

Insecurity, migration and economic development: Imperatives for a multipolar world

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Keywords

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Abstract

Purpose: The study critically examined insecurity, migration, and economic development of a multipolar world and assessed the relationship between the variables

Methodology: This review paper adopted a descriptive design, of an exploratory nature, which engages a cross-case analysis of prior empirical studies and statistical reports; involving comparisons of Nato and Brics both of which carrying significant global influence in a re-emerging multipolar world that was previously dominated by a monopolar perspective. Meanwhile, it derives its theoretical underpinning drawn from a range of concepts including examined insecurity, migration, and economic development, as well as frustration-aggression-displacement theory.

Findings: revealed that (i) insecurity negatively affects the economic development of a multipolar world, whereas (ii) the effect of migration was inconsistent, and crucially (iii) no one holds absolute power on the world stage, and (iv) there is uncertainty whether the two blocs could agree to cooperate in critical areas, or whether their rivalry will lead to a more stable or destabilized world? Suggesting uncertainty: hence, more needed to be done for mutually respective cooperation.

Introduction

The Cold War, which was the world dominated by a bipolar system was a period of geopolitical tension and rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union, from the mid-1940s to the early 1990s. According to Shapiro (2018), the period was characterized by ideological conflict (capitalism vs. communism), an arms race (including nuclear weapons), espionage, and proxy wars, but did not involve direct large-scale military conflict between the two superpowers. This balance of fear was based on the doctrine of mutual destruction. After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, the world became unipolar for several years, with the United States as the sole global superpower. This status was manifested by its military power, economic dominance, and cultural influence (Muzaffar, Yaseen & Rahim, 2017). In the last decades, however, unipolar dominance has become weak, and the world has increasingly transformed into a multipolar one. Álvaro (2009) defined a multipolar world as a system of international relations in which there are several great powers that compete and cooperate with each other. It could be nations or other actors (international organizations and global technology corporations) that fundamentally influence global security, politics, and economics (Shapiro, 2018). The attributes of a multipolar world include military strength, economic might, natural resources, technological advancement, size and geographical location, demography, and political leadership (Ozdilek, 2025).

The key factors that led to the emerging multipolar world are the rise in China economy and military expansion, Russia's reassertion of its influence in energy and security sectors, the growth of regional alliances and the drive for independence from Western institutions, and the digitization and technological competition, especially in artificial intelligence and cyber security. According to Ünal (2022), a multipolar world is characterized by the presence of multiple powerful nations, each with its own distinct economic and security structures. This diversification can help to reduce the risk of global economic or security shocks, as the failure of one nation's economy or security apparatus is less likely to have a catastrophic impact on the global system. Andersen (2018) noted that the diffusion of power among multiple centers,

presents both opportunities and challenges for global security and migration. While it can foster greater cooperation and prevent the dominance of a single power, it also increases the complexity of managing alliances, misjudging intentions, and navigating competing interests, potentially leading to instability and conflict. But the key question is whether the superpowers and the great powers can agree to cooperate in critical areas, or whether their rivalry will lead to a more destabilized world. Indeed, the future of multipolarity depends on the ability of actors to strike a balance between competition and cooperation that will be essential to ensuring global stability and prosperity (Ozdilek, 2025).

Arkhipov and Yeletsky (2015) opined that in a multipolar world, insecurity and migration patterns are deeply intertwined with economic development. Insecurity, whether political, social, or economic, often acts as a catalyst for migration, while migration itself can both hinder and promote economic development depending on how it is managed. The interconnectedness of these factors is further complicated by the multipolar nature of the global landscape, where power and influence are distributed among multiple centers, impacting international cooperation and policy response (Booth, 2021).

In view of the above, the aim of this paper is to critically review the effect of insecurity and migration on economic development in a multipolar world, and the necessary actions that could be taken to enhance economic performance and development.

Literature Review

Insecurity

UNDP (1994) defined human security with a view to understanding what insecurity entails. According to the report, human security means, first, safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression. And second, it means protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life – whether in homes, in jobs or in communities. The report identified seven elements that make up human security, which include economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security; and political security. Anything short of this definition and elements amounts to insecurity. However, Beland (2005) defined insecurity as a state of fear or anxiety due to absence or lack of protection. It is a condition that exists when there is a vulnerability to harm, loss of life, property or livelihood. In other words, insecurity could be seen as any form of violence, crisis, uncertainty, instability, danger, harm or lack of safety. According to Ezeajughu (2021), insecurity is of various types, which include job insecurity, food insecurity, political insecurity, economic insecurity, financial insecurity, social insecurity, demographic insecurity, gender/sexual insecurity, health insecurity, environmental insecurity, relationship insecurity, religious insecurity, and moral insecurity.

According to the World Food Programme (2025), 470,000 people in Gaza are facing catastrophic hunger (IPC Phase 5), and the entire population is experiencing acute food insecurity. The report revealed that an alarming 71,000 children and more than 17,000 mothers need urgent treatment for acute malnutrition. Insecurity in Iraq has far-reaching effects, impacting the country's economy, food security, displacement, and social stability. It hinders economic growth, exacerbates food shortages due to drought and conflict-related disruptions, and leads to displacement, particularly in vulnerable areas like southern Iraq. As of 2020, reports show that over four million people in Iraq need aid and 1.2 million people are still internally displaced after the insurgency that metamorphosed into war with death rate recorded as 3,961,163 (European Union Agency Asylum, 2024). Many internally displaced people remain in camps in Iraqi Kurdistan, even as most camps in Federal Iraq were closed in 2019 and 2020, leaving people with nowhere to go and often leading to increased community tensions.

Between 1997 and 2000, about 1234 individuals from the rural and urban areas of the eastern Iranian provinces were taken as hostage by the Afghans that resulted in a national action. The US forces have faced attacks in the region since 2003, with approximately 4,000 US troops losing their lives in military operations (Ahmad & Ezzatollah, 2016). The imposition of sanctions by the United States on Iran has resulted in a significant drop in Iran's GDP growth rate in two consecutive years (minus 2.25% and minus 2.65% in 2018 and 2019, respectively). In 2018, the largest decline was experienced in the mining, manufacturing, construction, electricity, water and gas sectors) with a 9.1% decrease compared with 2017, followed by a decline of 2.4% in agriculture and decline of 0.05% in the services sector.

Value added in the manufacturing sector also experienced a decline of 6.5% in 2018. In 2019, the value added of the industry sector declined again – by 9.7% compared with 2018 – while the agricultural sector's

value added increased by 9.2%, the services sector showed a minor decline of 0.18% and the manufacturing sector enjoyed a growth rate of 4%. As noted by Joulaei, Keshani, Foroozanfar, Afrashteh, Hosseinkhani, Mohsenpour, Moghimi, and Meymandi (2023) the key driver of the overall decline of GDP in 2018 and 2019 was a fall in industrial production, mainly due to the oil embargo on Iran by the United States due to the military attack on Israel.

Garga (2015) revealed that in Nigeria's Northwest and NorthEast regions, which are besieged by Islamic insurgents, about 75 percent of the people live in abject poverty. The Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics (2022) reported that 30.9 percent of Nigerians lived below the international extreme poverty line of \$2.15 per person per day (2017 PPP) in 2018/19 before the COVID-19 pandemic, and as of 2022 the report shows that 63% of persons living within Nigeria (133 million people) are multi-dimensionally poor. This has been attributed to insecurity and poor economic policy in the country. Ugo, Okwu and Ugo (2019) showed that poverty has a positive and significant relationship with insecurity in Nigeria.

Attacks by Israeli security forces have damaged more than half of all religious and cultural sites in the Gaza Strip, part of a wider campaign to destroy civilian targets and infrastructure through airstrikes and shelling. Israeli attacks also targeted religious sites that served as places of refuge, killing hundreds of people, including women and children. They also damage and destroy more than 90 percent of the school and university buildings in Gaza, creating conditions where education for children, including adolescents, and the livelihood of teachers have been made impossible. Over 658,000 children in Gaza have had no schooling for several months (United Nations, 2025).

For the people of Ukraine incomes have drastically declined. Poverty in the country soared from 5.5% of the population to 24.2% in 2022, according to the World Bank. Further, Ukraine is now one of the most food-insecure countries in the world, despite being one of the world's biggest exporters of crops, such as maize, barley and wheat, before the war. Ukraine's rising deprivation is, in part, due to job losses following Russia's destruction of infrastructure such as ports and manufacturing plants. It is also a result of a slowdown, or cessation, of economic activity including agriculture. Deaths among household earners also add to the deprivation. In August 2023, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) recorded 26,717 civilian casualties in the country: 9,511 killed and 17,206 injured since the conflict started.

According to Lennon (2025), over 18,800 civilians have been reported killed since the beginning of the conflict, and the levels of violence in Sudan are getting worse. At the beginning of February, about 275 people were killed in just one week, a threefold increase on the previous week's death toll. The ongoing conflict and displacement crisis in Sudan is marked by widespread suffering, displacement, and a severe impact on the population's health, food security, and overall well-being. Millions have been displaced, facing challenges like limited access to essential resources, heightened exposure to violence, and increased vulnerability to disease outbreak.

Nigeria's oil production is significantly impacted by insecurity, with current levels often falling below its OPEC quota and production capacity due to factors like oil theft, pipeline vandalism, and militant activity (Ojo & Olayemi, 2014). While the exact figures fluctuate, production has been consistently below the 1.5 million barrels per day (bpd) mark, despite the country's capacity to produce around 2.2 million b/d (Akindoyo, 2025).

The September 11 attacks were four coordinated Islamist terrorist suicide attacks by al-Qaeda against the United States in 2001. Nineteen terrorists hijacked four commercial airliners, crashing the first two into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City and the third into the Pentagon (headquarters of the U.S. Department of Defense) in Arlington County, Virginia. According to Bram, Orr and Rapaport (2012), the fourth plane crashed in a rural Pennsylvania field during a passenger revolt. The attacks killed 2,977 people, making it the deadliest terrorist attack in history. In response to the attacks, the United States waged the global war on terror over multiple decades to eliminate hostile groups deemed terrorist organizations, as well as the governments purported to support them. Consequently, the incident became known as one of the deadliest and most successful terrorist acts in recorded history, carried out on American soil.

Osama Bin Laden orchestrated the September 11 attacks. He initially denied involvement but later renounced his denial. He said and quote.

“It has become clear that the West in general and America in particular have an unspeakable hatred for Islam. ... It is hatred of crusaders. Terrorism against America deserves to be praised because it was a response to injustice, aimed at forcing America to stop its support for Israel, which kills our people. We say that the end of the United States is imminent, whether Bin Laden or his followers are alive or dead, for the awakening of the Muslim Ummah [nation] has occurred. It is important to hit the economy (of the United States), which is the base of its military power. If the economy is hit, they will become reoccupied”.

The immediate impact of the 9/11 attacks reduced real GDP growth in 2001 by 0.5% and increased the unemployment rate by 0.11% (reduce employment by 598,000 jobs (Robert, 2019). Forecasted real GDP growth in 2002 fell dramatically immediately after the 9/11 attack but then recovered fully. The recovery in the forecast could have been due to unforeseen responses that mitigated the impact of the attack, but it also could have been due to erroneous forecasting, and a poor understanding of how the attack would impact the economy. The forecasted unemployment rate in 2002 rose sharply immediately after the 9/11 attack, but unlike real GDP growth, it never subsequently returned to a pre-9/11 level (Robert, 2019).

Insecurity significantly hinders economic development by disrupting trade, deterring investment, and increasing poverty. It creates a climate of fear and instability, discouraging both domestic and foreign investment, which are crucial for growth. This leads to reduced economic activity, job losses, and a decline in government revenue, ultimately impacting the overall well-being of the population. Insecurity has devastating effects on economic development. A review of the extant literature such as Madume and Owulo (2024), Marrie (2021), Castle, Dehaas and Miller (2014) revealed the following effects on economic development of any nation:

- (i) Foreign investors are scared and their confidence is lost, leading to a decline in FDI.
- (ii) Supply chains are disrupted, making it difficult to import and export goods, thus negatively impacting international trade and economic growth.
- (iii) businesses scale back operations or close due to insecurity and migration, leading to job losses and higher unemployment rates.
- (iv) Economic activity is reduced and lower tax collection leads to a decline in government revenue, limiting the government's ability to invest in public services and infrastructure.
- (v) The level of poverty and inequality increases by disproportionately affecting vulnerable populations and hindering their access to economic opportunities.
- (vi) The challenges force people to flee their homes, leading to displacement, which further destabilizes communities and economies; and
- (vii) Trust and social cohesion are eroded, leading to increased crime rates and social unrest, further hindering economic development.

Migration

According to Obani and Odalonu (2023) migration refers to the movement of individuals or groups from one country, locality, or place of residence to settle in another area. The concept encompasses the movement of people within a country (internal migration) or between countries or continents (international migration). A person engaged in either type of migration is known as a migrant (Bokae'e, 2003). Enyi and Oluleye (2020) reported that roughly 244 million people live outside their country of origin. Some have migrated in search of better opportunities. Others flee from crises imposed by conflict or disasters, or from abject poverty. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2024) reported that of the 75.9 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) at the end of 2023 globally, 68.3 million were displaced by conflict and violence and 7.7 million by disasters. For many, leaving one country for another is a complex process fraught with risks and insecurities. While migration is not a new phenomenon, the sheer scale of forced and irregular migration in recent years has called attention to the need for stronger international cooperation to better address the root causes of displacement and to promote durable solutions towards safe, orderly and regular migration. The usual problems most irregular migrants particularly women and children face during transit and in crossing international borders are sexual abuse, kidnapping, human trafficking, abduction, physical violence, and even death (Vespe, Fabrizio & Luca, 2017).

The Arab world stands out in the world of migration because it is the home to the largest number of forced migrants in the world, including both refugee and internally displaced people. Nearly one quarter of the world's refugees lived in “the Middle East region in 2008. While 7.6 percent of all migrants globally

are refugees, seventy-seven percent of the (8.7 million) migrants living in Mashriq. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2024) report shows that Sudan had the largest number internally displaced persons, with over 6 million in 2023, followed by Palestine with 3.4 million. It is on records that the Arab world constitutes the largest number of refugees and displaced people in the world today. Majority of the refugees live in places where aspirations are blocked, there is political voicelessness and challenges to human dignity.

The war in Ukraine has triggered one of the largest refugee crises on record, with more than 5 million people fleeing the country since the Russian invasion in February and at least 7 million people displaced internally (International Organization for Migration, 2025). Beyond the trauma of displacement, these contexts – mostly conflict zones with little hope of imminent peace – are facing severe economic and public health challenges, compounded by threats to food supplies. Even people with homes and some sources of nutrition are facing challenges of survival.

The prolonged drought in Somalia has created food insecurity thereby forcing close to one million Somalians to move in search of food and water. Across Somalia, parts of Ethiopia and northern Kenya, some 20 million people are struggling to feed themselves. The UN estimates that 90% of the 5.5 million people in Ethiopia's Tigray region need urgent help in the face of war, chronic drought and economic collapse. An estimated 316,000 internal displacements by conflict and violence were reported in Somalia in 2024. The army and its partners continued to fight against Al-Shabaab. People also fled due to communal violence over land disputes in the Gedo region (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2024).

In Syria, civil war has forced over 13 million people to flee, with severe repercussions for regional stability and economic reconstruction (Amnesty International, 2023). In Ukraine, the 2022 invasion by Russia triggered the fastest-growing refugee crisis in Europe since World War II, further aggravated inflation and energy crises across EU states (UNHCR, 2023; IMF, 2023). In Nigeria, Boko Haram insurgency has displaced over 3.2 million people, destroying livelihoods and reducing GDP in the North-East by over 60% between 2013–2022 (UNHCR, 2023).

Economic effects of migration vary widely. Sending countries may experience both gains and losses in the short term but may stand to gain over the longer term. For receiving countries temporary worker programmes help to address skills shortages but may decrease domestic wages and add to public welfare burden. Vespe, et al. (2017) noted that the economic effects of migration for both sending and receiving countries may vary depending on who is moving, specifically with respect to migrant workers' skill levels. It is observed that the problem is not immigration; it is integration, especially in the labor market. If there are no jobs, the consequences are segregation, housing problems and divided cities.

For sending countries, the short-term economic benefit of emigration is found in remittances. Remittances are funds that emigrants earn abroad and send back to their home countries, mainly to support families left behind. According to the World Bank Group (2024) in 2023, remittances back to home countries totaled about \$656 billion. The World Bank reports that global remittances, or money sent home by migrants, are a significant source of external finance for low- and middle-income countries. In 2023, these flows were estimated to have reached \$656 billion globally, exceeding Foreign Direct Investment and experiencing a 4.6% increase from the previous year. The World Bank also tracks remittance prices worldwide, with the average cost of sending \$200 to low- and middle-income countries.

As claimed by the International Migration Institute (2021), the massive global economic benefits are unevenly shared between migrant origin countries and migrant destination countries. But destination countries do not gain, on average, at the expense of harm to origin countries. Migration typically brings large, indirect, long-term benefits to original countries as well. It builds networks that bring new technologies, skills, trade, investment, and modern social norms to countries of migrant origin. For example, when there is a 10 percent increase in the number of emigrant-origin countries to a migrant-destination country that produces and exports a given product, there is a 1.6 percent greater likelihood that the migrant-origin country will start producing and exporting that product from scratch during the following ten years. Migrants create human networks that give life to new kinds of business. Migration of people between countries is part and parcel of the complexification of their economies, without which economic development does not occur.

Although the impact of remittances on developing countries is difficult to measure, one World Bank study has concluded that a one per cent increase in the share of remittances in a country's GDP leads to a

0.4 per cent decline in poverty. At the same time, developing countries can suffer from “brain drain” – the loss of trained and educated individuals to emigration. For example, there are currently more African scientists and engineers working in the U.S. than there are in all of Africa, according to the International Migration Institute (2021).

Indeed, Africa has experienced a dramatic increase in the stock of skilled emigrants to OECD countries over the past three decades (Biavaschi, Burzyński, Elsner & Machado, 2020). In fact, about 3.6 million skilled Africans lived and worked in OECD countries in 2015 compared to 0.7 million in 1990. That is an increase of 90.3% on average each decade. While the size of brain drain is relatively stable at the world level (on average 4.8%), Africa has been characterized not only by its greater brain drain (13.2%), but also by its growing trend (from 11.3% in 1990 to 13.2% in 2015). At regional level, North Africa has experienced a decline in its brain drain while Sub Sahara Africa has rather evidenced a sharp increase especially from 2000. It is the second most affected region in the world behind Latin America and the Caribbean. On the other hand, Africa in 2015 accounted for 15% of total immigration to the OECD for migrants aged 25 and above, and 15.8% of total remittances to developing countries (\$72.5 billion out of \$455 billion). It then seems to be the third largest beneficiary of total remittances and occupies the fourth position out of the six developing regions. But this view is a deception as Egypt (\$18.3 billion) and Nigeria (\$ 21.2 billion) both together accounted that year for 55% of total remittances to Africa and only 9.9% of African migration to the OECD. In other words, the remaining 52 countries account for 90.1% of Africa migration to OECD and only 45% of total remittances. If Nigeria and Egypt are isolated from report on remittances per migrant, Africa will account for only 7.1% of remittances to developing world while it represents in the other side 15% of developing countries migration to the OECD. Thus, it appears to be the second last beneficiary (\$3,268) only before Europe and Central Asia (\$2,791) (Biavaschi, et al., 2020).

In Zambia, emigration has reduced the number of practicing doctors from 1,600 a few years ago, to a mere 400 in 2013 (Luesby, 2013). The IOM estimates Africa’s brain drain has cost nearly \$9 billion in lost human capital and growth potential since 1997. Africa only retains 1.3 percent of the world’s health care practitioners. Thus, despite having over a quarter of the world’s tuberculosis cases and 64 percent of the total numbers of people infected with HIV, Africa only has, on average, a mere one nurse per 1,000 people (United Nations Population Fund, 2006).

Recent strikes by Kenyan doctors and nurses show that the country still has a long way to go to improving pay and other incentives that encourage health practitioners to stay and work in the country (Bahar & Rapoport, 2018). Because of severe shortages, Kenyan doctors, who work for little to no pay and have limited experience, are often performing the same number of surgical procedures that doctors in developed nations perform in one year, in just two months. However, in recent years, Kenya has been working hard to combat this trend. The Kenyan government, in partnership with international aid organizations, created the Emergency Hiring Plan to increase nursing staff in public health facilities. International donors helped cover the cost of workforce recruitment, employment contracts, salary subsidies and staff deployment.

In Nigeria, insecurity such as Boko Haram bombings, killings by Fulani herdsmen, high rate of kidnapping for ransom masterminded by bandits and unknown gunmen of skilled professionals contribute to the escalation of brain drain as highly skilled professionals migrate to safer countries. Data from the World Bank (2019) show that there is a negative net migration data (300,000) of the country as of 2017.

On the developed countries which are often on the receiving end of migration streams, the positive economic gains from immigration are largely the result of the infusion of inexpensive and eager laborers into the economy (Mishra, 2007). In the U.S. and Canada, for example, migrant workers often fill low-wage jobs for which there is not enough local supply of labor, such as in the agricultural and service sectors. Just as cheap imports of industrial goods benefit the American economy, so too does the import of low-cost labor. Economists who support the notion of these positive gains claim that immigration has little impact on wages or job availability for domestic workers and that there is no correlation between immigration and U.S. income distribution and unemployment rates. However, the effects of immigration have also been the cause for much debate especially in the U.S. and not all people believe that high levels of immigration are economically beneficial.

Economic Development

It is improper to conceptualize economic development without first invoking economic growth. This is because economic growth is one aspect of the process of economic development. Therefore, economic growth is the increasing capacity to satisfy the needs and wants of the economy overtime. It is conventionally measured as the percentage rate of increase in real gross domestic product, or real GDP (Kumari & Bhanoo, 2022). On the other hand, economic development can be defined as “the process of improving the quality of human life through increasing per capita income, reducing poverty, and enhancing individual economic opportunities. It is also including better education, improved health and nutrition, conservation of natural resources, a clear environment and a richer cultural life” (Kumari & Bhanoo, 2022).

Economic development refers to the process of improving the economic well-being and quality of life within a specific area, such as a community, state, region or nation (Hirschman, 2011). It encompasses not just economic growth but improvements in living standards, education, healthcare and overall quality of life. It's a multifaceted concept that involves qualitative and quantitative changes in an economy, leading to a more advanced and prosperous society. Economic development is typically associated with improvements in a variety of areas or indicators (such as literacy rates, life expectancy, and poverty rates). For example, health and education improvements have been closely related to economic growth, but the causality with economic development may not be obvious. In any case, it is important not to expect that economic development programmes be able to fix many problems at once as that would establish insurmountable goals that are highly unlikely to be achieved. Historically, economic development policies focused on industrialization and infrastructure; since the 1960s, it has increasingly focused on poverty reduction (Nunn, 2020).

There are various types of macroeconomic and socio-cultural indicators or "metrics" used to assess the economic development of a given nation. The World Bank (2020) revealed that indicators for economic development include Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita and real income, investment level and national debt, birth and death rates, life expectancy, morbidity, education levels (measured through literacy and numeracy rates), housing, social services like hospitals, health facilities, clean and safe drinking water, modern transportation networks- such as high-speed rail infrastructure, telecommunications and the internet, and the Gender-Related Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM).

In its broadest sense, policies of economic development encompass three major areas as noted by Seidman (2005). The first category involves governments undertaking to meet broad economic objectives, such as price stability, high employment, and sustainable growth. Such efforts include monetary and fiscal policies, regulation of financial institutions, trade, and tax policies. The second category includes programmes that provide infrastructure and services such as highways, parks, affordable housing, crime prevention, and basic education. Job creation and retention through specific efforts in business finance, marketing, neighborhood development, workforce development, small business development, business retention and expansion and technology transfer, and real estate development. This third category is a primary focus of economic development professionals (Spolaore & Wacziarg, 2013).

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

NATO is a political, intergovernmental and military alliance of thirty-two member countries from Europe and North America with Headquarters in Belgium. Its members are committed to protecting each other from any threat. The organization serves as a system of collective security whereby its independent member states agree to mutual defense in response to an attack by any external party (Robert, 2019). This is enshrined in Article 5 of the treaty, which states that an armed attack against one member shall be considered an attack against them all, which is also the common slogan of Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in Nigeria.

After September 11 attacks Article 5 was invoked for the first and only time after the September 11 attacks, leading to the deployment of NATO troops to Afghanistan as part of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). Eichler (2021) noted that the alliance has since been involved in a range of roles in Iraq and Libya in 2011. Since the Cold War, the alliance has progressively enlarged, incorporating former Warsaw Pact countries and post-Soviet states. This eastward expansion has been a persistent source of tension with Russia, which views it as a threat to its security interests. The Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 prompted strong condemnation from NATO and a renewed focus on collective defense. As noted by

Münch (2021), Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 led to a major reinforcement of NATO's eastern flank and caused Finland and Sweden to abandon their policies of neutrality and join the alliance.

The combined militaries of all NATO members include approximately 3.5 million soldiers and personnel. Their combined military spending constitutes over half of the global total. Members have committed to a target of spending at least 2% of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on defense to ensure the alliance's continued military readiness (Eichler, 2021).

The Multipolar World and Emergence of BRICS

Following the September 11 attacks in 2001, the United States launched an invasion of Afghanistan to dismantle the Taliban regime and eliminate al-Qaeda. After two decades of occupation and warfare, the U.S. withdrew from Afghanistan in 2021, leaving behind a country in chaos. The 2003 invasion of Iraq, justified by the false claim that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction, was another disastrous Western intervention. The removal of Saddam Hussein's regime led to widespread sectarian violence, the rise of terrorist groups like ISIS, and a destabilized Middle East. Iraq remains a fractured nation, struggling with political instability, corruption, and the lingering effects of years of occupation and conflict. The invasion not only violated Iraq's sovereignty but also caused untold suffering for its population, further discrediting the Western model of security (Patnaik, 2023). In 2011, a NATO-led coalition intervened in Libya under the pretext of protecting civilians during the country's civil war. The intervention led to the ousting and killing of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi, but it also plunged the country into chaos. The invasions of Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya are among the most prominent examples of how Western interventions, far from promoting security, have resulted in long-term instability, human suffering, and the spread of extremism.

In recent years, the rise of new power centers – most notably the BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) have begun to challenge this long-standing global order. According to Cooper (2016) these five nations represent approximately 40% of the global population and around 25% of global GDP. More importantly, BRICS countries encompass some of the world's most dynamic economies, providing an alternative to the Western-led financial system, which has long been dominated by institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

BRICS, representing a collection of emerging economies, is offering an alternative to Western-led institutions, promoting a multipolar world where global power is distributed more evenly. Christian Russia, under the leadership of Vladimir Putin, has also emerged as a significant force, promoting traditional values and sovereignty, particularly in opposition to NATO's expansion and Western liberalism. This shift according to Curtis (2024) signals the beginning of a new era in global security, one where Western dominance is no longer assured, and where the balance of power is increasingly contested. Curtis (2024) claimed that the moral and geopolitical decline of the Western world has become starkly evident in recent conflicts, particularly in Gaza and Ukraine. The humanitarian crisis in Gaza exposes the West's failure to promote genuine peace and security in the Middle East. Western powers, particularly the United States, have been complicit in enabling ongoing violence through their unwavering support for Israel, ignoring the human rights abuses inflicted on Palestinian civilians. Similarly, in Ukraine, the West's decision to push NATO's expansion eastward, despite Russia's strong opposition, has turned Ukraine into a geopolitical pawn in the broader confrontation between NATO and Russia. The sacrifice of Ukraine for NATO's ambitions has led to immense human suffering, further undermining the West's claims of promoting global stability and security.

Politically, BRICS represents a collective effort to resist Western dominance in global governance. The group has called for reforms by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and other international bodies to better reflect the current distribution of global power, rather than the post-World War II order that continues to favor Western nations. BRICS has also been vocal in opposing Western interventionism, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa, where Western military actions have often led to destabilization and humanitarian crises (Cooper, 2016).

While BRICS members don't engage in direct military conflict with each other, the Bloc faces internal divisions and tensions. The BRICS bloc, while presenting a unified front, faces significant internal conflicts and power struggles, particularly between China and India, and among new members like Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the UAE (BRICS, 2025). These tensions, coupled with varying economic and political interests

among members, could hinder BRICS's ability to effectively challenge the existing world order and could lead to a weakening of the bloc's influence.

In recent times, membership of BRICS has increased to eleven countries comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Ethiopia, Indonesia, and Iran (Curtis, 2024). The population and economic performance as a share of the world for BRICS countries in comparison to Europe and the United States of America in 2023 is presented in the Table below:

Table 1: Population, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Exports of BRICS countries, Europe and United States of America

S/N	Countries	Population (%)	GDP (%)	Export (%)
1.	India	18	3	3
2.	China	18	17	11
3.	Indonesia	3	1	1
4.	Brazil	3	2	1
5.	Russia	2	2	2
6.	Ethiopia	2	0	0
7.	Egypt	1	0	0
8.	Iran	1	0	0
9.	South Africa	1	0	0
10.	Saudi Arabia	0	1	1
11.	United Arab Emirates	0	0	1
12.	Europe	6	18	31
13.	United States of America	4	26	10

Source: World Bank (2023)

It is observed from the Table above that in terms of population, BRICS countries of India and China accounts for a population size of 18% of the world population. The countries of Europe (6%) and the United States of America (4%) are not close to the size of population in the two BRICS countries. But in terms of economic performance measured by GDP and export, the reverse becomes the case. All the BRICS countries put together accounts for only 26% of world GDP, which is the same figure associated with the United States of America only. Similarly, while the entire BRICS accounts for just 20% of global exports, only Europe is responsible for 31% of global exports. This goes to suggest the reason while the western world is still very powerful. Therefore, to be able to contend with the west, the BRICS nations must give adequate attention to security challenges and migration in the region to boost economic performance.

Since both blocs NATO and BRICS, carry significant global influence, it is therefore important also to analyze their military strength, GDP, population, and strategic relevance, ultimately determining who holds more power on the world stage. A study conducted by Spmias Academy in 2024 revealed the following as presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Comparison Table between NATO and BRICS

S/N	FEATURES	NATO	BRICS
1.	Mission	Military Alliance	Economic Cooperations

2.	Formation	1949	2006 (expanded in 2010 & 2024)
3.	Membership	32 Countries	11 Countries
4.	Total GDP	\$40 Trillion	\$60 Trillion
5.	Population	952.7 Million	3.3 Billion
6.	Primary Focus	Collective Defense	Economic Growth & Multilateralism
7.	Geopolitical Role	Military Deterrence & Defense	Multipolar Global Economic Influence

Source: *Spmias Academy (2024)*

A comparative analysis of BRICS and NATO countries reveals that no one holds absolute power on the world stage. It ultimately depends on the domain in question. When it comes to military strength, NATO takes the lead, backed by its unified command structure, significantly larger defense budgets, and the ability to mobilize forces swiftly across continents. On the other hand, economic influence is where BRICS is emerging as a formidable force, driven by rapid GDP growth, resource-rich Bloc, and a substantial population base that fuels demand and productivity.

From a demographic standpoint, BRICS once again enjoys an edge, especially with its young, expanding labor force, while NATO countries increasingly face the challenges of ageing populations and workforce shrinkage. Moreover, in terms of geopolitical narrative, NATO continues to dominate security and military dialogues at the global level, but BRICS is steadily making its mark by championing economic reform, advocating for multipolar governance, and enhancing representation for the Global South. In essence, NATO remains the stronger military alliance, whereas BRICS is fast becoming a rising global coalition reshaping the economic and demographic future. The world is transitioning toward multipolarity, and both blocs will play unique and powerful roles in defining this evolving international order.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Frustration-Aggression-Displacement Theory, which was postulated by John Dollard, Neal Miller, Leonard Doob, Orval Mowrer, and Robert Sears in 1939. The theory provides a clear explanation of the causes of violent crime leading to insecurity and migration. The theory states that frustration, aggression and displacement are necessary conditions for insecurity and migration. While frustration is the blockage of goal attainment, aggression is a behavior intended to cause harm or injury, and displacement is a shift in location when an object changes from one position to another. Frustration and aggression or displacement works hand in hand in that the existence of one lead to the occurrence of the other.

This means that thwarting an individual's expected goal attainment leads to heightened emotion, which can direct that individual either to take aggressive action such as protest, kidnapping, assassination, among others or relocate from the environment. For example, if an employee is disrespected and humiliated by his employer at the workplace (i.e. frustration), and since he cannot respond (i.e. aggression) for fear of losing his job, he may go home and take his anger and frustration out on his family (i.e. displacement).

Gurr (1970) agreed that depriving an individual from achieving political, economic, financial, social or personal needs or expectations can spike violent civil conflicts or displacement thereby leading to a high level of insecurity or migration.

Empirical Literature

Otu, Onen and Williams (2025) conducted a study on the impact of insecurity on economic growth in the North-Eastern states of Nigeria. The study investigated how the security challenges have hindered economic development by disrupting agricultural activities, trade, and investment flows, which are the primary economic drivers in the region. Using data from official reports, surveys, and relevant literature, the article highlights key factors such as displacement of people, destruction of infrastructure, and loss of

livelihoods. It further explores the resulting decline in GDP, employment rates, and government revenue. The findings reveal that insecurity has not only suffocated local economies but also led to severe poverty and increased dependency on humanitarian aid.

Ewubare and Odu (2025) investigated the effect of migration on economic development in Nigeria from 1981 to 2021. The study used poverty (PVT) to proxy economic development as the dependent variable while net migration rate (NMG), international migration stock (IMG) and rural-urban migration (RBM) were used as the explanatory variables. Descriptive statistics, unit root test, bound co-integration test, as well as Autoregressive distributed lag (ARDL) were employed to analyze the data. The study revealed that both in the short run and long run, net migration (NMG) had a negatively non-significant impact on economic development in the short run, and in the long run, international migrant stock (IMG) had a positive and non-significant impact on economic development. More so, in the short run, rural-urban migration (RBM) had a positive and non-significant impact on economic development in Nigeria while it had a negative and non-significant impact on economic development over the data period. The study thus concluded that migration did not promote economic development in Nigeria within the period under review.

Kunwar (2021) studied the impacts of migration on poverty reduction at individual, households, community and national level. Both internal and international migration phenomenon including working environment of migrants are analyzed. The paper is based on secondary sources of information with aim of find evidence on linkages between migration and poverty at individual, household and community and National levels. Migration phenomenon has shown evidence of in reducing poverty level, but migrants are being compelled to work in an exploitative and unhygienic environment. Female migrants are being more victims of exploitation than male migrants. The poverty reduction has been gained in return of exploitative and health hazards working environment of migrants can be considered as an injustice to migrants and their place of origin as well as countries of origin.

Morina, Gashi and Morina (2016) examined the positive and negative effects of migration on human resource development, unemployment and vocational training. The study was conducted through a survey of 300 citizens of Kosovo. The survey was conducted to obtain information about the reasons for citizens' emigration and to obtain information about the effects that emigration brings to local families. Finally, it is seen from the results that the effects of emigration on economic development of the country are both positive and negative at the same scale. This phenomenon is a persuasion to the economic and social development of the country, but it also gives negative effects by removing human resources, that are often professionally able outside the country.

Brunow et al., (2015) studied the impact of international migration on economic growth in the global economy using a regression model from 1950 to 2010 decadal growth in most countries of the world and show that a country's net migration in any decade has been neither harmful nor beneficial to growth in real income per capita in that decade, in contrast with natural increase (births minus deaths), which has been harmful to growth. When using lags, there is evidence that in rich countries net migration benefits growth in the long run, while natural increase in these countries generates a demographic dividend for growth after about two decades. In developing countries net outward migration also appears to boost growth in the long run. Hence greater cross-border mobility contributes to higher global long-run growth. We reconcile this empirical evidence with exogenous and endogenous growth theories, as well as with theories of economic geography and agglomeration. We consider a wide range of channels through which migrants can influence productivity growth in sending and receiving countries, such as education and training decisions, skill and diversity spillovers, age structure, entrepreneurship, trade, remittances, and clustering.

Altay et al. (2013) examined the relationship between terrorism and economic growth using panel data analysis from 1996 to 2010 to assess the effects of terrorism in the Middle East countries. The result reveals that terrorism has a negative impact on economic variables. They may either increase spending on defense or invest in education and health to boost the wellbeing of people who could be involved with terrorist acts.

Gaibulloev and Sandler (2009) noted that terrorism (transnational terrorist attacks) had a significant growth limiting effects and that terrorist incident per million persons reduces gross domestic product per capita growth by 1.5% in Asia. On the other hand, terrorism increases risk and uncertainty that limits investment and hinders foreign direct investment. Sandler and Ender (2008) conducted a study on the economic consequences of terrorism in developed and developing countries. It was found that terrorism

influences the specific sectors that face an enhanced terrorism risk, such as the tourist industry and FDI'. They concluded that given the low intensity of most terrorist campaigns, the economic consequences of terrorism are generally very modest and short-lived.

The economic influence of terrorism is anticipated to surface in specific sectors that face an enhanced terrorism risk, such as the tourist industry or FDI'. Tsiddon (2004) investigated the effect of terrorism on the macro economy of Israel, using quarterly data from 1980 through 2003. Applying vector autoregression (VAR), the result showed that terrorism has a significant negative impact on per capita GDP, investment and exports.

Methodology

This review paper adopted a descriptive design, of an exploratory nature, which engages a cross-case analysis of prior empirical studies and statistical reports; involving comparisons of NATO and BRICS both of which carrying significant global influence in a re-emerging multipolar world that was previously dominated by a monopolar perspective. Meanwhile, it derives its theoretical underpinning drawn from a range of concepts including examined insecurity, migration, and economic development, as well as frustration-aggression-displacement theory.

Additionally, the authors constructed two tables (see Table 1 and 2 above in which more in-depth analysis of the strategic weight of NATO and BRICS countries and resources were provided.

Discussion and Interpretations

The Multipolar World and Emergence of BRICS

As noted, strategically, NATO and BRICS are different: in age, vision/mission, size of population, market size, GDP, geopolitical role, economic power, military power, and so forth.

As per BRICS (2025), the focus of BRICS includes: is to advance economic growth and multilateralism as demonstrated below:

Advocate for greater representation in global organizations, as well as coordinate economic policy. BRICS seeks to establish a united front of emerging economic perspectives in multilateral institutions, as well as gain geopolitical mutual economic influence.

Reduce reliance on the U.S. dollar. Increasingly disgruntled over the domination of the dollar in global transactions—which exposes them to Western sanctions—BRICS leaders have long advocated for de-dollarization in favor of increased trade in local currencies or even a potential common BRICS currency.

Create an alternative financial system: The creation of the BRICS Development Bank (also known as the New Development Bank) in 2014 and Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) are significant moves by the bloc, reflecting its desire to challenge the Western-controlled Bretton Woods institutions. The BRICS Bank provides financing for infrastructure and development projects, particularly in emerging markets, without the stringent political and economic conditions typically imposed by Western financial institutions. This according to Patnaik (2023) has made BRICS an attractive alternative for many developing nations, particularly those that have grown frustrated with the neoliberal austerity measures often demanded by the IMF and World Bank.

In contrast, the focus of NATO is common defence/military deterrence and strategic dominance of the world.

Hence, as noted above, there is a significant difference between the two organizations in relation to their geopolitical role/views. Nevertheless, it is fundamentally critical for the two organizations to ensure stability of the world, which is most important.

Limitations: It was a review paper that critically analyzed the geopolitical perspective as opposed to regional or national dimensions.

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Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

In conclusion, insecurity, migration, and economic development are intertwined issues that are further complicated by the dynamics of a multipolar world. Effective solutions require a holistic approach that addresses both the immediate impacts of insecurity and migration, as well as the underlying drivers of these challenges. International cooperation and a commitment to sustainable development are essential for navigating these complex issues and promoting a more just and equitable global order.

While BRICS members don't engage in direct military conflict with each other, the Bloc faces internal divisions and tensions. These arise from differing strategic interests, particularly regarding the West and the pace and scope of BRICS expansion. Some members, like Russia, favor a more confrontational stance towards the US, while others, like India and Brazil, prefer a non-aligned approach. China also favors a non-confrontational path, prioritizing multilateralism and free trade, which can create further divisions within the group. More so, a comparative review of BRICS and NATO countries on their military strength, gross domestic product (GDP), population, and strategic relevance, revealed that no one holds absolute power on the world stage. It ultimately depends on the domain in question.

Recommendations

In view of the above discussions, the following recommendations are made:

- (i) Effective international cooperation of the multipolar world is essential for managing insecurity and migration flows, providing humanitarian assistance, and addressing the root causes of displacement.
- (ii) Governments all over the world need to prioritize security by investing in law enforcement, intelligence gathering, and border control to create a safer environment for economic activity.
- (iii) Nation's investment in peace building initiatives, conflict resolution mechanisms, and social cohesion programmes can help reduce violence and create a more conducive environment for economic growth.
- (iv) Enhancing the capacity of nations and international institutions in tackling the root causes of insecurity, such as poverty, inequality, and lack of opportunities, is crucial for long-term stability and economic development. The creation of the BRICS Development Bank is a right step in the right direction.
- (v) Diversifying economies away from reliance on a few sectors can reduce vulnerability to shocks caused by insecurity.
- (vi) The host country government should initiate appropriate policies and measures for the integration of immigrants to the host communities.
- (vii) Nations should embrace human-rights-based migration policies, enabling integration and contribution to host economies.
- (viii) The home country governments should engage skilled migrants in national development through remittances, investments, and knowledge transfer.
- (ix) BRICS countries should develop a strategic behavior of working together in harmony. This will go a long way to solidify the bloc and make it stronger in all ramifications.

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