



Working Papers

Paper 152, August 2019

Migration and Social Transformation in Ethiopia

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MADE project paper 7

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Abstract

This paper reviews key trends in migration patterns within and from Ethiopia over the last century, with a particular focus on 1960 onwards when more national-level data is available. It shows that both gradual and dramatic shifts characterize Ethiopia's migration history. Regarding gradual shifts in the movement of populations within the country, Ethiopia shows a two-fold process of sedentarization of nomadic and semi-nomadic lifestyles alongside a slow but steady urbanization of internal migration trajectories. Alongside this, rising levels of international migration have diversified in terms of the composition and destinations of Ethiopian emigrants. Ethiopia's history also shows more punctuated and dramatic shifts in population movements over relatively short periods – a consequence of political conflict, famine, conscription, resettlement schemes, and/or development-induced displacement. At the same time that Ethiopians left their country in times of distress, Ethiopia was also an important destination for hundreds of thousands of refugees from neighboring countries in the Horn of Africa. This paper provides evidence for these trends, and considers how they relate to other processes of social change. In particular, it applies a social transformation framework to show how different dimensions of social change – the political, economic, cultural, technological and demographic – impacted population movements over time. We distinguish between 'deep' drivers of migration transitions (e.g. the expansion of formal education, infrastructure development and industrialization) and the (often) state-led policy interventions (and failures) that can suddenly affect the movements of large segments of the population (e.g. resettlement programs, development-induced displacement, political conflict, or famine). We ultimately argue that while migration driven by the latter can be addressed and mediated through policy-interventions, overarching migration transitions driven by the former are part and parcel of development strategies in the modern period, and are thus unlikely to be significantly affected by policies aimed at stemming migration's 'root causes.'

Keywords: migration, development, social transformation, urbanization, state

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Acknowledgements: The research leading to these results is part of the MADE (Migration as Development) Consolidator Grant project and has received funding from the European Research Council under the European Community's Horizon 2020 Programme (H2020/2015-2020)/ERC Grant Agreement 648496 and the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) Visitor's Travel Grant (040.11.642). The authors thank Hein de Haas, Sonja Fransen, Lea Müller Funk, Katharina Natter, Simona Vezzoli, Siebert Wielstra for their valuable comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

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Introduction

The relation between development and human mobility is a subject of academic controversy, with polarizing debates over whether development leads to more or less migration (de Haas 2010). Empirical research seems to confirm that at the aggregate level, over time and space, ‘development’ in poor countries entails rising rates of emigration (see, for example, Massey 1988; Skeldon 1997; de Haas 2007; Clemens 2014). Nevertheless, the perception that migration is a symptom of development failure – of poverty, conflict, or other livelihood constraints – persists and continues to animate the development policy of many countries. The call to address migration’s root causes with development aid remains, perhaps, stronger than ever (see de Haas 2007; Clemens and Postel 2018). This debate about the relationship between migration and development remains relatively simplistic, in large part because academics and policy makers lack the conceptual tools to speak about how different dimensions of ‘development’ affect migration processes, and the heterogeneous ways in which mobility patterns change in nature and volume over time. To contribute to this on-going debate, this paper offers novel theoretical and empirical perspectives about the relationship between migration and development, taking Ethiopia as a case study. Our main research question is: *How have processes of social transformation shaped the geographical orientation, timing, composition and volume of internal and international migration within and from Ethiopia?* (see de Haas et al, forthcoming). Our analyses will examine broad changes over the last century, with a particular focus on the period between 1960 onwards.

Ethiopia has a number of distinct characteristics that make it a compelling case to examine. First, Ethiopia remains one of the most rural countries in the world, with 84 percent of its population living in rural areas and engaged in small-scale subsistence farming as of the last national census (CSA 2010). Relative to the region, international migration is also low – despite (or perhaps because of) a high incidence of poverty and underemployment. Thus, Ethiopia provides an opportunity to ask why people do *not* migrate, an often-overlooked question in migration research (Schewel 2019a). At the same time, a number of factors foreshadow rising rates of internal and international migration in the decades to come: demographic shifts, rapid economic growth, infrastructure development, and the expansion of formal education. As Table 1 illustrates, fertility rates are declining, and life expectancies are increasing. This demographic transition coincides with a more general urban transition, where a steadily growing share of the population lives in urban areas. This shifting distribution of the population towards urban areas is mirrored in a corresponding shift in young people’s aspirations: many Ethiopian youth no longer aspire to rural, agrarian livelihoods, putting their hopes instead in education, professional work and urban futures (see Tadele and Gella 2012; Camfield 2011; Abebe 2008; Schewel and Fransen 2018a).

Table 1. Indicators of a Demographic Transition in Ethiopia

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Fertility Rate (births per woman)	6.9	7.0	7.3	7.3	6.5	4.9
Infant Mortality Rate (per 1,000 live births)	-	143.4	141.2	120.2	88.2	55.3
Life expectancy	38.4	42.9	43.7	47.1	51.9	61.6
Urban population (% of total)	6.4	8.6	10.4	12.6	14.7	17.3
Population (millions)	22.2	28.4	35.3	48.1	66.5	87.7

Source: World Development Indicators 2019

Second, Ethiopia is unique among African countries for maintaining its independence from colonial powers (with the exception of a partial occupation by Italy from 1936-1941). Thus, its emigration trends do not fit the typical colonial and post-colonial frames that often structure the migration histories of other African countries. Rather, Ethiopia provides the opportunity to examine how the development policies pursued by its own leaders transformed the internal and international movements of its population. Since the 1940s, three regimes pursued three very different visions of ‘modernization’: under an imperialist regime until 1974, a communist regime through from 1974-1991, and a self-titled ‘developmental state’ from 1994 onwards. Mirroring Ethiopia’s geographic position, its rulers carefully balanced the influence, advice and assistance of Eastern and Western powers with a steadfast defensiveness of their own sovereignty. The country’s story thus defies common assumptions that ‘modernization’ is a one-way process, transplanted onto the Global South by Western powers. Rather, Ethiopia’s own turbulent history — and its complex relationship to powers outside of it — is a story of “multiple modernities” (Eisenstadt 2000) and manifold processes of modernization, shaped by ever-shifting domestic and international cross-pressures.

The paper proceeds in two parts. First, we review migration trends in Ethiopia, with a particular focus on the period between 1960 and 2010. We rely primarily on population and housing census data for Ethiopia and United Nations and World Bank population and migration estimates. We will show that social transformation in Ethiopia entailed a three-fold (im)mobility process: 1) the sedentarization of nomadic and semi-nomadic populations; 2) a reconfiguration of internal migration trends away from rural destinations towards urban ones; and 3) a steady increase and diversification of international migration trajectories. Within these overarching trends, we will also show that periods of state-driven resettlement, famine, or political conflict led to moments of massive displacement – within Ethiopia or to neighboring states – that are also integral to the history of Ethiopian migration.

Disentangling the drivers of these migration patterns is the aim of the second section. We evaluate the relative influence of various social forces shaping these migration transitions: the political, economic, technological and cultural. In this way, the paper advances a ‘social transformation framework’ to uncover the patterned complexities in the relationship between migration and social change over time (de Haas et al, forthcoming; see also Castles 2010; Zelinsky 1971). Following de Haas et al (forthcoming), we distinguish five core dimensions of social transformation – the demographic, political, economic, technological and cultural – and consider the respective impact of each, as well as their intersections, on migration trends over time. In this light, we distinguish between ‘deep’ drivers of migration transitions – which include the expansion of formal education, infrastructure development and industrialization – and the (often) state-led policy interventions (and failures) that can suddenly affect the movements of large segments of the population (e.g. resettlement programs, development-induced displacement, political conflict, or famine). We ultimately argue that while migration driven by the latter can be addressed and mediated through policy-interventions, overarching migration transitions driven by the former are part and parcel of development strategies in the modern period, and are thus unlikely to be significantly affected by policies aimed at stemming migration’s ‘root causes.’

1 Migration Trends

1.1 Sedentarization

The Ethiopian population is made up of diverse groups of people pursuing very different livelihoods and patterns of movement. Most Ethiopian historians and geographers suggest that the structural configuration of Ethiopia’s land explains a large degree of differentiation among its peoples and their livelihoods, particularly a “dualism” between “well-watered highlands and dry lowlands” that have “left a strong imprint on human activities and social organizations” (Prunier and Ficquet 2015: 4). Agrarian settlements first emerged in the cool, humid highlands, while pastoral livelihoods persisted in the vast arid and semi-arid lowlands (Trimingham 1951: 9). In the first half of the 20th century, cultivation was common in the central and northern highlands, among the Agew and the Amhara-Tigrean peoples, as well as in the well-watered highlands of the South, where the Gurage, Sidamo, and Omo tribes were hoe-cultivators of ensete and other cereal grains. Nomadic and semi-nomadic pastoralism characterized the livelihoods of peoples living in the more arid and semi-arid lowlands: the Afar, Saho and Somali in the east, the Oromo across the south, the Nuer in the West (Levine 1974; 2000). Of course, some populations resist categorization within this neat dualism. The Harari peoples, for example, were the only group to have developed an early agricultural and trading tradition centering on a single large urban center (Levine 2000: 38). Similarly, the Oromo, because of a long history of expansion, conquest and adaptation, are the most widely dispersed peoples in Ethiopia and also the most diverse in terms of livelihoods, religion, and lifestyles.



Figure 1. Map of Ethiopia and its terrain

Source: 2019 Google Maps (Mapa GISrael, Orient-ME)

Given the historical prominence of nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples across Ethiopia’s vast lowlands, to examine changing migration patterns requires looking beyond the typical definitions we use, namely a move in residence across an administrative boundary. On the contrary, in Ethiopia, ‘modernization’ over the last century entailed the settlement of populations that had historically been highly mobile. Quantifying the decline in nomadic lifestyles at the national level is difficult, because Ethiopian censuses often excluded nomadic or pastoralist areas.¹ The latest 2007 census, however, made a greater effort to include pastoral peoples (Randall 2015), and at this time, pastoralists numbered some 2.3 million (3.1 percent) of the population (CSA 2007). Despite issues in the reliability of national data, a range of more qualitative work on nomadic and semi-nomadic populations confirms that the rise of the ‘modern’ Ethiopian state has coincided with a decline in nomadic lifestyles across Ethiopia – from the Dasenech peoples who lived along the Omo River in Southern Ethiopia (Carr 1977) to the Somali pastoralists in the East (Devereux 2006) to the Afar peoples of the Northeastern drylands (Rettberg 2010; see also Lautze et al 2007; Hagmann and Mulugeta 2008). Today, an increasing proportion of pastoralists’ ‘incomes’ (an irrelevant concept for previous generations) derives from market-engagement and wage labor, employment opportunities that often assume settlement (Piguet and Pankhurst 2009). Ethiopia’s pursuit of development then, at least initially, brought a decline in the mobility of many Ethiopian peoples.

1.2 Internal Migration

Alongside this process of sedentarization, Ethiopia experienced a steady increase in the percentage of its population living in urban areas. Given higher fertility rates in rural areas, this urban growth is in large part due to rural-urban migration. As Figure 1 shows, Ethiopia remains far more rural than other Sub-Saharan African countries, yet its steady but slow growth in its urban population mirrors a global urbanizing trend in the modern period.

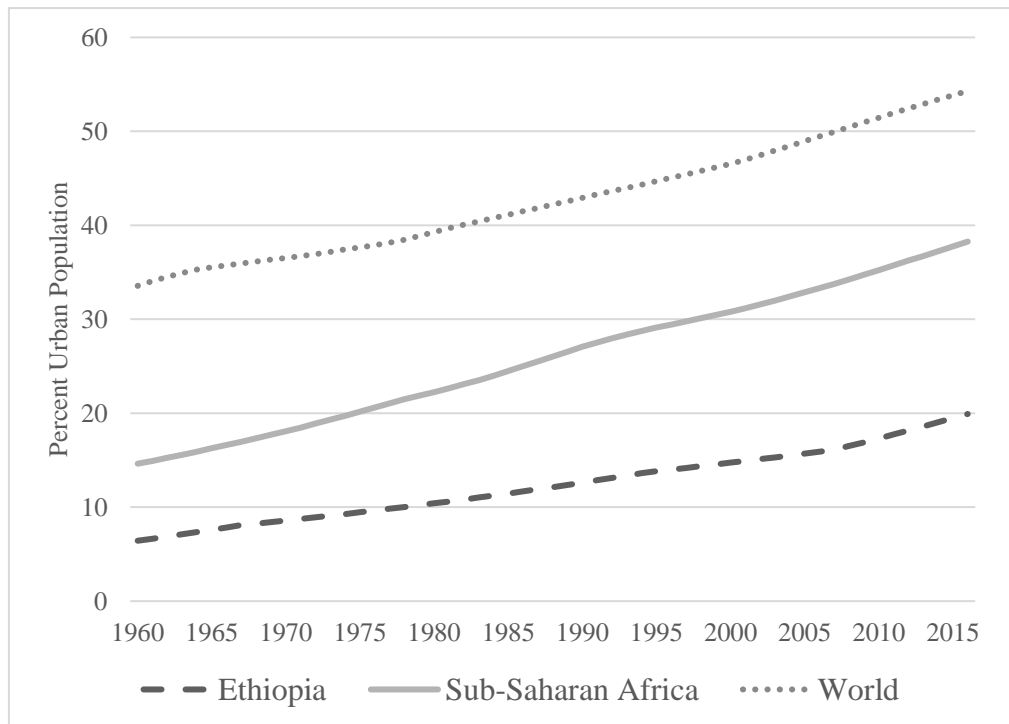


Figure 2. Percentage of Population Living in Urban Areas

Source: World Development Indicators 2019

Urban growth in Ethiopia has been dominated by movement towards its capital city, Addis Ababa. Meaning “New Flower,” Addis Ababa was first settled by Emperor Menelik and Queen Taytu in 1886.ⁱⁱ By 1910, the population was estimated to have 70,000 permanent and 30-50,000 temporary inhabitants (Pankhurst 2001: 195). The combination of settlement and growing population density allowed for infrastructure development and labor specialization unprecedented in other areas of the empire. By the 1960s, Addis Ababa had grown to 644,190 residents, one third (33.4%) of the urban population in Ethiopia at that time (CSO 1968). As small towns and medium-sized cities proliferated across Ethiopia in the decades after (see Table 2), the proportion of the urban population living in the capital city decreased – to 28.5% in 1994 to 23.6% in 2007 (CSA 1998; 2010) – yet still remains substantial.

Table 2 shows the growth of towns and cities across Ethiopia over the last half-century. The most dramatic increase over the last decades has been in the absolute number of urban localities across Ethiopia, from 163 towns and cities in 1967 to 803 in 2007. The distribution of the urban population across small, medium and large cities has shifted somewhat. In 1967, Ethiopia's urban population was concentrated in the capital city (33.9 percent) or across small towns with less than 20,000 people (40.0 percent). In 1984, this trend held: 32.4 percent in the capital city and 36.9 percent in small towns. By 2007, a growing share now lives in larger cities outside Addis Ababa. However, one-fourth (24.9 percent) of Ethiopia's urban population still lives in towns of 10,000 or less.

Table 2. Charting Urban Growth in Ethiopia by Town- and City-size

Population-size of urban centers	Number of urban centers by town- and city-size			Proportion of the urban population by town- and city-size (%)		
	1967	1984	2007	1967	1984	2007
2,000-5,000	101	186	357	16.51	13.23	10.45
5,000-10,000	36	75	245	12.92	11.79	14.45
10,000-20,000	15	38	115	10.55	11.88	13.44
20,000-50,000	8	14	61	13.97	9.36	15.86
50,000-100,000	1	10	14	2.93	15.05	8.73
100,000-500,000	1	1	10	9.20	6.31	13.47
500,000-1,000,000	1	0	0	33.93	/	/
1,000,000+	0	1	1	/	32.37	23.60
Total	163	325	803	100	100	100
Total Urban Population				1,917,160	4,364,140	10,769,022

Source: Rafiq and Hailemariam (1987) for 1967 and 1984; CSA 2010 for 2007

Within this overarching trend of gradual urban growth, there are large variations in the nature and direction of internal movements. For example, as Figure A1 (See Appendix) shows, urban population growth rates are irregular, experiencing notable declines in the late 1970s and late 1990s. Urban growth rates vary even more considerably by region. For example, as Table A1 in the Appendix shows, almost all regions saw a growing share of their population living in urban areas between 1994 and 2007, but for some regions, like Gambella, Afar, or Tigray, this growth was more dramatic than others.^{iii,iv}

Within and across this regional differentiation, there are many other kinds of movements occurring over the last century that were not urban-centric. In fact, rural-rural movement has historically been the most common type of internal migration occurring over the last century – whether for land, work or

marriage.^v Today, internal migration trajectories are increasingly urban-centric. In one study, Schewel and Fransen (2018b), using Labor Force Survey data on internal migration rates across zones in Ethiopia, found that only recently did rural-to-urban migration replace migration between rural areas as the most common migration trajectory of internal migrants – even among women, for whom rural-rural migration was by far the most common type of migration as late as 2005 (See Table 3).

Table 3. Migration patterns by gender: 1999, 2005 and 2013

Migration patterns (%) of recent migrants	1999		2005		2013	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Rural to rural	31.19	39.14	35.70	41.97	24.08	22.32
Rural to urban	21.79	21.58	27.60	23.91	29.42	37.26
Urban to rural	21.65	13.08	16.02	11.09	23.15	14.79
Urban to urban	24.37	25.56	17.78	20.43	23.35	25.63
Total migrations	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Notes. Based on LFS data. Recent migrants are individuals who moved less than five years prior to survey data collection. Based on the population aged 15 and over.

Source. See Schewel and Fransen (2018b), page 13.

Another form of internal migration that increased from the 1960s onwards is state-led resettlement. Resettlement is a form of development-induced displacement, a less researched kind of migration that nevertheless carries significant implications for the lives of populations across Ethiopia and Africa more generally (Cernea 2005). State-led resettlement schemes have been a regular and contentious strategy of Ethiopian governments over the last half-century, often justified in response to drought. Over one million people were resettled in Ethiopia over two phases: some 600,000 individuals (200,000 households) in 1985-86 under the communist regime, and around 627,000 people (190,000 households) between 2003 and 2007 under the current government (Pankhurst 2009). These resettlement schemes often failed for lack of adequate planning and resources (Piguet and Pankhurst 2009). Yet, for the purpose of this section, it is important to note that alongside ‘voluntary’ internal migration, state-led resettlement schemes directed significant population movements in Ethiopia (more details about these resettlement strategies are provided in Section 2.1).

1.3 Emigration

Rates of international migration from Ethiopia are relatively low. Less than one percent of the Ethiopian population were emigrants in 2015 (see Table A2 in Appendix). As is the case for internal migration,

available data on rates and levels of international migration from Ethiopia is limited and fragmented (see Carter and Rohwerder, 2016), and official estimates are likely lower than actual migration rates. That acknowledged, in addition to being one of the most rural countries, Ethiopia shows low emigration rates^{vi} relative to other countries at similar levels of human development (Table A2). Only Nigeria and Madagascar show lower levels of emigration, although a higher share of their populations are living in urban areas (Table A2).

Most accounts of international migration from Ethiopia suggest that before the communist revolution in 1974, during the period of Emperor Haile Selassie, international migration was largely the purview of the elite, who left for educational purposes and returned to high positions within the government. “The few Ethiopians who went abroad were elites who did so to study and then returned” (Terrazas 2007, 1; see Levine 1965). However, existing data on international migration shows that prior to the communist revolution in 1974, there was already relatively significant regional migration to neighboring countries: Djibouti, Sudan, Kenya, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia, for example, which then accelerated under the Derg (see Table 4; Figure 3). Because it is based on census and population register data, the numbers cited in Table 4 likely underestimate the extent of international movement occurring over the period, but nevertheless highlights the already diverse destinations of international migrants during the time of the imperial and communist regimes.

Table 4. Top Ten Destinations of Ethiopian Emigrants by Decade (N)

	1960		1970		1980		1990		2000	
Top 10 Destinations	Djibouti	3442	Djibouti	6273	Djibouti	1263 2	United States	34983	United States	71578
	Israel	2736	Kenya	4634	United States	1058 3	Israel	30337	Israel	66967
	Sudan	1738	Canada	3671	Saudi Arabia	7513	Djibouti	19811	Djibouti	25437
	United States	1415	Israel	3251	Canada	6828	Saudi Arabia	19573	Saudi Arabia	21174
	Kenya	871	United States	2847	Kenya	6026	Germany	9555	Kenya	20332
	France	661	Sudan	1658	Italy	5820	Kenya	7493	Canada	14075
	Canada	651	France	1583	Israel	4389	Sweden	7464	United Kingdom	11796
	Yemen, Rep.	444	Saudi Arabia	1473	Sudan	2126	Italy	6783	Sweden	11776
	Zimbabwe	268	Netherlands	565	Netherlands	1563	Netherlands	4504	Netherlands	7455
	Saudi Arabia	262	Yemen, Rep.	549	Sweden	1426	Sudan	2978	Italy	5587
Total Emigration	1460 5		3140 8		6662 8		15849 2		29124 9	

Source: World Bank Global Bilateral Migration Database 2018

Migration to Middle Eastern destinations is rooted in a long history of religious and trade connections (Pankhurst 2002). One notable example is the movement of Jewish Ethiopians (Beta Israel), who began migrating to Israel as early as 1935. This movement increased after the newly created Israeli state offered citizenship to any member of the Jewish nation, often referred to as the Law of Return, in 1950. Over the coming decades, this religious ‘return’ migration often entailed dangerous journeys through Sudan or Kenya, but after the establishment of the Israeli embassy in Addis Ababa, which facilitated legal migration of Jewish Ethiopians to Israel, this movement became more regularized and secure (Terrazas 2007). According to Israel’s Central Statistical Bureau, there were some 125,500 citizens of Ethiopian descent living in Israel in 2011. There is also a long-standing history of religious movement between Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia for the purpose of pilgrimage. In the early days of Islam, Prophet Muhammad sent some of His first persecuted followers to seek refuge in the Christian Kingdom of Aksum, known as the first hijra. Muslims now comprise over one-third (33.9 percent) of the Ethiopian population (CSA 2007), and Ethiopians have been going on the Hajj for centuries (Tibebu 2018). These religious connections mirror economic ones. Trade between Ethiopia and the Arabian Peninsula has an ever longer history (see Pankhurst 2002, 1965)

The Global Bilateral Migration data also shows that, rather than being the primary destination of international migrants in earlier periods, as earlier research suggests, it appears that North American and European destinations actually began to absorb a growing share of international migration over time, which had been mostly directed towards African (e.g. Djibouti, Sudan, and Kenya) and Middle Eastern (e.g. Israel and Saudi Arabia) destinations in the 1960s and 1970s (See Figure 3).

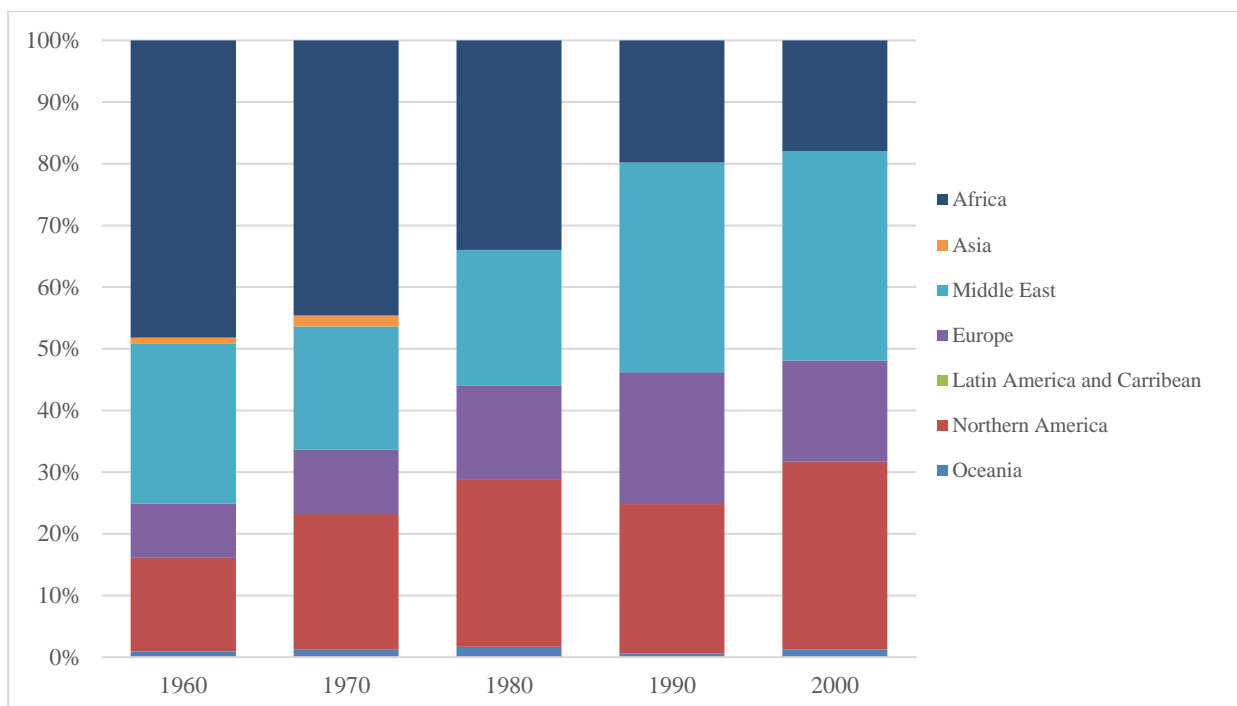


Figure 3. International Migration from Ethiopia by Decade and Region of Destination

Source: World Bank Global Migration Database 2018. *Note:* Based on top 20 destinations, which includes over 95% of emigration.

After the overthrow of the Imperial regime and the rise of the communist Derg regime in 1974, another form of migration became more prevalent: the movement of refugees fleeing political persecution and civil strife. The Derg formally closed Ethiopia's borders soon after seizing power, yet international movement significantly grew during this period. This is the period when Ethiopian scholars speak of the 'Ethiopian diaspora' being established in countries like the United States, many of whom were educated elites with some connection to the imperial regime. However, most migrants leaving at the beginning or end of the communist regime's rule did not have the resources to embark upon such a long-distance asylum-seeking project (or were not selected from refugee camps for asylum in North America or European countries). By 1990, at the end of the socialist government's rule, the UN Population Division data notes 942,295 Ethiopians living in Sudan, 460,000 in Somalia, 26,695 in Kenya, 13,405 in Djibouti, and 1,284 in Eritrea (see Figure 4).^{vii} These figures are much higher, and likely more accurate, than the Global Bilateral Migration data from Table 4. Most Ethiopians migrated within the Horn of Africa, a relatively small portion of whom received refugee status in the United States or Europe once registered in refugee camps (Terrazas 2007).

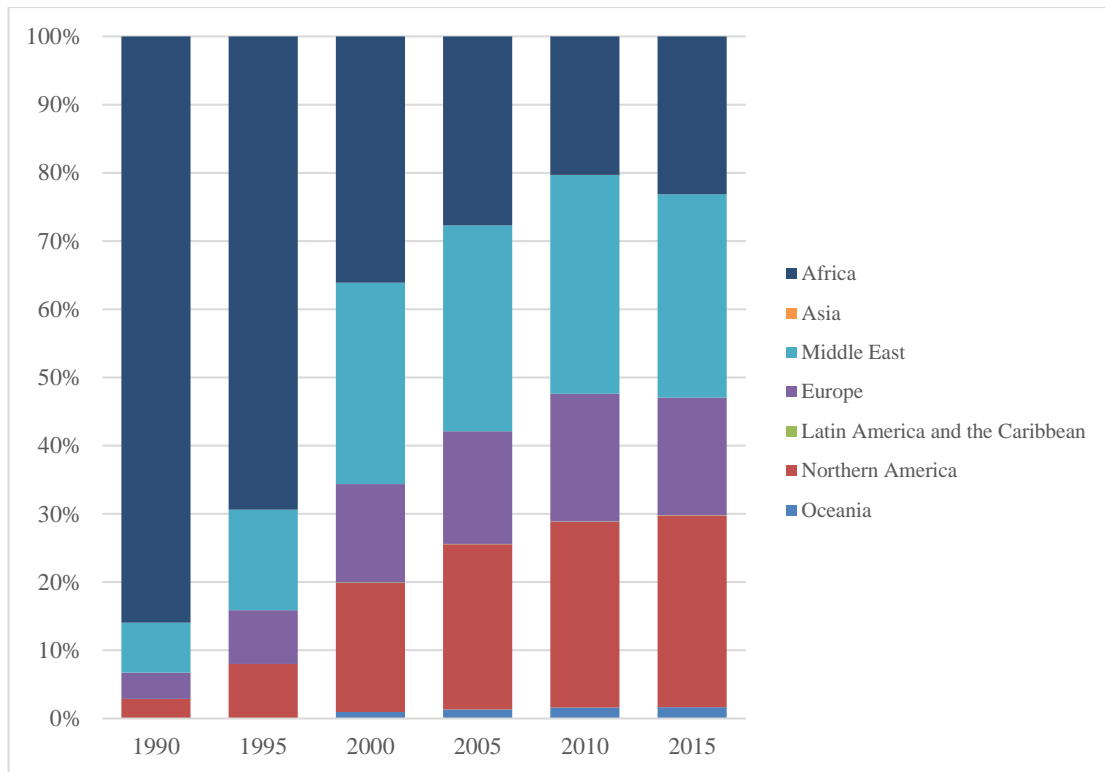


Figure 4. Regional destination of Ethiopian International migrants, 1990-2015

Source: UN Population Division, Trends in International Migrant Stock: 2015 Revision (Total migrant stock at mid-year)

After the fall of the communist government in 1991 and the rise of the more market-oriented developmental state, emigration flows continued to increase in volume, composition, and diversity of destinations (see Figure 4). Today people continue to flee political persecution, reunite with family, or seek educational opportunities abroad; alongside this, the emigration of high- and low-skilled workers to destinations across Africa, Europe, North America, and the Middle East is increasingly common (Kuschminder and Siegel 2014). The migration of women and men to the Middle East is one relatively “new” labor migration trajectories and representative of the “feminization” of Ethiopian labor migration (Fernandez 2011). In one study across five regions of Ethiopia, Kuschminder and Siegel (2014) found that half of all emigrants were in the Middle East, compared to 20 percent in Africa and 22 percent in North America or Europe. Sixty percent of these migrants were women. As shown earlier, migration systems to the Middle East have long existed, initially for religion and trade, but the nature of movements within this migration system transformed over time, such that today, much of the movement between Ethiopia and the Middle East is low-skilled labor migration.

1.4 Immigration

During the ‘Scramble for Africa’ between 1881 and 1914, when European powers conquered, divided, and colonized the African continent, Ethiopia was the only country that maintained its independence. Although the newly unified Kingdom of Italy invaded Ethiopia during this period, the Ethiopian army defeated them at the Battle of Adwa in 1896, securing the Ethiopian empire’s sovereignty for another forty years. In 1935, Italy invaded again, this time using mustard gas and heavy air-bombing that overwhelmed Ethiopian military forces and civilians alike (Pankhurst 2001). The Italians took Addis Ababa in 1936 and held the country under military occupation until 1941. During this time, many Italians moved to Ethiopia. By 1939, there were over 130,000 Italians in Ethiopia, serving in administrative positions, working in infrastructure development, and settling new agricultural communities (Pankhurst 2001; Sbacchi 1977). The fascist vision was to settle hundreds of thousands of Italy’s ‘surplus population’ in agricultural settlements across Ethiopia, but these hopes were never realized. The occupation was constantly challenged by guerilla warfare, shortage of funds, poor planning, and lack of infrastructure. After several years of conflict, Haile Selassie returned to Addis Ababa and seized power in 1941, many Italians left in the years thereafter, and a formal peace treaty was signed in 1947.

After this period of significant imperialist immigration, migration continued between countries in the Horn of Africa, and to some extent, further afield. In the late 1950s and 1960s, Ethiopia hosted some of the largest numbers of African immigrants. During a period of anti-colonial activism and newly independent states, many immigrants were African activists seeking refuge or military training, or students seeking higher education at Haile Selassie I University, the precursor to Addis Ababa University.^{viii}

In later decades, Ethiopia also experienced periods of significant conflict-induced immigration from neighboring states. Sharing a border with every other country in the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia lies at the center of regional movements in a region characterized by significant unrest over the last half-century (Terrazas 2007). The same countries that hosted Ethiopian emigrants during periods of political turmoil in Ethiopia – Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea and Djibouti, for example – also sent many migrants into Ethiopia during these same years. For example, around 1990, the same years that Ethiopia experienced some of the highest rates of emigration, it also received the highest number of immigrants. In 1990, Ethiopia had an immigrant stock of 1.15 million, 64.2 percent of whom were refugees. These numbers declined quite significantly over the 1990s and 2000s, before rising again in 2015 to over 1 million (see Table 5). Some estimate even higher number of migrant stocks, 1.7 million, in 2015 (Donnenfeld et al, 2017).

Table 5. Migrant (including Refugee) Stock in Ethiopia, 1990-2015

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015
International migrant stock at mid-year (both sexes)	1,155,390	806,904	611,384	514,242	567,720	1,072,949
International migrant stock as percentage of total population	2.4	1.4	0.9	0.7	0.6	1.1
Female migrants as percentage of international migrant stock	47.4	47.4	47.3	47.5	47.6	49.0
Estimated refugee stock at mid-year (both sexes)	741,965	393,479	197,959	100,817	154,295	659,524
Refugees as a percentage of the international migrant stock	64.2	48.8	32.4	19.6	27.2	61.5

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2015). Trends in International Migrant Stock: the 2015 Revision.

1.5 Summary of Migration Trends

The last century witnessed both gradual and dramatic shifts in the movement of Ethiopia's population. Regarding gradual shifts, there has been a two-fold process of *sedentarization* of nomadic and semi-nomadic lifestyles alongside a slow but steady *urbanization* of internal migration trajectories. Over the second half of the 20th century, this urban growth was dominated by the capital city and small towns. Only in recent decades are mid-size cities with populations over 100,000 emerging across Ethiopia. Relative to other countries at similar levels of economic development or population size, Ethiopia has relatively low rates of urbanization and international migration. Only some 20 percent of the population live in urban areas, and less than one percent of the population are international migrants. That recognized, Ethiopia has a long-history of international migration within the Horn of Africa, to the Middle East, the United States and Europe, and the number of international migrants has increased over time – doubling each decade since 1960 (Table 4). Rooted in a history of religious, economic, and diplomatic ties, the nature and direction of this movement diversified over time. Ethiopians are moving to more countries in more varied ways than ever before. In recent decades, for example, a notable and rising trend is labor migration to African and Middle Eastern destinations for low-skilled wage-work.

Alongside these overarching processes of sedentarization, urbanization, and diversification in the nature of international migration, Ethiopia also experienced more punctuated and dramatic shifts in population movements over relatively short periods – often a consequence of political conflict, famine, conscription, resettlement schemes, and/or development-induced displacement. At the same time that Ethiopians fled their country in times of distress, Ethiopia also hosted hundreds of thousands of refugees from neighboring countries in the Horn of Africa. The following section explains these migration trends using a social transformation framework (see de Haas et al, forthcoming). It will examine to what degree

different dimensions of social change – particularly the political, economic, technological, and cultural – explain these gradual and sudden moments of transformation in the migration patterns of the Ethiopian population.

2 Applying a Social Transformation Framework

A social transformation framework assumes that the causes of migration are complex, inter-related, and arise from a constellation of social processes playing out over time. Nevertheless, this complexity should not dissuade researchers from attempting to see patterns (de Haas 2014), or to analyze how, in certain moments, some dimensions of social change, or particular constellations of social shifts, may have a greater impact on migration patterns than others. Importantly, a social transformation approach requires stepping away from *migration* as the sole research focus to understand the political, economic, demographic, technological and cultural contexts of a country that shape the nature, timing, and direction of ‘migration transitions’ (cf Zelinsky 1971; Skeldon 2012; de Haas et al, forthcoming).

Table 6 shows some of the key indicators of social change in Ethiopia. Population growth, rising life expectancies and declining fertility rates suggest the Ethiopia is experiencing a ‘demographic transition.’ Indeed, as mortality rates declined and fertility rates followed more slowly over the last three decades, a larger share of Ethiopia’s population are now young adults, about 21 million (51.2 percent) (CSA, 2010; see also Donnenfeld et al 2017). This demographic shift is commonly referred to as a ‘youth bulge’ – the growing proportion of the population between 15 and 29 years, relative to the total population over 15 years old in the country. Scholars and policy-makers often assume that a youth bulge ‘drives’ migration. However, research also shows that just as there are many ways through the ‘demographic transition’ – that is, different patterns of mortality and fertility decline across contexts – so too are there very different migration patterns associated with the demographic transition (Skeldon 2012). Ethiopia, for example, is now past the peak of its ‘youth bulge’ (Donnenfeld et al 2017), yet migration levels remain relatively low compared to other countries (Table A2). This suggests the need to look beyond somewhat deterministic, demographic explanations for increasing migration to other forces of social change. In this light, Table 6 suggests other important social transformations outside the demographic realm. For example, economic development fluctuated at low levels from 1980 to 2000, before experiencing rapid growth from 2010 onwards. At the same time, an education transition brought rapid growth in primary school enrollment from 2000 onwards. Over this same period, a growing share of the population began to live in urban areas. This section considers the influence of political, economic, cultural and technological changes on changing migration patterns within and from Ethiopia.

Table 6. Indicators of Social Transformation in Ethiopia

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2015
Population (millions)	22.2	28.4	35.3	48.1	66.5	87.7	99.9
Fertility Rate (births per woman)	6.9	7.0	7.3	7.2	6.5	5.0	4.3
Infant Mortality Rate (per 1,000 live births)	-	143.4	141.2	120.2	88.2	55.3	44.2
Life expectancy at birth (years)	38.4	42.9	43.7	47.1	51.9	61.6	65.0
Urban population (% of total)	6.4	8.6	10.4	12.6	14.7	17.3	19.4
Gross Domestic Product* (billions)	-	-	7.3 ^A	12.2	8.2	30.0	64.5
Primary school enrollment (% gross)	-	15.0 ^o	33.8	35.1	54.4	91.8	101.9

Source: World Development Indicators 2019 | *GDP in current US\$ | □ data for year 1981 | □ data for year 1971

2.1 Political: Regime Change, Conflict and Resettlement

To begin to explain why the migration (and immobility) trends we see in the previous section occurred, it is necessary to understand what “development” entailed practically in Ethiopia. Since the 1940s, three visions of development animated the policies of three different Ethiopian states. The first, the Imperial regime under Haile Selassie, looked to Japan as a model of modernization. Japan drew on the economic and technological advancements of the modern West while maintaining its sovereignty and tradition — not to mention authority within the hands of an all-powerful and sacred Emperor.^{ix} The emperor’s downfall came in 1974, the year Prunier and Ficquet call “the year of destiny, the year when Ethiopia was suddenly thrown into the modern world” (2015: 1). By this, they mean that all semblance of continuity with the mythic, religious past that Haile Selassie sought to balance beneath his modernization pursuits disappeared as a military regime, founded in communist ideology, seized control and imposed an altogether different vision of modernity. During its 17-year reign, from 1974 to 1991, the model of modernity that inspired the revolution and subsequent reforms was Stalin and Lenin in the USSR, and Maoism in China — at the time, the alternative option of “modernity” for many of the world. Woube and Sjöberg (1999) argue that Ethiopia was one of the few African countries that actually imposed a Marxist-Leninist version of socialism (see also Prunier 2015). Nevertheless, the communist ‘Derg’ regime is more often remembered for its brutal and violent suppression of opposition and its failed policies than its genuine social reforms (Prunier 2015).

Liberation forces struggled to make headway against the Derg regime throughout the 1970s and 80s, but their unification into the Ethiopian Peoples’ Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) in 1989 and 1990 — excluding the EPLF — gave strength against the declining regime, at the same time that

international support for the communist government ceased with the end of the Cold War. When the Derg regime was overthrown in 1991, a three-year process began to determine what the new state would look like. This time, its constitution looked to the West, and Ethiopian expatriates returned to help create the new charter (Gidada and Lemma 2016). They devised the framework for a democratic, ethnic federalism that enshrined the rights of individuals and ethnic groups to self-determination.

Although the new constitution was in many ways liberal, the implementation of the new state, spearheaded by its first Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, again looked to the East—to the development trajectories of South Korea and Taiwan, where the state played a heavy-handed role in industrial development with impressive results (de Waal 2013). Meles Zenawi was unabashed and direct in his explanation for functioning as a ‘developmental state,’ meaning a government that embraces state-led macro-economic development planning (Zenawi 2012). He firmly opposed the neoliberal Washington Consensus prevalent at the time, arguing that under imperfect conditions of rent-seeking and patronage, development requires a strong state to create the conditions under which a healthy market and democratic order can function. Initially, the developmental state pursued an ‘Agricultural Development-Led Industrialization’ strategy, which like under the Derg, focused on agriculture as the cornerstone of economic development. However, in the 2000s, facing poor economic growth, internal political challenges, and international pressures (notably from the IMF; see Stiglitz 2002), the government shifted its development strategy to embrace industrial capitalism, greater foreign investment, and the expansion of private enterprise and market forces. As a result, Ethiopia reported unprecedented economic growth, yet not without political backlash. Frustrations over undemocratic rule and unequal access to the fruits of Ethiopia’s progress led to widespread protests, beginning in earnest in 2005 and continuing after Meles Zenawi’s death in 2012.

Because of the widespread conflict and recurrent political instability – both within Ethiopia and in neighboring countries – it is tempting to characterize Ethiopia’s emigration and immigration history as “forced.” Indeed, large-scale emigration from Ethiopia occurred around periods of political turmoil and transition – between the imperial and communist regime in the 1970s, and between the communist regime and ‘developmental state’ that took power in the 1990s. As Figure 5 suggests, emigration peaked around 1990, before the communist regime was overthrown in 1991 and the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) seized power. (The UN data captures a large movement of populations to neighboring countries in Africa that is missed in the Global Bilateral Migration data)^x. Similarly, fluctuations in immigration often correlate with civil war and political turmoil in neighboring states, including the collapse of President Siad Barre in Somalia and the ethnic conflict between the forces of the central government, President Salva Kiir and his former deputy, Reik Macchare in South Sudan. Ethiopia’s long-standing conflict with Eritrea – including the war for Eritrean separation from 1961 to 1991 and the Eritrean-Ethiopian war from 1998 to 2000 – meant many people have fled over

this contentious border for decades (See Table A3 in Appendix for migrant stock data by country, 1990-2015).

There are important ways in which class shaped migration trajectories during these periods of conflict. As the last section detailed, many Ethiopians associated with Haile Selassie’s regime fled the country during the 1970s and 1980s, establishing a large Ethiopian diaspora in the United States, followed by smaller numbers in Canada, Italy, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands (Fransen and Kuschminder 2009). However, ‘diaspora’ need not be reserved for destination countries of the Global North. In fact, the majority of Ethiopians who fled Ethiopia during these times of political upheaval did not have the opportunities or migration capabilities to flee across continents. Of the nearly two million Ethiopian refugees who fled the country in the 1980s, some 90 percent were living in Sudan and Somalia (Bariagaber 1999 as cited in Fransen and Kuschminder 2009). Thus, class had an important impact on these first major international movements out of Ethiopia. Those with greater resources were able to flee further distances; most Ethiopians were only able to flee to neighboring states. Many more likely remained within Ethiopia, internally displaced or ‘involuntarily immobile’ (Carling 2002).

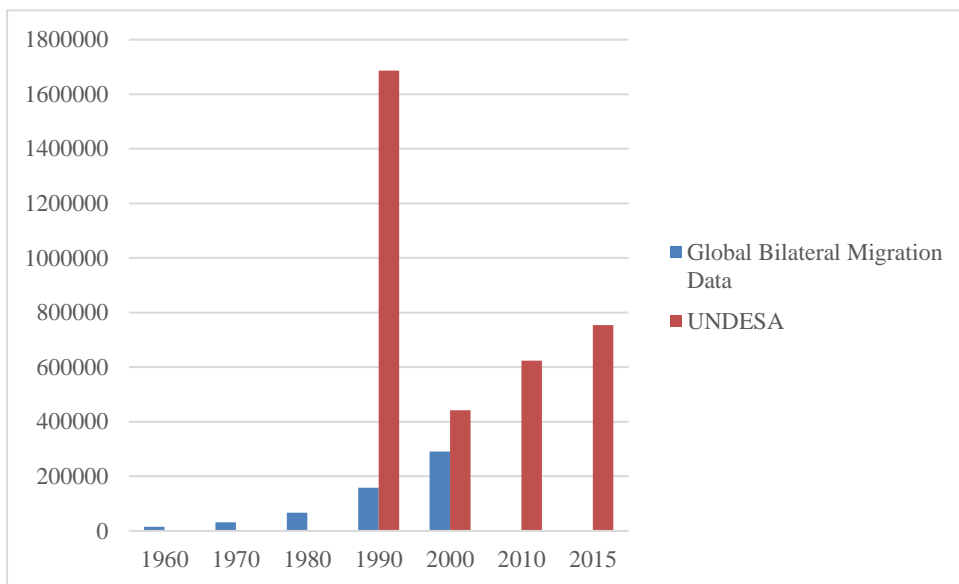


Figure 5. Total Emigration from Ethiopia

Source: Migrant stock data World Bank Global Migration Database (2018) and UNDESA (2015)

The impact of class, or wealth, is just as consequential for the ways in which Ethiopians responded to periods of drought. Droughts regularly punctuated Ethiopia’s history. Markos (2001), citing Rahmato (1994), indicated the occurrence of nine major famine episodes in the 19th century and 11 others in the 20th. Although drought is common in areas throughout Ethiopia’s arid lowlands, most of the major famines have been concentrated in the northern regions, namely Wello and Tigray. There is little doubt

that drought, and particularly famine, led to significant population movements. During the 1983-1984 famine, for example, as many as 2.5 million were internally displaced, and at least 400,000 people fled the country (Wolde-Giorgis 1989). However, it is important to note that the most vulnerable often remained trapped in the countryside, where poor road infrastructure and petty politics prevented them from receiving food aid or making their way to distant distribution centers (Piguet and Pankhurst 2009). Under these circumstances, famine did not mean migration; it meant starvation. No one knows exactly how many died in the 1973-1974 famine, but estimates range from 200,000 to 1 million (van Santen 2010), and as many as 1.2 million died in the 1983-1984 famine (Gill 2010).

Whether drought leads to famine, and whether famine leads to migration (or death), depends on a number of factors beyond environmental conditions. What the 1973-1974 and the 1983-1984 famines clearly illustrated was that infrastructure is crucial to facilitate the provision of food aid and services to peripheral regions of the country where rural agriculturalists and pastoralists were suffering. Even more importantly, though, is politics, that is, whether the State feels compelled to take the necessary measures to prevent or alleviate the effects of drought. In this regard, Amartya Sen once argued that no famine has ever occurred in a functioning democracy (Sen 1999). Critics quickly pointed out that starvation and malnutrition remain widespread in many democracies, like India, and indeed, under the current regime in Ethiopia. In fact, famine continued to occur even under the current democratic government, most notably in 2003-2004. Nevertheless, the point that the state matters is a key one. One key strategy all three regimes employed in response to the problem of drought and food insecurity is resettlement.

Resettlement began as a few *ad hoc* initiatives' started under Haile Selassie in 1966 and became a major government strategy of the communist regime in the 1970s and 1980s, culminating in the resettlement of over half a million people in 1985-1986 (Piguet and Pankhurst 2009: 9). Before the 1974 revolution, the Imperial regime resettled some 10,000 households – constituting 0.2 percent of rural households at the time, as compared to 5 percent of rural households that migrated 'spontaneously' (Piguet and Pankhurst 2009: 9, citing Wood 1985). Under the communist regime, the numbers and pace of resettlement increased. From 1974-1983, before the 1984 famine, some 46,000 households (187,000 people) were resettled in 88 sites across 11 regions (Piguet and Pankhurst 2009). In the aftermath of the 1984 famine, an "Emergency Phase" plan resettled over half a million people between October 1984 and January 1986, constituting "one of the most complex, ambitious and draconian measures ever attempted by the Ethiopian government" (Piguet and Pankhurst 2009: 10).

Resettlement, under the Imperial regime and the Derg, was justified as a proactive strategy to address a wide range of perceived social ills: to redistribute populations more efficiently, to develop less populated areas and increase agricultural productivity, to safeguard populations against the threat of famine, to provide land for the landless, to establish cooperatives, to "remove urban unemployed," to settle pastoralists and shifting agriculturalists, and to rehabilitate repatriated refugees (Piguet and

Pankhurst 2009: 9). But resettlement was never the magic bullet government planners hoped it to be. Due to inadequate planning, financial constraints, and the lack of experienced personnel to manage these projects, “the results were generally poor, the schemes tended to fail, and most settlers left the projects” (Piguet and Pankhurst 2009: 9). Nevertheless, resettlement remains a common development and humanitarian strategy, even under the current government. From 2003 to 2005, for example, a plan of the New Coalition for Food Security resettled over half a million people across Oromiya, Amhara, SNNP and Tigray. However, these efforts also faced significant obstacles, namely lack of adequate housing, agricultural water or other resources for the resettled populations, and lack of consideration for the rights of pastoralists in areas of resettlement, exacerbating conflicts over environmental resources (World Bank 2007: 117).

Alongside resettlement schemes, the displacement of populations for development projects is another major form of population movement in Ethiopia’s history – whether to support the creation of dams, agricultural development schemes, the creation of national parks or urban expansion (see Pankhurst and Piguet 2009). Some populations are directly displaced and compensated by the government for their lands. Other local populations are indirectly marginalized by such projects, excluded from resources that had historically supported their livelihoods. Development projects do not only lead to displacement of settled populations, they can also contribute to the sedentarization of nomadic populations. Research suggest that more direct government development interventions, such as the expansion of irrigation agriculture, or land seizure for development projects (e.g. dams) or national parks, make nomadic lifestyles less and less viable (see Rettberg 2010; Devereux, 2006; Lautze et al 2006; Haggman and Mulugeta 2008; Pankhurst and Piguet 2009).

Aside from formal, state-sponsored resettlement, however, short-distance movements appear to be more common than long-distance migration as a household adaptation strategy to drought. As Jónsson (2010) showed in the context of the Sahel region, drought leads to resource scarcity, which means people do not have the means to invest in long-distance or international migration. Furthermore, the ways in which people move or stay in response to drought are heterogenous. For example, Grey and Mueller (2012) find that, in one region of the Ethiopian highlands, men from poor households are more likely to engage in labor migration when drought strikes, yet marriage-related moves by women tend to decrease under the same conditions. Further, not every household is able to support a migration project as an adaptation strategy, or to receive aid during periods of drought or famine. These are the ‘displaced in place’ (Lubkemann 2008) and the most vulnerable to food insecurity.

Beyond political conflict, and government-led responses to drought, the political dimension also suggests the need to examine the impact of different development policies adopted by the state. As detailed in the next section, to understand why and where people are moving, it is also necessary to look at the economic policies of the state that shaped changing livelihood opportunities and constraints for Ethiopia’s population.

2.2 Economic: Commercial Agriculture and Industrialization

The economic development policies of the three regimes shaped the volume and direction of internal and international population movements. In particular, each regime's pursuit of industrial development contributed to slow but steady urban growth and a general reorientation of internal migration from rural-rural to rural-urban trajectories. However, this section suggests that the most rapid internal and international migration transitions occurred under the current government, as the country embraced a market-oriented industrialization strategy, which means that Ethiopians are now leaving primarily rural, agricultural livelihoods at unprecedented rates for new urban-based income-generating opportunities in the service or industrial sectors.

Internal labour migration within Ethiopia historically occurred from the more highly populated northern highlands towards the less densely populated south, southwest and east of the country (see Markos 2001). In the early 20th century, this was a kind of 'frontier migration'; peasants left situations of land scarcity and low agricultural productivity in search of more fertile lands, and soldiers were often given land by the imperial regime as 'tribute' (World Bank 2007). In the 1950s through 70s, movement from the highlands to the lowlands continued but began to change in nature as Ethiopia's economy 'developed. Under Haile Selassie, 'modernization' entailed the growth of light industries like cotton, sugar, cement, leather, and printing factories. Commercial agriculture began under his rule in some areas of Ethiopia, often those accessible to the railway lines, and introduced new forms of paid employment to new populations. New services, like banking, insurance, hotels, restaurants, shops and trading companies were established in emerging towns (Pankhurst 2001). With the rise of commercial agricultural sites during this period, migration was increasingly directed towards wage-work on state- or privately-owned enterprises: for example, cotton and sugar plantations in the Rift Valley and Awash valley, coffee plantations in the south and southwest, and farms harvesting sesame, beans and oil seeds in the north-west (Piguet and Pankhurst 2009; Markos 2001)^{xi}. This movement was often seasonal, but over time, it also led to the settlement of migrant laborers in these areas and the emergence of new towns (Blunch and Laderchi 2015; World Bank 2007).

Many agricultural developments were run by foreign organizations, including the Dutch in sugar, the Japanese in textiles, the Greeks in shoes and beverages, and the Italians in construction, textile, and agricultural industries (Wubne 1991). Ethiopian owned companies were often dominated by the interests of large landowners with close links to Haile Selassie (Clapham 2015). By the early 1970s, Prunier (2015) notes, foreign capitalists held almost 70 percent of investments in Ethiopia, and the economy was "split between a large traditional agricultural sector living essential at the level of subsistence and a small 'modern' sector linked to urban consumption and export" (Prunier 2015: 212).

The unequal nature of this economic development was one spark for the communist revolution of the 1970s.

After the fall of Haile Selassie in 1974, a military regime popularly known as the *Derg* took its place. “In the name of *hibretesebawinet* (“socialism”), a new word it had just invented, Ethiopia would remain united (this was for Eritreans), the state would take total control of the economy and a great national socialist party would be created” (Prunier 2015: 218). Socialist economic development put more of an emphasis on rural development than the imperial government had. The *Derg*’s leader Mengistu^{xii} and his military hands in the regime appeared to believe that Marxism “would provide them with a quasi-magic blue-print for development,” Prunier argues (2015: 225). In many ways, their plans for modernization and structural transformation followed classic communist prescriptions: the establishment of over 30,000 peasant associations in the countryside and urban dwellers associations in cities, the nationalization of land and businesses, the establishment and investment in collective and state-run farms, the creation of a single Workers party, and controlled freedom of speech and press (Prunier 2015: 226; Pankhurst 2001). The foreign investment that had been growing over the 1950s and 1960s fled the country, only to return in earnest after the socialist government fell in the early 1990s.

The development vision of the socialist regime had varying impacts on population movements. On the one hand, even when many private- and foreign-owned enterprises were overtaken by the *Derg*, labor migration continued (Piguet and Pankhurst 2009). In fact, it often became state-sponsored: conscription was introduced by the *Derg* not just for military purposes, but also to fill labour shortages on state farms. On the other hand, state planning under a Marxist-Leninist vision put a new emphasis on the control of the population movements and internal migration rates were lower in Ethiopia than the rest of sub-Saharan African during this period (McDowell and de Haan 1996: 5). New government policies directly encouraged immobility during this period. Under Haile Selassie, although many highland areas already had forms of land tenure that tied peasants to plots, in other lowland and more peripheral regions of the country, the State had employed a decentralized political structure (see Gnamo 2014). These peripheral regions became increasingly consolidated within the Empire under Haile Selassie, but the penetration of the state reached new levels under the *Derg*. The division of districts into Peasant Associations – one of the major administrative units of the *Derg* – brought state bureaucracy closer to the ground than ever before. The Peasant Association was designed to be a smaller unit (some 800 hectares) of some 300 or 400 farmers and their household within which land distribution, land directives, judicial tribunals, cooperatives, schools, health services, villagization programs among other government directives and services would be established.^{xiii} One consequence of the establishment of peasant associations is that those who wanted to gain access to material resources needed to be registered to the peasant association. There were obvious material advantages to doing so, and while the *Derg* left room for different kinds of relations with nomadic peoples, such as the Afar, the vast majority of peasant associations were agrarian kebeles. Through the land reform and creation of the peasant association, then, the *Derg*

effectively, as Hoben (1976) put it, allocated land to the people and people to the land. And once land was allocated, it could not be left or it would be lost. People had to maintain their rural land to keep it. The nationalization of land, and certain land rights policies incentivized settlement and staying: for example, regulations prohibiting sale of land, loss of land rights for those who leave rural areas, and registration requirements for new internal migrants.

After the socialist government fell in 1991, the EPRDF coalition government that took its place initially adopted a development vision that was, in many ways, inspired by socialist ideals. The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, formally established in 1995, was spearheaded by Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, who served from 1995 to 2012. Meles Zenawi firmly defended the functioning of the government as a ‘developmental state,’ resisting the neoliberal Washington consensus of his time (Zenawi 2012; Clapham 2018). In the early years of the new regime, the government envisioned a state-led economy that put agriculture and the well-being of the peasant masses as the starting point, or cornerstone, of the nation’s economic growth — an approach to the structural transformation of the economy described as “Agricultural Development-Led Industrialization” (ADLI) (Lefort 2015). It was a unique “endogenous” development strategy that embraced government control and marginalized private enterprise (Clapham 2015: 364). The ADLI strategy expected that growth in agricultural productivity would create demand among the most successful peasants for basic consumer goods, leading to the emergence of simple industries. The growth of industry would then create employment opportunities for the rural labor force that would become increasingly detached from the land as productivity gains increased and less laborers were needed. Industries would increasingly provide not only basic consumer goods but agricultural inputs like fertilizers, seeds, and pesticides. Because they would be cheaper than imported goods, this would give rise to greater agricultural productivity and in turn more demand for industrial products. “The virtuous circle of growth would be set in motion” (Clapham 2015: 364).

By the early 2000s, it was clear that ADLI was not working. Agricultural productivity stagnated, and GDP growth rates were lower than at the end of the Derg. The EPRDF began to face significant disapproval both in town and the countryside, and the 2005 elections were a turning point. The regime changed course and decided its new legitimacy would have to be found in “the promise of massive economic growth” (Clapham 2015: 365). This led to a second stage in the regime’s approach to modernization, one that was much more sympathetic to the role of private actors, foreign investment, free enterprise, and market forces than the first stage (Lefort 2015). Under this most recent period of the EPRDF’s rule, economic growth has indeed increased at unprecedented levels, averaging (officially) double-digit GDP growth rates over the last ten years (Figure 6).

As a result of this shift in development policy, the share of the Ethiopian population employed in agriculture has dropped. Although the contribution of agriculture to Ethiopia’s GDP declined since the

1980s (Figure 7), this sector remained the main occupation of more than eighty percent of the population until 2000. However, the 2000s saw a steady decline in agricultural employment, from 85.8 percent in 2000 to 68.2 percent in 2017 (see Figure 8). Most of those who left agriculture found work in the service sector. In Ethiopia – like many other countries in Africa – the service sector has grown faster than industry. Accordingly, employment in services jumped from 10.5 percent in 2000 to 22.4 percent in 2017. Employment opportunities within industry are also growing, but industry still employs less than 10 percent of the population (Figure 8).

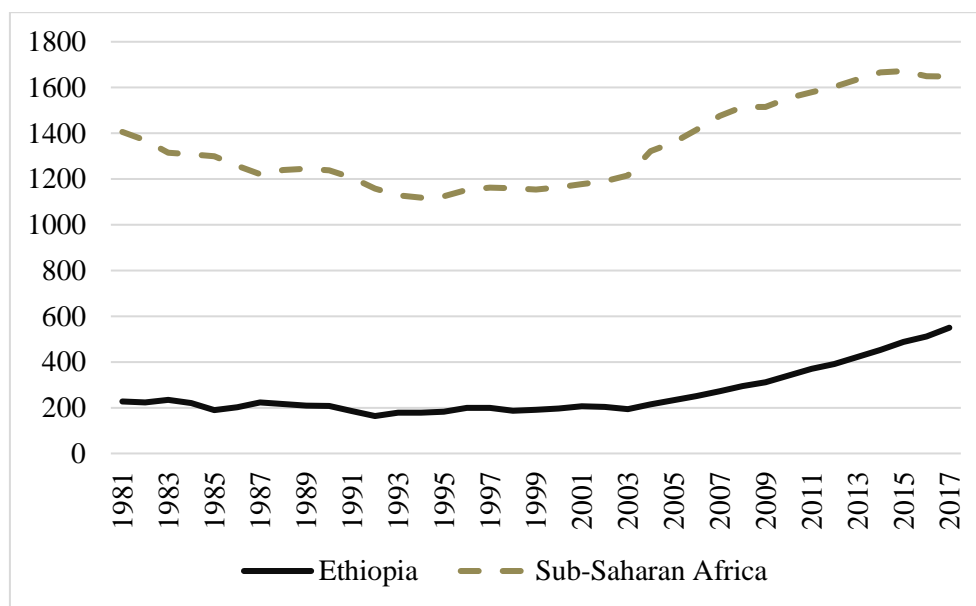


Figure 6. GDP per capita (constant 2010 USD) in Ethiopia and Sub-Saharan Africa

Source: World Development Indicators 2019

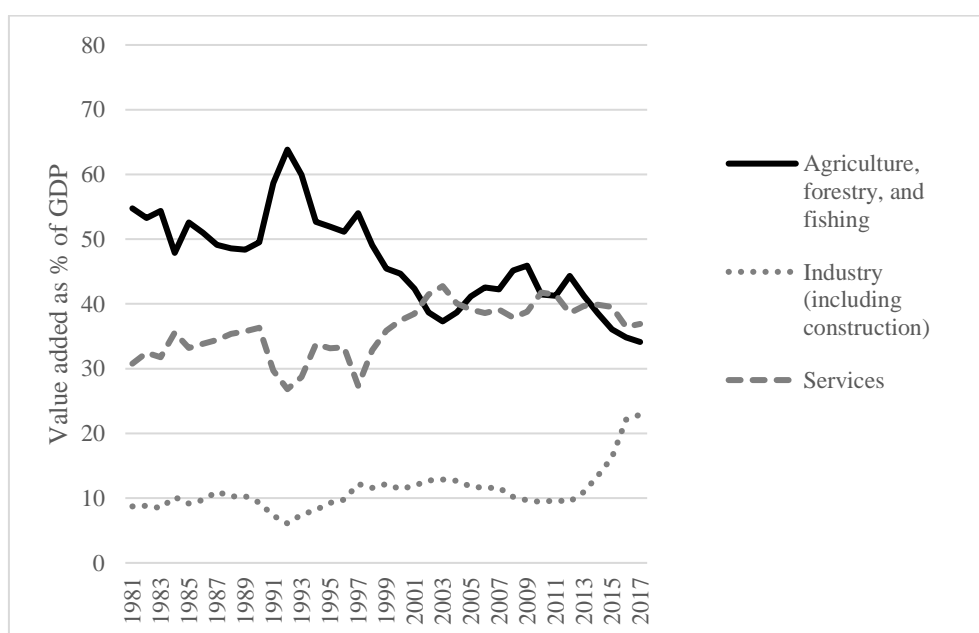


Figure 7. Sector Analysis of Ethiopian Economic Development

Source: World Development Indicators 2019

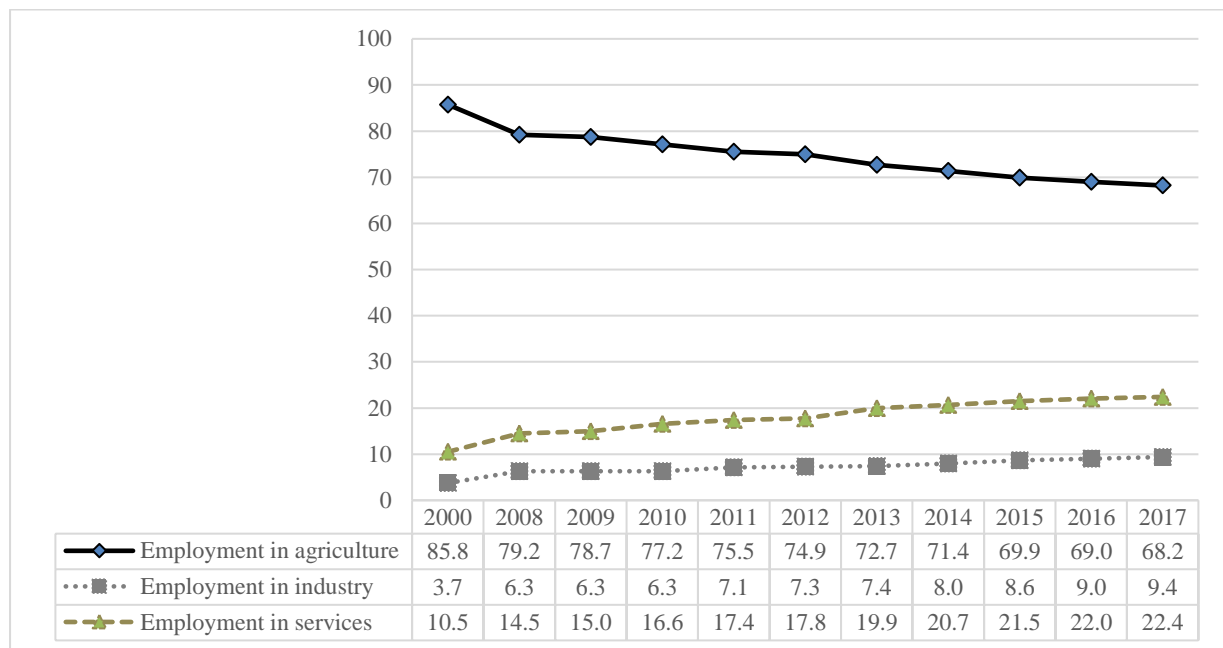


Figure 8. Employment by Sector (%) in Ethiopia

Source: World Development Indicators 2019, modeled ILO estimates

Figures 6-8 illustrate that agriculture holds a diminishing place in the government’s vision for economic development. The government still aims to support small-scale agriculture, of course. Because the majority of the Ethiopian population remain subsistence farmers, they have to. But the current *Growth and Transformation Plans*, which detail the government’s development goals, assert that a focus on agricultural production alone cannot stimulate industrialization and spark economic growth. The development of manufacturing centers and creating conditions more conducive to the growth of the service sector is therefore a core objective.

Over this same period, the direction of labor migration has become increasingly urban-centric. One reason for this is because, particularly since the 1990s and 2000s, more foreign companies – from agricultural, floricultural or meat processing enterprises to manufacturing and industrial parks – are strategically established in regions surrounding Addis Ababa or easily connected to its airport through the main railways or highway routes. These companies’ proximity to the main roads, or the capital city, and the new opportunities for low-skilled employment have accelerated the growth of neighbouring urban areas (see Schewel 2018; Piguet and Pankurst 2009). Likewise, the growth of towns and their market economies has led a growing share of the workforce to seek income through engagement in the formal and informal service sector.

In sum, the current government's growing embrace of market forces is crucial to help explain why both internal and international migration, particularly to urban centers or for wage-work overseas, appears to be increasing. Opportunities in industry are growing in foreign and government-sponsored industrial parks, which are strategically located along main infrastructure pathways (roads, rail, or airline) and inevitably lead to the growth of towns and cities that neighbor them. More than industry, many young Ethiopians have their aspirations set on work opportunities in the service sector, which are, inevitably, concentrated in urban centers. Finally, when individuals and households gain access to new income-generating opportunities in town, they are better equipped to finance an international migration project.

2.3 Cultural: Formal Education

The political and economic transformations highlighted above miss one important driver of changing migration aspirations and behavior in recent years, namely the rapid expansion in formal education across Ethiopia, particularly at primary levels (Schewel and Fransen 2018a). Low educational attainment in Ethiopia is one potential explanation for low international migration rates, but widening access to it is crucial to understand why internal migration is increasingly urban-oriented, and why international migration trajectories have increased and diversified over time.

Under Haile Selassie, special emphasis was given to education – a cornerstone of his modernization agenda and area development aid donors like the United States were eager to support (Clapham 2015)^{xiv}. Education was a key motivation for international movement in the first half of the twentieth century. Under the Imperial regime, international movement of the relatively elite was often for higher education, after which individuals would usually return to a government position in Ethiopia. Donald Levine (1965) presents some indication of the extent of this movement; drawing on official statistics, he estimates that prior to the Italian occupation in the 1930s, close to two hundred Ethiopians studied abroad, with the primary destination countries being France and Switzerland, then Egypt, England, the United States and Italy (Levine 1965: 194-195). Official statistics of returnees who had migrated after the Italian occupation, in the late forties and afterwards, presents a slightly different pattern. As of June 1959, there were some five hundred Ethiopian returnees. Those who had left in the mid-forties had gone to the United States and Canada (38 percent), the United Kingdom (20 percent), Lebanon (17 percent), Western Germany (10 percent) and India (4 percent). Destinations of those who left in the late fifties also included Egypt, Italy, France, Israel and Sweden (Levine 1965: 195).^{xv}

Under the Derg, migration abroad for education in pursuit of Ethiopia's modernization continued, only the primary destinations shifted towards socialist countries, such as the former USSR, China, Cuba and East European socialist countries.^{xvi} However, the most important educational initiative under the Derg was the expansion of primary and secondary education within Ethiopia, a policy with significant mobility consequences for those who had access to it. The Derg intended to establish a school in every

peasant association of the country. Table 7 shows the extent of this educational expansion. The number of young people in primary school rose from less than half a million in 1968-1969 to 2.8 million in the later years of communist state. Secondary education also increased, but at lower levels, over this period. Tertiary educational opportunities within Ethiopia have mostly increased under the current regime, particularly in the later years of the 1990s. The current government has focused on rapid expansion of its education sector at both ends of the spectrum, primary and tertiary, rather than in the middle.

Table 7. Enrollments by Level in Government and Nongovernment Educational Institutions in Ethiopia, 1967 to 2003

Years	Pre-Primary	Primary (Grades 1-8)	Secondary (Grades 9-12)	Technical and Vocational Education	Teaching Training Institutes	Higher Education
1967-68	-	496,334	26,690	-	-	-
1970-71	-	728,548	53,220	-	-	-
1975-76	-	1,226,124	90,091	-	-	-
1980-81	-	2,341,437	216,876	-	-	-
1985-86	-	2,811,910	292,385	-	-	18,456
1990-91	-	2,871,325	453,985	-	-	17,895
1995-96	-	3,787,919	402,753	2,738	5,900	17,378
2000-01	109,358	7,274,121	649,221	8,639	6,224	46,812
2001-2002	118,986	7,982,760	684,630	38,176	6,080	48,143
2002-2003	123,057	8,572,315	626,714	54,026	7,002	77,946

-- data not available.

Source: World Bank 2005: 26

Despite this expansion in schooling, low levels of educational attainment may help explain why Ethiopia also sees lower levels of international migration relative to other countries at similar levels of development. Total educational attainment in Ethiopia is nearly 20 percent lower than other low-income countries in Africa (Donnenfeld 2017). Even though primary enrollment rates rose from 40 percent in 2000 to 85 percent in 2014, secondary school enrollments remain low (12 and 15 percent in 2000 and 2014, respectively; Donnenfeld 2017, 76). With the rapid spread of primary education, its strongest impact on patterns of movement may be at the local and regional level, where secondary and higher education for rural students often requires migration to urban areas (Schewel and Fransen 2018a). Erulkar *et al.* (2006), in a study of young people (ages 10-19) in poor areas of Addis Ababa, for example, found that around half of all boys and girls moved there primarily in pursuit of educational opportunities (Erulkar *et al.*, 2006).

The educational attainment of internal migrants appears to differ based on the internal migration trajectory. National representative Labor Force Survey data from 2013 captures migration across zones, and shows that the characteristics of those who stay and those who move to rural areas are very similar. As Figure 9 shows, at least half of this population has no formal schooling. However, migrants who move to urban areas – whether from a rural area or another urban area – have higher levels of education. Urban-urban migrants show the highest levels of education. One reason urban to rural migrants also see higher levels of educational attainment is likely because these migrants are government workers who are sent to jobs located in rural areas. In recent years, they may also capture the movement of high-skilled workers to foreign companies or industrial parks that may be located in rural areas and build housing for their administrative workers.

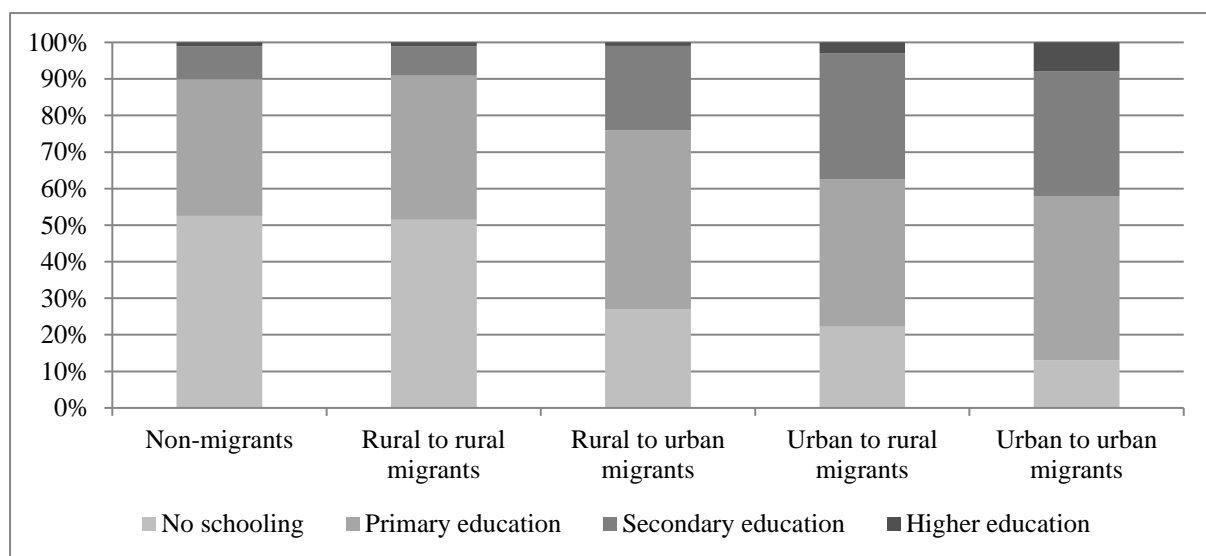


Figure 9. Educational attainment of non-migrants and internal migrants by migration trajectory
Notes. Based on Labor Force Survey 2013 data. Recent migrants are individuals who moved less than five years prior to survey data collection. Based on the population aged 15 and over. The sample includes 146,198 individuals.

Source: Figure reproduced from Schewel and Fransen 2018a: 564.

Widening access to formal education is a political project with important cultural and economic consequences. Formal education shapes young people’s notions of good work and the good life, and thus their migration aspirations and behaviour (Schewel 2019b). In this regard, Mains (2013) ethnographic study of the life experiences and aspirations of young, unemployed men in Jimma, one of the large, zonal towns in south-western Ethiopia, is illuminating. Many young men, particularly those with secondary education or higher levels, prefer unemployment instead of assuming other forms of low-skilled and socially devalued work. The social devaluation of farming and other forms of low-skilled work (including work on foreign owned flower farms; see Schewel 2018) has important

migration consequences. More and more, young Ethiopians aspire to ‘good work’ in urban areas of Ethiopia (Schewel and Fransen 2018a).

In Ethiopia, increased access to education appears to increase the likelihood of internal migration for several reasons: first, the nature of formal education in the modern period tends to teach students values, attitudes and skills that are oriented towards ‘professional’, urban employment (White 2012; Maurus 2016); second, achieving higher education in Ethiopia often requires moving to an urban center, because schooling is simply not available in rural areas (Schewel and Fransen 2018a; Schewel 2019b); third, higher educational attainment is a form of human capital that can boost the expected economic returns of a migration project (Sjaastad 1962; Schwartz 1971; Blunch and Laderchi 2015); and fourth, modern labor markets concentrate skilled labor in urban areas (Lee 1966).

Regarding international migration, the educational attainment of international migrants varies. The greatest share of Ethiopia’s international migrants have primary-levels of education, which is perhaps unsurprising given that the overwhelming majority of the Ethiopian population only have primary levels of schooling. However, research suggests that even higher levels of *primary* education can drive migration aspirations (Schewel and Fransen 2018a). Further, research on labor migrants in the Middle East often find that the women who leave have upper levels of primary or lower levels of secondary education (e.g. Busza et al 2017; Schewel 2018b). In general, then, these labor migrants are more educated than non-migrants (Kuschminder & Siegel 2014: 3). Among the relatively few who achieve tertiary levels of education, emigration levels are significant. One study found that Ethiopia’s tertiary educated population had an emigration rate over 10 percent in 2000 (DIOC-E 2000).

In sum, despite the three regimes’ very different visions of development, all included widening access to formal education as fundamental. Under the imperial regime, this was largely limited to urban areas and the relatively elite. Under the Derg, access to schooling expanded into more rural and peripheral regions of the country. Under the current government, enrollment in formal education increased exponentially. Despite this expansion, educational attainment across the three regimes remained overwhelmingly at primary levels for the bulk of Ethiopia’s population. Nevertheless, this access to education – even just primary levels – appears to play an important role in shaping young people’s aspirations and expectations for their lives, orienting their aspirations away from rural livelihoods towards urban futures.

2.4 Technological: Infrastructure Development

The political, economic, and education transformations described above were only achieved through significant infrastructure development across Ethiopia, another important yet often-overlooked driver

of migration trends. Infrastructure development, whether through roads, rail, air, or information communication services, fosters growing rural-urban and urban-urban connectivity and integration. Growing connectivity lowers information and capability thresholds for those considering a migration project, whether to a nearby town, a more distant urban center, or abroad.

Significant road expansion in Ethiopia occurred under Emperor Menelik in the late 19th and early 20th century. In fact, Emperor Menelik is said to have participated himself in constructing roads, so vital were they to his modernization and integration ambitions (Pankhurst 2001). Under the brief Italian occupation, the Italians built over 6000 km of roads and trails, and although many bridges and roads were destroyed when they left, they laid an initial infrastructure that was built upon in the decades to come. Haile Selassie established the Imperial Highway Authority in 1951, and many roads in the 1960s were built by foreign contractors. The Derg created a Rural Roads Department in 1978, to facilitate connectivity to rural areas, in addition to the Highway Authority. Road development continued under the new government, with the Road Sector Development Program in 1997, which expanded Ethiopia’s road network from 26,550 km, of which 3,708 km were paved, to 49,000km (See Table 8). Road expansion continues, making up about a quarter of the infrastructure budget. Foreign companies, primarily China, are playing a key role in road construction in recent years. By 2015, the road network had doubled to over 100,000 km.

Table 8. Road Network Development in Ethiopia

Years	Growth in road network (km)	Total road network (km)
1951-1973	2760	9260
1974-1991	9757	19017
1992-2010	31019	49000

Source: Ethiopian Roads Authority (2010)

As a result of road development, rural areas are now in closer contact to urban centers. Dorosh and Schmidt (2010) found that the number of people residing in or within three hours of a city of at least 50,000 rose from 15.5 percent of the population in 1984 to 48.5 percent in 2007. This connectivity has significant consequences on internal mobility. More rural people are exposed to goods, services, and basic facilities (electricity, for example), that may not be available in rural areas. Growing rural-urban connectivity leads to the creation and transformation of new markets as more people access urban centers. Further, growing access to neighboring towns can also increase exposure to more distant urban areas.

Accompanying road construction is significant government investment in railway networks. Beginning even earlier than roads, the first railway connected Addis Ababa to the coast – starting in Djibouti in

French Somaliland in 1897, reaching Dire Dawa in 1902 and Addis Ababa in 1917. The creation of the Djibouti-Addis Ababa railway contributed to the emergence of several towns along the route which in turn led to the establishment of financial and public services such as banks, hospitals and schools (Pankhurst 2001). Following the growth of these urban centers, non-agricultural workers—artisans, traders, bar and restaurant owners and workers, shop keepers and construction workers—also began migrating to these emerging towns (Blunch and Laderchi 2015)^{xvii}.

Airline infrastructure is another element facilitating both internal and international connectivity of both goods and people. Ethiopian Airlines, a government owned enterprise across the three regimes, began operating as early as 1946 and is now the largest intra-African network operator. The growing ease and decreasing cost of international travel also relieves some of the constraints on migration. In fact, a growing migration industry that facilitates the migration of young Ethiopian women to the Middle East as domestic workers relies upon this airline infrastructure.

Finally, the expansion of communications technology is important to understand changing migration aspirations among young generations in Ethiopia. Radio and television were the first revolutions in information sharing. During the time of the Imperial regime and thereafter, these communication technologies were state-run, and served the purpose of sharing information, education, and fostering a sense of national identity. The first television program, Ethiopian Educational Television, was overseen by the Ministry of Education and first broadcast in October 1965. Television and radio were part of the state-building and development projects of the three Ethiopian regimes. More recently, growing access to mobile phones and the internet widens access to information about opportunities and lifestyles elsewhere.

Relative to other countries, however, internet access remains relatively low in Ethiopia. Although mobile phone usage has dramatically increased in recent decades, only 2.9 percent of the population could access the internet at home (through a mobile device or otherwise) in 2014 (UN 2016). Low access to communications technologies could be one part of the story of why migration from Ethiopia remains relatively low. Nevertheless, whether by road, rail, air, or information communication technology, this infrastructure development is a fundamental process that helps explain why migration rates can increase over time. Increased access to information about opportunities and lifestyles elsewhere, and greater ease to reach them, means more people will have the capability to embark upon a migration project, whether to a neighboring town or abroad.

3 Discussion and Conclusion

This paper contributes to discussions about the drivers of migration in Ethiopia, and in countries at low levels of human and economic development more generally. It is commonly assumed that in such

contexts, migration is driven by push factors like poverty, drought, land-scarcity or conflict. In our analyses, we show that clearly, drought- and conflict-induced displacement is a key part of Ethiopia's migration history. Yet, to reduce Ethiopia's migration history to them would neglect the deeper and more gradual shifts in the political, demographic, economic, technological, and cultural realms that are also crucial to understanding how and why migration trajectories transformed over the last century.

This paper clarifies 1) how migration trends within and from Ethiopia have changed over the last century, and 2) what dimensions of social transformation help explain these shifts. Regarding the first objective, we suggest that migration trends changed in primarily three ways. First, there has been a general *sedentarization* of nomadic and semi-nomadic populations across Ethiopia's lowlands as the modern nation-state expanded. All three government regimes – the imperial regime, the socialist regime, and the developmental state – are built upon and reinforce a sedentary logic that tends to assume settled life as the norm, and through its bureaucratic structure and service provisions, directly or indirectly has the effect of tying people to places. This is an important finding for research on 'migration transitions,' which often begin from the assumption that populations are largely immobile and become more mobile as 'modernization' proceeds (see Zelinsky 1971). The Ethiopian case shows that, on the contrary, many Ethiopian peoples were highly mobile; the sedentarization of nomadic and semi-nomadic populations has been a core feature of 'modernization' policy in Ethiopia.

Second, although the Ethiopian population has historically been very mobile, this movement was primarily rural-rural; however, in recent decades, internal migration trajectories are increasingly oriented towards urban centers. There is a slow but steady urbanization of Ethiopia's population distribution, a trend that mirrors global experience and is likely to continue in the coming decades. Third, international migration from Ethiopia diversified in nature and destination over the last half century. International migration for religious, educational, or trade reasons under Haile Selassie became increasingly dominated by asylum-seeking movements under the Derg. Under the current government, new forms of low-skilled labor migration, to the Middle East or other African destinations, are increasingly common.

Despite these shifts in migration trends, a key characteristic of Ethiopian migration across the last century is that levels of internal and international migration have been and remain relatively low (barring periods of significant conflict-induced displacement or state-led resettlement schemes). Ethiopia is less urbanized, and sees lower levels of international emigration, than other African countries at similar levels of human development (Table A2). Part II of this paper offered some potential explanations for this: poverty, low levels of education, and relatively low levels of connectivity continue to characterize the lives of much of Ethiopia's rural population. Indeed, despite rapid economic growth over the last two decades, Ethiopia remains one of the poorest countries (on a per capita basis) in the world. Both internal and international migration projects often require significant financial, human and

social capital to realize. Thus, rather than stimulating migration, low levels of income, education, and opportunity are likely a key explanation for why migration levels remain relatively low.

However, despite relatively low rates of urbanization and international migration, things are changing. To understand why we see the rise of rural-urban movements and the growth and diversification of international movements requires examining a range of social processes. A social transformation framework acknowledges the relevance of Ethiopia's demographic transition, which means a growing share of Ethiopia's population are young adults. However, rather than 'forced' out of rural livelihoods by 'population pressures,' it is important to note that the young generations in Ethiopia increasingly aspire to urban futures in the service sector, in large part because of their growing access to formal education, even just at primary levels. Furthermore, when government policy focuses on urban development and the commercialization of the economy, as it has done most forcefully in recent years under the EPRDF, population movements and economic behavior mirror this emphasis.

One important finding of this paper is that, when researchers speak about migration 'drivers,' it is important to distinguish between the relatively abrupt moments of population displacement, due to political conflict or famine, for example, and the underlying, gradual shifts in the structure of society that make certain kinds of migration more likely. These 'sudden' and more 'gradual' drivers of migration are inevitably interrelated, but sometime the links between the two are underappreciated. For example, in Ethiopia, famine has historically caused major internal population movements. Massive displacement and starvation were the fate of millions. However, over time, the impacts of drought – whether it turned to famine, and whether population movement resulted – changed as the Ethiopian nation-state developed. On the one hand, as the state became more consolidated, it introduced resettlement programs that led to large-scale movement of populations that the government saw as the primary way as to prevent against the worst consequences of drought. On the other hand, over this same period, infrastructure development increased substantially, particular the construction of roads and communication infrastructure, which meant that aid could be more easily given to distant populations. This reduced the need for some populations to move. Thus, the consolidation of the modern Ethiopian state had important and conflicting impacts on how populations adapt to periods of drought: displacement through state-led resettlement, but also more opportunity to stay through the more sophisticated provision of food aid.

Another important finding is that the timing and particular constellation of social changes give rise to certain kinds of migration or staying behavior. For example, the policy emphasis on rural development and the more explicit ambition to control population movements under the communist Derg regime can help explain why such a large share of the population remained in rural, agricultural livelihoods for so long. In fact, agriculture remained the main occupation of more than eighty percent of the population until 2000. It was only after the relatively abrupt shift in the economic rationale of the developmental

state, in particular the embrace of market forces, private entrepreneurship and industrial capitalism, that Ethiopia experienced rapid economic growth and the share of the population working in agriculture decreased, from 85.8 percent in 2000 to 68.2 percent in 2017. Rather than moving into industry, most of those who left agricultural employment found work in the service sector. Thus, relative to previous decades, the share of the population moving out of agriculture into the service sector is dramatic. Nevertheless, the analyses suggest that growing rural-urban migration is not only driven by economic transformation. Rising access to formal education is also an important driving force. Net enrollment rates in primary school increased from 21 to 93 percent over the last two decades (UN 2014). Thus, these economic shifts occurred at the same time that a growing share of young people began to be educated, and even just primary levels can impact migration aspirations (see Schewel and Fransen 2018a).

Finally, regarding international migration, the concept of a ‘migration system’ can help explain the nature and direction of international migration from Ethiopia (cf. Mabogunje 1971; Kritz et al 1991). On the one hand, the fact that Ethiopia was never formally colonized helps explain relatively low emigration levels. Italy occupied Ethiopia for five years, but never consolidated a lasting colonial administration in Ethiopia. This brief occupation had lasting ramifications for the political and economic trajectory of the country (Pankhurst 2001), but it did not generate a migration system between Ethiopia and Italy, as colonization did between other African and European countries in the postcolonial era. However, this paper shows that international migration from Ethiopia, even if relatively low, is not new. For example, there are long-standing migration links between Ethiopia and the Middle East – for both economic and religious reasons. However, these long-standing ties gave rise to labor migration systems in recent decades. Because of the economic and educational transitions mentioned above, Ethiopians increasingly aspire to futures outside of rural agriculture. As migration systems develop between Ethiopia and the Middle East (and elsewhere) – which the growing integration of Ethiopia into the world market will likely bring – more Ethiopians will likely leave to realize their aspirations elsewhere.

Because migration within and from Ethiopia is driven by deep shifts in the political, economic, and cultural make-up of Ethiopian society, ‘development’ in Ethiopia in the decades to come will likely lead to rising levels of internal and international migration. Policy efforts to stem the ‘root causes’ of migration should recognize the differentiated nature of migration’s drivers. Conflict-induced displacement, or state-driven resettlement schemes, are the arena in which the state has more power to directly impact population movements. But migration trends driven by deeper shifts in the demographic composition of the population, the diversification of the economy, growing infrastructure and levels connectivity, and changing notions of the ‘good life’ – these processes all tend to increase rates of mobility and are stubbornly resistant to policy interventions that attempt to keep people in place. Future generations will inevitably see more Ethiopians “on the move.”

4 References

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5 Appendix

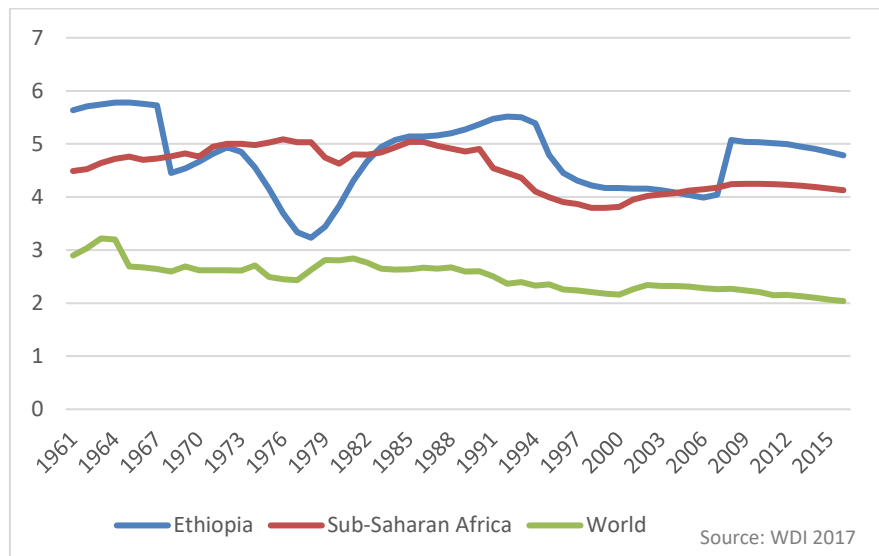


Figure A1. Urban Population Growth (Annual Percentage)

Table A1. Number & percentage of total and urban population of the different regions of Ethiopia, 1994 and 2007

Regions & City Administrations	1994				2007			
	Total Population		Total Urban Population		Total Population		Total Urban Population	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Tigray	3,136,267	5.86	468,478	14.94	4,316,988	5.86	844,040	19.55
Afar	1,060,573	1.98	79,258	7.47	1,390,273	1.89	185,135	13.32
Amhara	13,834,297	25.87	1,265,315	9.15	17,221,976	23.38	2,112,595	12.27
Oromia	18,732,525	35.03	1,970,088	10.52	26,993,933	36.65	3,317,460	12.29
Somali	3,198,514	5.98	437,035	13.66	4,445,219	6.04	623,004	14.02
Benishangul-Gumuz	460,459	0.86	36,027	7.82	784,345	1.06	105,926	13.51
S.N.N.P	10,377,028	19.40	704,818	6.79	14,929,548	20.27	1,495,557	10.02
Gambella	181,862	0.34	27,424	15.08	307,096	0.42	77,925	25.38
Harari	131,139	0.25	76,378	58.24	183,415	0.25	99,368	54.18
A.A City Adm	2,112,737	3.95	2,084,588	98.67	2,739,551	3.72	2,739,551	100
Dire Dawa City Adm	251,864	0.47	173,188	68.76	341,834	0.46	233,224	68.26
Total	53,477,265	100	7,323,207	13.69	73,654,178	100	11,833,785	16.10

Source: CSA, 1998:14; 2010:7

Table A2. Emigration Rates for Ethiopia and other countries at similar levels of human development (2015)

Country	Emigration rate	Human Development Index Rating	% Rural
Nigeria	0.0060	0.527	52.2
Madagascar	0.0070	0.514	64.8
Ethiopia	0.0075	0.451	80.6
Kenya	0.0097	0.587	74.3
Chad	0.0149	0.407	77.5
Djibouti	0.0172	0.470	22.6
Niger	0.0179	0.347	83.8
Uganda	0.0183	0.505	77.9
Guinea	0.0353	0.443	64.9
Cote d'Ivoire	0.0368	0.478	50.6
Yemen, Rep.	0.0376	0.483	65.2
Senegal	0.0392	0.492	54.1
The Gambia	0.0453	0.457	40.8
Sudan	0.0489	0.497	66.1
Guinea-Bissaw	0.0575	0.449	57.9
Togo	0.0603	0.495	59.9
CAR	0.0970	0.357	59.7

Sources: HDI data from UNDP (<http://hdr.undp.org/en/data>) | Emigrant Stock data from UNDESA 2015 | Total Population & Percent Rural from WDI (databank.worldbank.org)

Table A3. Total migrant stock in Ethiopia at mid-year by origin, 1990-2010

Year	Total	Other North	Other South	Burundi	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Djibouti	Eritrea	Rwanda	Somalia	South Sudan	Sudan	Uganda	Yemen
1990	1155390	7358	22075	19	48	904	69681	71	616940	384266	53857	103	68
1995	806904	10378	31136	25	63	1901	34949	93	459615	235512	33008	135	89
2000	611384	15366	46100	35	90	3258	6843	132	389419	131405	18417	192	127
2005	514242	12925	38775	29	75	2740	5756	111	327545	110527	15491	161	107
2010	567720	14269	42807	32	83	3025	6354	122	361609	122021	17102	178	118
2015	1072949	17477	52431	40	102	3705	156030	150	442910	375202	24539	218	145

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2015). Trends in International Migrant Stock: the 2015 Revision.

ⁱ The 1984 census, for example, covered about 81 percent of the Ethiopian population, omitting lowland areas with nomadic populations (see Randall 2015). The 1994 census did not cover the nomadic populations of Afar and Somali regions where pastoralists are dominant (Randall 2015).

ⁱⁱ Ethiopian kings had a long history of traveling with their entourages from place to place, and though many rulers had settled before — clearly manifest in the formidable castles of Gondar — the population of Addis Ababa grew more rapidly than any other historic town.

ⁱⁱⁱ For example, Gambella had 15.1 percent urban population in 1994, and this grew to 25.4 in 2007. Tigray, likewise, grew from an urban population of 15.0 to 20.0 percent over the same period. Other regions saw less dramatic increases, like Somali, from 13.7 to 14.0 percent, or Oromiya, from 10.5 to 12.3 percent. Although lower than the national average of 13.7 in 1994 and 16.1 in 2007, some overwhelmingly rural regions still experienced relatively significant urban growth: for example, in Afar, whose urban population grew from 7.5 percent in 1994 to 13.3 in 2007, or in SNNPR, which grew from 6.8 to 10.0 percent. The regions that carry the highest percentage of the total Ethiopian population, Amhara (23.4), Oromia (36.7) and SNNP (20.3) remain more rural than the national average, with urban populations constituting 12.3 percent, 12.3 percent, and 10.0 percent, respectively, of the regions' total population.

^{iv} This table focuses on the 1990s onwards because of the administrative restructuring and regional-state creation that took place between the 1984 and 1994 census. The redrawing of boundaries makes it difficult to compare historical census data by region.

^v For example, among the Oromo — a population that constitutes over one-third of the Ethiopian population — marriage traditionally entails the departure of a woman from her family to that of her husband. Historically, this was most often a rural-rural movement (between settled populations or semi-nomadic ones) that marked the lives of at least half of that population.

^{vi} Measured as emigrant stock divided by the total population.

^{vii} The World Bank Global Bilateral Migration database presents United States, Israel, Djibouti, and Saudi Arabia as the top countries hosting Ethiopian emigrants in 1990 (see Table 6). However, these figures for 1990 from the World Bank are dissonant with those from the United Nations Population Division, who note much higher numbers Ethiopian emigrants in neighboring African countries.

^{viii} Ethiopia played an important role in the pan-African movement and twentieth-century African politics, such that it was chosen as the permanent headquarters of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa in 1958, the Organization of African Unity in 1963, which later became the African Union in 2001. These international ties facilitated the movement of people into Ethiopia.

^{ix} Emperor Haile Selassie, as Prunier and Ficquet argue, “was probably the Ethiopian aristocrat of his time who had been the most exposed to Western education and values,” and yet, “his entourage consisted of intellectuals who were known as ‘modernizers’ or ‘Japanizers’ since Japanese Meiji era was their model for Ethiopia” (Prunier and Ficquet 2015: 9; Levine 2000).

^x By 2000, the UN and World Bank datasets are more comparable, though the UN dataset still captures more regional migration as well as higher migration numbers in other Western countries in 2000.

^{xi} In 1976, one study found that 75 percent of laborers working in 16 irrigation schemes in the Awash valley were migrants (World Bank 2007: 116 as cited by Blunch and Laderchi 2005).

^{xii} Once the Derg's leader Mengistu secured his dominant position and the regime's relationship with the Soviet Union solidified — hallmarked by the “Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation” signed in Moscow by Mengistu on 20 November 1978 — he enthroned the formal Workers Party of Ethiopia in a costly public production of power in 1984, 10 years after the initial revolution and continued a process of modernization under the banner of communism.

^{xiii} Groups of four or more kebeles were organized into an agargelot (meaning service), a cooperative designed to facilitate the distribution of goods and social services.

^{xiv} A Ministry of Education was established in 1930, but the education of “natives” more or less ceased under Italian occupation, and so the expansion of the education system began in earnest in the 1940s. Pankhurst (2001) notes that unlike the prewar period, education was then extremely popular: “Almost every school had a waiting list for new student intake. The emperor, when driving in his car, was frequently mobbed by children crying, ‘School! School!’” (2001: 259). The first tertiary education institution, the University College of Addis Ababa was established in 1950, though many students continued to study abroad, choosing destinations beyond Europe, often in English speaking countries like the United States, Canada and India (Pankhurst 2001).

^{xv} Levine (1965) dedicates significant analysis to the effects of migration on the political and intellectual horizons of the Ethiopian elite during this period. The migration experience, particularly the exposure to different political, economic, and social systems of other places, significantly shaped the aspirations and commitment of this educated elite to Ethiopia's modernization and progress (Levine 1965). “In the mirror of foreigners' regards,” Levine (1965: 197) writes, “their identity as Ethiopians took clearer shape [...] These factors—broadening of perspective, acquaintance with a higher economic standard, less inhibited discussions, and greater self-consciousness as Ethiopians—contributed to a spirit of nationalist dedication.” Those who returned were often those who took positions of power in the Imperial regime, or contrived plans to overthrow it as in the case of the

^{xvi} This movement is missing from the World Bank migration statistics (who note 0 migration to the Soviet Union in 1970 or 1980).

^{xvii} Today, expanding Ethiopia's railway network remains vital to connecting this land-locked nation to the world market. A new railway linking Addis Ababa and Djibouti's port opened in 2017, costing 4.2 billion dollars, and shortening the travel time between the two countries from three days by truck to around 12 hours by rail. More than 95 percent of Ethiopia's trade passes through Djibouti's port. These long-standing transportation links to Djibouti are also reflected in the movements of people. Djibouti has remained a top destination of Ethiopian emigrants since the time of Haile Selassie (see Table 4).