

## **Trends in Contemporary International Migration of Ethiopia**

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### **Abstract**

*Ethiopia is found in the 'Eastern Africa migration system' known for turbulent population mobility due to a host of social, economic, and political factors. The migration problem of East Africa, in which, a substantial exploration of the complexity and intensity of the migration pattern of Ethiopia has become necessary in the context of social transformation and development processes. To this end, this study is designed to provide migratory change and developmental patterns of international migration of Ethiopia in regional and sub-regional perspectives based on long-term macro statistics. The data obtained from the Reports of the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs and World Bank's Development Indicators have been used to describe, analyze and explain long-term patterns of international migration of Ethiopia within the regional contexts. Results show the trend that Ethiopia experienced a continuous increase in its international migrant stock in the last five decades, from less than 400,000 in 1960 to over 1 million in 2015. Refugees and transit migrants constituted the largest number of immigrants, mostly from the neighboring countries, driven by continuous conflicts and political instability. Ethiopia, once dominant in refugee flows in the Horn of Africa due to political conflict, famine, and persecution, experienced a sharp decline in the share of refugees in the Horn of Africa in the last three decades. Economic motives have recently become the prime factors in migration decisions among the Ethiopians as observed with the fact that the USA and the Middle East are the major destinations. The findings revealed that Ethiopian emigration is characterized by the inter-continental flows unlike the Sub-Saharan migration pattern known to have an intra-continental migratory link. Feminization of Ethiopian migration is also evident particularly in core destination countries of the Global North, which indicates the increasing role of females in migration decisions but also disproves the widely held perception about Ethiopians emigration to the Arab World as female-specific. In the final analysis, Ethiopia could be regarded rather as a destination, with over 1.2 million migrants, than as an origin, with just over 800,000 as of 2017, which now make the country a regional migration hub in the Horn of Africa.*

**Keywords:** *Migration, Refugee, Migratory link, Ethiopia, East Africa*

### **Introduction**

Migration is a phenomenon that is as old as the history of humankind. People have been moving from one place to another all through human history (McKeown, 2004). In recent years, accounting to its complexity and intensity, international migration has become a more interesting subject of researches in social sciences as it gets more momentum due to the debated economic pressure immigrants create in hosting countries. According to United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), as of 2017, the number of people

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living in a country other than their place of birth has recently shown a tremendous increase from over 150 million in 1991 to almost 260 million in 2017. While this increase is more evident in developed countries like the USA and Germany, low and middle-income countries also hosted a large number of migrants which are mostly refugees and asylum seekers. One important feature of this increase is the feminization of migration as the number of women migrant population has generally increased in all regions with an annual average growth rate of 1.1 in 1991-1995 to 2.4 in 2010-2015. Although the largest number of international migrants originated from Asia and Europe in the last couple of years (UNDESA, 2017), the growing number of international migrants is a phenomenon that is also evident in Africa, often regarded as a “continent on the move”, which is previously dominated mainly by intra-continental population mobility.

This international population mobility has been facilitated by the development process, social transformation, and of course factors like wage differences, historical relationships, and geographical proximity. New shreds of evidence show that Africans also migrate for family union, work, and/or study (Schoumaker & Beauchemin, 2015). In terms of destination, many studies show that African emigration is not just directed to Europe as it is usually claimed but is mainly directed towards other African countries (Schoumaker & Beauchemin, 2015; Sander & Maimbo, 2003), the Gulf countries, and the Americas (Bakewell & Haas, 2007).

Ethiopia is found in the Horn of Africa, a conflict-ridden area of the world, often labeled in the literature as the “Eastern Africa migration system”, known for the turbulent mobility of people within the region and outside. Scholars posit that the migration problem of East Africa, in which Ethiopia is involved, has always been substantial, and exploring the migration patterns in the region is complex due to the host of social, economic, and political factors. Being one of the poorest, populous, politically unstable, and food-insecure countries in the world, Ethiopia meets all the profile of a country prone to large emigration (Fransen & Kuschminder, 2009). The World Bank report has shown that the country has an estimated emigration rate of 0.7% which is lower than other sub-Saharan countries (Fransen & Kuschminder, 2009). A survey conducted in Ethiopia by the World Bank in 2010 indicates that nearly 40% of respondents had family members or relatives living in another country. The United Nations has estimated that the number of Ethiopians born abroad has virtually doubled as the migrant stock of 443,926 by 2000 which has grown to be 800,879 in 2017 (UNDESA, 2017). The fact that the share of females in the stock has shown a growth rate of 20% every five years is also worth mentioning in this regard. The point is that Ethiopia, being one of the developing countries, faces the

complex challenges of migration flows beside the recurring problems of food insecurity, drought, political instability, and demographic growth, unemployment and ethnic conflict, *etc.* (Adepoju, 2004). Nonetheless, the studies conducted on the international aspect of population mobility are generally scanty.

One such study worth mentioning is the work of Fransen & Kuschminder (2009) that aimed at providing an overview of migration and development in Ethiopia. While this work could be regarded as one of the first systematic attempts in presenting the discussion of historical and contemporary migration patterns of Ethiopia, it is not exhaustive as it narrowly focuses on the development impact of the Ethiopian Diaspora. Besides, it does not capture the recent fast-paced political and economic changes that Ethiopia is experiencing over the last decade.

A study conducted by Kuschminder *et al.* (2012) provides an account of the general profile of Ethiopian migrants in destination regions, namely: the Global North (North America, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand), African countries, and the Middle-East. They have found out that the migration pattern of Ethiopia is unique within the African context in that the tremendous migration flow is towards the Middle East, not to other African countries and it is essentially feminized. While the aforementioned study provides a good account of empirical information, the authors have equally indicated that the results cannot be generalized to represent the pattern of Ethiopian migration, and hence the necessity of further researches to understand the national phenomenon in the wider picture of international migration flows and trends, which in the words of Melegh (2013), “form a web around the world”.

In this paper, an attempt is, thus, made to equally pay attention to the inflow aspect of Ethiopian migration, unlike other studies that emphasized only the outflow dimension. According to Melegh (2013), this can fruitfully be done *via* the complex, historical analysis of migratory change and developmental patterns based on longer-term macro statistics. The fact that the Ethiopian migrant population is young makes the studies on migration dynamics even more pervasive particularly in the context of economic growth, lack of properly documented data, and absence of a well-articulated national policy framework.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Migration is a very complicated and dynamic social phenomenon that involves many actors upholding varying interests. It has taken different forms, patterns, or magnitudes at different times. In his contribution to the book titled “The Handbook of International Migration: The American Experience”, Massey (1999) argues that modern international migration has

undergone four major phases: (i) the period, extending from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, dominated by the migration of Europeans to other parts of the world as related to colonization and growth of mercantile capitalism; (ii) the period that starts from early 19<sup>th</sup> until early 20<sup>th</sup> century, which featured the migration mainly dominated by Europeans, and this time due to industrialization; (iii) the inter-war period that exhibited lesser movement of people across borders; and (iv) the post-industrial period, from the 1960s onwards, in which international migration was mainly dominated by movements of developing nations to the Global North. By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, international migration had become truly a global phenomenon (Massey, 1999). In such a global context, it is, thus, imperative to see the patterns of migration and what causes them. Hence, there are two important questions worthy to pose: ‘why does migration occur?’ and ‘why does it still persist?’ These questions help to understand and explain what makes people decide to leave their home country and travel long distances which sometimes prove to be risky and dangerous.

A conventional way of addressing and explaining these questions is a push-pull factor approach. The push-pull factors are described as flip sides of various coins, each coin representing different sets of economic, sociocultural, political, and geographic factors (Schlewitz, 2013). Push factors consist of a set of factors that induce migration while pull factors are conditions in place of destination that attract migrants. The theories of International Migration, explained in the following section, attempt to address the two basic questions posed above.

### ***Neoclassical Theory of Migration***

This is one of the popular international migration theories which explain migration at macro and micro levels. It is rooted in the Heckscher-Ohlin model of macroeconomics, and Harris & Todaro (1970), who created a link between internal (rural-urban) migration and economic development. According to this theory, international migration occurs because of the geographic difference in labor demand and supply between countries. People from countries that have a relative surplus of labor but relatively limited capital usually move to countries that have a higher endowment of capital but relatively limited labor. In other words, people migrate from labor rich countries to capital-rich countries as often precipitated by differences in wages (Massey, 1999).

There is a microeconomic analysis of migration coupled with the above macro-level explanation; migration is a decision made by an individual based on a material/monetary cost-

benefit analysis expected from it. However, before reaping the expected benefit, individuals make their investment in the form of the cost incurred to migrate and settle in the new location or investment in human capital (Sjaastad, 1962).

### ***New Economics of Migration***

This theory of migration challenges many of the assumptions of Neoclassical Migration Theory. It argues that migration is not the result of the individual decision; rather, it is a decision collectively made at a family or household level not only intended to maximize benefit from migration but also minimize the risk of loss of income (Edward & Stark, 1991). The relative deprivation, the collective reduction of risks that a household feels or faces within its community influences a family's decision to send a family member abroad. Hence, a family might decide to send its member abroad even if the relative gain from migration is insignificant/unchanged and if it expects problems in pulling income and/or improving relative income positions within its community (Massey, 1999). This theory, therefore, assumes that conditions in the home country influence the decision of a family to migrate. Based on their unit of analysis and the framework theories, criticisms on neoclassical and push-pull models can be categorized into the following broad divisions. The historical-structural approach follows the 'global structural change' framework (together with dependency and world system theories) and there are others that follow the 'network' approach (cumulative causation and social capital theories). The first two tried to explain why migration occurs while the last one is mainly about why migration continues.

According to the "structural theories", the criticized models fail to vividly depict why migration occurs. These theories use a *post factum* approach which is, explaining a scenario based on the consequences than trying to find out the root cause leading to the decision for migration. A further critique of the approach is that the conventional push-pull theories assume that the poor and economically disadvantaged parts of a society migrate only because of the global income or economic inequality; thus, the poorest countries should send migrants into the richest countries, while this cannot be demonstrated. Hence, this approach fails to explain why migration does not occur from other equally poor nations (Portes & Borocz, 1989).

### ***World System Theory***

This is a historical-structural approach which sees migration as a global phenomenon created and reinforced by the unequal distribution of political power and expansion of global capitalism (Massey, 1999). According to Frank (1969), the force of global capitalisms acted to "develop

underdevelopment” creating a system of dependency dictated by the strong capitalist nations putting the third world countries in a disadvantaged position. The theory further emphasizes the reverse relation between migration and movement of capital to the non- or pre-capitalist society. Migration is a natural consequence of the disruption of the traditional labor structure and dislocations that inevitably occur due to the penetration of capitalism into pre-capitalist societies (Kurekova, 2011). Saskia Sassen, in her explanation about the link between foreign investment and international migration, claims that one key process mediating between the introduction of these modern forms of production and the formation of labor migrations is the disruption of traditional work structures (Sassen, 1988). Therefore, migration is not an individual or family level choice; rather, it is a phenomenon into which people are forced as a result of the existing global structure. However, this theory is also censured for its failure to provide a systematic explanation of migration patterns over a longer period independent of a specific phenomenon which leads to or created a specific migratory link (Melegh, 2013).

### ***Segmented Labor Market Theory***

This theory also follows somewhat the line of argument represented by World System Theory, which explains migration as a consequence of global structural change/difference but only from the demand side. Pioneer proponent of this theory, Michael Piore argues that international migration occurs due to the permanent demand of modern industrial societies for unskilled labor force; which Massey also puts it as an unavoidable need for low wage workers due to the problem of wage inflation (Piore, 1979; Massey, 1999). Wages of the lower scale workers cannot be increased as wages above are to be increased in that case; hence, there are always some jobs which are left for migrant labor and are not done by the non-migrants in the advanced economies. Increasing the wage for less attractive jobs will disrupt the whole wage hierarchy leading to crisis; hence, resorting to low de-skilled migrant labor becomes the only viable option. Accordingly, the inherent dualism between labor and capital extends to the labor market as well. Capital is a factor of production that cannot be laid off even if the demand for it falls, but the labor force can be laid off upon fall of demand. Likewise, employers tend to keep workers having firm-specific skills in capital-intensive sectors while they let to go the workers required for labor-intensive sectors creating a segmented labor market (Massey, 1999).

### ***Social Capital Theory***

This theory and cumulative causation theory (discussed below) are characterized as a network approach that tries to explain the reasons for the perpetuity of migration (Melegh, 2013). Social

capital basically consists of some aspect of a social structure that facilitates certain actions of individuals who are within the structure. Like other forms of capital, social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that would not be materialized otherwise (Coleman, 1990).

Existing and newly created social ties, kinships, and family memberships play a significant role in creating and sustaining international migration links. It could, thus, be argued that migrant networks are sets of interpersonal ties that connect former migrants and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin (Massey, 1999). Therefore, the social capital and networks people have reduced the risk and cost of international migrations leading to the decision to migrate. Yet, the network theories are also criticized for their failure to explain the integration of transitional destinations found at the two ends, origin and destination, in bigger migration routes. Moreover, an explanation as to why migratory links become less intensive and eventually dry out is missing in these theoretical accounts (Melegh, 2013).

### ***Cumulative Causation Theory***

In an attempt to explain why migration continues to happen, this theory argues that one migration leads to another; in the words of Massey, “causation is cumulative”. When one migration occurs, it changes the social context of the origin in a way that instigates subsequent or additional decisions of migration (Massey, 1999). For instance, people who have friends, family members, or relatives abroad have a relatively lower risk after migration which prompts them to migrate. Of course, the level of the network at the origin needs to reach some threshold.

In this article, either one or an amalgamation of the theories discussed above was utilized to analyze the complex phenomenon that characterizes migration, in general, and the Ethiopian migration in particular.

## **Materials and Methods**

This article is based on an exploratory study design. It is meant to be exploratory research to provide an understanding of the long-term patterns of emigration and immigration of Ethiopia and explaining the same by using one or a combination of the conventional theories of migration. To this end, this study has relied mainly on secondary data collected from literature and utilized the qualitative approach of data analysis. Besides, a substantial effort has been made to incorporate basic macro-level statistical data to describe, analyze, reveal and discuss

the complexity and intensity of the migration pattern of Ethiopia within the context of regional and sub-regional perspectives.

In so doing, the general macro statistics on the international migrant stock, data on refugees, GDP per capita, and GDP growth rates were obtained from the World Bank's Development Indicators (2018). Detailed migration data on origin and destination, gender, and net-migration rates were extracted from reports of the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA, 2003, 2013, 2015, 2017). Results were presented along with a thematized discussion to address the knowledge gap pertinent to the socio-economic and political dynamics of international migration of Ethiopia coherently and exhaustively. Accordingly, explanations and analyses have been undertaken, in the next sections, *via* utilizing a framework drawn from the aforementioned theories by taking into account migratory links (as sending and/or receiving state) that characterize the dynamics of population mobility in which Ethiopia is embedded.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **General Trends in International Migrant Stock of Ethiopia**

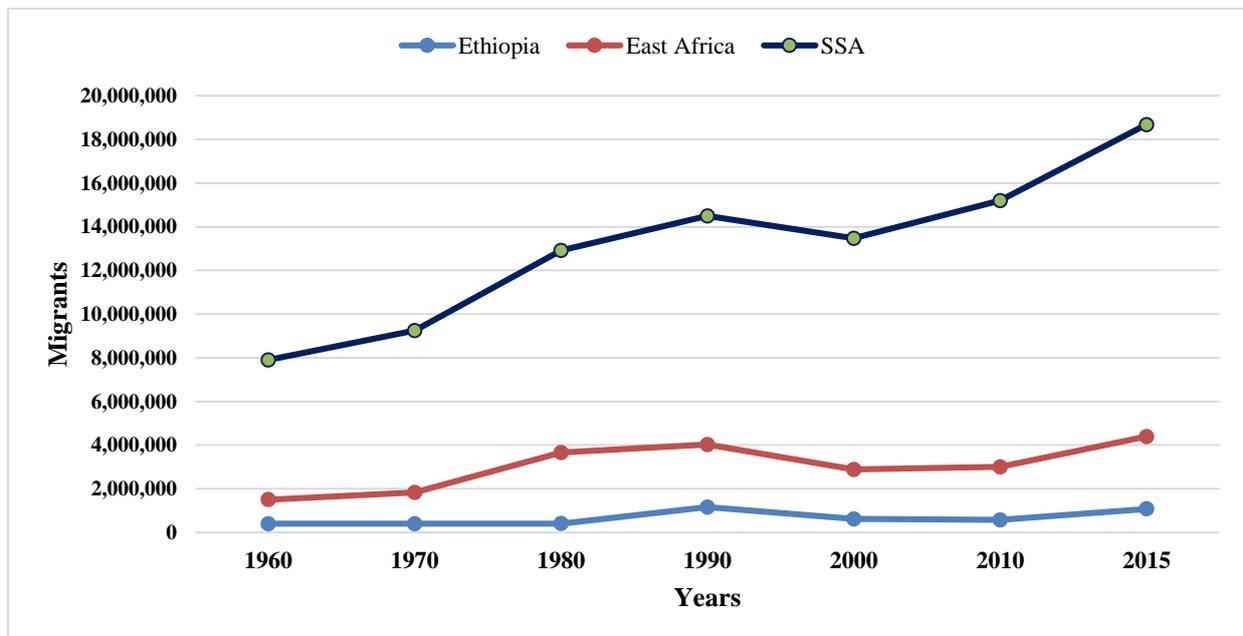
UN defines "international migrant stock" as "the number of people born in a country other than that in which they live" (UNDESA, 2003, 2017). In simple words, it refers to the number of foreign-born persons present in a given country. Basically, this number also includes refugees. International migrant stock is estimated for a particular point in time usually from population censuses. When data on the foreign-born population are not available, people who are citizens of a country other than the country in which they reside are used as estimates (UNDESA, 2017; World Bank, 2018).

Looking at the global and regional dynamics of migration, it appears that the international migrant stock as a percentage of the population has steadily increased over the last five decades. This is manifested in the rise of the number of international migrants in the world over the last five decades, from about 72 million in 1960 to over 220 million in 2000 (UNDESA, 2003). The number of international migrants in developed countries as a proportion of the world total migrant stock kept increasing over the last decades. According to UNDESA (2003), by the year 2000, three-fifths of the world's migrants were found in more developed regions. Based on the World Bank estimate, the number of international migrants in OECD countries as a proportion of the world total migrant stock has increased from 42.8% (in 1960) to 53% (in 2015); whereas in the LDCs it has dropped from 9.4% to less than 5% for the same period (World Bank, 2018).

The main point of our concern here is that data on international migration is of paramount importance not only due to the realization of international migration as “an important issue in the modern world where economic globalization has led to the growing interdependence of countries but also for better understanding of causes and consequences of international migration (UNDESA, 2003). For instance, conflicts in many areas of the world have increased the potential for forced migration across national borders.

Ethiopia is in the Horn of Africa, which is one of the most conflict-ridden areas of the world, known for forced migration. It is part of the Eastern Africa migration system in which the migration problem has always been substantial in the past four decades. To this end, exploring the causes of the migration patterns in the region is complex because there are so many agents present at the same time. Understanding the causes of migration formations in the Horn of Africa requires examination of a large number of factors, including ethnic and religious conflicts, irredentist and separatist-inspired violence, the international war between countries in the region, and intervention in domestic conflicts by external powers (Fransen & Kuschminder, 2009). The same phenomenon is observed in Figure 1 below that depicts an increase of the international migrant stock of SSA, East Africa, and Ethiopia from 1960 to 2015, except for the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (1990-2000).

**Figure 1: International Migrant Stock of Ethiopia, East Africa & Sub-Saharan Africa**



*Source: World Bank, 2018.*

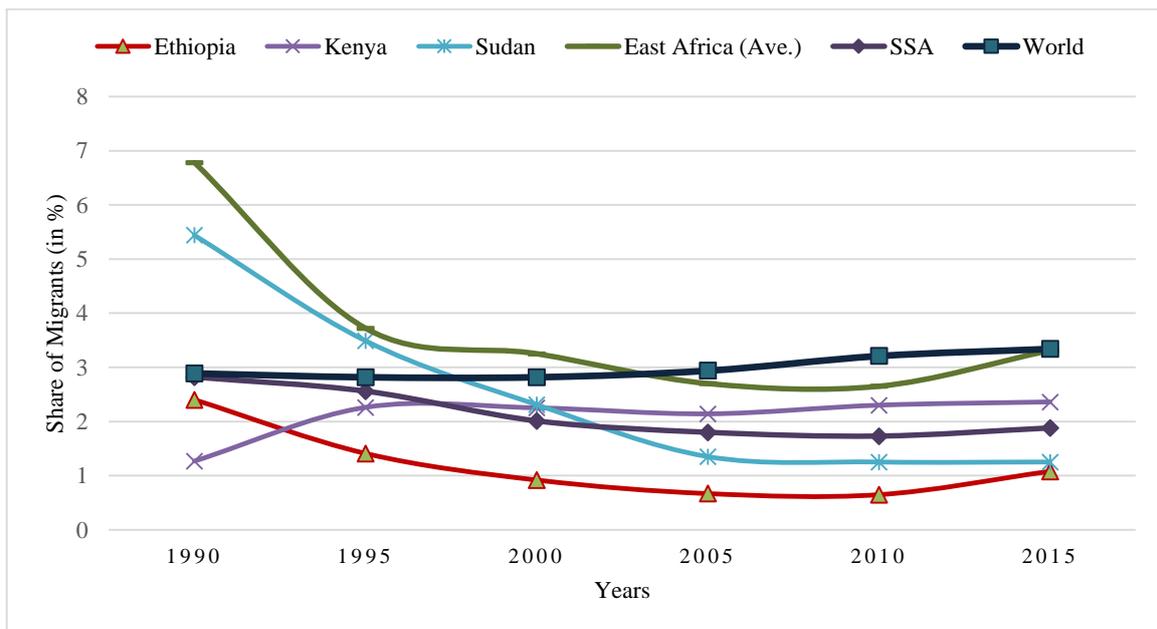
The international migrant stock of Ethiopia has grown from 393,260 in 1960 to over 1 million in 2015, in East Africa 1.5 million to about 4.4 million, and in the Sub-Saharan region from

less than 8 million to over 18.5 million for the same period. For all the three regions, it has almost tripled. The overall trend of Ethiopia’s international migrant stock, self-revealing in the above graph, mirrors more or less the general patterns of East Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa. In order to show the significant level of immigration, an attempt has been made below to show the share of migrant stock in the total population.

***Share of Migrants in the Total Population of Ethiopia, East Africa and SSA***

The data on international migration reveals that the percentage share of international migrants has significantly increased in the developed regions of the world, while the situation in the Horn of Africa has proven to be the opposite. The average share of migrant stock as a percentage of the population in the East African countries<sup>1</sup>, except Kenya, has shown an enormous decline from 6.78% in 1990 to 2.65% in 2010 despite some increase afterward.

**Figure 2: Share of Migrants in the Total Population of Ethiopia & East African Countries**



Source: World Bank, 2018.

As indicated in Figure 2 above, the average share of international migrants in East African countries is high compared to Sub-Saharan countries because of the small population size of countries such as Djibouti and Somalia, which in the 1990s were destinations for a large number of migrants from countries with larger demographic size like Ethiopia making the share

<sup>1</sup> The average value of 1990 is calculated for six countries, i.e. Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Somalia & Uganda; for 1995, 2000 & 2005, it is seven with the inclusion of Eritrea; and for 2010 & 2015, there are eight countries, with South Sudan coming in.

of migrants as high as 20% in Djibouti in 1990, which eventually declined but remained 12.65% in 2015.

Ethiopia, Sudan, and Uganda exhibited a similar pattern of general decline till 2010 and an increasing trend afterward that characterizes the sub-regional average. Yet, in some countries, like Eritrea, the share of international migrant stock as a percentage of the population has remained stable. Kenya, however, has shown an increase in the share of international migrant stock from 1.27% in 1990 to 2.36% in 2015 due to the country's stable political system and better economy which made it a migration destination in the Horn of Africa. This clearly confirms the overall regional and global dynamics of migration and development nexus. The high-income countries have seen an increase in the level of share of migrants' stock from 7.7% in 1990 that nearly doubled in 2015, or the OECD members from 6% to 10%, which contrasts the phenomenon in the low-income countries as the share of migrants dropped from 2.72% to 1.47%, or the HIPCs from 3.32% to 1.67%. According to the World Bank, it is well-developed regions such as North America and EU that have the highest shares of migrant stock (15% and 11% respectively in 2015), while regions such as SSA have the lowest share, less than 2% in 2015.

### ***Migrant Stock in Ethiopia by Country of Origin***

As far as Ethiopia is concerned, the four major sending countries are countries of East Africa namely: Eritrea, Somalia, Sudan, and recently South Sudan. Table 1 below presents the migrant stock of Ethiopia by country of origin across years (1990-2015).

**Table 1: Migrant Stock in Ethiopia by Country of Origin**

S.N.	Origin	Year					
		1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015
1.	Djibouti	904	1,901	3,258	2,740	3,025	3,705
2.	Eritrea	69,681	34,949	6,843	5,756	6,354	206,030
3.	Somalia	616,940	459,615	389,419	327,545	361,609	442,910
4.	South Sudan	384,266	235,512	131,405	110,527	122,021	395,202
5.	Sudan	53,857	33,008	18,417	15,491	17,102	39,539
6.	Uganda	103	135	192	161	178	218
7.	Others	29,639	41,784	61,850	52,022	57,431	74,972
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,155,390</b>	<b>806,904</b>	<b>611,384</b>	<b>514,242</b>	<b>567,720</b>	<b>1,162,576</b>

*Source: UNDESA, 2017.*

Eritrea was a former Northern part of Ethiopia, until its secession after the referendum in 1992. From 1974 until 1991, Ethiopia was ruled by the Socialist military junta called 'Dergue'. During this period, the Eritrean liberation fronts were in war with the army of the military

government. This period was generally characterized by mass internal migration due to the civil war. Over the last two decades that followed its independence, the Eritrean state has been a migrant-sending nation and the increase of outflow of people is not exceptional to Ethiopia only, rather a common phenomenon observed in other destinations as well. The repressive nature of the regime, economic retardation, and involvement in international conflicts (with Ethiopia, Yemen, Sudan, Djibouti) has contributed to the large and continuous outflow of people from the country. In the post-independence period, the outflow of migration has initially shown a relative decline, from 2010 when it started to rise dramatically as shown in the above Table 1.

The migration stock of Somalia in Ethiopia is considerably high across the years in reference. Since 1991, Somalia has been in a civil war (ICR, 2008). The civil war which began in 1988 in the northwest part of the country, the former British Protectorate of Somaliland, ultimately ousted President Mohamed Siad Barre and brought down the government. The rebel Somali National Movement (SNM) mounted attacks against the government which for its part staged land and air campaigns against towns throughout Somaliland, causing people to flee westward to Ethiopia and northward to Djibouti. By 1990, migration stock was over half a million. Hence, the migration has already started earlier in 1990 and the same is observed on the migration stock in Table 1 above. When there was relative peace in the subsequent years (2000 and 2010), there was a relative decline in the number of migrant stock. However, a civil war between the Federal Government of Somalia supported by the African Union and different militant groups like 'Al Shabaab' broke out again around 2010 which contributed to the relative increase of the stock. Although there is a general declining trend across the years under consideration, Ethiopia continued to receive a large number of migrants from Somalia which was less than half a million in 2017.

South Sudan is the second-largest source of immigrants in Ethiopia due to cultural and ethnic ties with the people by the Southwestern borderline of Ethiopia. After its independence in 2011, a civil war broke out in South Sudan, leading to a huge influx of migrants to Ethiopia. The amount of South Sudanese migrants in Ethiopia almost triples (241.87%) following independence and during the recent civil war.

The migratory link between Ethiopia and Sudan slightly declined with the end of the civil war in Ethiopia in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century but also because of the weakening political and diplomatic ties between the countries over the concern of terrorism. Besides, the migration

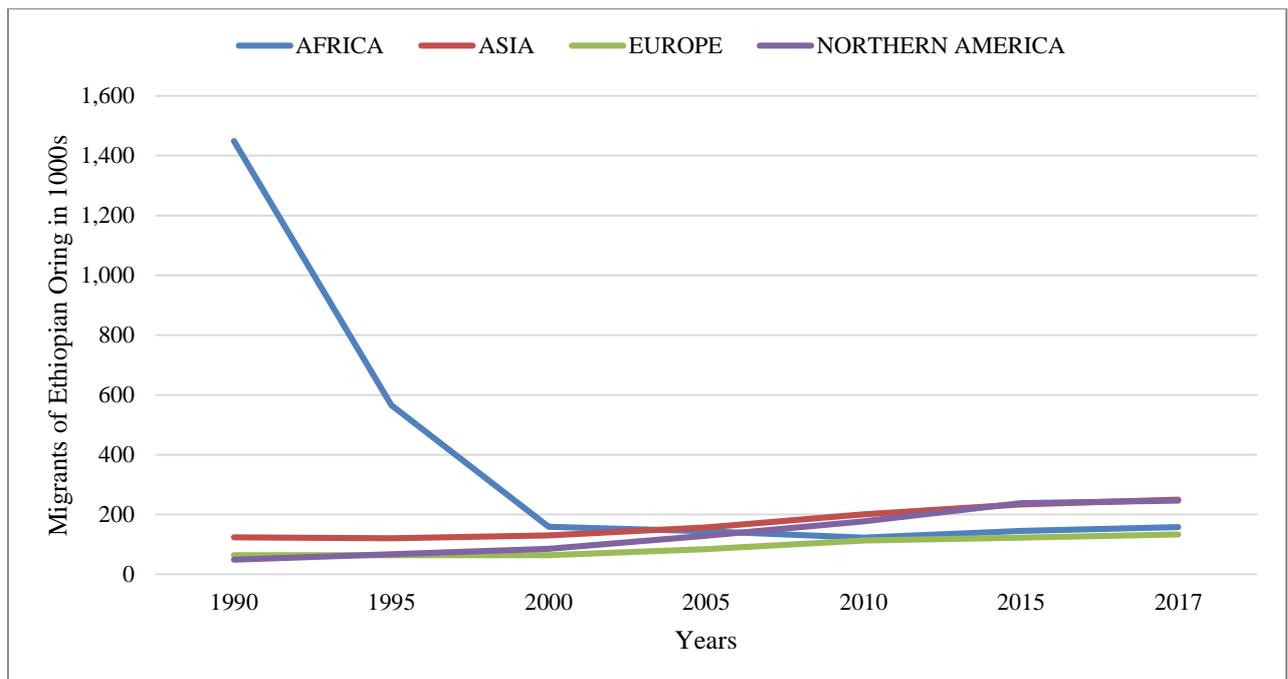
stock of Sudanese in Ethiopia is partly explained by the formal and informal trade links around the border with Ethiopia. Nevertheless, the factors that determined the migration linkage between the two are essentially political in nature.

### **International Migrant Stock of Ethiopia by Destination**

#### ***Destination of Ethiopian Migrants by Continent***

The overall outmigration of Ethiopians is not only directed to Africa but also other destinations mainly North America and Asia (particularly the Middle East). If it is seen country-wise, the major destinations of Ethiopian migrants are three: the USA, Israel, and Saudi Arabia. This makes clear the substantial relevance of inter-continental migratory systems than intra-continental migration as typically exemplified by the Indonesian case where the home continent, Asia, appears to be the major destination of its migrants with a significant increase from 1990 to 2013 (see Figure 3 below).

**Figure 3: Destination of Ethiopian Migrants by Continent**



*Source: UNDESA, 2017.*

For various reasons, be it geographic, socio-economic, and political factors, the African continent used to be significant for Ethiopian migrants before 1990 but has over time lost its significance due to the shift of migration patterns to intercontinental which changed the Ethiopians' destination to be North America, Europe (Western) and Asia (especially the Middle East). Studies reveal that motives to flee have always changed over time. Fransen & Kuschminder (2009) argue that migrants initially fled for political reasons and to escape

conflicts. In later years, the motives of Ethiopian migrants to flee their country shifted to more economic motives (Fransen & Kuschminder, 2009). As far as the general profile of the migrants is concerned, it has been found out that people migrating to the Global North are mostly from urban, well-educated and often with better income, while the uneducated and lower-income people tend to choose Africa and the Middle East and they are predominantly undocumented migrants (Kuschminder *et al.*, 2012).

**Major Destination Countries for Ethiopian Emigrants**

As alluded to, in the above discussion, the emigration of Ethiopians is mainly directed towards Global North and Asia, in general, and North America and the Middle East in particular. Seen in terms of specific countries, it appears that the USA, Saudi Arabia, and Israel are the three most important destinations of migrants originating from Ethiopia (see Table 2 below).

**Table 2: Migrant Stock of Ethiopia by Country of Destination**

S.N.	Destinations	Year					
		1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015
1.	USA	34,805	52,866	71,296	109,858	152,798	210,917
2.	S. Arabia	61,017	62,534	64,252	79,371	102,910	131,493
3.	Israel	40,595	50,287	57,163	67,189	78,029	80,474
4.	Sudan	942,295	502,740	123,478	107,732	70,677	60,734
5.	Kenya	26,695	29,521	20,846	20,917	24,091	36,889
6.	Italy	16,703	11,136	5,569	17,983	30,396	30,401
7.	Canada	13,765	13,822	14,208	18,889	24,535	27,438
8.	Germany	19,612	17,204	14,795	15,936	16,835	17,541
9.	Sweden	9,356	11,103	11,907	11,221	13,100	16,246
10.	Somalia	460,000	18,044	555	1,142	1,882	13,079
11.	Others <sup>2</sup>	62,674	51,233	59,857	70,850	108,309	128,029

Source: UNDESA, 2017.

The Ethiopian emigration to the USA has grown incredibly (by 526%) from less than 35,000 in 1990 to nearly 220,000 in 2017. The enacting of the 1965 Immigration Act, the Refugee Act of 1980, and the Diversity Visa Program of the Immigration Act of 1990, contributed to an increased inflow of migrants to the USA to which Ethiopians are not an exception. The Ethiopian migration was further enhanced by famine in 1985-86 and other unfavorable economic conditions, including political unrest and civil wars (Chacko, 2003). The majority of Ethiopian immigrants arrived later in the 1990s, following the change of government and the Ethio–Eritrean War. Immigration to the West, especially to the USA, from Ethiopia since 1991

<sup>2</sup>UK, Netherlands, S. Sudan, Djibouti, Australia, UAE, France, Norway, Yemen, Switzerland & S. Africa.

rose. Ethiopian Americans have since 1990 established ethnic enclaves in various places in the country, particularly in the Washington D.C, Los Angeles, and California which have also come to be known as “Little Ethiopia”, to describe an enclave of many Ethiopian businesses and restaurants, as well as a significant concentration of residents of Ethiopian and Eritrean ancestry (Ember, 1997). The key factor is, thus, social capital and the strong ethnic enclaves created in the USA. As of 2014, approximately 251,000 Ethiopian immigrants and their children live in the USA constituting United States’ second-largest African immigrant group next to Nigeria (MPI, 2014).

According to Portes & Borocz (1989), the condition of reception at the country of destination facilitates migration. In Washington D.C., ‘Amharic’, the widely spoken official language in Ethiopia, became one of the six non-English languages in the Language Access Act of 2004, which allows access to government services and education in Amharic for Ethiopians. This condition in the USA makes the migration and integration easier encouraging migration by reducing the risk and creating favorable conditions upon arrival in the USA. Apart from the above facts specific to Ethiopia, the USA is a core country that makes it a major destination for migrants from across the globe.

Saudi Arabia is a country that has exhibited the second-largest growth (143.7%), next to the USA, as a country of destination for Ethiopian migrants. Religion and religious pilgrimages have also played a significant role in contributing to the sustained migration from Ethiopia to Saudi Arabia. While emigration to Arab countries from Ethiopia can be explained by the push-pull theories and also by the segmented labor market theory, it would be misleading to explain the Ethiopian emigration to the USA solely by one or two migration theories.

Although the official data reveals Ethiopian migrants in Saudi Arabia are less than 150,000, Transparency International’s estimation in 2017 reveals the figure is higher. Accordingly, 5% of the 10 million migrant workers in Saudi Arabia are Ethiopians. The primary motive behind migration is to move out of poverty, improve family life standards through remittances, and secure family business. Migration to Arab countries has intensified due to social networks, expansion of illegal agencies; and the relative fall of migration costs. There was also a shift of labor demand from Asian workers to African labor as Asian domestic workers tend to seek higher wages than the cheaper labor from countries like Ethiopia (Girmachew, 2017). An overwhelming majority of Ethiopians are domestic and farmworkers.

The third major destination of Ethiopian emigrants is Israel. Ethiopia has been home to black Jews. The Jews of Ethiopia had prayed for hundreds of years to return to the land of their forefathers (James, 1992). At the end of May 1991, plane after plane brought 14,310 Ethiopian Jews to Israel within a day and a half in an amazing airlift. The pictures that appeared over and over again on the world's television screens of thousands of Ethiopian Jews, dressed in white traditional costume with exquisite hand-woven embroidery, silently filing into the airplanes to fulfill the dream of their forefathers of immigrating to Zion, remains imprinted in collective memory and yet economic factors have also played a significant role in the continued pattern of migration to Israel.

The head of the military junta, Mengistu Hailemariam, who ruled Ethiopia from 1974-1991 under the socialist regime refused to let the "Falasha" leave Ethiopia when he was requested by the Israeli government. The Israeli government with cooperation from the USA government relocated members of the group in ten thousand from Ethiopia to Israel between the mid-1980s and the early 1990s (Mitchell, nd.). So, during the night, Ethiopian Jews were brought into Sudan, and from there they were airlifted out to Israel by the Mossad operation called 'Operation Solomon'. The high migration stock of Ethiopians in Sudan is, thus, partly attributable to this operation. Apart from this, however, the ruthless regime of Mengistu which killed many young Ethiopians during the "red terror" and the high poverty level of the country has forced many to migrate to the closest and safest places, in which case Sudan was one.

The migration link to Israel can be best explained by a combination of factors and the theory of cumulative causation as a link is established between the migrants who already reached the destination and the new batch aspiring to follow. There was a subsequent operation called 'Operation Moses' by Mossad in which many Ethiopian Jews were also airlifted at the time of the coup d'état that brought the current government to power. Even after that, there are still many remaining Ethiopian Jews who constantly strive to go to Israel. This was further facilitated by the link that was already created by the large Ethiopian Jews community created mainly by the two operations. Religious ties between the two have contributed a lot in further strengthening the migratory link between the two countries. Social capital also explains the sustained migration from Ethiopia to Israel.

Historically, it is Sudan that has been the top recipient of Ethiopian emigrants. It is evident in Table 2 above that Sudan was the most important neighboring state hosting hundreds of thousands of Ethiopian migrants towards the end of the 1980s and early 1990s, during the

bloody civil war in Ethiopia. However, the migratory link of Ethiopia with Sudan declined sharply with the end of the civil war in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century but also because of the weakening political and diplomatic ties between the countries over the concern of terrorism. Yet, the factors that determined the migration linkage between the two are essentially political. The emigration of Ethiopians towards Sudan declined tremendously from 942,295 in 1990 to 71,631 in 2017. From the 1990s onwards, Sudan was also in a continuous civil war which does not make it a migrant attracting destination. Hence, Sudan has become a less important destination for Ethiopians, unlike the past. In recent years, it was only internal push factors within Ethiopia that contributed to the outflow of Ethiopians to Sudan.

Kenya has been one of the top five destination countries mainly since 2000. It is also used as a transit country at which Ethiopian migrants generally spend 1-3 years before immigrating to the Western World. UNHCR's biggest refugee camp in East Africa found in Kenya has contributed to the outflow of Ethiopians to Kenya. Besides, it has to be mentioned that, in this region, the trans-national ethnic groups and communities like Somali (found on the borders of Somalia, Ethiopia, and Kenya) and the Oromo (living on both sides of the Ethio–Kenyan border) make the movement of people to and from Ethiopia very easy by undermining the border. Hence, these borders are the easiest exit options for people fleeing from political persecution.

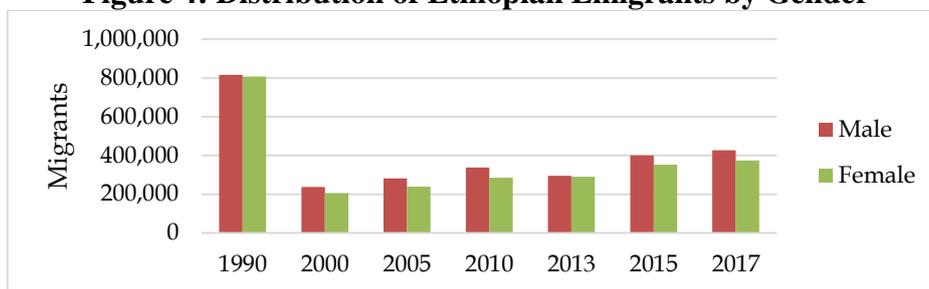
Similar to Sudan's condition mentioned above, the migration growth to Somalia has seen a substantial decline from less than half a million in 1990 to about 14,000 in 2017; hence by same token Somalia was not a favorable destination for Ethiopians as Somalia was in continuous civil war for the last three decades. Other destinations of Ethiopian emigrants including core immigrant-receiving countries are Germany, Italy, Canada, and Sweden.

### **International Migrant Stock of Ethiopia by Gender**

According to studies, a host of factors have contributed to tremendous changes in numbers and roles of females in international migration flows. Today, women constitute nearly half of all international migrants (UNDESA, 2017; World Bank, 2018). Scholars agree that recent years have seen a “feminization of migration”. The term “feminization of migration” is meant to describe a phenomenon of a significant rise in the share of females, sometimes a majority, in the total international migrant stock. Recently, female-specific forms of migration include the commercialization of domestic workers, trafficking of women in the sex industry, and the organization of women for marriage (Kuschminder *et al.*, 2012). While it is true that female

used to be viewed as “passive reactors to males’ migration decisions”, it is now apparent that they have become increasingly “active decision-makers” as labor migrants, particularly in such countries as Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines where migration policies are gender-selective, women comprising 62-75% of migrant workers. The figure is only 45% of migrant workers in Asia overall (*Ibid.*). The female migrant stock increased in absolute numbers from over 200,000 in 2000 to nearly double in 2017 with a growth rate of 31.21% for 2010-2017, which is by far greater for the male counterpart considered for the same period. Below, an attempt is made to provide data on the distribution of the international migrant stock of Ethiopia by gender.

**Figure 4: Distribution of Ethiopian Emigrants by Gender**



Source: UNDESA, 2013, 2017.

The overall share of females in the total Ethiopian migrants has slightly declined from 1990-2000. However, it has steadily increased over the last two decades. Furthermore, it should also be noted that the absolute value of female migrants has considerably increased from 205,629 in 1990 to 373,946 in the year 2017 which is close to double. A significant increase has been observed in countries of the Global North, particularly in some European countries such as the UK, Switzerland, Greece, and France.

**Table 3: Share of Female Ethiopian Emigrants in Destination Countries**

S.N.	Destination	Year						
		1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2017
1.	Italy	77.9%	76.2%	71.4%	59.8%	57.7%	58.7%	58.6%
2.	Greece	44.7%	51.9%	63.2%	65.6%	68.0%	71.5%	71.9%
3.	France	60.7%	61.7%	62.6%	57.5%	63.9%	64.4%	64.6%
4.	Austria	58.6%	57.6%	56.8%	58.3%	59.4%	59.0%	59.2%
5.	Switzerland	49.4%	49.5%	49.4%	51.9%	58.1%	54.0%	54.0%
6.	UK	39.5%	50.4%	52.0%	54.5%	55.3%	56.0%	56.3%
7.	Canada	51.3%	51.6%	51.8%	51.9%	51.8%	51.8%	51.8%
8.	New Zealand	51.6%	51.9%	51.3%	51.4%	51.5%	51.6%	51.6%
9.	Israel	49.3%	50.1%	50.2%	50.2%	50.4%	50.6%	50.6%
10.	USA	46.8%	46.3%	46%	45.8%	46.4%	51.1%	51.1%
<b>World</b>		<b>49.4%</b>	<b>48.6%</b>	<b>46.3%</b>	<b>45.8%</b>	<b>45.7%</b>	<b>46.9%</b>	<b>46.7%</b>

Source: Own Computation Based on UNDESA Report, 2017.

A decline in the share of female migrants is only observed in the case of Italy while there is a steady increase in countries having huge Ethiopian migrant stock. On average, the share of female migrants in the above destination countries exceeded that of males across the years under consideration. This is an indication of the feminization of Ethiopian emigration. The reasons for the feminization of Ethiopian migration manifested in the increase of the number of female migrants in core destination countries can be explained by the rising incomes, education, better communication, and transport services which minimize the overall cost of migration (Williams, 2008) and hence, “migration hump” theory. This theory, based on historical and cross-country comparison, upholds that migration initially increases when economic growth and rising income levels enable countries to emerge from the status of a low-income country.<sup>3</sup> This correlation between development and migration also applies to sub-Saharan Africa (Martin-Shields *et al.*, 2017). Since 1991, there is a growing recognition of the fact that the poorest countries are not the sending nations. People need resources to migrate, thus, initially developmental policies such as free trade and foreign direct investment enable people to migrate; however, in the long run, the same policies and additional remittances from diaspora empower countries to establish infrastructure to preserve their human capital and even instill return migration (Aggarwal, 2014).

Reports at sub-national levels indicate that the migration of women is further instigated by a high rate of female unemployment<sup>4</sup> and lack of livelihood alternatives in their home country, the expectation of better pay in the country of destination, legalization of migration agents, and the resultant increase of brokers (Mohammed, 2016). This feminized feature can also be explained in terms of the integration into the global economy that provides a further context for women’s increased mobility due to structural demand of labor inherent in the destination countries which have high levels of manufacturing and service sectors and hence, world systems and segmented labor theories (Raharto, 2007).

It has to be underscored here that the feminization of migration is highly observed in the countries of the North than common destination countries for Ethiopians in the Middle East. Below is a table showing the percentage share of females in the selected destination of Middle East countries with a higher share of Ethiopian migrants’ stock. Contrary to the generally

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<sup>3</sup> According to migration hump theory, a decrease in international migration is anticipated only when the status of upper middle-income country is achieved (Martin-Shields *et al.*, 2017).

<sup>4</sup> For instance, in 2012, urban female unemployment rate is 24% as opposed to 11.4 % of the urban male unemployment (Kuschminder *et al.*, 2012).

accepted perception about the number of female Ethiopian migrants in the Middle East, the data reveals that the average share of female migrants is lower than the average share of female computed for all destination countries, as shown in Table 4 below.

**Table 4: Share of Female Ethiopian Emigrants in the Middle East Destinations**

S.N.	Destination	Year						
		1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2017
1.	Egypt	59.9%	59.6%	59.2%	55.5%	57.7%	65.2%	68.6%
2.	Yemen	41.9%	41.9%	41.9%	37.3%	44.7%	46.9%	46.9%
3.	Libya	59.6%	53.3%	44.0%	36.1%	35.7%	36.2%	36.1%
4.	Kuwait	39.4%	36.3%	32.4%	34.0%	34.8%	39.6%	37.2%
5.	Saudi Arabia	33.5%	33.3%	33.2%	31.3%	29.9%	30.4%	31.2%
6.	Bahrain	28.6%	29.6%	30.9%	32.0%	32.6%	33.0%	32.9%
7.	UAE	28.8%	28.4%	28.4%	30.8%	29.9%	29.9%	29.9%
8.	Qatar	27.1%	25.4%	23.7%	26.1%	19.8%	18.5%	18.5%

Source: Own Computation Based on UNDESA Report, 2017.

The share of females in the international migration of Africa is increasing across years as shown in the table below. While some African countries like Kenya have exhibited more than 50% of female emigrants numerically exceeding male migrants, Ethiopian share has slightly increased from 2005 onwards and has become nearly equal to the African average (47%).

**Table 5: Share of Female Emigrants of Ethiopia Compared to East African Countries**

S.N.	Origin	Year						
		1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2017
1.	Djibouti	45.5%	43.9%	42.6%	47.2%	47.9%	48.5%	48.7%
2.	Eritrea	47.5%	49.4%	50.1%	48.9%	47.9%	47.9%	47.7%
3.	Ethiopia	49.4%	48.6%	46.3%	45.8%	45.7%	46.9%	46.7%
4.	Kenya	51.0%	51.6%	51.7%	52.2%	52.4%	52.6%	53.0%
5.	Somalia	47.1%	47.7%	48.6%	46.2%	46.9%	47.8%	47.9%
6.	South Sudan	48.2%	46.6%	44.5%	44.9%	47.4%	51.1%	51.7%
7.	Sudan	42.6%	43.2%	43.1%	44.7%	42.5%	45.1%	44.9%
8.	Uganda	49.3%	49.9%	50.8%	50.2%	51.8%	51.3%	51.4%
<b>Africa Total</b>		<b>45.6%</b>	<b>45.9%</b>	<b>45.7%</b>	<b>45.2%</b>	<b>44.9%</b>	<b>46.1%</b>	<b>46.6%</b>
<b>World Total</b>		<b>49.2%</b>	<b>49.4%</b>	<b>49.3%</b>	<b>48.9%</b>	<b>48.4%</b>	<b>48.5%</b>	<b>48.4%</b>

Source: Own Computation Based on UNDESA Report, 2017.

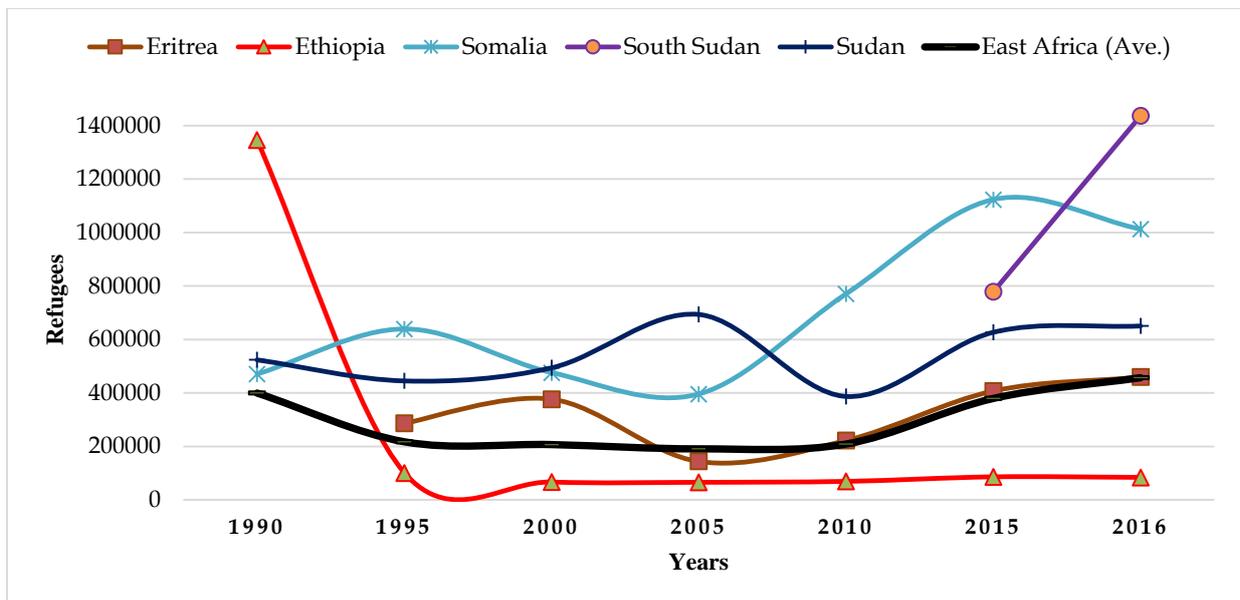
### **The Role of Ethiopia as a Source and Destination of Refugees in East Africa**

Refugees are people who have humanitarian status and provided temporary protection in another country in accordance with UNHCR statute as well as other international conventions where asylum seekers are excluded (World Bank, 2018). As the number of refugees continues

to grow at an alarming rate in conflict-ridden regions such as the African Horn, it becomes crucial to have a look at the data of refugees to understand the regional dynamics and put the role of countries in the context of regional or sub-regional migration systems.

Historically, Ethiopia was one of the largest sources of migrants, mostly refugees, in Africa, escaping political conflict, famine, and persecution, often by their government (Adepoju, 2004). However, the movement of Ethiopian civilians substantially rose in the late 1960s and 1970s (Fransen & Kuschminder, 2009). Literature shows that Ethiopia was dominant in refugee flows in the Horn of Africa too as it witnessed an increase from 55,000 in 1972 to over a million in 1982 (Adepoju, 2004; Fransen & Kuschminder, 2009). After the 1974 revolution, a large flow of refugees described by some as “a mass of fleeing individuals” aimed at quickly arriving at safer neighboring countries (Fransen & Kuschminder, 2009). With the end of the cold war, which marked the overthrow of the *Dergue* socialist military regime and the end of the bloody civil war that ravaged the country for three decades, the share of Ethiopian refugees in the Horn of Africa sharply declined from 99% in 1982 to 45% in 1992 (Fransen & Kuschminder, 2009).

**Figure 5: Refugee Population of Selected East African States by Country of Origin**



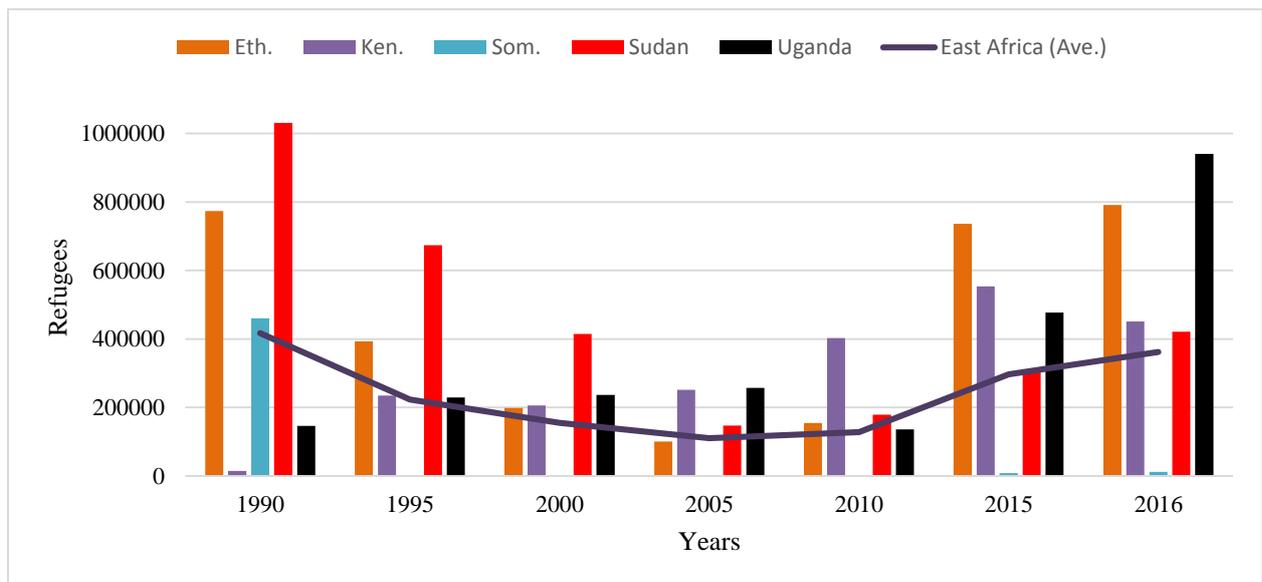
Source: World Bank, 2018.

Self-evident in Figure 5 above, the refugee population of Ethiopia continued to fall until the mid-1990s when it became a little above 100,000 (in 1995). After 2000, however, the magnitude of refuge population originating from Ethiopia has remained relatively stable even since 2010 when the sub-regional average of East Africa experienced a significant increase due to the rising number of refugees from Somalia (from 395,553 in 2005 to 1,123,156 in 2015),

Eritrea (144,066 in 2005 to 459,390 in 2016), Sudan (387,288 in 2010 to 627,087 in 2015) and South Sudan (778,718 in 2015 to 1,436,667 in 2016). In 2016 alone, these four countries produced about 97% of the total refugees in eight East African countries. The state collapse and intensification of civil war in Somalia, repressive political regime in Eritrea, the conflict in the southern part of Sudan (until 2011) and in Darfur (Western) region, and the outbreak of civil war in the youngest nation of the world, *i.e.* South Sudan, are all the major factors that contributed to the huge influx of refugees in the region. Hence, this phenomenon in the region over the last five decades could be explained by the notion of the ‘context of origin’ is well-articulated by Portes & Borocz (1989).

In terms of destination, Sudan was the major recipient of refugees in East Africa until 2000 hosting more than one million refugees in 1990 but eventually declined as other nations such as Kenya and Uganda (more recently) rose since 2005 to replace the role that Sudan played in the last decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century.

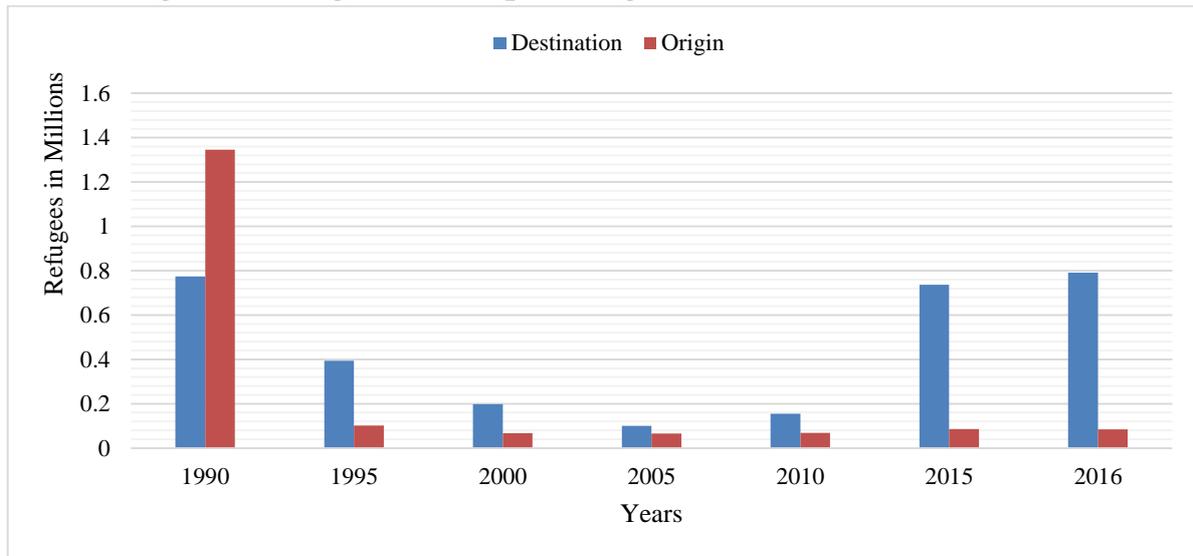
**Figure 6: Ethiopia as Destination of Refugees Compared to East African Countries**



Source: World Bank, 2018.

Kenya’s share in the region has increased from less than 1% of the total refugees in 1990 to 45% in 2010; while Uganda’s share from about 6% in 1990 to 20% in 2010, and in 2016 assuming the first rank in East Africa with less than a million refugees that amounts to 33% of the total refugees in the region. Ethiopia, the second major recipient of refugees in the region, hosting 773,764 refugees in 1990, witnessed a constant decline till 2005 when it got closer to the average of East Africa nations.

**Figure 7: Refugees of Ethiopian Origin and Destination Across Years**



*Source: World Bank, 2018.*

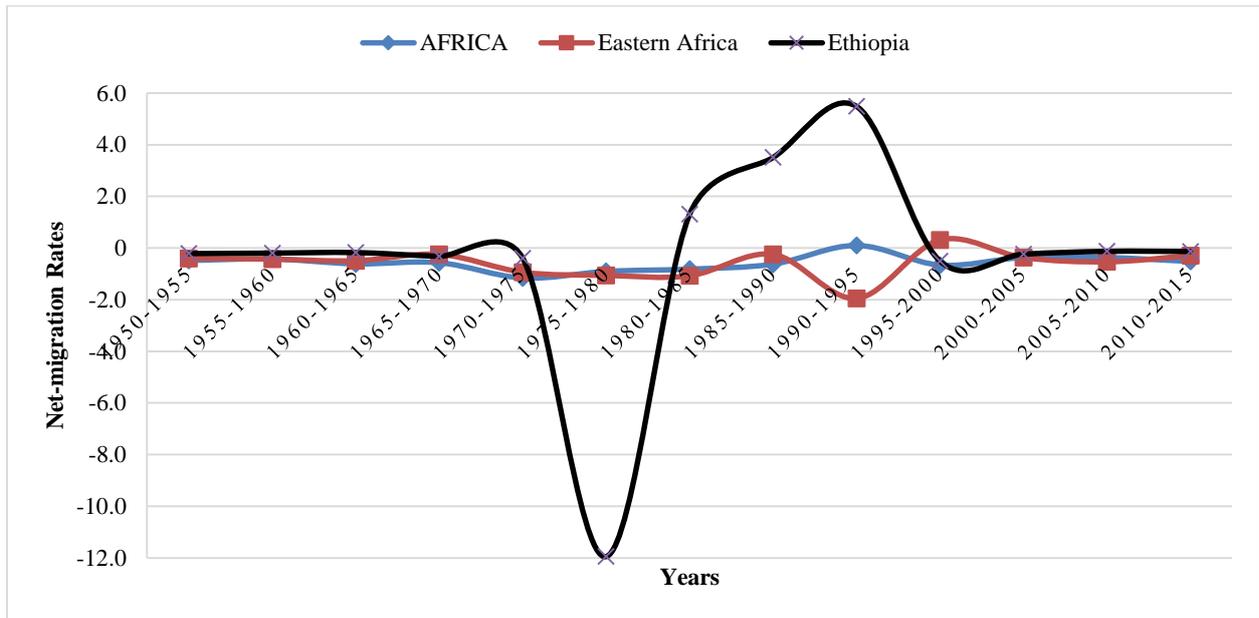
Since 2016, Ethiopia finds itself in a situation of migration crisis hosting more nearly 800,000 asylum seekers, mainly from South Sudan, Somalia, and Eritrea (BBC, 2017). With the recently proposed plan, for which some have regarded Ethiopia as a model to support poorer countries housing large numbers of migrants as it aims for creating jobs that are meant to offer employment rights to 30,000 refugees, the migration crisis is by no means coming to an end.

### **The Patterns of Net-migration of Ethiopia in the Regional and Continental Contexts**

Considering the continental level net migration starting from 1950, Africa as a continent has consistently remained as net emigrant continent. The continent has been a source of migrants due to a bundle of reasons including drought, famine, flood, and arbitrary demarcation of boundaries which mainly resulted in conflicts, post decolonization accounting for the return of the colonization settlers and inter-guerrilla warfare, as well as a flight from recruitment into the military or guerrilla forces, *etc.* (Melegh, 2013). Except for the period between 1990 to 1995, the net migration rates remained more or less unchanged in the intervening time.

The same pattern is observed in Sub-Saharan Africa and Eastern Africa sub-categories. The net migration rate of Africa was -0.5 in 1950 and it has not changed (significantly) over the years till 2015. From 1950 to 2015 on average the net migration rate of Africa was -0.6 for every 10,000 people in this continent during 1950-2015, 6 more had moved out by the end of every year on average (see Figure 8 below).

**Figure 8: Net-migration Rates of Ethiopia, East Africa & Africa**



Source: UNDESA, 2015.

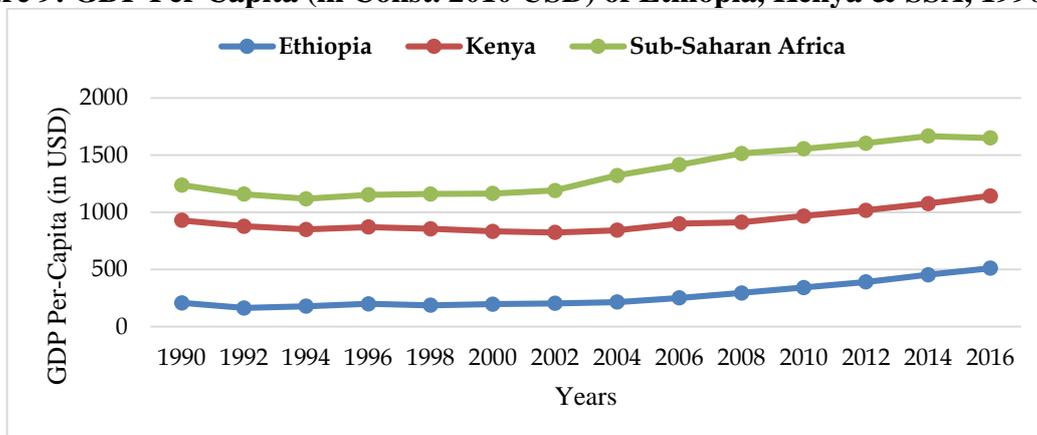
In Eastern Africa, although the net migration rate picture as a whole remained unchanged, there were significant differences in rates across periods. More precisely, starting from the 1970s, there was a huge increase in the outflow of Eastern African people up until the mid-1980s. During this time, the sub-regions' average net migration was -1.0. The fact that net migration rates varied considerably across a certain period in Eastern Africa could partly be explained by the difficult history of the sub-region that is characterized by frequent conflict, coup d'état, riots, dictatorship, and war.

As Figure 8 (above) shows, Ethiopia has been a sending country with a negative net migration rate with a drastic increase in negative net migration that reached 12 persons per one thousand in the year between 1970 to 1985. In 1981, there were 1.74 million refugees and 2.4 million of the internally displaced persons in Africa were from Ethiopia which was in just six years after the Ethiopian Revolution (CIMADE, 1986). For the most part, Ethiopian political instability, starvation, and fear of persecution by their government forced them to flee from their country (Meron, 2015). But in later years, Ethiopian migrants flee from their country mainly as a result of economic motives (Fransen & Kuschminder, 2009), mobility which has been facilitated by the social capital established by earlier migrants. However, in 1980-1990, Ethiopian migrants repatriated from Sudan and Somalia accompanied by a high number of migrants from Somalia as a result of the Somali civil war (Bariagaber, 1999), which is depicted by the positive net migration in Figure 8 above.

Overall, Ethiopia with one of the lowest GDP per capita has always been on the negative side except in the period between 1985-95 which, according to Fransen & Kuschminder (2009), could be accounted for by immigrants from neighboring countries with political instability and civil wars and Ethiopian repatriation from Somalia. The GDP per capita of Ethiopia has declined in the 1980s, a time often referred to as the lost decade of Africa economically, from 227.8 USD in 1980 to 190USD in 1985 and then to 208 USD in 1989. The economic performance of the country was the worst of its kind compared to the economic conditions of other countries in the region, such as Kenya that exhibited an increase in their economic performance from 897 USD in 1981 to 923 USD in 1989 (World Bank, 2018).

For the same decade, the economic performance for SSA countries has undergone a decline from over 1400 USD in 1981 to 1245USD towards the end of the decade, while the world average is 6285 USD to 7172 USD in 1980& 1990 respectively. This period was a time when a huge outflow of people was reversed as between 1980-1985 and Ethiopia was a net immigrant nation thereafter until 1995. The net migration between 1985-1995 was positive while the country was in an internal crisis, and, it could rather be attributable to the high death rate due to famine and civil war within. The net migration rate of Ethiopia has reached 5.5 for 1990-1995. This period marked the coming of another new government, the Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front. Since 1995, the political atmosphere was relatively “stable”; as a result, the net migration rate remained at an average rate of -0.15. In general, the decade covering 1990-2000 witnessed the return of migration, which led to a drop by three quarters in absolute terms – below is a figure describing the economic condition as indicated by GDP per capita of the country in comparative view with Kenya, the other regional migration hub, and Sub-Saharan Africa.

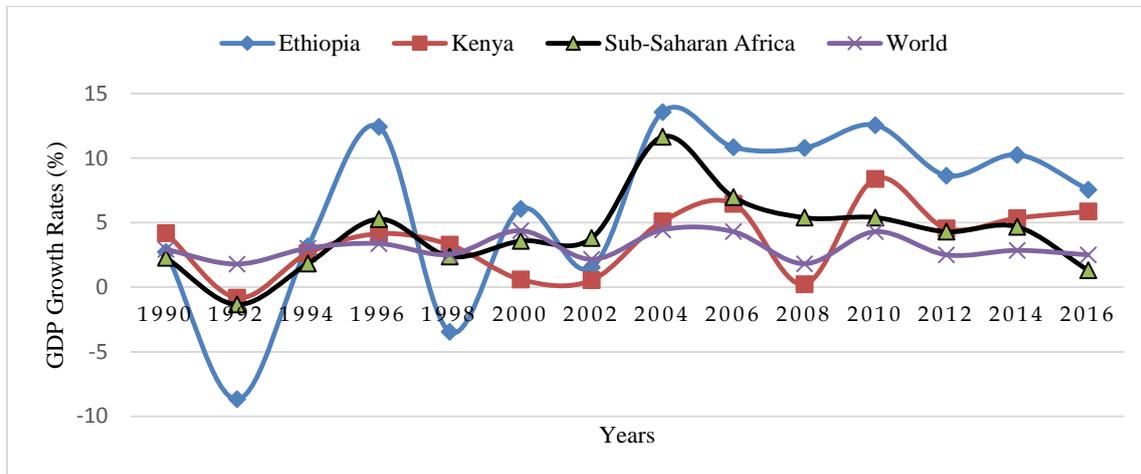
**Figure 9: GDP Per Capita (in Const. 2010 USD) of Ethiopia, Kenya & SSA, 1990-2016**



Source: World Bank, 2018.

The economic performance of Ethiopia and Kenya has experienced a similar pattern of increase for more than two and a half decades. The time from 2000 onwards is referred to as a time of economic boom for Ethiopia and was also a time of increased in outmigration.

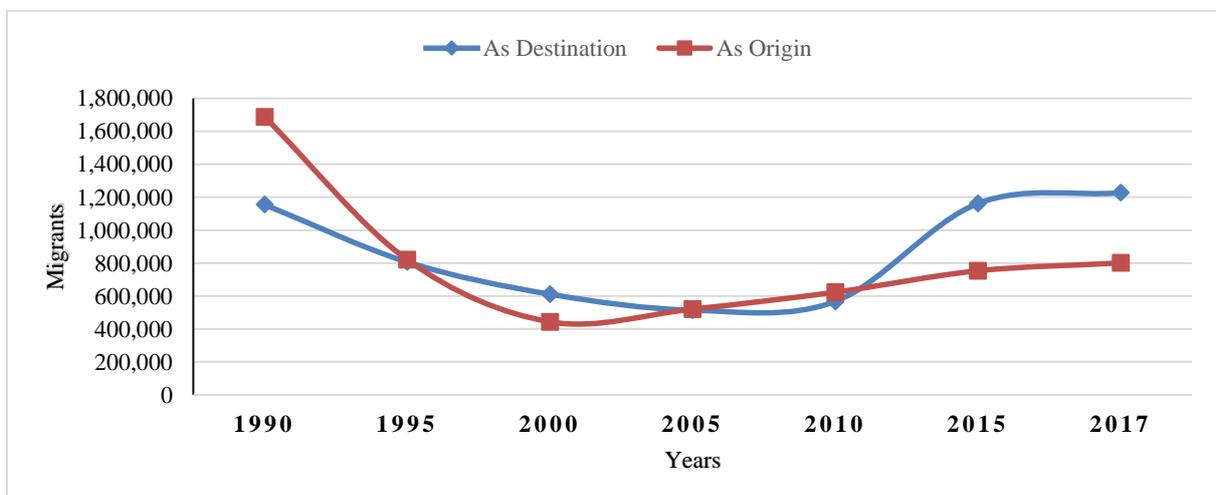
**Figure 10: GDP Growth Rate of Ethiopia in the Context of East Africa and SSA**



Source: World Bank, 2018.

The growth of the economy was exceptionally high especially for Ethiopia in 1992-1998 and after 2002. Although the growth rate of emigrants of the country has shown an eventual decline over the last couple of years, 40.47% (for 2000-10), 20.8% (for 2010-15), and 6.32% (for 2015-17), it could be argued that it has generally increased to nearly double as it rose from 443,926 (in the year 2000) to 800,879 (in 2017) with the overall growth of 80.41%. It also appears that the male migrant stock increased from 238,297 (in 2000) to 426,933 (in 2017) with a growth of 26.10% during 2010-2017, while the female migrant stock increased from 205,629 (in 2000) to 373,946 (in 2017) with greater growth of 31.21% in 2010-2017.

**Figure 11: Migrant Stock of Ethiopia as Origin and Destination (1990-2017)**



Source: UNDESA, 2017.

The overall trend shows that Ethiopia is a destination country than a country of origin. In recent decades, Ethiopia has evolved into a regional migration hub in the Horn of Africa and is concurrently a country of origin, transit, and destination for large numbers of regular and irregular migrants.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

In this paper, an attempt was made to provide the general profile of Ethiopian migration by paying equal attention to the inflow and outflow dimensions of the country's migration. In so doing, countries that have migratory links as sending and/or receiving are taken to analyze the dynamics of population mobility patterns in which Ethiopia is embedded. Gender dimension was also included to show gender differentials in international migration from and to Ethiopia. Results reveal that Ethiopia has been on sending and receiving ends of migration as a country which is in one of the conflict-ridden areas of the world. Along with this, the Horn of Africa is known for the turbulent mobility of people within the region and outside. Refugees and people who use Ethiopia as a transit account for the largest number of immigrants to the country.

For the last five decades, the international migrant stock of SSA, EA, and Ethiopia has always shown an increase. More or less, Ethiopia reflects the same pattern in international migrant stock as both East Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa. Furthermore, the average share of migrant stock as a percentage of the population in the East African countries has shown an enormous decline for some years while some experienced an increase or stable percentage. It is found out that the migrants moving to Ethiopia were mostly from the neighboring countries because of continuous conflict and political instability. The majority of Ethiopians migrate mainly to North America and Asia; particularly the USA and the Middle East which go beyond Africa even though African countries are used as a transit. The migration to the USA was the dominant one which is facilitated by factors like social capital and the strong ethnic enclaves created in the USA. Moreover, reception at the country of destination cannot be denied its encouragement to facilitate migration.

Besides religion and religious journeys, the economic factors were elaborated by neoclassical and segmented labor market theories that explain the sustained migration from Ethiopia to Saudi Arabia and other countries of the Middle East. The migration to Israel, apart from economic reasons, can be best elucidated by the cumulative causation theory, which was an attempt to bring the Ethiopian Israeli to their forefathers' land, which clearly resulted in a

continuous migration in which religious ties also played a great role. Besides this, the Ethiopians mainly migrated to the neighboring countries due to political reasons.

Feminization of migration has been the features of both international and Ethiopian migration which showed a shift in the motives from previous family reunification to labor migrants and female-specific forms of migration. The overall share of females in the total Ethiopian emigrants has slightly declined in some years to only show a steady increase over the last two decades. The recent increase in the number of female migrants in core destination countries of the Global North, Western Europe, North America, Australia, and New Zealand, can be explained by the rising incomes, level of education, and urban origin which enhanced their mobility. It could also be mainly attributable to the increase in the role of females as active decision-makers to migrate, which is an important feature of the feminization phenomenon (Kuschminder *et al.*, 2012). Feminization of migration is highly observed in the countries of the North than common destination countries for Ethiopians in the Middle East in contrary to the generally accepted perception.

Ethiopia, which was one of the dominant countries in refugee flows in the Horn of Africa as people were fleeing to escape political conflict, famine, and persecution experienced a sharp decline in its share of refugees in the Horn of Africa in the last three decades. The size of the refugee population originating from Ethiopia has remained relatively stable in recent years while the sub-regional average of East Africa experienced a significant increase due to the rising number of refugees. Contrarily, Sudan was the major recipient of refugees in East Africa until 2000 but eventually declined as the number of refugees in other nations such as Kenya and Uganda more recently rose.

In general, Africa as a continent has constantly remained as a net emigrant continent where Sub-Saharan Africa and Eastern Africa sub-categories experienced the same pattern with some significant alteration in the rates across time for the Eastern Africa sub-region. Ethiopia has also undergone a drastic increase in negative net migration for some period in the last 65 years. Ethiopians in recent years leave their country mainly due to economic motives as opposed to their previous reasons like political instability. In the final analysis, despite its negative net migration rates at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century due to high population growth rates, Ethiopia still continues to be a country of origin, transit, and destination for regular and irregular migrants as it is a regional migration hub in the Horn of Africa.

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