

The Economic Factors Influencing the Undocumented Migrants Traversing from Ethiopia to South Africa through Iringa Region, Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the economic factors influencing the undocumented migrants traversing from Ethiopia to South Africa through Iringa Region, Tanzania. The study employed a mixed-methods research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches. A sample of 75 undocumented migrants and 4 key informants (migration officer, prison officer, Ethiopian woman and legal officer) was selected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue. Quantitative data were gathered through structured questionnaires, while in-depth interviews were used to collect qualitative insights. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions and percentages, as well as thematic analysis for qualitative data. Findings revealed that economic factors such as poverty, lack of basic services, and demand for cheap labor are key motivators for undocumented migration. Additionally, the study highlighted the persistence of undocumented migration due to a combination of these factors, as well as the limited availability of legal migration channels. In conclusion, the study underscores the complex and multi-faceted nature of undocumented migration. Economic hardship like poverty, lack of basic services, and demand for cheap labor are all significant drivers. The study recommends that governments improve economic conditions and strengthen migration policies, while stakeholders should enhance support systems for migrants. Future research should focus on long-term impacts of migration policies and explore different migration routes and contexts for a more nuanced understanding of the issue.

Keywords: Poverty; Basic Services; Cheap Labor; Undocumented Migrants

INTRODUCTION

Migration, the movement of people from one place to another, has been a fundamental aspect of human history, originating from early human migrations driven by factors such as environmental changes, population growth, and the search for resources (IOM, 2020). Migration, both voluntary and forced, has been a longstanding global phenomenon, driven by many socio-economic, political, and environmental factors (World Bank, 2021).

The movement in question involves irregular migration, where individuals from the Horn of Africa, including Ethiopia and Somalia, traverse multiple countries in search of better economic and social opportunities. Tanzania serves as a key transit route in this process due to its strategic geographic location connecting East Africa to Southern Africa (IOM, 2020). While it is primarily a passageway rather than a destination, Tanzania plays an important role in facilitating this migration corridor. Migrants use Tanzania to navigate towards South Africa, a country often seen as a land of economic promise. This significance arises from Tanzania's interconnected road networks, porous borders, and at times, inconsistent immigration enforcement. Neighboring countries such as Kenya and Mozambique also feature as part of this transit route, with Tanzania acting as a central node within this broader migratory pathway (IOM, 2020).

The Tanzania's strategic geographical location, bordering several countries and serving as a conduit between East and Southern Africa, renders it a focal point for transitory migration (UNDP, 2020). This positioning not only facilitates the movement of people across its borders but also makes it an essential route for migrants

traveling from Ethiopia and Somalia, on their way to the more economically prosperous nations in the south, particularly South Africa.

Iringa Region is considered a critical node along this migratory route due to its strategic location in the Southern Highlands, which connects major migratory paths from northern Tanzania to southern border regions. Its geographic positioning makes it a natural transit point for undocumented migrants moving towards Southern Africa, particularly South Africa. Despite the region's rough terrain, it has become a significant passageway for undocumented migrants navigating their way southward (IOM, 2020).

Moreover, the attraction of South Africa, with its perceived economic prosperity and opportunities for employment, serves as a powerful magnet for migrants from various parts of Africa, including those traversing Tanzania (IOM, 2017). South Africa's status as a regional economic powerhouse and its relatively favorable living environment make it an attractive destination for individuals seeking better prospects and livelihood opportunities (UNDP, 2020). Despite the inherent associated risks with irregular migration routes, including exploitation, violence, and legal repercussions, the promise of a better life motivates migrants to undertake the arduous journey (IOM, 2017). For many migrants, the potential rewards outweigh the risks, driving them to endure the challenges of traversing through unfamiliar territories and navigating complex migration networks despite political violence, crimes, and hunger (UNDP, 2020). The pursuit of economic prosperity and the aspiration for a better future propel individuals to embark on this perilous journey, often at significant personal cost.

The role of the Tanzanian immigration officers in intercepting and apprehending undocumented migrants is crucial for maintaining border security and enforcing immigration laws (Davis, 2022). Moreover, logistical constraints, such as rugged terrain and remote border areas, further complicate enforcement efforts, making it difficult to monitor and intercept irregular migration flows. The dynamic nature of migration patterns presents significant challenges for immigration officers. As routes and strategies evolve, enforcement efforts must also be innovative and flexible to keep pace with these changes, as highlighted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2018). This adaptability ensures that migrant networks continue to facilitate movement despite intensified border controls and shifting migration policies. Despite these challenges, immigration officers play a vital role in safeguarding Tanzania's borders and upholding national security.

Theoretical Framework

In this paper, Social Disorganization Theory was used. This theory posits that social and structural factors such as poverty, ethnic heterogeneity, and residential mobility can disrupt the social cohesion of a community, weakening the informal social control mechanisms that typically regulate behavior. In the context of migration, these disruptions can lead to environments where illegal activities, such as undocumented migration, become more prevalent.

The theory's relevance to this study lies in its ability to shed light on the broader social and structural conditions that drive individuals to migrate illegally. For instance, poverty in a community can create a sense of desperation and a lack of legitimate opportunities, pushing individuals to seek better livelihoods elsewhere, even through undocumented means. Ethnic heterogeneity and residential mobility, meanwhile, can erode the sense of community and shared norms, making it easier for individuals to engage in or support undocumented migration without facing social repercussions.

Applying Social Disorganization Theory to the issue of undocumented migration, the study can provide a more nuanced understanding of the root causes of this phenomenon.

Empirical Review

From different literatures the following are the economic factors influencing the traversing of the undocumented migrants:

Shortage of Employment Opportunities

Adepoju (2016) studied on "Migration and Employment in Sub-Saharan Africa" focuses on the correlation between limited employment opportunities and the surge in migration from Sub-Saharan African countries. The study finds that the shortage of job opportunities in rural and urban areas significantly contributes to the decision of individuals, especially the youth, to migrate in search of better livelihoods. The research highlights that in countries like Nigeria and Ghana, the lack of industrialization and economic diversification has led to high unemployment rates, pushing people to seek opportunities abroad.

De-Haas (2019) in the study of "Migration Transitions: A Theoretical and Empirical Inquiry into the Developmental Drivers of Migration," de Haas explores the role of employment shortages in driving migration from North African countries to Europe. The findings reveal that in regions like Morocco and Tunisia, the limited availability of decent jobs, especially for educated young people, serves as a major push factor for migration. The study further discusses how structural unemployment and underemployment in these countries have led to increased irregular migration as people search for better opportunities.

Beegle and Christiaensen, (2019) in their study "Accelerating Poverty Reduction in Africa: Employment and Productivity," examine the relationship between employment shortages and migration in East Africa. The research demonstrates that in countries like Ethiopia and Tanzania, the scarcity of formal employment opportunities, coupled with low agricultural productivity, has fueled migration both within the region and to other continents. The study concludes that the lack of viable job options is a critical factor driving individuals to migrate, often through irregular channels, in search of better economic prospects.

Lack of Basic Services

Martinez, (2018) conducted a study on "Migration and Lack of basic Services: A Case Study of Migrant Populations in Central America." This study explored how the lack of basic services such as healthcare, education, and housing drives migration from Central American countries. The findings indicated that the scarcity of essential services in the region significantly contributes to the decision to migrate, with migrants seeking better access to these services in more developed countries.

Nguyen, & Purnamasari, (2019) conducted a study on "Access to Services and Migration Decisions: Evidence from Rural Vietnam." This study focused on the relationship between lack of basic services and migration in rural areas of Vietnam. The study revealed that limited access to clean water, healthcare, and education in rural regions is a significant push factor for migration to urban areas and abroad, where such services are more readily available.

McAuliffe, & Kitimbo, (2020) studied on "Migrants on the Margins: Access to Services for Migrant Populations in Africa." This study examined the barriers that undocumented migrants in Africa face in accessing basic services. The research highlighted that the inability to access healthcare, education, and legal protections in their home countries often pushes individuals to migrate in search of better opportunities and services, particularly in neighboring countries or regions.

Poverty

Adepoju, (2019) conducted a study "Migration and Development: The Impact of Poverty on Migration in Sub-Saharan Africa." In this study, Adepoju explores how poverty serves as a significant push factor driving migration in Sub-Saharan Africa. The research highlights that individuals from impoverished regions are more likely to migrate in search of better economic opportunities. The study documents various cases where poverty-stricken communities in East Africa, particularly in Ethiopia and Somalia, experience high levels of undocumented migration as residents seek improved living conditions in more prosperous regions like South Africa.

Castles, et al., (2020) studied on "The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World." Castles and colleagues discuss how poverty is a fundamental driver of migration, particularly in developing countries. The book includes empirical evidence showing that economic hardship, limited access to

resources, and lack of employment opportunities compel individuals to migrate, often through irregular means. The authors argue that poverty not only initiates migration but also influences the patterns and destinations of migratory flows, with many migrants choosing South Africa due to its perceived economic opportunities.

Koser, (2018) studied on "International Migration: A Very Short Introduction." Koser's study examines the relationship between poverty and migration, emphasizing how economic deprivation is a primary factor influencing individuals' decisions to migrate. The research focuses on various regions, including East Africa, and demonstrates that poverty-driven migration is often undocumented, with migrants risking dangerous journeys to reach destinations like South Africa. The study further explains how poverty exacerbates the vulnerabilities of migrants, making them more susceptible to exploitation and violence during their transit.

Demand for Cheap Labor

Martin (2017) conducted a study titled "Migrants in the Global Labor Market: Demand for Low-Skilled Workers and Policy Responses," which explores how global labor market dynamics shape migration patterns. The study highlights those sectors such as agriculture, construction, and domestic work, which often require low-skilled labor, create a substantial demand for cheap labor. Martin argues that this demand drives undocumented migration, as migrants from low-income countries seek better employment opportunities abroad. The study emphasizes that the reliance on cheap labor in these industries not only fuels migration but also influences policy responses aimed at managing labor migration and addressing labor shortages. The research underscores the complexities of balancing labor market needs with immigration control policies.

Ruhs and Anderson (2018) conducted a study titled "Cheap Labor: The Global Politics of Immigration Control," which delves into how the demand for cheap labor in developed countries shapes immigration policies. The authors analyze various case studies from different regions, including Africa and the Middle East, to illustrate how economic needs drive the influx of undocumented migrants. Their study provides a comprehensive examination of how immigration policies are often designed to manage the flow of low-skilled workers while simultaneously attempting to control and regulate undocumented migration. Ruhs and Anderson argue that the demand for cheap labor significantly influences policy decisions and contributes to the persistence of undocumented migration, highlighting the tension between economic interests and immigration controls.

Gibney (2019) explored "The Political Economy of Forced Migration: Demand for Cheap Labor and Its Implications," focusing on the interplay between economic pressures and migration dynamics. This study examines how the demand for cheap labor in host countries influences forced migration patterns. Gibney argues that economic pressures, including labor shortages in low-wage sectors, create conditions that drive migrants to seek work in these vulnerable industries. The study highlights how such demand often leads to exploitation and precarious living conditions for undocumented migrants. Gibney's research emphasizes the political and economic factors that push migrants into low-wage work and the systemic issues in both origin and destination countries that perpetuate these migration trends.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a mixed-methods research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches. A sample of 75 undocumented migrants and 4 key informants (migration officer, prison officer, Ethiopian woman and legal officer) was selected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue. Quantitative data were gathered through structured questionnaires, while in-depth interviews were used to collect qualitative insights. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions and percentages, as well as thematic analysis for qualitative data.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Economic factors play a significant role in migration decisions. These factors encompass employment opportunities, access to basic services, poverty, labor demands, economic instability, better job prospects abroad, cost of living, role of remittances, accessibility of social services, and educational opportunities and other financial considerations that can drive individuals to seek better conditions abroad. The following sections

present detailed findings on how various economic factors influence the migration decisions of undocumented migrants.

Shortage of Employment Opportunities

One of the primary economic drivers of migration is the unavailability of employment opportunities. Limited access to stable, well-paying jobs often compels individuals to seek work elsewhere, particularly in regions where economic conditions are perceived to be better. Migrants often move in search of jobs that offer higher wages, job security, and career advancement prospects that may not be available in their home countries.

This section explores how the shortage of employment opportunities in migrants' home regions contributes to their decision to migrate, shedding light on the types of employment they seek and the broader economic pressures driving these migration patterns.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to employment opportunities(N=75)

Response Option	Frequency	Percent (%)
It is a major factor; I am unable to find suitable work in my country.	45	60.0
It is a moderate factor; I have some opportunities, but they are not sufficient.	20	26.7
It is not a significant factor; I have adequate employment opportunities in my country.	10	13.3
Total	75	100

Source: Field Data (2024)

Table 1 indicates that 60% of migrants identified the lack of employment opportunities as a primary motivation for their migration, emphasizing the significant role of job shortages in driving migration decisions. Many migrants are likely seeking employment in agriculture, construction, manufacturing, or service sectors, where jobs may be scarce or poorly compensated in their home regions. Agricultural workers, often facing seasonal work and low wages, may migrate for more stable, better-paying jobs, while informal sector workers, such as street vendors or casual laborers, may seek formal employment with higher wages. A smaller proportion (26.7%) viewed employment opportunities as a moderate factor, suggesting that while some opportunities exist, they are insufficient to meet their needs. The 13.3% who did not see employment as a major factor may be motivated by other concerns, such as safety or family reasons. These findings underscore the economic pressures driving migration, aligning with research by Hollifield (2020) and Massey *et al.* (2016), which highlight economic hardship and unemployment as key migration drivers.

Supporting this, the immigration officer commented:

"The issue of undocumented migrants passing through Tanzania is quite significant... Economic hardship in their home countries is one of the primary factors, along with political instability." [September 21, 2024: Migration Office]

In addition, the Ethiopian woman highlighted that:

"Back home, even if you finish school, there are no jobs. Most of us leave not because we want to, but because there is no way to survive. I came because I needed to help my parents and younger siblings." [September 20, 2024: Ethiopian Woman]

This reinforces the quantitative findings that economic hardship, including unemployment, serves as a critical push factor for migration.

Lack of Basic Services

Access to basic services such as healthcare, education, and sanitation is a fundamental aspect of quality of life. When these services are inadequate or unavailable, individuals may be compelled to migrate in search of better living conditions. The absence of essential services can drive migration both internally and across borders, as people seek regions where their basic needs can be more reliably met.

Table 2: Lack of Basic Services(N=75)

Response Option	Frequency	Percent (%)
It is very important; lack of access to these services is a primary reason for my migration.	40	53.3
It is somewhat important; limited access to services is a contributing factor.	25	33.3
It is not important; there is lack of basic services in my home country.	10	13.3
Total	75	100

Source: Field Data (2024)

Table 2 indicates that over half (53.3%) of the migrants reported the lack of basic services, such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure, as a significant factor influencing their decision to migrate. This highlights the importance of essential services in shaping migration decisions. Another 33.3% considered these factors somewhat important, while 13.3% did not view them as a significant concern. The findings suggest that while some individuals may prioritize other factors, a substantial portion is driven by inadequate access to basic services. This aligns with migration theories, which emphasize the critical role of quality of life in migration decisions (De Haas, 2019; Castles *et al.*, 2020). Additionally, the lack of access to healthcare, clean water, and sanitation exacerbates economic challenges, pushing migrants to seek better living conditions elsewhere.

The Ethiopian Embassy Public Relations Officer highlighted the broader regional migration patterns:

"The persistence of undocumented migration through Tanzania reflects broader regional migration patterns... Migrants are fleeing situations where access to basic services is limited."[September 21, 2024; Embassy office]

This emphasizes that the lack of basic services, particularly in rural areas of Ethiopia, contributes to the decision to migrate in search of better living standards.

Economic Instability as a factor

Economic instability is a crucial factor influencing the decision of individuals to migrate, particularly in the context of undocumented migration. When countries experience economic difficulties such as inflation, fluctuating currency values, or high unemployment rates, individuals often seek better economic conditions abroad. Economic instability in a home country leads to a lack of confidence in local markets, which can result in a decline in job opportunities, loss of savings, and overall financial insecurity.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to the perception of economic instability (N=75)

Response Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
It is a major factor; the instability is severely affecting my quality of life.	42	56.0
It is a moderate factor; while concerning, it is not the sole reason for my migration.	26	34.7

It is not a significant factor; I do not consider economic instability in my migration decision.	7	9.3
Total	75	100

Source: Field Data (2024)

Table 3 reveals that 56% of respondents consider economic instability in their home country a major factor driving migration, highlighting its critical impact on quality of life and the pursuit of stability. A further 34.7% view it as a moderate factor, indicating that it contributes but is not the sole driver of migration, while 9.3% do not consider it significant, possibly due to other priorities like safety or family.

Economic instability is closely linked to issues such as high inflation, unemployment, and poor governance, which create financial insecurity and limit future planning. This aligns with migration theories emphasizing that individuals often seek to escape unstable economies for more secure environments (Bilsborrow et al., 2017; Castles et al., 2014).

In Ethiopia, regional economic crises, high unemployment, and unstable government policies exacerbate migration pressures. Approximately 50-60% of respondents cited economic instability as a major factor, underlining the connection between economic hardship and migration. Addressing these challenges requires policies that promote economic development and stability in migration-prone regions.

The Immigration officer explained:

"Economic hardship in their home countries is one of the primary factors, along with political instability... Many of these individuals are fleeing the impacts of economic instability, including the inability to find steady work and rising inflation." [September 21, 2024; Immigration Office]

This quote reinforces the idea that economic instability is a key driver for migration, with the population being compelled to leave due to the lack of stable livelihoods and economic uncertainty in Ethiopia. This view is also supported by the Mgagao prison officer who added:

"The rising numbers of undocumented migrants are also partly due to the economic instability in their home countries. Many of these migrants are trying to escape tough economic conditions, which only seem to worsen each year." [September 21, 2024; Mgagao Prison]

This perspective further highlights the linkage between economic instability and migration, noting that unstable economies push individuals towards more secure prospects, even if it means migrating irregularly.

Cost of Living

The perception of better pay outside one's home country is a significant factor in shaping migration decisions, especially among undocumented migrants. When individuals perceive that economic opportunities in their home country are limited or inadequate, they are more likely to consider migration as a viable alternative to improve their economic circumstances. The allure of higher wages, better working conditions, and more job opportunities abroad plays a pivotal role in motivating individuals to seek opportunities outside their national borders.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents according to cost of living (N=75)

Response Option	Frequency	Percent (%)
It is a significant factor; the high cost of living is pushing me to seek alternatives.	38	50.7
It is a moderate factor; while it affects my life, it's not the main reason for my migration.	29	38.7

It is not a factor; the cost of living is manageable, and my migration is driven by other reasons.	8	10.7
Total	75	100

Source: Filed Data (2024)

Table 4 shows that about half (50.7%) of the respondents consider the high cost of living in their home country as a significant factor in their decision to migrate. This indicates that the financial burden of living expenses is a major push factor. The 38.7% who see it as a moderate factor suggest that while the cost of living is a concern, it is not the primary reason for migration. The 10.7% who do not view it as a factor might be influenced more by other considerations such as job opportunities or safety.

The cost of living as a significant factor in migration decisions highlights the economic pressures that drive individuals to seek more affordable living conditions elsewhere (IOM, 2020). The cost of living in Ethiopia is another economic factor influencing migration decisions. About 45.0% of respondents reported that the rising cost of living made it increasingly difficult to meet basic needs, which contributed to their decision to migrate. High prices for food, housing, and utilities are particularly burdensome for low-income individuals, pushing them to seek more affordable living conditions abroad.

The Ethiopian Embassy Public Relations Officer explained:

"In Ethiopia, the high cost of living has led many to view migration as a way out. They perceive the cost of living in neighboring countries or even further afield as more manageable, which makes migration an attractive option." [September 21, 2024; Embassy Office]

This observation is also supported by the Mgagao Prison Officer who added that:

"As people struggle to keep up with the rising cost of living at home, they look at countries like South Africa, where they believe the cost of living is lower, or at least more manageable, compared to what they face here." [September 21, 2024; Mgagao Prison]

These comments affirm that economic pressures, such as the high cost of living, serve as significant push factors, leading individuals to seek better opportunities abroad.

Poverty Influence on Migration

Poverty remains one of the most prominent push factors influencing migration. Individuals living in impoverished conditions often face limited access to resources, poor living standards, and lack of economic mobility, which can drive them to seek better opportunities elsewhere. Poverty is not only about low income but also the broader socio-economic environment that hinders upward mobility. This section explores how poverty, as a critical economic factor, shapes the migration decisions of undocumented migrants, highlighting the role of economic hardship in prompting individuals to leave their home countries in search of a more stable and prosperous life abroad.

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents according to Poverty (N=75)

Response Option	Frequency	Percent (%)
Poverty is a major driver; it significantly influences my decision to seek better opportunities elsewhere.	55	73.3
Poverty has a moderate impact; while it is a factor, it is not the sole reason for my migration.	15	20.0

Poverty does not significantly impact my decision; my migration is driven by other factors.	5	6.7
Total	75	100

Source: Field Data (2024)

Table 5 reveals that 73.3% of respondents identified poverty as a major driver behind their migration decisions, emphasizing the severe economic hardships faced by many migrants. The 20.0% who viewed poverty as a moderate factor suggest that while poverty plays a role, other reasons also contribute to migration. A smaller group (6.7%) did not consider poverty a significant factor, possibly due to other motivations such as safety or family ties. The prominence of poverty as a migration driver aligns with migration theories that recognize economic deprivation as a key push factor, encouraging individuals to seek better opportunities abroad (Koser, 2018). Furthermore, 66.7% of respondents reported low-income levels, underscoring how poverty and the inability to meet basic needs compel individuals to risk undocumented migration in search of improved living conditions.

The Mgagao Prison Officer noted the connection between economic factors and migration flows:

"From a security standpoint, the situation is widespread... Many undocumented migrants are apprehended... This ongoing problem puts pressure on our resources, demonstrating the need for better systems to manage and support these individuals. [September 21, 2024; Mgagao Prison]"

This statement reflects the wider issue of poverty pushing individuals to migrate, leading to overcrowded detention facilities in Tanzania, as seen in the Prison Officer's observations.

Role of Remittances

Remittances are a crucial economic factor influencing migration decisions, particularly for individuals seeking to improve their economic standing and provide support to their families back home. As migrants travel abroad in search of better opportunities, many send a portion of their earnings back to their families in their home countries. This flow of remittances plays a significant role in the local economies of migrants' countries of origin, often improving household livelihoods, supporting education, healthcare, and other basic needs.

Table 6: Distribution of respondents according to role of remittances (N=75)

Response Option	Frequency	Percent (%)
It is very significant; I need to support my family financially.	33	44.0
It is somewhat significant; remittances are a part of my decision but not the main reason.	28	37.3
It is not significant; remittances do not influence my decision to migrate.	14	18.7
Total	75	100

Source: Field Data (2024)

Table 6 highlights the significant role of remittances in migration decisions, with 44% of respondents considering them a major motivator. This reflects migrants' financial responsibilities toward families' back home, often viewing remittances as a means to alleviate economic hardship. A further 37.3% view remittances as somewhat significant, indicating their importance as part of broader migration considerations, while 18.7% prioritize other factors like employment opportunities or safety.

The financial lifeline provided by remittances supports households in regions with limited economic opportunities, often funding essential services, small businesses, and enhancing social mobility (Taylor & Wilson, 2020; Ratha, 2015). Despite many respondents being single, they maintain responsibilities to parents or siblings, driving their motivation to migrate.

Remittances are also linked to broader economic development, as they reduce financial pressures on families and contribute to local economies, outweighing risks for many migrants (Ammassari, 2014). This highlights the dual role of remittances in both individual decision-making and supporting regional economic stability.

The Iringa Regional Prison Officer also commented:

"We often see migrants who have been detained telling us they migrated in part because they could send money home to their families. It's a key motivator that keeps them going, despite the risks involved." [September 21, 2024; Iringa Regional Prison]

These insights underline the role of remittances as a key economic consideration for migrants, helping to sustain families back home and acting as a motivator for continued migration.

Demand for Cheap Labor

One of the key economic factors influencing the decision of undocumented migrants to traverse through Tanzania is the availability of job opportunities in the destination country. Employment prospects in the destination country are often seen as a crucial factor in the decision-making process, especially when migrants are seeking to improve their economic situation. This section explores how job prospects in South Africa influence migration patterns and the extent to which they motivate migrants to journey through Tanzania.

Table 7: Distribution of Respondents according to Perceived Better pay in the Destination Country (N=75)

Response Option	Frequency	Percent (%)
Very important; the availability of job opportunities is a primary reason for my migration.	48	64.0
Moderately important; job prospects are a factor, but there are other reasons influencing my decision.	22	29.3
Not important; job prospects are not a significant factor in my decision to migrate.	5	6.7
Total	75	100

Source: Filed Data (2024)

Job prospects in the destination country are a significant driver of migration, with 64% of respondents identifying employment opportunities as a primary motivator. Sectors such as construction, agriculture, domestic work, and retail are particularly attractive to migrants. Another 29.3% of respondents consider job prospects moderately important, suggesting additional influencing factors, while 6.7% prioritize reasons such as safety or political freedom over job opportunities.

These findings align with labor migration theories (Harrison & Lee, 2020; Massey *et al.*, 2016), which emphasize the pull of employment opportunities in attracting migrants. Qualitative insights from key informants, including an immigration officer and an Ethiopian embassy public relation officer, further confirm the centrality of job prospects in undocumented migration. These perspectives underscore how economic instability in home countries and the promise of work in destinations like South Africa fuel migration decisions.

Immigration officer:

"Job prospects in South Africa are indeed one of the primary motivators for migrants coming through Tanzania. Many migrants from Ethiopia are looking for employment in South Africa, particularly in the agricultural and construction sectors. These industries are often seen as offering better wages compared to what they could earn in their home country. Even those who don't have family or friends in South Africa are encouraged by the promise of work opportunities."[September 21, 2024; Iringa Immigration Office]

The Ethiopian Embassy Public Relations Officer:

"There is a growing perception that South Africa is a land of opportunity. Many Ethiopians are attracted by the economic growth in South Africa and the promise of stable employment. This perception is particularly strong among young people who are facing unemployment and limited career prospects at home. In our consultations, we often hear that migrants believe they can improve their quality of life by finding better-paying work in South Africa."[September 21, 2024; Embassy Office]

Ethiopian Woman key informant who has settled in Tanzania said:

"I decided to migrate because I heard about the many job openings in South Africa. There's a huge demand for workers, especially in domestic work. Even though I don't know anyone there, the idea of earning money to send back home made me feel hopeful. It's the opportunity to work that pushed me to leave."[September 21, 2024; Iringa]

These qualitative insights show how job opportunities in the destination country align with the quantitative data, emphasizing that migrants often see economic opportunities abroad as a pathway to improve their livelihoods. The pull factors, particularly job prospects, serve as key motivators in the decision to migrate, especially for those from regions with high unemployment rates. The combination of higher wages and better employment opportunities in South Africa thus acts as a powerful driver for undocumented migration.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that many factors discussed in this report such as economic factors, particularly the lack of employment opportunities, are a major driver for the persistence of undocumented migration through Tanzania. These other factors include high unemployment rates, poverty, and economic instability, including inflation and currency devaluation, push individuals to seek better financial prospects and improved living conditions in destination countries. These challenges create financial uncertainty and social and political instability, making it difficult for individuals to meet their basic needs or invest in their communities, further reinforcing migration patterns. In addition, the promise of remittances and better access to social services such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure in destination countries acts as a significant factor for migrants. These factors highlight the need to address economic challenges, such as creating employment opportunities, stabilizing economies, and improving social services in migrants' home countries.

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