed areas. Globalisation, with its open borders, is turning less industrialised nations into dumping grounds. Therefore, migration is evident in the countless daily border crossings made by traders, many of whom are market women trying to make ends meet. Contrary to the perception of the mediatised horrors of irregular migration from Africa to

the Mediterranean, most African migrants traverse land borders rather than seas.

It is necessary to examine the realities in terms of evidence from various countries, the lens through which migration is viewed, and the impact the narrative has had on the response to migration at the national, regional, and continental levels to understand the various narratives that exist on migration within, to, and from the continent. This chapter addresses migration and how it relates to intra-African migration. Migration in Africa is driven by push and pull factors. Push factors are conditions in the home country that make it difficult or impossible to live there, such as violence, gender inequality, political corruption, environmental degradation, climate change, and lack of access to adequate health care and education. Pull factors are circumstances in the destination country that make it a more attractive place to live, such as better opportunities, greater quality of life, freedom from religious or political persecution, and employment opportunities. This chapter makes use of a qualitative approach. It collects and analyses non-numerical (descriptive) data to comprehend people's attitudes, beliefs, and motivations to their social reality. This chapter sketches border management, Africa's visa policies liberalisation as part of the free movement goal, intra-African migration, African Union (AU) migration policy framework for Africa, intra-African migration securitisation, the impact of securitisation of intra-African migration on the free movement of persons, the benefits of the free movement of persons and security concerns.

### **Border management in Africa**

Border governance in Africa has got substantially more difficult in the recent decade than in previous decades. States face challenges such as managing irregular migration, transnational organised crime, and terrorism, protecting the most vulnerable, such as victims of trafficking, unaccompanied minors, and refugees, and responding to health epidemics and large-scale cross-border mobility caused by natural and human-made crises. Climate change also strains people's livelihoods and

security in some regions of the continent, raising the prospect of more cross-border travel. While border management in Africa has traditionally been to ensure the security and safety of the local population and, to a lesser extent, that of the migrants themselves, the emphasis is shifting more and more toward how to facilitate the movement of people across borders best to enhance formal economic development through expanded services and trade.

There is a common misconception that the free movement of people entails the physical erasure of boundaries established by colonial powers; however, this is not the case, given the changing nature of border management on the continent. Instead, the vision of a continent with “seamless borders” where commodities, people, and services may flow more freely is outlined in Agenda 2063 and mirrored in the African Union and Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) (African Union, 2018; Intergovernmental Authority on Development, 2012) migration policy guidelines. With the need for creativity, resources, capacity building, and suitable technology solutions, the significance of borders, therefore, assumes a new perspective. The African states must overcome several obstacles with boundaries that are universal and those unique to the continent.

### **Africa’s visa policy liberalisation is part of the free movement goal**

One of the African Union goals outlined in Agenda 2063 is the elimination of visa requirements for citizens of the continent. Due to Africa’s division into 54 states, anyone of African origin seeking to travel across the continent by land may need to pass several borders and may need multiple visas. Visa deregulations increase trade, commerce, and tourism, as well as overall potential economic advantages, more constrained visa policies used to address concerns about irregular migration, political or economic instabilities, and security concerns, are just a few of the complex and interconnected reasons why nations may impose or relax their visa policies (Pécoud & de Guchteneire,

2007). Although many African countries had already begun to address this issue bilaterally, some regional economic groupings (RECs) and other trade blocs began implementing visa-free travel for their constituents, the signing of the AfCFTA Agreement and its coordinating Protocol on Free Movement of Persons on March 21, 2018, represented a significant step forward. Within the AfCFTA region, the protocol is implemented to establish a visa-free zone (African Union, 2018).

The discussion surrounding the withdrawal of visas is typically oversimplified, and visa regulations and procedures are frequently misunderstood. Removing the need for visas and liberalising visa policies does not imply that a state has eliminated border restrictions or needs a visa program. The state's genuine worries about the entrance and stay of phony immigrants can be addressed by risk management procedures that include pre-clearance technologies like Advanced Passenger Information or Passenger Name Records. Additionally, because visa requirements are a genuine source of income for immigration departments, which are frequently underfunded, nations may be hesitant to abolish them. Many countries have found success with "visa on arrival", eager to do away with the burdensome visa procedures to promote trade and tourism. Many African nations, like Nigeria, Rwanda, and Seychelles, offer visas on arrival to most African citizens.

The African Development Bank (AfDB) (2018) and Africa Visa Openness Index Report (2018) list the advancements made by the states to liberalise access to their countries as much as possible. This is especially true about the number of nations offering e-visas for Africans, which increased from nine in 2016 to 13 in 2017 and 16 in 2018. East Africa (eight nations), West Africa (seven countries), and Southern Africa (four countries) make up the majority of the top 20 countries that are most friendly to Africans. At the same time, there is only one country in North Africa (Mauritania) and none in Central Africa. Africans may obtain visas upon arrival in 24 per cent of African nations and do not require visas to visit 25 per cent of African nations and require visas to visit 51 per cent of African countries. Again, this scenario is progressively shifting for much of the continent

due to the slow implementation of the AfCFTA and the Free Movement Protocol (African Union, 2018).

**Table 4.1:** African Union Countries with Visa Facilities to Africans. Source: AfDB, 2018

Type	Countries	Countries
Countries offering visa-free or visa-on entry to Africans	11	Benin, Cabo Verde, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Mauritania, Mozambique, Rwanda, Seychelles, Togo, Uganda
Countries offering visa on arrival to all Africans	4	Comoros, Djibouti, Madagascar, Somalia

Nigeria, the most populous nation in Africa, declared in December 2019 that it will start providing visas upon arrival to all African citizens as of January 2020. However, various groups have opposed its adoption (Olaniyi, 2020).

## African Union Migration Policy Framework for Africa

In light of the opportunities for, and obstacles to development presented by migration, the Council of Ministers of the then Organization of African Unity (OAU) called for the creation of a framework for migration policy during their 74<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session in July 2001 (OAU, 2001), which required the creation of a migration policy framework by making sure that migration and related concerns are incorporated into the national and regional agenda for security, stability, development, and cooperation, as well as creating a strategic framework for migration policy in Africa that could help solve the challenges presented by migration, to promote the freedom of movement of people and to strengthen intra- and inter-regional cooperation in topics relating to migration, based on the existing migration processes at the regional and sub-regional levels, and to provide an environment that will enable migrants, particularly those in

the Diaspora, to participate in the development of their home countries.

The AU Migration Policy Framework (MPFA), adopted in Banjul, the Gambia, in 2006, resulted from this (AU, 2006). The 2006 MPFA offered the AU Member States and RECs comprehensive and integrated policy guidelines, which they were urged to consider in their efforts to promote migration and development and solve migration issues on the continent. It presented policy guidance in nine theme areas: labour migration, border management, irregular migration, forced displacement, human rights of migrants, internal migration, migration data management, migration and development, and interstate cooperation and partnerships (Abebe & Mudungwe, 2018).

The MPFA was evaluated by the AU Commission in 2016 to see how well it had assisted states and RECs in managing migration, the difficulties encountered during implementation, the possibilities that might be taken advantage of, its ongoing applicability, and whether it needed to be revised. After the assessment, AU Member States and RECs gathered in Zanzibar in November 2016 to discuss the evaluation report for the African Union Migration Policy Framework. The Member States and RECs recognised that migration is dynamic, and that migration trends and patterns have changed over the past ten years across the continent. The AU Commission should revise the MPFA, and a 10-year action plan should be developed for its implementation, according to the meeting's recommendations (African Union, 2017).

According to a study from the International Organization for Migration (2019), the number of people migrating regularly within Africa grew from 18.5 million in 2015 to over 21 million in 2019, accounting for more than half of all regular African migration. Indeed, the modern intra-African movement is considered essential for development, and any effort by governments to stifle regular intra-African mobility by making it risky, expensive, or limited can be detrimental to the continent's development strategy (Bastia & Skeldon, 2020).

Theoretically, the foundation of this study is examined through the lens of the theory of push-pull factors (Lee's Theory), network theory, and securitisation theory. The push-pull theory was created by Everett S. Lee (Lee, 1966) to explain the driving forces for migration frequently linked to the present developments in Africa. The push-pull forces are crucial to comprehend when looking at migration trends. According to Lee, pull factors are favourable elements at the destination, such as high earnings, jobs, and educational possibilities. In contrast, push factors are unfavourable aspects in the place of origin, such as low pay, high unemployment rates, and a lack of health care.

This approach emphasises the driving and pulling forces behind the migration of thousands of individuals. Political (violations of human rights, tyranny, corruption, a lack of rule of law, poor governance, arbitrary detention, and a lack of freedom of expression), socioeconomic (lack of access to quality healthcare, inadequate educational opportunities, unemployment, poverty, low wages, and poor working conditions), and environmental conditions (such as food insecurity), and security issues (such as war, conflict, and terrorism) are all taken into account. Employment opportunities, safety, and peace are also pulling factors. These elements play a big role in understanding this study.

Network theory: Migrant networks are groups of interpersonal connections that, via familial ties, friendships, and shared heritage, connect migrants, former migrants, and non-migrants in the areas of origin and destination. Reducing the costs and dangers associated with migration and raising the anticipated net gains from migration increases the likelihood of international migration (Massey *et al.*, 1993). When the number of migrants reaches a certain point, network expansion lowers the costs and hazards associated with moving, which increases the possibility that people would migrate, which leads to more movement, which causes more networks to grow, and this is perpetuated. Instead of focusing on what initiates migration, the network theory of migration investigates what keeps it going through time and space (Thieme, 2006). According to

this view, migration is a network process whereby migrants communicate with close friends and family to support one another. They communicate, provide financial assistance, and even help people find jobs. According to the argument, a relationship like this reduces the risks and expenses associated with relocation. However, there are instances of friends and family members migrating illegally, which causes difficulty and exposes migrants to violence and exploitation.

Securitisation theory, developed by the Copenhagen School, proposes that security threats are socially produced through a process known as securitisation, offering a fundamentally constructivist view on how security issues arise and disappear (Jacobsen & Landau, 2013). Immigration is seen as posing a security danger in several policies that come from governments, major political parties, the general people, and even the media (Jacobsen & Landau, 2013:210).

Governments are seen to be able to proclaim threats to the state's existential security by just stating that there is a real and immediate risk, even if there need not be one, according to securitisation theory (Hoffman, 2019).

### **Intra-African migration securitisation**

The Copenhagen School of Security Studies first introduced securitisation. It contends that sociological, environmental, economic, and political aspects, in addition to the military, make up a security threat (Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2010). Furthermore, it claimed that security dangers are created socially through the discursive framing of a problem. The policy implications of the securitised discourses are greater because they justify exceptional measures outside the confines of conventional political processes (Behr, 2015).

The term "securitisation of migration" refers to the portrayal of migration as an inherent security threat to a state or society as an expansion of the notion of securitisation (Buzan, Wæver & De Wilde, 1998). As governments react by enacting more restrictive laws against migrants and providing justification for increased monitoring, imprisonment, and

deportation of migrants, this paradigm is reducing the opportunities for lawful movement. As a result, migrants are forced to take more hazardous routes and pay migrant smugglers and human traffickers excessive sums to transport them to their final destinations, which has a severe effect on their security. Growing anti-migrant sentiment is partly a result of the securitisation of migration.

A crucial entrance point for securitising tales like “invasion” of society is that a migrant signifies an outsider who arrives from a different background (Bigo, 2002). Additionally, it serves as the foundation for the excessive emphasis on preventing irregular migration, creating the impression that all movement is irregular.

Improving border controls, tightening visa regulations, and demographic profiling are only a few examples of how the securitisation of migration is being realistically shown. This is clear from the fact that several of Africa’s upper-middle-income nations tend to have tighter visa policies for African travellers. Some justifications for such harsher rules include fear of a significant inflow of individuals from low-income countries and increasing rivalry for employment between immigrants and natives (Abebe, 2018). These worries have occasionally sparked xenophobic inclinations that have claimed the lives of migrants and ruined their homes. These contribute to the growing securitisation of migration, which results in limitations on total African mobility within Africa and eventually has an influence on the extension of the African Union’s agenda for the free movement of people.

### **Intra-African migration**

As it has been for millennia, intra-African migration is still a major force in our society; it affects our economy as well. Internal and external migration have significant overlaps and parallels across the entire continent; they can complement one another, coexist, or happen in succession, but most importantly, they are all significant components of thousands of households’ livelihood strategies in the poorer Global South (Vullnetari,

2020:54). Migration is “essential to ensuring certain people’s lives and livelihoods are in order ... governance policies make it more challenging, risky, or expensive to engage in, and such tactics may work against development” (Bakewell, 2020:74). On the African continent, migration and mobility are fundamental social, cultural, political, and economic elements (De Bruijn, van Dijk, & Foeken, 2001). The bulk of African migrants continue to migrate within the continent, despite some recent research showing a decline in intra-African migration relative to historical patterns (Flahaux & De Haas, 2016:22), emphasizing the consequences of rural movement toward cities. as well as smaller metropolitan areas (Potts, 2009, 2013).

Halfway through 2019, there were 26.5 million extra-African migrants, or two per cent of the continent’s population (UNDESA, 2019). According to the 2020 World Migration Report (International Organisation for Migration, 2020), out of 281 million international migrants, almost 21 million were Africans dwelling in other African countries, a major increase from 2015, when about 18 million were anticipated to be doing so (McAuliffe & Triandafy, 2021:3). Population trends on the continent have been driven by increased intraregional migration, with substantial growth seen in nations like Equatorial Guinea, Niger, Angola, Uganda, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Despite the possibility that migration patterns could cause social and demographic changes. “The bulk of African migration occurs within the continent, as people circulate within Africa looking for economic opportunities” (Awumbila, 2017:1). Therefore, most of the internal migration occurs inside the continent (UNCTAD, 2018), while most of the intra-African movement is focused on the nearby sub-region, especially between neighbouring nations (Flahaux & De Haas, 2016; Schoumaker *et al.*, 2015).

Intra-African migration has grown significantly, from 12.5 million in 2000 to 19.4 million in 2017. (UNCTAD, 2018). South Africa, Côte d’Ivoire, Nigeria, Kenya, and Ethiopia receive most of the continent’s migrants, even though all African nations suffer out-migration (Awumbila, 2017:1). It is vital to

recognise that even the largest destination nations undergo out-migration, both within the continent and to other regions.

### **The impact of securitisation of intra-African migration on the free movement of persons' agenda**

Several explanations are provided for the rising securitisation of migration within Africa, all of which have something to do with advancing the goal of the free movement of people. The first reason concerns the unstable security environment in Africa today, which is plagued by various current and new challenges, including non-state threats. Armed gangs and militia groups frequently fight for and against African governments in the continent's civil conflicts. Threats emanating from terrorist organizations like Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, and the Islamic State are seen as being a significant security issue.

Al-Shabaab is active in this regard in the Horn and Eastern Africa, an epicentre region made up of migrant-origin nations headed for the Middle East and Gulf (the eastern route), countries in Southern Africa (the southern route), and Europe (northern route). Additionally, the region is home to more than four million of the 7.4 million African refugees and more than eight million of the 17.8 million people who are internally displaced (Abebe, 2020). Similar to this, several violent organizations, notably Boko Haram, operate throughout West Africa (particularly in the Lake Chad basin, the Sahel, and the Sahara), a region that has one of the most successful systems for allowing people to roam freely (Gandhi, 2018).

Porous borders, lack of standardised travel documents, lack of policy convergence among member states, lack of capacity and appropriate infrastructure for border management, and lack of knowledge about the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons (African Union, 2018) are additional major issues that prevent African member states from implementing the free movement of persons agenda. These worries have sparked trends for border security between several African States. Morocco and Algeria are two examples. Morocco said in 2014 that it would erect a security barrier with electronic sensors along its shared

border with Algeria to stop the flow of people smuggling and shield it from potential terrorist infiltration. Similarly, Algeria finished constructing a trench along the border with Morocco to combat illegal cross-border transactions, including smuggling milk, dates, and petrol (Boukhars, 2019).

### **The benefits of the free movement of persons' security concerns**

The experiences of African nations like Benin, Ghana, Mauritius, Rwanda, and Seychelles, which have free movement laws in place, show no clear correlation with exposure to security issues. These nations' introduction of relatively lax visa requirements has not resulted in any significant security risks. In reality, the experience of the border continent demonstrates that the advantages of a free movement policy outweigh the security risks.

First, by facilitating the free movement of experts, students, and trainees to acquire appropriate skills, the protocol can help to increase free movement regimes and support labour mobility, skills transfer, and technology transfer among African residents (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2019). As a result, people from the eastern and southern areas continue to be drawn to Rwanda's growing technology industry (IOM, 2019). Similarly, migrants continue to be drawn to South Africa's economy, including the banking and information technology sectors and the well-established mining industry, mostly from Southern Africa (IOM, 2019). Rwanda would not have a free visa policy if the securitisation argument were to be used, as there would be security worries from the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo across the border. Currently, the busiest border on the continent is between Rubavu in Rwanda and Goma in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (KT Press, 2018).

Second, by encouraging people to move freely across the continent, African nations may decide to implement a complete border management strategy, which calls for stronger political institutions and law enforcement capabilities. This specifically means enhancing the integrity of travel papers, improving the

integration of border and security infrastructure, and embracing innovation and technology to manage borders and national security (Abebe, 2018). Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda now provide a single tourist destination visa as of 2014. These nations established the necessary border and security infrastructure, which allowed them to take advantage of successful borderless cooperation. Greater security difficulties have not yet afflicted the nations.

Third, improving the African Continental Free Trade Area's (AfCFTA) implementation, which aspires to create a single continental market for goods and services, would directly benefit from the extension of the free movement regime (African Union, 2018). After being approved in 2018, the AfCFTA Protocol became effective in May 2019. The rapid implementation of the AfCFTA attests to the increased political backing it gained throughout the continent. This is a wise decision since it will aid in developing trade in Africa. Only 18 per cent of all African exports were intracontinental in 2016, compared to 59 and 69 per cent for intra-Asia and intra-Europe (Sow, 2018).

### **Conclusion**

Despite the security risks connected with the unrestricted movement of people, none of these risks is substantial enough to support the possibility of excluding legitimate African travellers from entering certain countries. Instead, the advantages of opening borders to Africans exceed the risks to national security. Since transnational security threats are borderless, it is essential to establish efficient collaborative preventative methods and systems. To reduce security concerns linked with the free movement of people, African nations must improve coordination, collaboration, and information sharing in the battle against transnational security threats. Through education, campaigning, sensitisation, and public awareness, African Union member states should endeavour to change individuals' perceptions so that they can embrace and understand the advantages of free movement on the continent. It is very important to educate their populace on the benefits of freedom of movement of people to support migrant acceptance

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and integration. As required by the protocol, monitoring the implementation's progress will be essential. Therefore, a methodical approach to monitoring implementation should be developed to record best practices and difficulties experienced by Member States.

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