

Climate-Induced Migration and Disaster Resilience Governance in Sub-Saharan Africa: Assessing Policy Coherence Between the Sendai Framework, Global Compact for Migration, and African Union Instruments

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Abstract

Climate-induced migration represents one of the most consequential yet understudied intersections between environmental hazard, human mobility, and governance in Sub-Saharan Africa. This paper examines the degree to which national disaster risk reduction (DRR) frameworks across the region are coherent with international migration governance instruments, specifically the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–2030), the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM, 2018), and the African Union (AU) Migration Policy Framework for Africa. Drawing on a comparative policy analysis of selected case study countries (Nigeria, Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Niger) alongside evidence from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the study finds significant structural misalignment between DRR and migration governance architectures, resulting in protection gaps for climate-displaced populations and diminished community resilience in both origin and destination contexts. The paper argues that bridging these policy silos through integrated multi-level governance mechanisms is not only normatively desirable but operationally necessary for achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets in the region. Recommendations for policy coherence, institutional coordination, and community-level resilience programming are advanced.

Keywords: *climate-induced migration, disaster risk reduction, Sendai Framework, Global Compact for Migration, Sub-Saharan Africa, policy coherence, community resilience, African Union*

Introduction

The relationship between climate change, human migration, and disaster risk has emerged as one of the defining governance challenges of the twenty-first century. Across Sub-Saharan Africa, the convergence of intensifying climate hazards including droughts, floods, desertification, and tropical cyclones with entrenched socioeconomic vulnerabilities is displacing millions of people annually (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre [IDMC], 2023). These movements are not merely humanitarian crises; they are systemic governance failures that expose fundamental incoherence between the international frameworks designed to manage disaster risk and those designed to regulate human mobility (Betts, 2013; McAdam, 2012).

Sub-Saharan Africa is disproportionately affected by both climate change and displacement. According to the IDMC (2023), the region recorded approximately 16.5 million new internal displacements in 2022, with conflict and violence accounting for more than half and disasters for much of the remainder. In the Lake Chad Basin alone, more than 6 million people affected by displacement (internally displaced persons, returnees, and refugees) were recorded across Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria in mid-2023, in a context shaped by desertification, resource scarcity, and conflict exacerbated by environmental stress (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2023). These figures underscore the scale of a phenomenon that transcends the mandates of any single international framework. Despite recognition in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction [UNDRR], 2015), the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM; United Nations General Assembly [UNGA], 2018), and the Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA; African Union [AU], 2018), the governance of climate-induced migration remains fragmented. National DRR plans frequently omit migration as a relevant variable, while migration governance instruments rarely address disaster risk as a structural driver of mobility (Foresight, 2011; Zetter & Morrissey, 2014). This policy incoherence has tangible consequences: displaced populations fall through institutional gaps, host communities lack support for absorbing mobile populations, and long-term resilience investments are poorly targeted (Rigaud et al., 2018).

This paper seeks to address three central research questions. First, to what extent are national DRR frameworks in Sub-Saharan Africa aligned with migration governance instruments? Second, how does forced climate-induced migration affect the disaster resilience capacity of host and origin communities? Third, what multi-level governance mechanisms can bridge the existing policy divide between DRR and migration governance? Through comparative policy analysis and engagement with empirical evidence from Nigeria, Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Niger, the paper advances a governance integration model grounded in the Sendai Framework's Priority 1 (understanding disaster risk) and the GCM's Objective 2 (minimize adverse drivers of migration). The paper is structured as follows: the literature review examines the theoretical and conceptual literature; the methodology section sets out the analytical framework; the case study section presents comparative evidence; the cross-cutting analysis assesses policy coherence; the integration section discusses governance mechanisms and models; and the discussion and conclusion draw out policy implications and recommendations.

Literature Review

The Climate-Migration-Disaster Nexus

The academic literature on climate change and migration has grown substantially over the past two decades, though theoretical consensus remains elusive. Early frameworks conceptualized climate migrants as "environmental refugees" (El-Hinnawi, 1985), a term subsequently contested for its conflation of causality and its implications for refugee law (Black, 2001; Castles, 2002). Contemporary scholarship employs the concept of "trapped populations", those who lack the resources to migrate despite deteriorating environmental conditions, as a critical complement to the more commonly studied mobile populations (Black et al., 2011; Zickgraf, 2019).

The Foresight Report (2011) on migration and global environmental change provided a landmark contribution by situating migration within a systems framework, identifying multiple drivers including environmental, economic, political, and social factors that interact to shape mobility outcomes. This multicausal perspective has since become dominant in the literature (Adger et al., 2015), and scenario modeling by Rigaud et al. (2018) projects that Sub-Saharan Africa could

produce between roughly 28 and 86 million internal climate migrants by 2050 under different emissions and development pathways. The intersection of migration and disaster resilience adds further complexity. Displacement following disaster events has long been recognized as a driver of secondary vulnerability (Oliver-Smith, 2009; Wisner et al., 2004). When populations are displaced into areas already characterized by poverty, environmental stress, or social fragmentation, the conditions for compounded disaster risk are reproduced (Pelling, 2011). The concept of "social-ecological resilience" (Folke, 2006) provides a useful analytical lens, emphasizing the capacity of coupled human-ecological systems to absorb disturbance and reorganize around new conditions; a capacity profoundly affected by the forced movement of people.

Governance Frameworks: Architecture and Gaps

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–2030) represents the primary international instrument for DRR. Its four priorities (understanding disaster risk, strengthening governance, investing in resilience, and enhancing disaster preparedness) collectively constitute a comprehensive approach to reducing disaster losses (UNDRR, 2015). Critically, although the Sendai Framework refers to displacement and migrants, its treatment of the migration dimension remains limited (UNDRR, 2015). The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), endorsed by the UN General Assembly with 152 votes in favor in December 2018 (UNGA, 2018), represents a non-binding but politically significant framework for migration governance. Its 23 objectives address a broad spectrum of migration policy, with Objective 2 explicitly recognizing adverse environmental factors as drivers of migration. However, the GCM has been criticized for its non-binding nature, its limited enforcement mechanisms, and its failure to adequately address the specific needs of climate-displaced populations who do not qualify for refugee status under the 1951 Convention (Bettini, 2013; Betts, 2013; Chetail, 2020; Kälin & Schrepfer, 2012). The African Union Migration Policy Framework for Africa (AU, 2018) provides a regional governance architecture grounded in the principle of free movement articulated in continental instruments and in Regional Economic Community (REC) protocols such as that of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The MPFA identifies environmental displacement as a priority concern and calls for harmonized regional responses (AU, 2018). Nevertheless, implementation has been uneven, with significant disparities between regional blocs and between member states (Castillejo, 2019; Dick & Schraven, 2019).

Policy Coherence and Multi-Level Governance

Policy coherence (defined as the systematic alignment of policy objectives, instruments, and implementation processes across sectors and governance levels) has been identified as a critical condition for effective disaster risk governance (OECD, 2019). In the context of climate-migration-DRR governance, coherence failures manifest in three primary ways: vertical incoherence (misalignment between international frameworks and national implementation); horizontal incoherence (misalignment between DRR, migration, and climate adaptation policy domains at the same governance level); and temporal incoherence (short-term emergency responses undermining long-term resilience investments) (Nilsson et al., 2012; Peters, 2015).

The scholarship on multi-level governance (MLG) offers theoretical resources for understanding how these incoherences can be addressed. Hooghe and Marks (2003) distinguish between Type I MLG (nested, general-purpose jurisdictions) and Type II MLG (task-specific, flexible jurisdictions), with the latter being more adaptable to the complex, cross-cutting nature of climate-

migration governance. In the African context, RECs such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the East African Community (EAC), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) function as Type II multi-level governance nodes with significant potential for policy integration (Dick & Schraven, 2019).

Methodology

This study employs a mixed-methods, comparative policy analysis design situated within a constructivist-interpretivist epistemological tradition. The philosophical underpinning of this research holds that governance frameworks, institutional mandates, and policy instruments are socially constructed artifacts whose meanings and effects are best understood through systematic interpretation and contextual analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This position treats quantitative displacement and demographic data as contextual evidence that informs, rather than determines, interpretive conclusions about governance coherence and resilience outcomes.

Research Design

The research design integrates three methodological strands: (a) a structured comparative case study; (b) systematic document and policy analysis; and (c) secondary quantitative data synthesis. This triangulated approach reflects the recommendation of Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010) that complex governance problems spanning multiple institutional actors, policy domains, and governance levels are most rigorously examined through deliberate combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The comparative case study method was selected for its capacity to generate contextually rich, transferable insights across multiple national settings while preserving analytical rigor (Lijphart, 1971; Yin, 2018). Unlike large-n statistical designs, the case study approach permits detailed examination of process and context; essential conditions for understanding why governance integration succeeds or fails in specific institutional environments (George & Bennett, 2005).

Case Selection and Rationale

Four countries were purposively selected (Nigeria, Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Niger) following a diverse-case selection logic (Seawright & Gerring, 2008). This strategy maximizes variation across theoretically relevant dimensions while ensuring each case contributes distinct analytical leverage. Selection criteria were operationalized across five dimensions: (1) geographic and sub-regional diversity across West Africa (Nigeria, Niger), East Africa (Ethiopia), and Southern Africa (Mozambique); (2) documented exposure to climate-induced displacement using IDMC (2023) indices and INFORM Risk Scores; (3) variation in institutional DRR capacity, from relatively mature (Ethiopia, Mozambique) to severely constrained (Niger); (4) variation in migration governance maturity; and (5) variation in political stability, testing governance integration arguments under different political conditions. This selection explicitly avoids the selection-on-the-dependent-variable bias identified by Geddes (1990) by including both more and less successful governance outcomes.

Data Sources and Collection

Data collection proceeded through three parallel streams. The first comprised systematic retrieval of primary policy texts: National DRR Strategies, National Migration Policies, National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs), Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs),

National Development Plans, and available inter-ministerial coordination frameworks for each case country. At the international level, the Sendai Framework (2015–2030), the GCM (2018), and the AU Migration Policy Framework for Africa (2018) served as normative reference points. The second stream comprised secondary quantitative data synthesis drawing on IDMC Global Reports (2020, 2023), IOM World Migration Report (2022), IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix country reports, UNHCR Global Trends (2023), the UNDP Human Development Report (2022), and the INFORM Risk Index (Marin-Ferrer et al., 2017). The third stream comprised a structured database search across Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, JSTOR, and UNHCR Refworld using Boolean search strings combining climate change, migration, disaster risk reduction, resilience, and African country terms. From over 840 initial results, 187 sources were retained after screening and 48 were selected for citation based on direct relevance and methodological rigor.

Analytical Framework: Policy Coherence Assessment

Policy coherence was assessed using an adapted version of the OECD Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD) framework (OECD, 2019). The framework was augmented with a fourth dimension drawn from Nilsson et al. (2012): temporal coherence, assessing alignment between short-term emergency instruments and long-term resilience investment frameworks. Each dimension was operationalized through diagnostic questions applied systematically to each country's policy portfolio. For integration of objectives, the analysis examined whether DRR strategies explicitly reference climate-induced migration as a risk driver and whether migration policies reference disaster risk as a structural driver of mobility. For coordination of implementation, the analysis examined inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms linking DRR and migration agencies. For monitoring and evaluation alignment, the analysis examined whether DRR systems capture displacement data and whether migration systems capture environmental risk variables. For temporal coherence, the analysis examined the balance between emergency response and long-term resilience investment across both governance domains.

Qualitative Content Analysis and Thematic Coding

Document and literature data were subjected to directed qualitative content analysis following Hsieh and Shannon (2005). An a priori coding framework was developed from three theoretical sources: the PCSD framework's four coherence dimensions; Hooghe and Marks' (2003) multi-level governance typology; and Folke's (2006) social-ecological resilience dimensions (adaptive capacity, transformability, and learning). This yielded 18 a priori codes across four thematic categories: policy objective alignment, institutional coordination mechanisms, data and monitoring systems, and community resilience outcomes. Coding was conducted in NVivo 14. A second pass identified six emergent codes including "political rupture and governance fragility" and "community-level social capital mechanisms." Inter-rater reliability was assessed on a 20% random subsample, yielding Cohen's kappa of 0.81, indicating almost perfect agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977).

Ethical Considerations

This study relies exclusively on publicly available secondary data, published institutional reports, and peer-reviewed literature. No primary human subjects research was conducted. The authors acknowledge that secondary data carry embedded assumptions reflecting their institutional production contexts. Displacement statistics from international organizations are shaped by definitional boundaries (particularly the contested distinction between conflict-induced and

environmentally induced displacement) (Black, 2001; Bettini, 2013) and interpretive conclusions are accordingly treated as provisional and grounded in transparent methodological reasoning.

Comparative Case Study Evidence

Nigeria: Governance Fragmentation in a Complex Multi-Hazard Environment

Nigeria presents one of the most complex governance environments in Sub-Saharan Africa. The country is exposed to multiple climate-related hazards including flooding (particularly in the Niger Delta and Middle Belt; Nkwunonwo et al., 2020), drought (in the arid north), coastal erosion, and desertification in the Lake Chad region. The IDMC (2023) documented approximately 2.4 million new disaster-related internal displacements in Nigeria in 2022, the large majority of which were attributable to flooding events exacerbated by upstream dam releases from Cameroon's Lagdo Dam, illustrating the transboundary dimensions of climate risk. Nigeria's primary DRR instrument, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) Act and its associated National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy, focuses predominantly on emergency response rather than risk-informed development planning. Migration governance is managed through the National Policy on Labour Migration (2014) and the National Migration Policy (2015), both of which are oriented primarily toward labor migration and diaspora engagement, with minimal reference to environmentally driven displacement. This horizontal incoherence between the DRR and migration policy domains reflects a broader institutional fragmentation across Nigerian public administration. At the subnational level, state governments in climate-vulnerable zones such as Borno, Kebbi, and Rivers have developed ad hoc displacement response mechanisms that operate largely outside the national policy architecture. These mechanisms, while responsive to immediate needs, lack the institutional durability and resource bases required for sustained resilience programming. The Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), of which Nigeria is a member, provides a regional governance node for addressing the interconnected drivers of displacement in the northeast, though its mandate and resources remain insufficient relative to the scale of the crisis.

Ethiopia: Emerging Integration Amid Structural Constraints

Ethiopia offers a contrasting case of nascent policy integration within a context of significant governance challenges. The country's Disaster Risk Management Commission (DRMC), established in 2015 under Council of Ministers Regulation No. 363/2015, represents a deliberate effort to mainstream DRR across government ministries and to align national practice with the Sendai Framework's priorities (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2020). The National Disaster Risk Management Policy (2013, updated 2020) explicitly recognizes climate-induced displacement as a disaster risk driver. Ethiopia also hosts one of the largest refugee populations in Africa, providing a distinctive institutional context in which forced migration governance and DRR intersect in practice (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2023). The country's experience with the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), adopted following the 2016 New York Declaration, has generated institutional learning about multi-sector coordination that is potentially transferable to climate displacement governance. However, this progress has been constrained by the Tigray conflict (2020–2022), which exposed the fragility of governance systems under compound crisis conditions and generated large-scale internal displacement in a context already characterized by significant environmental displacement (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [OCHA], 2022).

Ethiopia's Second Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP II) and the National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) both reference migration as a climate adaptation strategy,

representing a form of policy integration that is rare across the region (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2020). Nevertheless, the vertical coherence between these national frameworks and the sub-national Disaster Risk Management plans of individual woredas (districts) remains weak, with local-level practitioners frequently unaware of national policy commitments.

Mozambique: Post-Cyclone Reconstruction and the Resilience-Migration Nexus

Mozambique's experience with Cyclones Idai and Kenneth in 2019 (among the most destructive ever recorded in the Southern Hemisphere) provides a critical case study in the relationship between acute disaster events, long-term displacement, resettlement, and community resilience (Jacobs & Almeida, 2021). The cyclones triggered hundreds of thousands of new internal displacements, destroyed critical infrastructure in the Beira and Pemba regions, and produced a protracted displacement crisis that exposed significant gaps in both DRR and migration governance frameworks (IDMC, 2020).

Mozambique's National Disaster Risk Management Institute (INGC) has developed one of the more institutionally mature DRR architectures in the region, including a national contingency planning system and sub-national early warning networks (INGC, 2017). However, the INGC operates largely in isolation from the National Migration Policy framework, which is managed by the Ministry of Interior and oriented primarily toward border control and irregular migration management. The Mozambique case also illustrates the resilience implications of climate displacement for host communities. The sudden influx of displaced populations into peri-urban areas around Beira placed intense pressure on water, sanitation, and food systems that were themselves already in fragile condition. This secondary vulnerability cascade — whereby the disaster resilience of receiving communities is undermined by unmanaged displacement flows — represents a critical governance failure with direct implications for SDG Target 11.5 (reducing disaster losses in urban areas).

Niger: Governance Deficit and the Compounding Drivers of Displacement

Niger represents perhaps the most acute case of governance deficit in relation to climate-induced displacement. The country ranks last or near-last on the Human Development Index (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2022) and is subject to compound climate risks including desertification, irregular rainfall, and recurrent flooding. The Sahel has experienced approximately 20% decline in rainfall since the 1960s, and models project continued and intensifying aridification across Niger's agricultural heartland (Hulme et al., 2001; Niang et al., 2014). Niger's National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy (2020–2030) aligns nominally with the Sendai Framework but lacks the institutional infrastructure for implementation. The country's National Agency for Civil Protection (ANPC) is severely under-resourced, and subnational disaster management capacity is largely absent outside the capital, Niamey. The July 2023 military coup (International Crisis Group, 2023), which prompted ECOWAS sanctions and a lasting rupture between Niger and the regional bloc, further disrupted regional governance mechanisms and international support flows that had provided essential backstops for DRR programming.

Migration governance in Niger has historically been framed primarily through the lens of irregular migration management and counter-trafficking, reflecting the country's position on the major West African migration routes to North Africa and Europe. The IOM's Niger mission has been one of the most active in the Sahel, but its programming has focused primarily on transit migration rather than on the internal climate displacement that represents the quantitatively dominant form of

human mobility in the country (IOM, 2022). This mismatch between international programming priorities and domestic displacement realities represents a significant governance gap.

Cross-Cutting Analysis: Policy Coherence Assessment

Vertical Incoherence: International Commitments and National Implementation

Across all four case studies, a consistent pattern of vertical incoherence is evident between international framework commitments and national implementation realities. While all four countries have ratified or endorsed the Sendai Framework and GCM, the translation of these commitments into coherent national policy is incomplete in every case. This gap between commitment and implementation reflects a combination of capacity constraints, competing political priorities, and institutional inertia (Peters, 2015).

The Sendai Framework's monitoring system, the Sendai Framework Monitor, tracks 38 global indicators, but national reporting on indicators most relevant to climate displacement (particularly the Target B indicators on affected people and damaged or destroyed dwellings, and the Target E indicators on national and local strategies) reveals significant data gaps. Of the four case study countries, only Ethiopia submits complete data across these indicators, and even Ethiopia's submissions reveal inconsistencies between national and subnational reporting (UNDRR, n.d.). This vertical monitoring gap makes it effectively impossible to assess the scale of policy coherence failure at a regional level.

Horizontal Incoherence: DRR and Migration Policy Domains

The horizontal incoherence between DRR and migration governance frameworks is the most consistently documented gap across the case studies. In all four countries, DRR policy documents are developed and implemented by agencies (emergency management commissions, civil protection agencies) that operate in institutional silos separate from those responsible for migration governance (interior ministries, labor ministries, foreign affairs). Joint inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms are either absent or dormant in Nigeria and Niger, nascent in Mozambique, and partially functional in Ethiopia.

This institutional separation has direct operational consequences. Displacement data collected by DRR agencies typically fails to capture information relevant for migration governance (including intended destination, mobility patterns, and integration needs) while migration data systems fail to capture the environmental drivers and disaster risk profiles of displaced populations. The result is a dual data gap that compromises both disaster response planning and migration management.

Temporal Incoherence: Emergency Response and Long-Term Resilience

A third dimension of policy incoherence concerns the temporal mismatch between short-term emergency response and long-term resilience investment. Climate-induced displacement generates both immediate humanitarian needs — shelter, food, water, medical care — and longer-term development challenges related to livelihood restoration, social integration, and community rebuilding. In practice, international and domestic funding flows are heavily weighted toward the former, creating a cycle in which displaced populations are repeatedly assisted through emergency mechanisms without addressing the structural vulnerabilities that made them susceptible to displacement in the first place (Pelling, 2011; Twigg, 2015). This temporal incoherence is particularly acute in the context of slow-onset climate events such as desertification and sea-level rise, where the displacement process is gradual and does not generate the acute humanitarian response that rapid-onset disasters trigger. In Niger's Sahel region and Mozambique's low-lying

coastal zones, populations facing gradual environmental degradation are effectively invisible to both DRR and migration governance systems until their situation reaches crisis proportions (Black et al., 2011; Zickgraf, 2019).

Towards Governance Integration: Mechanisms and Models Integrated Risk-Mobility Assessment Framework

A critical first step toward governance integration is the development of shared data systems capable of capturing the climate-displacement nexus in its full complexity. This paper proposes an Integrated Risk-Mobility Assessment Framework (IRMAF), drawing on existing tools including the IDMC's Global Internal Displacement Database, the IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), and the UNDRR's Sendai Monitor. The IRMAF would require national DRR agencies and migration management bodies to jointly collect and report data on: (a) climate hazard exposure of mobile populations; (b) displacement destinations and trajectories; (c) resilience assets and vulnerabilities of host communities; and (d) return and integration intentions and capacities.

Institutional precedents for such integrated data systems exist at the regional level. ECOWAS's Free Movement Protocol, together with the bloc's regional early-warning and monitoring mechanisms, provides a basis for expanding data collection on climate-mobile populations across West Africa (Dick & Schraven, 2019). The AU's African Observatory for Migration and Development, endorsed in 2018 and hosted in Rabat, could serve as a continental platform for aggregating IRMAF data across regional economic communities.

Multi-Level Governance Architecture for Climate Mobility

Beyond data integration, effective governance of climate-induced displacement requires institutional architecture capable of coordinating action across multiple levels — from community-based organizations and local governments through to national ministries, regional bodies, and international frameworks. The Disaster Risk Governance literature (Tierney, 2012; UNDRR, 2017) identifies several institutional design principles relevant to this multi-level architecture: subsidiarity (devolving decision-making to the lowest appropriate level), redundancy (maintaining multiple institutional pathways for response), and adaptive management (building in mechanisms for learning and adjustment). At the national level, the establishment of Inter-Ministerial Climate Mobility Task Forces (bringing together DRR, migration, climate adaptation, and social protection agencies under a shared coordination mandate) represents a feasible institutional reform. Ethiopia's experience with the DRMC provides a partial model, though its mandate would need to be extended to explicitly include the migration dimension. Such task forces would be responsible for developing Joint Climate-Migration Action Plans that align national DRR strategies with GCM objectives and AU MPFA commitments.

Community Resilience and the Role of Social Capital

Governance integration at the community level requires investment in social capital: the networks, norms, and trust that enable collective action in the face of shared challenges (Aldrich, 2012; Putnam, 2000). Research on post-disaster community recovery consistently finds that social capital is among the strongest predictors of resilience outcomes, and that displacement erodes social capital by severing community ties and disrupting established cooperation networks (Aldrich & Meyer, 2015; Keck & Sakdapolrak, 2013). Programming designed to build community resilience in the context of climate migration must therefore attend explicitly to social capital reconstruction, including support for community-based organizations, inter-community dialogue between

displaced and host populations, and investment in shared infrastructure that generates cooperative interdependence. The African College of Crisis Management and Peacebuilding (ACCMP)'s focus on strengthening leadership capacity for migration governance and peacebuilding is particularly relevant here, as effective community resilience requires local leaders with the skills and knowledge to navigate the complex intersection of climate risk, mobility, and social cohesion (ACCMP, 2026).

Discussion

The findings of this comparative analysis carry important theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, they underscore the inadequacy of single-framework approaches to understanding and governing climate-induced displacement. Neither the DRR literature nor the migration governance literature alone provides the conceptual resources to capture the full complexity of this phenomenon; what is required is a genuinely integrative framework that treats climate risk, human mobility, and governance as co-constitutive dimensions of a single system. The social-ecological resilience framework (Folke, 2006) offers promising conceptual foundations for such integration, but requires extension to account for the political dimensions of governance — including power asymmetries between displaced and host populations, between national governments and international organizations, and between different regional governance traditions. A political ecology of climate mobility (Watts, 2015) that situates displacement within broader structures of inequality, extraction, and environmental injustice provides a necessary complement to the systems-oriented resilience perspective. Practically, the findings point to four priority areas for policy reform. First, national DRR strategies must explicitly incorporate migration as both a risk driver and a risk reduction strategy, consistent with the Sendai Framework's Priority 1 mandate to understand disaster risk in all its dimensions. Second, GCM national implementation plans must be reviewed and updated to include climate displacement as a distinct category requiring tailored governance responses, including pre-emptive managed relocation programs where gradual environmental degradation makes long-term habitability untenable. Third, African Union institutions, particularly the African Observatory for Migration and Development and the African Risk Capacity (ARC), must be resourced and mandated to serve as regional coordination hubs for integrated climate-migration-DRR governance. Fourth, community-level resilience programming must be systematically integrated into national development plans, with dedicated financing streams that are insulated from the short-term pressures of humanitarian response cycles.

The comparative evidence also highlights the importance of political context in shaping governance outcomes. Niger's experience illustrates how political instability and governance rupture can rapidly undermine even nascent DRR and migration governance infrastructure. This finding underscores the importance of building resilience into governance systems themselves — not only into the communities these systems are designed to serve. Crisis management and peacebuilding approaches that address the political drivers of governance fragility are therefore integral to the broader agenda of climate-displacement governance integration (Barnett & Adger, 2007; Raleigh & Kniveton, 2012).

Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated that the governance of climate-induced migration in Sub-Saharan Africa is characterized by significant policy incoherence — vertical, horizontal, and temporal — that undermines both the protection of displaced populations and the resilience of communities affected by climate mobility. Through comparative analysis of Nigeria, Ethiopia, Mozambique,

and Niger, the study has shown that this incoherence is not merely a matter of technical misalignment but reflects deeper institutional separations between the DRR and migration governance domains that are reinforced by distinct organizational cultures, funding streams, and political constituencies. Addressing this governance challenge requires more than incremental reform of existing frameworks. It demands a fundamental reconceptualization of climate-induced displacement as a governance domain that is simultaneously a disaster risk issue, a migration management issue, a climate adaptation issue, and a peace and security issue. Only by treating these dimensions as integrated aspects of a single governance challenge can national governments, regional bodies, and international organizations develop the coherent, multi-level policy architectures that the scale of the challenge demands.

The Sendai Framework, the GCM, and the AU MPFA collectively provide a normative foundation for this integration, but their potential can only be realized through deliberate, sustained efforts to build the institutional linkages, data systems, and political coalitions that coherent governance requires. Leadership development — equipping practitioners at every level of the governance system with the knowledge and skills to navigate this complexity — is an essential, often overlooked, dimension of this agenda. The work of institutions such as the African College of Crisis Management and Peacebuilding in strengthening leadership capacity for migration governance, policy development, and peacebuilding is therefore not peripheral to the governance integration agenda but central to it. Future research should build on this analysis by developing and testing specific institutional design models for inter-ministerial coordination in the climate-migration-DRR nexus, by conducting longitudinal assessments of community resilience outcomes under different governance arrangements, and by systematically evaluating the effectiveness of the IRMAF approach proposed in this paper. As the climate crisis intensifies and displacement scales increase, the urgency of this research agenda can scarcely be overstated.

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