

Globalisation and international migration in two Ethiopian communities

Harresaw, Eastern Tigray; Aze Debo, Kembata

Mekelle – 3-4 October 2018

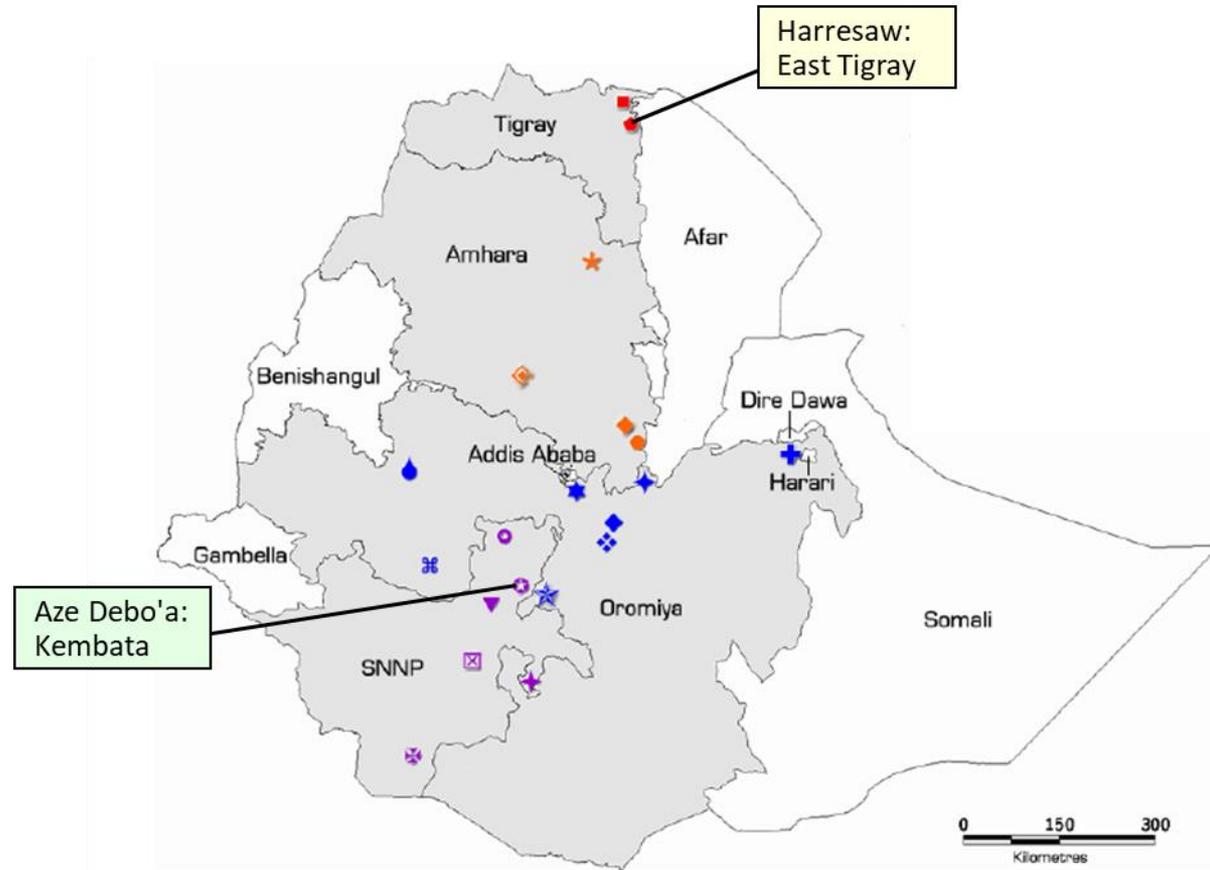
Panel 2015 – Globalisation and rural Ethiopia

Outline

- Scope of this paper
- Globalisation and migration – Literature & policy
- Aze Debo & Harresaw in 2018
- Migration in Aze Debo & Harresaw in 2018
- Migration and globalisation in the two communities – A comparative perspective
- Globalisation dimensions in international migration in Aze Debo and Harresaw
- Looking into the future
- Conclusion

Focus of the paper

- Using longitudinal data on Harresaw, Eastern Tigray and Aze Debo, Kembata
- Exploring how different globalisation dimensions interacted with international migration processes
- Their relative & comparative importance and reasons for this
- And some of the consequences for the communities and people in them



- Followed by a look into the future & some concluding thoughts.

(Very) selective overview of literature and policy

Int'l migration: globalisation form influenced by other global & local factors

Global trends

- Increasingly restrictive Western immigration policies/ practices, in tune with varyingly strong 'nationalist' agendas
- Alongside 'discourse' re int'l migration as shared int'l responsibility (NY 2017)

Regional trends (Africa, Gulf)

- Flows to 'West' dwarfed by intra-region 'mixed migration' flows
- Various African/regional frameworks, alongside non-influenced domestic agendas re immigration, like in the West - E.g.
- Drastic shift in Saudi labour immigration policy at discourse level (economic crises, workforce nationalisation)
- Even though in practice in-flows have continued, as access to cheap workforce a cornerstone of political settlement
- Ongoing shift in South Africa's immigration policy (White Paper 2017), from tolerance to much stricter immigration management through border controls
- Elections in 2019 ← Political actors want to be seen to focus on jobs for SA₄

Ethiopian int'l migration trends & policy context

- Increased & changed since 90s ('right to mobility'), esp. last 15 years
- From elite, education/politically-driven to low-skilled labour migrants
- Small vs global/African migration rate, but possibly approx. 1.5-2 million; hard to get figures as large proportion undocumented
- Most usual push/pull factors at play + emerging 'migration culture'(?)
- Policy context: national development through labour force deployed 'in-country' (agric modernisation, SMEs, FDI-driven job creation)
- But implicit recognition that int'l migration is unstoppable? Also, remittances > aid flows; but human rights abuses should be prevented
- Post-2013 GoE ban, large illegal flows to Gulf countries, South Africa, Sudan continued
- Recent new policy framework (2015 anti-trafficking & 2016 overseas employment Proclamations), ban lifted, legal migrants from Oct 2018
- Game changer? Largely depends on implementation; and how current migration flows 'fit' wrt new dispensation, and react to it.

Harresaw and Aze Debo, 2018



Harresaw,
Eastern
Tigray



Aze Debo (Kembata, SNNP)



Harresaw and Aze Debo, 2018



In common: youth joblessness associated with landlessness & lack of options generally

Aze Debo youth on average more educated, but does not help

Harresaw (no water in dam)

Differences: Aze Debo economically upward (from low basis), 5kms from large & developing town (zonal capital); no major socio-political issue in 2018

Harresaw economically downward (from low basis), near v. small new municipality; (perceived) lower LG effectiveness/fairness, social fragmentation



Aze Debo
Small
scale
irrigation

Migration in Aze Debo in 2018

Rural-rural

- Historically, male, seasonal/some long term: sugar factories, state farms; Wolkite, Alaba sharecropping; some resettlement Keffa 2003

Rural-urban

- Male & female, Addis Ababa, Hawassa & Industrial Park, Dukem, Zway...: construction, cobblestone, jobs in IPs & private workshops, hotels/cafés, flower farms, housemaids & tea/jabana seller (women)
- Usually long term (several years), a few recent returns (troubles), some educated people/jobs
- >150 male & approx. 100 female in past five years

International

- South Africa since 1991/2 (Hadiya Amb), long term (several years), male (women for marriage)
- Sudan since 2001/2, usually 2-3 years, some repeat, women > men
- Gulf countries more recently, a few in US (DV lottery, missionaries' educ)
- 50-60 in past 5 years (more?); 75 hhs get remittances; new houses etc.

Migration in Aze Debo in 2018



Migration in Harresaw in 2018

Rural-rural

- Humera ↓ since when local irrig. daily labour ↑; now others took jobs

Going to Afar

- ↑ since 2012, men & women, hundreds at any time
- Some for 2-3 yrs; seasonal for landed hhs; most (landless) 'commuting'

Jobs in towns/cities

- Mostly in Tigray, gr 10+, fewer than Afar
- Some seasonal, others study & work, urban youth get the jobs...

International

- Only irregular to Saudi, men & growing number of women
- Longstanding trade; first migrants 1985; ↑↑ after Millennium drought
- 2012: from coping (repay debt) to investment strategy, 400-500/year
- 2018: drastic changes in journey/Saudi conditions, still 100-250/year, flows out & in (deportations), volatility, 10-30% 'success'

Migration in Harresaw in 2018



Int'l migration & globalisation – Decision-making

- In mix global/local factors, global more important in AD > H
 - Networks at destination (SA), more ambitious 'good life' & economic aspirations; AD also more connected & more educated;
 - 'Going for work' highly valued in AD; no alternative in H.
- Alternatives e.g. local/nearby factory jobs, possibly more attractive for H migrants, yet less likely to happen in H than AD
- Legalising migration: unlikely to be a game-changer?
 - AD: Migrants to South Africa are hawkers, traders (not labourers), not covered by new Ethiopian framework; little attention to Sudan
 - H - Requirements for legal migration out-of-reach for most; policy irrelevant for jobs taken by male migrants (e.g. camel herder)
- 'Past fatalism gives way' (2013) → New form of fatalism re migration?
 - AD: If someone dies it's God's will, would have died at home
 - H: If staying, dying; if going, half chance of dying, half of succeeding;
"no hope in kebele for young people to think about their future". ¹²

Int'l migration & globalisation – Migration routes

Options, costs, brokers, what can go wrong, financing & payment modalities

Three stories among many...

- Aze Debo to Jo'burg – Three months, ten brokers & as many smuggler groups, long waits in bush (no food/water, begging locals), once brought back to border previous country, jailed there (Tz), one month in refugee camp in Malawi, finally Zim then SA, temporary permit from immigration, called network in Jo'burg... Bribes, extortion (authorities, smugglers), cheating (brokers, smugglers), good and bad locals.
- Harresaw to Saudi – First trip smooth in 2012; “disaster” in 2014. Robbers before sea-crossing; abducted in Yemen, Ethiopian with Yemenis, knew all Ethiopian brokers by names; 1st group once paid ‘sold’ them to 2nd group; tortured, jailed, friend shot as could not pay.
- Aze Debo to Sudan – If walking, death by starvation/exhaustion/thirst in desert. Young woman: 45 days walk; 27 ‘dropped’ from group of 72.

Int'l migration & globalisation – Migration routes (2)

- Mobile phones – Critically important for smuggling networks, & for migrants and families
- Int'l flights – Cost not key in decision; << cost of broker-arranged visa
- Level of hardship faced on journey
 - Factor of 'objective' risks (number of countries to cross & how)
 - Strongly mediated by security situation (e.g. war & lawlessness in Yemen), and policy and governance re irregular transit migrants in transit countries (e.g. Tz jail/bribing/release vs. jailed for 5 yrs)
- 'Hardening' of smuggling networks in past few years, reflects global trend of increased exploitation of vulnerability of irregular migrants
- Networks at destination as source of migration financing: AD (esp. SA); not mentioned in H (fewer cases of 'smaller-scale' success)
- Payments involve fund transfers across borders & arrangements between brokers about exchange rates, payment currencies etc.

Int'l migration & globalisation – Destination countries

- Early 2018, conditions in South Africa considered as 'ok'
 - Tolerance, protection by govt, but violence incl by other Ethiopians
 - But vulnerable to change in political context: recent xenophobic violence (← 2019 elections); evidence (from Hosanna) of returns...
- Sudan – mixed
 - “Police bad, Sudan for Sudanese”, good & bad people
 - Drastic SP depreciation (3 birr/SP in 2010 to 0.7 birr/SP end 2017)
- Saudi – hard
 - Good & bad employers, harder to find jobs esp. men
 - Policy of crackdown (2013), ‘workforce nationalisation’ discourse
 - But access to cheap labour continues to be key in domestic political settlement → ‘jobs’ for low-skilled migrants still exist
 - Govt mix of enforcement & eye closing → space for local interpretation of rules; though deportations much more frequent.

Int'l migration & globalisation – Migration returns

Remittances, savings and modalities; new ideas and lifestyles; changes in gender relations; returnees' adaptation

- Critical importance of destination country context re economic returns → potential for int'l migration to contribute to devt at home
- Changes if context changes (Sudan economy, South Africa politics, Saudi economy & politics); in particular, irregular migration vulnerable to political changes
- Paying remittance, repatriating savings: mix of informal ways of using formal systems/structures (e.g. transfer from employer's bank a/c, 'Ethiopian banks', legal migrants) and informal systems (hand-carried)
- 'Global ideas' re cleanliness (women migrants in Sudan, Saudi); not much impact on ideas re economic investment at home (+ weak govt support to entrepreneurs)
- Int'l migration (+ve/-ve) experiences → strong impact on returnees' outlooks on life in community/Ethiopia → new social differentiation, 'drifting youth' in H, gender norms under pressure in AD.

Global dimensions in int'l migration in AD & H

Climate change

- Drought key push factor in H; in AD other global factors are stronger than in H (e.g. networks at destination)

Technology

- Mobiles ubiquitous, indispensable for migrants & smuggling networks
- 'Modern' travel means not for most journeys ← irregular migration
- Funds flow: mix of informal ways of using 'modern' global banking & informal low-tech means (hand-carried cash) ← irregular migration
- Facebook, TV anti-migration govt messages ("*change it, change it*"); also likely to 'support' migration (display of 'good life' abroad etc.)

Smuggling business - AD/SA, AD/Sudan, H/Saudi

- Smuggling, trafficking, authorities' colluding: blurred, worsening in past few years
- ↔ Growing global informal economy around irregular migration; increasingly exploiting migrants' vulnerability to maximise profits.

Global dimensions in int'l migration in AD & H (2)

Destination countries' context

- Local dimension: destination country's economic & political context → migration experiences susceptible to change if context changes
- Also key, GoE ability/interest in negotiating with destination countries' govt – More on this in conclusion...

Global ideas

- Global ideas of 'good life' pull factor in AD & H, though push factors stronger in H > AD; and less ambitious 'good life' ideas in remoter H
- Gender equity
 - Harresaw - Regressing (?), int'l migration not a +ve factor, vs...
 - Aze D - Gender norms contested, women migration one driver of change
- Markedly different interactions btwn global religions & migration
 - Aze Debo - Protestant church supportive of int'l migration, vs...
 - Harresaw - Not so for Orthodox church, though individual priests recognise dilemma (and some migrate too).

Looking into the future

- Unlikely that ‘local options’ will any time soon suffice to ‘replace’ migration abroad for most/all Ethiopian labour force
- Implementation of new Ethiopian framework depends on factors not fully under GoE’s control
- E.g. destination countries’ immigration/domestic labour policies and willingness to negotiate them with GoE
- In GoE domestic political agenda, youth unemployment noted as a most pressing issue, and ‘reluctantly’, migration part of ‘solutions’
- Yet, unclear that new legal labour migration options are relevant for most rural youth currently migrating/considering it – Because:
- GoE has paid/is paying little interest to South Africa & Sudan
- Re Saudi, focus on addressing past issues (domestic work for women), no forward look (what might be options for men)
- Gr8 may be achieved by most younger migrants (Harresaw?), but TVET training & certificate? How much administrative complexity?

Conclusion

- Need to recognise the limits of what GoE can do
- Leaving aside issues of regional foreign affairs relations...
- Focusing on factors under GoE control:
 - Alongside continued efforts to develop ‘local’ options (beyond scope of this ppt)
 - And a start at implementing the new framework
 - May need pragmatic approach looking at existing migrants’ profiles (low skilled for most, but not all), destinations (incl SA & Sudan), constraints (cannot afford lengthy costly processes)
 - And think about adapting/ expanding/ enriching framework
- How could Ethiopian research organisations focusing on international migration unite to better engage with policymakers?
 - Network, virtual ‘international migration policy think tank’?