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Research Article

Analysis of Internal Migration in Brooke's Point, Palawan: Implications for Policy Formulation (2025)

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the internal migration dynamics in Brooke's Point, Palawan, with particular emphasis on the socio-economic demographic profile of in-migrants, the key aspects influencing migration, and its economic, social, and environmental implications for local development. Employing a descriptive-empirical survey design, data were gathered from 381 respondents across eight barangays with significant migrant populations. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, including Pearson's r and Chi-square tests, to determine relationships between socio-economic variables and migration patterns. Findings reveal that internal migration in Brooke's Point is primarily economically driven, dominated by working-age, married, and male individuals seeking better livelihood opportunities. The municipality's role as a regional agro-industrial hub has made it a major destination for migrants from Luzon and the Visayas. Most migrants are semi-skilled and engaged in informal or self-employed work, reflecting both the opportunities and vulnerabilities of migration. The study affirms E. Lee's Push-Pull Theory, with lack of jobs as the strongest push factor and employment availability as the main pull factor, while De Haas' Migration Transition Theory explains the shift from survival-driven to opportunity-driven migration. Migration has generated largely positive effects stimulating business growth, expanding markets, and fostering cultural diversity. However, challenges persist, including underemployment, social integration gaps, and environmental strain from unregulated settlement expansion. To address these, the study recommends integrating the Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa (BP2) framework in local governance, strengthening skills training and livelihood programs, promoting social cohesion, and enforcing sustainable land-use policies. Overall, internal migration in Brooke's Point emerges as both a transformative and strategic force for inclusive and sustainable rural development.

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Keywords: *Internal migration, socio-demographic profile, push-pull theory, economic opportunity, policy formulation, sustainable development.*

Background

Migration, whether voluntary or involuntary, involves the movement of individuals across or within borders to settle temporarily or permanently. It is a dynamic component of population change that reflects underlying social and economic shifts (Castles, de Haas, & Miller, 2014; de Haas, 2020). Driven by economic, political, environmental, and social factors (McLeman, 2014; IOM, 2022; UNHCR, 2023), migration whether internal or international presents both opportunities and challenges, influencing economic growth, cultural exchange, and demographic transitions (OECD, 2022).

In the Philippines, internal migration particularly from rural to urban or resource-rich areas has long been a defining demographic feature (Ballesteros, 2010; Lomibao, 2023). The Philippine Statistics Authority (2022) reports that 52% of Filipinos have migrated internally, primarily for employment, compared to only 3–7% who migrate abroad. Palawan has become a significant destination, attracting in-migrants through its rich agricultural and natural resources. Brooke's Point, in particular, has emerged as a hotspot for internal migration, especially among migrants from the Visayas, due to its fertile soils, water resources, and livelihood potential (De la Cruz, 2018; Burgos, Del Rosario, & Fernandez, 2021).

Grounded in Lee's Push-Pull Theory and the Migration Transition Theory, this study situates Brooke's Point as a microcosm of rural migration shaped by economic opportunities, environmental suitability, and social networks (Samson, Reyes, & Ventura, 2022; de Haas, 2020). While most migrants are motivated by improved living standards and family reunification, they also encounter challenges in employment, access to services, and social integration (Reyes & Santos, 2022). These dynamics underscore the importance of understanding

migration not only as an economic process but as a complex social phenomenon with far-reaching policy implications.

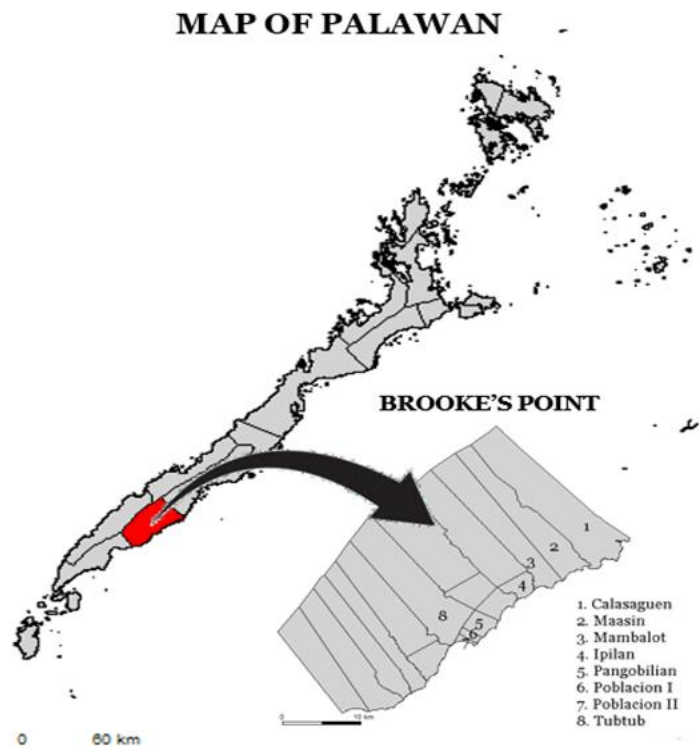
Accordingly, this study analyzes internal migration in Brooke's Point, Palawan examining (1) the socio-economic demographic profile of in-migrants, (2) the key aspects of migration such as causes and patterns, and (3) its effects on the local economy, society, and environment. The study is geographically confined to eight barangays with high migrant populations, focusing on immediate socio-economic factors and integration challenges.

Its findings aim to inform policymakers, the local government, and academic institutions in crafting responsive, evidence-based, and sustainable policies that promote inclusive growth and community integration. The study also contributes to the broader discourse on internal migration in the Philippines, particularly within emerging rural economies like Brooke's Point.

Methodology

Research Locale

The study was conducted in eight barangays of Brooke's Point, Palawan: Calasaguen, Maasin, Mambalot, Ipilan, Pangobilian, Poblacion I, Poblacion II, and Tugtub selected for their significant in-migrant populations. Brooke's Point, a first-class municipality with 73,994 residents across 18 barangays (PSA, 2020), serves as a major agro-industrial hub in southern Palawan. The selected barangays represent both urban and rural zones: Pangobilian and the Poblacion areas comprise the commercial core, while Calasaguen, Maasin, Mambalot, and Ipilan anchor agricultural and mining sectors. Together, these sites capture the municipality's diverse economic and demographic landscape, making them ideal for examining internal migration dynamics.



Source: Population of selected barangays in Brooke's Point, Palawan, 2020 census
 (<https://www.philatlas.com/luzon/mimaropa/palawan/brookes-point.html>,
<https://psa.gov.ph/classification/psgc/barangays/1705306000>)

Research Design

An empirical-descriptive survey design was employed to analyze internal migration patterns in Brooke's Point. Quantitative data were collected through structured questionnaires focusing on migrants' socio-economic profiles, migration causes, patterns, and problems encountered. This method enabled a systematic and objective understanding migration trends, forming a basis for evidence-based policy recommendations.

migrants serving as household heads distributed proportionally across the eight barangays. Using Slovin's formula, a 5% margin of error, an initial sample of 396 was determined, though 381 were retrieved and validated. A stratified random sampling approach ensured demographic representativeness across variables such as age, sex, civil status, and place of origin. This approach minimized sampling bias and reflected the heterogeneity of Brooke's Point's migrant population.

Respondents, Population, and Sampling

The study involved 381 valid respondents pioneer and second-generation internal

Table 1. Population distribution of the respondents of the study

Barangay	Population size	Number of respondents
Calasaguen	3,650	38
Mambalot	2,758	29
Maasin	3,945	42
Ipilan	6,377	67
Pangobilian	10,368	109

Barangay	Population size	Number of respondents
Poblacion I	4,830	51
Poblacion II	3,351	35
Tubtub	2,296	24
		N= 396

Source: Population of selected barangays in Brooke's Point, Palawan, 2020 census (<https://www.philatlas.com/luzon/mimaropa/palawan/brookes-point.html>, <https://psa.gov.ph/classification/psgc/barangays/1705306000>)

Research Instrumentation

Data were gathered using a modified and structured questionnaire divided into four sections:

1. socio-economic demographic profile;
2. key aspects of internal migration (causes, patterns, and impacts);
3. effects on economic, social, and environmental dimensions, and
4. Problems encountered by the Internal Migrants.

Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1), with descriptive equivalents from Very High (4.50–5.00) to Very Low (1.00–1.49). The instrument generated quantifiable data to identify trends, relationships, and implications for community development and local policy.

Data Gathering Procedure

Prior authorization was secured from the Mayor of Brooke's Point and barangay officials. Surveys were conducted in person from January 20–26, 2025, ensuring accurate and timely responses. Data collection focused on demographic information, migration causes, patterns, impacts, and migrant challenges. Responses were encoded and verified for accuracy before statistical analysis.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, and rankings were used to summarize the socio-economic profiles and migration aspects of the respondents. Mean scores from the Likert scale were interpreted using descriptive equivalents. Inferential statistics, specifically Pearson's *r* and Chi-square tests, were applied to determine significant relationships between socio-economic

demographic variables and key aspects of internal migration. All analyses were performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) at a 0.05 level of significance, providing quantitative evidence to explain migration behavior and support policy formulation in Brooke's Point, Palawan

Results and Discussion

This section presents the results, and discussion of data gathered from internal migrants in Brooke's Point, Palawan. The presentation follows the sequence of the research problems and integrates empirical findings with relevant literature to contextualize the socio-economic and migration dynamics observed.

Socio-Economic Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Internal migration in Brooke's Point follows distinct demographic and economic patterns, reflecting broader national trends. Migration is often driven by economic opportunities, better living conditions, and access to essential services. Understanding the socio-economic characteristics of migrants including their age, sex, civil status, ethnic background, educational attainment, income, employment, place of origin, and year of migration is essential in shaping policies that support sustainable development in the municipality.

Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents are aged 30–39 years (29.92%), followed by those aged 20–29 (21.78%) and 40–49 (18.11%), with an average age of 42.3 years. This distribution reveals that migration is typically a decision made during one's economically productive years, supporting Castles, de Haas, and Miller's (2014) assertion that migration is tied to life stages involving work and family formation. Similarly, PSA (2020) data

confirm that Filipinos aged 25–44 comprise most internal migrants, often moving for employment, housing, or family reasons. The concentration of working-age migrants implies that Brooke's Point benefits from an influx of human capital, though this also creates future challenges for employment and service provision (Skeldon, 2006).

Migration to Brooke's Point remains male-dominated (64.83%), compared to females (35.17%). This pattern reflects traditional labor migration where men migrate first to secure work, a phenomenon termed "step migration" (Asis, 2006). The prevalence of male migration aligns with sectors like agriculture, fisheries, and construction (Parreñas, 2015). Nationally, however, PSA (2021) has observed rising female migration, signaling that gender balance may evolve over time a shift that could reshape community participation and family dynamics (Tacoli, 1999).

In terms of civil status, married individuals (62.72%) dominate, followed by single (31.23%) and widowed (6.03%). This suggests migration as a family-oriented decision, undertaken to improve financial stability and access to services (Parreñas, 2015). Consistent with Hugo (2000), family life-cycle stages such as marriage strongly influence migration timing. Brooke's Point thus emerges as a safe and stable settlement area for families, highlighting the need for improved healthcare, education, and childcare services.

Ethnically, Brooke's Point exhibits significant cultural diversity. Bisaya and Tagalog migrants (22.31% each) form the largest groups, followed by Ilonggo (12.86%), Ilocano (11.02%), and Cuyonon (7.87%). This reflects broader migration flows from Luzon and the Visayas to Palawan, creating a multi-ethnic environment that contributes to cultural and linguistic richness (David, Asis, & Reyes, 2018). Smaller minority groups, such as Pala'wan, Tausug, Maranao, Jama Mapun, and Malaysian-born migrants, further enrich this diversity. Such multiculturalism demands inclusive

governance that fosters cohesion and respects indigenous and migrant identities (Asis, 2006; Ballesteros, 2010).

In terms of education, most migrants are high school graduates (23.68%), followed by high school level (21.05%), and college graduates (15%). Meanwhile, 25.79% only completed elementary education, illustrating that migration cuts across all educational backgrounds (Asis, 2006). This supports the idea that internal migration is both an avenue for upward mobility and a coping strategy for those with limited opportunities. The low percentage of vocational graduates (1.05%) indicates underutilization of technical education, which could otherwise enhance employability (TESDA, 2018; Reyes & Tabuga, 2011).

Income distribution reveals that 43.83% earn below ₱5,000/month, and 22.57% earn between ₱5,001–₱10,000, both below the national poverty threshold (PSA, 2023). Most are self-employed (49.61%), followed by private employees (25.98%), unemployed (14.17%), and government-employed (10.24%). This reflects the dominance of informal and agricultural livelihoods, a pattern consistent with rural economies (Ballesteros, 2010). These findings point to the need for inclusive livelihood programs, microfinancing access, and skills training for migrants.

The majority of migrants originated from Luzon (45.66%), followed by Visayas (16.01%) and within Palawan (23.88%), indicating both inter-island and intra-provincial migration. Migration from Mindanao (8.39%) and abroad (0.52%) highlights smaller but meaningful long-distance movements. The peak of migration occurred between 2010–2019 (30.18%), corresponding with national decentralization and infrastructure programs (Ballesteros, 2010; Reyes, 2016). The rise of second-generation migrants underscores Brooke's Point's evolution into a permanent multi-ethnic community, calling for proactive urban and environmental planning.

Table 2. Socio-Economic Demographic Profile of the Internal Migrants.

Characteristic	Frequency [N=381]	Percentage [%]
Age Group		
30–39	114	29.92
20–29	83	21.78
Sex		
Male	247	64.83
Female	134	35.17
Civil Status		
Married	239	62.72
Single	119	31.23
Ethnic Groups		
Bisaya	85	22.31
Tagalog	85	22.31
Ilonggo	49	12.86
Ilocano	42	11.02
Educational Attainment		
High School Graduate	90	23.68
High School Level	80	21.05
College Graduate	57	15.00
Elementary Level or below	93	24.44 [combined]
Monthly Income		
Below 5,000 PHP	167	43.83
5,001–10,000 PHP	86	22.57
Source of Income		
Self-Employed	189	49.61
Private Employed	99	25.98
Unemployed	54	14.17
Place of Origin		
Luzon	174	45.66
Rural-Urban Migration	91	23.88
Visayas	61	16.01
Year of Migration		
2010–2019	115	30.18

Note: This table is a summarized version of the complete data, retaining only the highest and lowest frequency and percentage values for each characteristic to highlight the most and least represented groups.

Key Aspects of Internal Migration

Table 3 presents the major push and pull factors influencing internal migration to Brooke's Point. The most significant push factor is lack of job opportunities (Mean = 4.25), while the least significant is scarcity of natural resources (Mean = 3.02). This aligns with E. Lee's Push-Pull Theory (1966), confirming that economic deprivation in origin areas remains a primary driver. Conversely, the main pull factor is employment opportunities (Mean = 4.21),

indicating that Brooke's Point attracts migrants due to its perceived potential for livelihood improvement.

This finding supports De Haas' (2020) Migration Transition Theory, which suggests that as regions develop, migration shifts from being necessity-driven to opportunity-driven. Policy implications include the need to expand employment sectors particularly in agriculture, eco-tourism, and small-scale enterprises to sustain migrant retention and integration.

Similar results in Vietnam and Indonesia show that job creation is central to stabilizing internal migration flows (Nguyen et al., 2023).

In terms of migration patterns, direct migration (Mean = 3.57) is the most prevalent, followed by family migration (Mean = 3.54), while planned staged migration (Mean = 3.31) is less common. This indicates that migrants often relocate directly rather than through

incremental stages. According to Stark's (1991) *New Economics of Labor Migration*, direct moves signify either stronger social networks or better initial settlement conditions. This trend underscores Brooke's Point's growing stability as a destination but also the need for immediate support mechanisms such as housing and job placement assistance.

Table 3. Push and Pull Factors, Patterns of Migration

Aspect	Mean	Descriptive Rating
Push Factors	4.25	Very High
Lack of job opportunities		
Scarcity of natural resources	3.02	Moderate
Pull Factors	4.21	High
Job opportunities in Brooke's Point		
Lower cost of living	3.33	Moderate
Patterns of Migration	3.57	High
Direct move to Brooke's Point		
Planned migration stages	3.31	Moderate

Note: This table is a summarized version of the complete data, retaining only the highest and lowest mean values for each aspect to emphasize the most and least significant factors.

Effects of Internal Migration

The analysis shows that internal migration in Brooke's Point has notable economic, social, and environmental impacts, generally perceived as positive. Economically, respondents report that migration boosts local business growth (Mean = 3.99) and expands markets through increased consumer activity. This aligns with Todaro and Smith (2020) and Constant (2014), who emphasize migration's role in energizing local economies. However, the influx of diverse skills (Mean = 3.79) remains underutilized, suggesting that migrants' human capital is not fully maximized (Borjas, 2016; Dustmann & Glitz, 2011). To address this, local programs on skill accreditation and training should be strengthened.

Socially, internal migration enhances cultural diversity and traditions (Mean = 3.93), fostering social interaction and cultural exchange (Levitt, 2001; Strang & Ager, 2010). However, language and cultural barriers (Mean = 3.58) persist, posing challenges to integration (Berry, 2005). Addressing these through inclusive communication and multicultural programs could enhance cohesion.

Environmentally, migration has led to deforestation from housing expansion (Mean = 4.49), reflecting the ecological strain of settlement growth (Seto et al., 2012). While noise pollution (Mean = 3.72) remains the least concerning effect, unregulated urbanization could eventually heighten this issue. Sustainable zoning, environmental safeguards, and proactive land-use planning are therefore crucial (de Sherbinin et al., 2019).

Table 4. Effects of Internal Migration: Economic, Social, and Environmental

Aspect	Statement	Mean	Descriptive Rating
Economic Effect	Internal migration has boosted local business growth.	3.99	High
	New residents bring diverse economic skills.	3.79	High

Aspect	Statement	Mean	Descriptive Rating
Social Effect	In-migrants enrich cultural diversity and traditions.	3.93	High
	Language and cultural gaps create challenges.	3.58	High
Environmental Effect	Deforestation has worsened due to housing growth.	4.49	High
	Noise pollution has increased.	3.72	High

Note: This table is a summarized version of the full results, retaining only the highest and lowest mean values for each aspect of migration to highlight the most and least pronounced effects.

Problems Encountered by Internal Migrants

Survey results reveal that internal migrants in Brooke's Point, Palawan, face significant economic, social, and environmental challenges, notably job competition, inadequate support services, and deforestation.

Economically, job competition emerged as the most pressing concern (Mean = 3.84), indicating that increased migration has intensified labor market saturation and threatened employment stability. De Haas (2021) and Massey et al. (2020) explain that in developing economies, such inflows often lead to underemployment as the "pull" of perceived job opportunities fails to match reality. Skeldon's (2018) migration transition theory further suggests that early-growth areas like Brooke's Point experience such employment bottlenecks before achieving diversification. Conversely, limited job opportunities ranked lowest (Mean = 3.59), implying that migrants still find entry-level work, though often informal or unstable (Tacoli, 2019; Fox & Goodfellow, 2020). This highlights the need for local policies promoting inclusive, sustainable employment that integrates migrants and locals alike.

Socially, the greatest challenge was the lack of support services (Mean = 3.45), reflecting gaps in housing, healthcare, and education

assistance. Castles (2017) and Vertovec (2020) note that weak institutional support hinders integration, particularly in rapidly diversifying communities. Dempsey and Sánchez (2022) likewise found that secondary cities often face migrant inflows faster than their social infrastructure can adapt. Meanwhile, feelings of isolation were least concerning (Mean = 3.27), suggesting a relatively adaptive and welcoming community environment. Berry's (2005) acculturation theory and Alencar's (2018) findings on digital socialization support this, indicating that community-driven integration mitigates cultural barriers.

Environmentally, deforestation and habitat loss ranked highest (Mean = 4.58), showing the ecological strain of migration-driven land conversion. Studies by Seto, Güneralp, and Hutrya (2017) and Black et al. (2011) link this to unregulated settlement expansion, consistent with Zelinsky's (2020) observation that early urbanization often precedes sustainable planning. In contrast, difficulty finding safe housing was the least concern (Mean = 3.19), suggesting that many migrants have so far secured stable residences. However, UN-Habitat (2020) and Pham et al. (2021) warn that without proactive land-use planning, population growth could soon push migrants into risk-prone areas.

Table 5. Problems Encountered by the Internal Migrants in Brooke's Point, Palawan

Aspect	Statement	Mean	Descriptive Rating
Economic Problem	Job competition affects employment stability.	3.84	High
	Job opportunities are limited for new in-migrants.	3.59	High
Social Problem	Experiences of discrimination or prejudice.	3.456	Moderate

Aspect	Statement	Mean	Descriptive Rating
Environmental Problem	Feeling isolated due to social norms and customs.	3.27	Moderate
	Concern over deforestation and habitat loss.	4.58	Very High
	Difficulty finding housing safe from environmental risks.	3.19	Moderate

Note: This is a summarized version of the complete results, retaining only the highest and lowest mean for each aspect to emphasize the most and least pressing issues perceived by respondents.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study provided a comprehensive analysis of the internal migration dynamics in Brooke's Point, Palawan, emphasizing the socio-economic demographic profile of in-migrants, the key migration aspects shaping mobility patterns, and their corresponding economic, social, and environmental implications. The study contributes to the broader understanding of localized migration processes in semi-urban, resource-based municipalities in the Philippines where migration is not merely a demographic phenomenon but a transformative socio-economic force.

One of the study's principal contributions lies in identifying how economically driven, family-based migration has redefined Brooke's Point's local development landscape. The predominance of working-age, married, and male migrants seeking better livelihood opportunities underscores the municipality's role as an emerging agricultural and agro-industrial hub, aligning with national rural revitalization efforts. The research substantiates E. Lee's Push-Pull Theory and De Haas' Migration Transition Theory, demonstrating that migration in Brooke's Point has evolved from survival-driven to opportunity-oriented mobility indicative of a maturing local economy and improved perception of stability.

The findings have multiple implications:

- For local governance and policy, migration management must move beyond reactive measures toward integrated planning, focusing on livelihood creation, social inclusion, and sustainable land use.
- For practice and education, technical and vocational institutions should tailor training programs that align with local industry demands, particularly in agriculture, construction, tourism, and services.

- For research, future studies should explore interlinkages between migration, environmental sustainability, and social integration, as well as the role of returning migrants in the context of national reintegration initiatives such as the Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa (BP2) Program.

Building upon these insights, the following recommendations are proposed to translate the study's findings into actionable strategies:

1. Strengthen skills and livelihood training. The LGU, together with TESDA, DTI, and DOLE, should set up community-based training centers that focus on local industries such as agriculture, construction, tourism, and services. Programs like TESDA's Special Training for Employment Program (STEP) and Community-Based Training for Enterprise Development (CBTED) can help improve employability, reduce job mismatch, and promote self-reliance among migrants (TESDA, 2018).
2. Support job creation and small business growth. Since many migrants rely on informal or self-employment, the LGU should prioritize MSME development by providing easier access to loans, business mentoring, and simpler registration processes. Creating agri-business, eco-tourism, and light manufacturing zones can open more stable jobs and support the Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa (BP2) vision for rural development (Ballesteros, 2010; Reyes & Tabuga, 2011; NEDA, 2021).
3. Establish a local migration and reintegration office. The LGU should create a Municipal Migration and Reintegration Office (MMRO) to coordinate housing, livelihood, and social services for migrants. Partnering with NEDA, DSWD, and the Commission on

Population and Development (CPD) will ensure local efforts are aligned with national migration strategies (NEDA, 2021).

4. Promote social unity and cultural inclusion. To strengthen harmony among Brooke's Point's diverse communities, the LGU can organize intercultural activities, language workshops, and community dialogues. Encouraging inclusive participation and shared values can turn diversity into a source of social strength (Putnam, 2007; Levitt, 2001).
5. Protect the environment and manage land use. As Brooke's Point grows, land-use planning must be more coordinated. The LGU, together with the DENR and Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD), should strictly implement zoning laws, protect forest areas, and promote reforestation to reduce environmental damage (Seto, Güneralp, & Hutya, 2012; de Sherbinin et al., 2019).

In essence, internal migration in Brooke's Point should not be viewed solely as a population movement but as a strategic driver of inclusive local development. By integrating migration management with livelihood generation, environmental stewardship, and social integration, Brooke's Point can become a model of sustainable rural transformation—advancing the objectives of the Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa Program while embodying the principles of the Migration Transition Theory. Future research may extend these findings through longitudinal or comparative studies to assess the long-term developmental trajectories of migration-dependent municipalities across Palawan and similar regions in the Philippines.

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