Beyond Economics: The Role of Socio-political Factors in Hadiya Migration to South Africa

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Abstract: Migration processes are often explained in economic terms both at the level of aspiration and capability. This is reflected in the claim that people migrate because of an absolute or relative deprivation and that who migrates depends on who can afford to cover the cost of migration. Economic factors certainly play an important role in why people migrate, however the fixation on economic factors has come with a reality cost to the extent that the non-economic factors in migration processes are not given the attention they deserve. This contribution seeks to fill this gap. It examines socio-political factors in migration processes and the various forms of inequality they take through a case study of Hadiya migration to South Africa. Specifically, mobility norms, spirituality of migration and sociopolitical networks are examined to explain why there is a geographic concentration in the place of origin of Ethiopian migrants in South Africa. While Hadiya mobility norms construe their migration to South Africa as part of the natural order of things, an overarching spiritual frame of reference represents migration as an enactment of a divine script: a prophecy fulfilled. Unequal access to political and social networks on the other hand have partly determined who migrates. While political networks are mobilized to leverage migration to redress historically shaped regional inequality, social networks are crucial in building capability and easing the process of adaptation in places of destination which further engender increased migration from places of origin.

Introduction

As one of the strongest economies on the continent, South Africa is a major destination country for migration within Africa. Close to three million migrants resided in South Africa in 2020. Ethiopians are amongst the most significant of these migrant populations. Outmigration is a prominent feature of contemporary Ethiopian society. It is estimated more than three million Ethiopians live abroad. The major destinations of Ethiopian migrants to the Global North are North America and Europe and South-South migration has primarily been directed to the Gulf, Kenya, the Sudan and starting, from the 1990s and more so since the 2000s, South Africa has become the major destination for Ethiopian migrants to the Global South. Estimates of Ethiopian migrants in South Africa vary. A recent estimate mentioned that there are around 250,000 Ethiopian migrants in South Africa. Others estimated that from 2016 to 2018 alone, between 200,000 and 300,000 Ethiopian migrants have moved to South Africa.

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2 Adugna 2019.
3 Cooper and Esser 2012.
4 IOM 2021.
Ethiopian migrants’ journey to South Africa is perilous, involving the crossing of state borders of as many as six countries. South Africa being located 4,777 km south of Ethiopia it is one of the longest migration corridors. The journey follows different routes involving different modes of transport: air, water and by land across several African countries. Some take a direct flight from Addis Ababa to Johannesburg but most combine bus and foot to cross transit countries. Still others travel by boat over the Indian Ocean. Typically, the land route from Ethiopia to South Africa starts in Kenya then passing through Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique/Zimbabwe to South Africa. This long journey is fraught with danger. Many migrants have perished in transit countries. A recent International Organization for Migration (IOM) study mentioned that more than 7,000 Ethiopian migrants have died or gone missing on irregular migration routes between 2012 and 2020.\textsuperscript{5}

Notwithstanding the challenges, there is already a sizeable Ethiopian migrant population in South Africa, most of whom are engaged in the informal retail trade running shops predominantly in Jeppe, the Ethiopian commercial enclave in Johannesburg, and in the nearby townships, popularly known as ‘locations.’\textsuperscript{6} Some of the migrants are well established evident in the growing remittances they send to support families and the investment they have made in small and large-scale businesses. Still, others send collective remittances supporting churches and local and national development projects in places of origin. At the macro level, Ethiopian migrants in South Africa contribute to the national economy. It is part of the over 5 billion USD that Ethiopia earns in remittance, much more than export earnings and 35 per cent of imports.\textsuperscript{7}

Although Ethiopian migrants in South Africa come from all over the country, most are from Southern Ethiopia, particularly from the Hadiya-Kembata area. According to the report of Hadiya zone Human Resource and Social Affairs department, it is estimated that, totally 61,148 Hadiya youth have migrated to South Africa from 2013 to 2018 alone.\textsuperscript{8} A recent survey has mentioned that nearly 40 per cent of households in Hadiya - Kembata have at least one international migrant who has ever migrated abroad.\textsuperscript{9}

This contribution focuses on Hadiya migration to South Africa from a place of origin perspective. Hadiya is one of the administrative zones in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State (SNNPR), a member state of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Hadiya Zone has a population of 1.23 million with a land size of 3,593 sqm\textsuperscript{10}. Its capital, Hosanna town, is located 230 km south of Ethiopia’s capital, Addis Ababa. Hadiya society is predominantly Protestant (75.3 per cent), followed by Muslims (11.1 per cent); Orthodox Christians (8.4 per cent) and Catholics (4.3 per cent). The public space in Hadiya, and Hosanna in particular, is dominated by Protestant Christianity and this has shaped the spiritual landscape of Hadiya migration to South Africa.\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{5} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{6} Zack and Estifanos 2016.
\textsuperscript{7} Seneshaw Tamru and Tewodros Mekonen.
\textsuperscript{8} Mekebo and Werku 2020.
\textsuperscript{9} Lambore 2018.
\textsuperscript{11} Hadiya is perhaps the only place in Ethiopia where public life is visibly Protestant where a receipt from a café or restaurant would come wrapped with biblical verses.
The contribution examines the geographic concentration of place of origin of Ethiopian migrants in South Africa focusing on non-economic factors that have shaped the specificity of the corridor through a case study of migrants from Hadiya. Economic factors certainly play an important role in migration processes and Hadiya migration to South Africa is no exception. Increasing pressure on farmland is one of the key economic drivers of Hadiya migration to South Africa. Indeed, Hadiya administrative Zone has one of the highest population densities (342.64 people per square kilo meter), which by far surpasses the national (109.22) and regional (141) averages. This has put a greater pressure on farmland leading to continuous tenure fragmentation and declining productivity. The average rural household has 0.6 hectare of land in contrast to the national average of 1.01 and 0.89 for SNNPR. The Hadiya area is also affected by a recurrent drought exacerbated by the vagaries of climate change further making farming a precarious form of livelihood. This is evident in the higher number of beneficiaries in national social protection programs such as the Productive Safety Net Program. However, these are constraining economic structures that Hadiya share with their neighbours, some of which have even higher population density. Nor do Hadiya migrate to South Africa in larger scale because they have greater capability for migration. Had that been the case, we would have seen more migrants from the neighboring regions which are economically better off because of the cash crops they grow. Of the 60 migrant returnees interviewed only 7 (11.6 per cent) 6.6 per cent mentioned poverty as a reason for their migration to South Africa.

The non-economic factors that it is important to consider to explain Hadiya migration to South Africa includes a culture of mobility, spirituality of migration, and network inequality. This contribution focuses primarily on these non-economic factors because these are typically neglected in the academic literature. This is a less known and probably much harder story to tell. Besides, where economic factors are important, they are very much influenced and shaped by the non-economic factors. Conceptually the contribution relates to the aspiration/capability frameworks in migration studies but both are understood and used more broadly. In this case study, aspiration is understood not only in economic terms (absolute and relative deprivations) but also migration locally perceived as of ‘right’. In local terms, Hadiya migration to South Africa is construed as the latest iteration of darifirma, which in Hadiya language means physical mobility (literally ‘to stroll’) which informs the wider culture of mobility. As such, the contribution pays attention to local perceptions of migration: when actors (migrants and the wider community to which they belong) see what they are doing as migrating or when they see it simply exercising a certain human disposition calling it the right to move. Capability is also understood more broadly as including the spirituality of migration which is relevant not only in decision making (Hadiya migration to South Africa construed as prophecy fulfilled) but also in risk assessment (a spirituality which redefines the perils of the journey to South Africa into an enactment of a divine script). Prophecies and migration counselling by local church leaders in places of origin seems to have created a spiritually animated migratory agency. Spirituality also enters in sense making in place of destination such as the business flourish of the Hadiya migrants despite greater entry barriers as compared with migrants from Southern Africa region who they now employ in their businesses. Aspiration and

12 Bachore 2012.
13 CSA 2008.
capability are also discussed in reference to network inequalities, involving both political networks (the role of government officials in encouraging migration) and social networks (differential access to migration brokers in the context of growing securitization of migration in the Ethiopia-South Africa corridor).

The data used in the analysis has come from fieldwork in Hosanna town, Jajura (Sorro district) and Lemo district in Hadiya Zone from December 2019 – March 2021, buttressed by the available knowledge from the extant literature on Hadiya migration to South Africa. Research participants include migrant and non-migrant families and returnees (those migrants who have permanently resettled as well as those who go backwards and forwards) in places of origin as well as some migrants who were visiting families in Hosanna. The bulk of the primary source used in this contribution is presented in the form of narratives that reflect the lived experiences of migrants and their families, returnees as well as non-migrant families. These narratives are particularly instructive in providing insights into local perception of migration.

**Mobility Norms Explaining Hadiya Migration to South Africa**

The idea that economics is not a sufficient explanation for migration processes is well established. One of the additional variables which is incorporated in migration studies is the culture of migration. Cohen and Sirkecia for instance, acknowledge the various ways in which migration decisions are made and how individual decisions are rooted in the social practices and cultural beliefs of a population:

> "We argue that the choice to migrate is not driven by economic need alone [...] It is culture—in other words, the social practice, meaning, and symbolic logic of mobility - that must be understood along with economics if we are to understand patterns of migration." Cohen and Sirkecia further note that “cultural traditions and practices frame and reframe and finally form responses and outcomes that allow people to make sense of what is going on around them."\(^\text{14}\)

One area to look at within the culture of migration framework is understanding local perceptions of migration, i.e., when the actors involved see what they are doing as migrating or when they see it as simply exercising a certain human disposition calling it the right to move. This includes paying attention to “when is it mobility just circulating as people feel free as a human being to circulate and when is it understood as migration.”\(^\text{15}\) This underscores the need to understand how migration is perceived by the migrants or what the actors think about migration. Some societies such as the Mandarin do not have a term for migration. They use terms which mean “flow”\(^\text{16}\) (see

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\(^{14}\) Cohen and Sirkeci 2011: 22.

\(^{15}\) Commentary by Professor Francis Nyamnjoh, March 23, 2021, MIDEQ Zoom meeting on the Zanj Special Issue on South-South Migration.

\(^{16}\) Commentary by Tawona Sithole, March 23, 2021, MIDEQ Zoom Meeting on Zanj Special Issue on South-
also Liu and Tawona, this volume). Similarly, among the Hadiya a local term connotes flow than migration, part of a natural order of things than a transgression.

This conception of population movement is different from the way the term migration is understood among policy communities which, after three decades of understanding migration, still narrowly defines it to the exclusion of contextual factors. The Hadiya talk about their migration to South Africa with a certain sense of entitlement: you go where things are better and a local hero is one who is not stuck in the villages or in a local university but rather who stretches far. There seems to be a pastoralist legacy at work that informs the culture of mobility of contemporary Hadiya society. Although Hadiya is currently predominantly agrarian, they do not have a strong sense of territoriality which is often associated with an agrarian society. The Hadiya have only recently adopted agriculture from neighboring communities. A focus group discussion with members of a local community in Jajura, one of the main emigrant localities, aptly captures the socio-cultural dimension of migration among the Hadiya:

Movement of people is not new for Hadiya. Heroes are those who have been to far off places. Our ancestors moved around for hunting and keeping cattle. A man was a hero if he were fearless of the lion, tiger, or buffalo; one who would walk in darkness etc. Even after we became farmers we continued to move around – from Libido (the neighboring Mareqo people) to Wonji [Awash valley]. Darifirma is what a Hadiya does whether out of necessity, adventure or expanding horizon.

A focus group discussion with elders of Jajura town, Soro district, January 4, 2020.

A discussion with the staff of a local University in Hosanna provided a similar cultural and historical context for Hadiya migration, including to South Africa:

We do not think Hadiya migration is because of poverty. Hadiya have proved to be hard workers and know they can prosper at home as well. There was a time when the number of cattle one owns used to be a wealth indicator. Hadiya used to be regarded as little Canada because of the quality and abundance of its wheat. Among the Hadiya there is a social norm called jebdu – they go for what they believe in. We have seen that with Professor Beyene Petros [the veteran Hadiya opposition leader committee to nonviolent political struggle] and his brother Bezabih [distinguished for his bravery in the air raid on Asmara during the Ethio-Eritrean border war of 1998-2000] Hadiya always seeks to

Professor Beyene is iconic among the Hadiya. In February 2021 Hadiya migrants in South Africa and in the US honoured him as a role model. During the occasion he was awarded an expensive private car in recognition of his merits.

South Migration.

18 Extract from a focus group discussion with elders of Jajura town, Soro district, January 4, 2020.
19 Professor Beyene is iconic among the Hadiya. In February 2021 Hadiya migrants in South Africa and in the US honoured him as a role model. During the occasion he was awarded an expensive private car in recognition of his merits.
excel. After farming, the first domain of excellence was the army. Then came the education wave. South Africa is considered as a third wave – a time to prosper. The word spread that some Hadiya went to South Africa and prospered. Many followed suits. Our university is planning to organize in partnership with IOM an awareness forum advising the youth not to migrate. Although we are in this, we do not really think this approach will work. What is needed is rather a psychological study first. Hadiya have a concept of darifirma. The male youth are encouraged to go somewhere, not stay in the same village. It is said that even joining the military is commendable than living in the same village forever. Now a Hadiya student would be unhappy if he is placed in a nearby university – the farther, the better. The preference is Meqele University – the farthest from Hadiya.20

Jebdu and darifirma mentioned in the quotations above are local norms which justify and encourage physical mobility while simultaneously critiquing a stationary lifestyle understood as limiting horizon and life options. In these and many other similar conversations, the Hadiya situate the current migration to South Africa within the broader culture of mobility; a culture of mobility which has been reinforced by a history of labor migration. Hadiya and Kembata, with population densities of 342 and 502 persons per km2 respectively, are among the most densely populated areas in Ethiopia (CSA, 2008). As a result, the shortage of agricultural land has been a serious challenge21. Hadiya seasonal agricultural labor migration was initially to the neighboring Libido areas which the informant in the quotation alluded to. In the 1940s and 1950s, Emperor Haile Selassie I granted large estates of land in the neighboring Sidama region to absentee landowners who started schemes of commercial coffee farming. The subsequent expansion of commercialized coffee farming in Sidama was responsible for the introduction of agricultural wage labour into the wider region.22

Although commercial coffee plantations provided the initial stimulus for labour commodification among the Hadiya, it was sugar cane-based cash cropping that has helped it flourish even further.23 The establishment of sugar estates in the Wonji and later the Metahara area in the Awash Valley by a Dutch company in the 1950s and 1960s was a landmark in the genesis of the migrant labour system in Hadiya-Kembata area and Ethiopia more broadly. Before the decade ended, the Wonji area had become the largest market for migrant labourers in the country.24 It is no wonder that one of the neighborhoods in Hosanna town is named after Wonji, as most of the inhabitants there are families of labor migrants from Wonji. In the 1980s, Wonji was replaced by Gambella in western Ethiopia as a major destination for Hadiya migration this time as part of the government-sponsored resettlement program following the 1984/5 famine.

20 Extract from a focus group discussion with Wachemo University staffs, Hosanna, January 5, 2020.
21 Girmachew 2019.
22 Negash 2017.
23 Ibid.
The culture of migration helps sustain the flow of migration from one generation to another, both domestic and international. Conversation with people in places of origin and discussion with some migrants at destination indicate that most of the Hadiya migrants in South Africa come from families with migration history. New routes of internal migration include to Dire Dawa and Addis Ababa. Some youth migrants use these cities as transit; to generate income to partly cover the cost of migration to South Africa. As Massey et al. noted, “if migration becomes strongly associated with social and material success, migrating can become the norm rather than the exception, and staying home can become associated with failure [...] Such migration affected cultural change can further strengthen migration aspirations along established pathways in communities and societies that can become obsessed with migration.”

Hadiya mobility norm is reinforced by an egalitarian but competitive ethos. Hadiya start with the cultural premise that “all are equal.” If someone migrates and succeeds, everyone else then would say, “why not me?”. Hadiya society is built along radical ideas of equality and exactly because of this it is also very competitive. As it is mentioned in the quotation above, before migration to South Africa, education was an arena for social competition. Ever since Professor Beyene exploded into the national and global scale as a renowned intellectual everyone else started working harder to emulate him. Similarly, many youths went to South Africa when they heard that someone from their village went there and bought a car or built a house for his family. This means they felt the urge to migrate because of relative worth, i.e., individuals evaluated their abilities/worth relative to other individuals, and their self-esteem was strongly influenced by a comparison of self to others. The implicit assumption is inequality is not part of the natural order of things, i.e., the belief that people are born equal, and it should remain so. An equilibrium is achieved when those who lag strive hard enough to catch up.

The Spiritual Framing of Hadiya Migration to South Africa

I saw a vision God opening a southern route to Hadiya through which people will go and bring back prosperity to Hosanna (Prophecy revealed by Pastor Peter Youngren, 2001 Hosanna).

Hadiya migration to South Africa has a strong spiritual dimension situated within the prophetic tradition of evangelical Christianity. This is linked with migration processes at various levels – from decision making, migratory agency to sense making at destinations. Spirituality of migration is expressed in two ways: first there is the prophecy revealed by a globally situated evangelical who came to Hosanna in 2001; and secondly, there is the blessing of migrants’ journey to South Africa by local church leaders.

Pastor Peter Youngren, a Canadian Christian evangelist, came to Hosanna in 2001 to deliver a prophetic message about Hadiya migration to South Africa. In a packed public square

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25 Liang and Song 2018.
26 Dereje 2018.
27 Douglas Massey et al. 1993: 452
28 He is the founder of World Impact Ministries (WIM) in 1976; widely known for its so-called ‘Friendship Festivals’ conducted over 60 nations where hundreds of thousands of believers attended. In 1990 Youngren held a
in Hosanna at Gofer Meda where over hundreds of thousands of people gathered, Peter delivered a prophecy which would ‘transform Hadiya society’. So goes the story that Hosanna was chosen for grace and blessing through the journey to South Africa, as the following recollection by a participant of the 2001 Hosanna Friendship festival organized by Pastor Peter indicates:

The conference was held at Gofer Meda and attendance was massive, predominantly Hadiya but also people from the neighboring areas particularly Kembata. Peter said ‘I have a message from God to deliver to you. I saw God opening a new southern route for Hadiya’. Peter further said, ‘from now onwards you will see a constant flow of people (ye mayiqom ye hizb jiret); people work hard and prosper; that they will bring blessing to Hosanna and to Ethiopia more broadly’. He specifically mentioned Hosanna town will be transformed beyond recognition; ‘the time will come when three wheel cars will fill the streets of Hosanna and a country where people go to without a visa’. He also said ‘there will be rain and abundant crops. He did not directly mention South Africa. That is how prophecy works. A man of God delivers a message and people interpret the message based on indicative signs. He said, ‘God will allow movement of people; one which will bring prosperity’. Peter did not say ‘go to South Africa’. He rather prophesized the onset of a largescale migration of Hadiya and their socioeconomic transformation. God used him as a conduit to bless the Hadiya. Peter said we would soon see signs. And it did not take long for us to start seeing the signs of the prophecy.

Pastor Birhanu further provided the economic and political context of the prophecy which increased its plausibility and receptivity:

The time when Peter came was a difficult time. There was drought. There were also too many youths in the street without jobs and any prospect of getting one. The government was also imprisoning Hadiya youth because of their support to an opposition party. That was a time when parents were crying loud praying hard to deal with the challenges.

This was indeed a message of hope which was well received by Hadiya due to the political and economic contexts of the time. Politically, this was a time of great upheaval in Hadiya Zone. There was political instability related to the contested 2000 election: Hadiya was the only area where the election was won by an opposition party — Hadiya National Democratic Organization — followed by a severe crackdown by the government. The post-election represssion ended in “a

stadium crusade in the Soviet Union; in 1991 in the Central Square in Sofia etc.

29 See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3o2hSVWA8_U.

bloodbath of the Hadiya.”

This was also a time of increased poverty because of a drought which resulted in crop failure. Political insecurity, grinding poverty and the stronger roots evangelical Christianity has taken among the Hadiya seem to have created a higher receptivity to Youngren’s prophecy. People who the author talked to in Hosanna and Jajura provide various evidence for the fulfillment of the prophecy. Some referred to a bumper harvest soon after Peter Youngren’s visit to Hosanna:

It did not take long for the prophecy told by Peter to start operating. Same year when Peter came there was much rain with a bumper harvest; so much so that a 100-birr wheat was sold for 40 birr. Unlike the years before the prophecy, everyone had much more than for subsistence.

Others referred to the blessing of the journey which is otherwise fraught with danger:

Soon after Peter’s conference Hadiya youth started flocking because the Southern route was now opened. Many Hadiyas flocked to South Africa without education and without an idea or information about what it is like to travel to South Africa. There were already few who went to South Africa, but mass migration started after 2001. Now Hadiya and Kembata in South Africa are twice as many as the other Ethiopian migrants. This is because the message was spread more widely in these areas. Imagine, the journey from Hadiya to South Africa involves crossing more than five or six countries and is dangerous. Notwithstanding the risks, the main news in Hadiya became someone South Africa geba (entered) without much difficulty. Not long after someone announced that he would travel to South Africa we would hear geba. The blessing made the journey a lot easier than one would have expected. I left in 2004, three years after Peter came. I was a student at that time. I talked to my friends about the idea of going to South Africa. They all readily agreed. When we decided to travel it felt as if we were already in South Africa. I remember the enthusiasm and the confidence we had. We never thought of the risks we might encounter during the journey and the language difficulties we might encounter. In fact, it felt like as if we were moving from one house to another within Hadiya.

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31 Tronvoll 2000.
32 This is part of the humanitarian crisis the wider East African region faced due to severe drought. The region’s main rainy season began late that year, adding to the problem. The drought caused crops to fail, livestock to die and food price to rise. See for instance Hammond and Maxwell 2002: 262-278.
33 Interview with a Mekaneyesus Church leader, Hosanna, January 28, 2020.
The spiritual aspect of Hadiya migration to South Africa is very instructive: it plays an important role in the decision making and motivation, instancing ‘confidence without caution’ as one of the problems of ‘believing’, the lack of even hesitation. Of course, spiritual aspect affects and foster such things as resilience when things are not going well, people feel the strength to persevere, arguably being better placed to cope with adversity.

Pastor Birhanu further invoked the overarching prophetic frame of reference while making sense of Hadiya migrants’ success at destination despite the multiple challenges they face:

It is not only the journey to South Africa which is blessed. It is also about the pace at which Hadiya have adopted to the new South African environment. It would not take long before they have become the envy of the more established migrants from other countries. What is intriguing is many of the Hadiya youth who became successful businessmen in South Africa were the same people who would rather sit idle at home. Most even would not bring items from a shop, let alone run a shop. One would also expect the predominantly uneducated Hadiya to be at a disadvantage in the business competition with the more established migrants from southern Africa region, and more so from the Indians and Chinese who dominate the business in South Africa. And yet it would not take longer than a year or so for a Hadiya to get used to life in South Africa, set up a business and flourish. This is because it is the will of God. I often refer to this divine favor during preaching in my congregation in Joburg. Hadiya migration to South Africa is a prophecy fulfilled. Most migrants in South Africa came to South Africa as a project. They are even supported by their government. Hadiya did not come to South Africa as a project but as the fulfillment of God’s word.35

A similar spiritual framing was used by a returnee while making sense of the successful establishment of Hadiya migrants in South Africa such as their business flourishment despite greater entry barriers as compared with migrants from Southern Africa region who they now employ in their businesses:

I strongly believe that Hadiya migration to South Africa is sanctioned by God. How else could you explain the successful business of Ethiopians who are otherwise at a disadvantage in South Africa vis a vis other migrant? Take Malawians for instance. They are very skilled (known in South Africa as best tailors) and yet they are employed by Ethiopians for a monthly salary of 2,500 Rand. The Ethiopians sell the curtains made by the Malawians and earn thousands of profits. Ethiopians make a profit from a business they do not know well. This is more intriguing for Hadiya migrants given the fact that most of them are from villages without

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35 Ibid.
cultural competence or entrepreneurial skill. Malawians speak South African languages, and they know the country very well and have the necessary skill. The Hadiya shopkeeper does not even understand what customers say but he is still richer. This is where the prophecy operates.\textsuperscript{36}

Similarly, those who stayed behind also now reflect on the link between the prophecy and the socio-economic transformation of Hosanna, as the following excerpts from interview in Hosanna indicates:

It was not so clear to us what Peter meant when he said ‘South’. Now we know he prophesized about South Africa! The prophecy was fulfilled when a new wave of migration route to South Africa started soon after the prophecy with an immediate transformative effect on Hosanna. However, not all the migrants have responded to the call in a responsible manner. Some have behaved well and made good use of the blessing – they changed themselves and their family, as prophesized by Peter. However, some abused the blessing – engaged in violence, extra marital affairs, divorce etc. This is the reason why there is inequality among the migrants – some succeeded while others failed.\textsuperscript{37}

Retrospectively I now say the prophecy was fulfilled. I am a living witness, as I was part of the spiritually guided journey. I went to South Africa 15 years ago and I could tell you the difference the migration has made. Compare Hosanna now and 15 years ago. It has grown so much from a small and insignificant town to an emerging city. The money sent from South Africa is at the heart of Hosanna’s transformation and Hadiya Zone more broadly. Many Hadiya families would not have survived without the support they get from family members living in South Africa. When the prophecy was delivered prosperity appeared too far removed from the reality on the ground. That was a time of economic difficulty, population growth and political repression.\textsuperscript{38}

The spiritual frame of reference for Hadiya migration to South Africa goes even deeper. Migrants and their families reflect on Hadiya migration to South Africa in relational terms situating it within the broader historically shaped regional inequality between the ‘core North’ and ‘peripheral South’ in the context of state formation in Ethiopia both in political representation and national wealth allocation. Historically, Hadiya belong to Ethiopia’s periphery and migration to

\textsuperscript{36} Interview with a migrant trader between Ethiopia and South Africa through the Ethiopian Airlines, aka ‘the Jordans’, December 16, 2020, Addis Ababa.

\textsuperscript{37} Interview with an official of Mekaneyesus Church, Hosanna, December 6, 2019.

\textsuperscript{38} Pastor Birhanu, Wengel Amagnoch Church based in Johannesburg, interviewed in Addis Ababa, November 8, 2020.
South Africa is understood to renegotiate this regional inequality. In so doing, the Hadiya attribute
an ‘inherent link’ between peoples of the periphery and their greater representation in South-
South Migration, as the following narrative indicates:

How come that Amharas, Tigres and Oromos [people of the core regions] are not migrating to South Africa as much as the Hadiya and other Southerners do [people of the periphery]? Their oversight is not accidental. God has blinded them of this opportunity protecting it for us. Had they known about the opportunities in South Africa they would have taken up all the opportunities. They are everywhere. Many Ethiopians in Europe, the US and Canada are Amharas, Tigreans and Oromos. They have money, knowledge, and wider social network. And yet we [the Hadiya and other peoples from Southern Ethiopia] managed to make it to South Africa despite our apparent lack of skill and political networks.\(^{39}\)

In the narratives by migrants, their families and Hadiya society more broadly, one of the contextual factors within which migration processes are situated is Hadiya’s religious landscape. Protestants comprise the majority in Hadiya. Within the broader Protestant Christianity, visionary Churches and the faith movement that underpins it is cutting deeper into Hadiya society. Local pastors, prophets and apostles have proliferated continuously working on and within the prophetic tradition expounded by Peter Youngren. The only difference is local self-proclaimed prophets and apostles operate at the individual level, focusing on divining the future for individual potential migrants. This is in turn situated within the current proliferation of prophetic claims within evangelical Christianity. In recent years, self-proclaimed evangelical prophets have proliferated across the world; “a loose but fervent movement led by hundreds of people who believe they can channel supernatural powers — and have special spiritual insights into world events.”\(^{40}\)

Reflecting a global pattern and the Ethiopian situation as well, there is a boom of self-proclaimed prophets among the Hadiya who are increasingly involved in divining the future for aspirant migrants. One of such well-known Hadiya prophets is Apostle Yididiya Paulos, who has travelled several times to South Africa to preach to the Ethiopian migrant community while at home he is active in preaching a divine protection to the Ethiopian nation. The following narratives from Hosanna further sheds light onto the spirituality of Hadiya migration to South Africa:

Those believers who would say Amen in a church during a blessing of planned migration would have higher prospect of a successful migration to South Africa. Some pastors even prophesize about the fortune a potential migrant would make in South Africa. I am told that I first go to South Africa and ultimately end up in Canada. I am working towards this goal.\(^{41}\)

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\(^{39}\) Interview with a returnee businessman, Hosanna, February 4, 2021.


\(^{41}\) South Africa has become a transit to North America further fueling aspiration. There is now a local agency
The Church has a vested interest in endorsing migration projects, as successful migrants remit money to the churches as a form of thanksgiving. Churches publicly recognize receiving money from the migrants, taking credit for migrants’ success enabled by their prayer. Some migrants send money to church as a gift, while others remit in the form of tithe (asirat). According to Protestant tradition (also taught by pastors) one pays tithe to the original church he belongs, which is often in places of origin. The pattern of residence at destinations facilitates joint fund raising as people living in a neighborhood are mostly from the same place of origin. For instance, Johannesburg is predominantly Sorro (from Jajura area) whereas Durban is dominated by Hadiya migrants from Lemmo district. From the remittances they get from migrants most local churches in Hadiya have bought keyboard, sound system and generator which are essential goods to enhance public visibility in the increasingly competitive Ethiopian religious landscape, adding to Hadiya’s already distinctively Protestant public space. Most churches in Hadiya are financed by migrants through the collective remittances that they send.

In the narratives presented and discussed the spirituality of migration in the Ethiopia-South Africa corridor abounds. Spirituality enters the migration process at various levels. It is intimately connected to decision making process, as the prophecy creates aspiration to migrate by its own right to which a divine script is attributed. It goes even further shaping or informing the actual time of migration, as potential migrants might be advised by local church leaders either to give priority to other members of the family or postpone it until an opportune moment comes. Spirituality also operates as a form of capability creating a spiritually animated migratory agency which was deployed to negotiate risks during the journey. The recent shocking incidents during the journey to South Africa indicate how risky it is. In March 2020, for instance, more than 60 Ethiopian migrants, most of whom are Hadiya, were found dead in a cargo container in Mozambique’s northwest Tete province. A study indicates that 38 per cent of respondents reported that they were beaten or physically robbed at least once and 30 per cent of them spoke of death during the journey. Not least, spirituality is invoked in making sense of the process of adaptation at destination, ultimately leading to successful migrant businesses. For some migrants, it is also important in place making as it forms part of a repertoire that they tap into to generate resilience in face of the challenges constitutive of the destination habitus including xenophobic violence. Interestingly even a failed migration project could be made intelligible through the same scheme of interpretation couched in the language of “abuse” of the blessing offered. It is also expressed in the form of increasing violence among migrants at destination with some spillovers to places of origin.

The Role of Socio-political Networks in Hadiya Migration to South Africa

Most research participants mentioned that Hadiya and Kembata migration to South Africa peaked in the early 2000s. This is confirmed by the existing literature on Hadiya migration to South Africa. Among other non-economic factors already mentioned such as the culture of mobility in Hosanna that organizes Hadiya migration to Canada. From an interview with an aspirant migrant, Hosanna, January 28, 2020.

43 Kanko and Teller 2014.
and spirituality of migration, political networks seem to have played an important role in Hadiya migration to South Africa. Various studies mentioned the role played by the then Ethiopian Ambassador to South Africa (2002-2004) who supported a few of his relatives to migrate to South Africa. The Ambassador himself is from Southern Ethiopia with a mixed Kembata-Hadiya ethnic background. His description of how he contributed to Hadiya-Kembata migration throws light onto the onset of the large-scale migration to South Africa situated within the historically shaped regional inequality in Ethiopia:

I have worked in over 15 government offices ever since I graduated from Addis Ababa University in 1962. I was wondering why I could not see people from my area [Southern Ethiopia] in the bureaucracy. The Ethiopian state appropriated our land and gave it to government officials from northern Ethiopia. And yet we were not incorporated into the bureaucracy. The problem is this distinction between ye mehal hager (centre) and ye dar hager (periphery). Tigreans and Amharas were considered (still largely are) mehal hager and the rest dar hager. Discrimination was so blatant that if you visibly had an ethnic name, you would not be employed. This was the reason why many southerners changed their name, me included. I did my part to make the bureaucracy a bit more inclusive. I recruited many southerners when I was an official at the Commission for Water Construction. I defended my act when I was accused of nepotism mentioning that ‘our bureaucracy is zeregna (racist)’ [...] I then joined and became secretary of ECHAT (Ethiopian Oppressed People’s Revolutionary Struggle) in the 1970s, for which I was imprisoned. Even during the so-called revolutionary Derg period people of the South were not treated equally. I remember what a relative of mine who was a Derg official told me how allocation of government positions was perceived. When he nominated educated southerners for government positions, he was rebuffed as if the rightful position for Hadiya and Kembata is slashing sugar canes in Wonji and Metehara. That is why I mentioned this during my intervention at the inaugural meeting of the transitional government in 1991 as a critic of the terms of Ethiopia citizenship.

The Ambassador has continued the same tradition of his ‘deliberate defiance’ of government discriminatory practices when he was assigned as Ethiopian ambassador to South Africa (2002-2004), the same time that Hadiya and Kembatta migration to South Africa picked up:

As a matter of fact, the current Ethiopian ambassador to South Africa Dr. Shiferaw Teklemariam- is also from Hadiya who is actively engaged in promoting Ethiopian migrants’ rights in South Africa.

I realized that there were lots of opportunities in South Africa that my fellow people from the South could avail. Of course, the migration already started before I arrived, but it became large scale since. Myself brought fifteen members of my extended family who in turn brought relatives and friends. What I did in South Africa is a continuation of my long-standing deliberate defiance against ethnic-based discrimination. The Ethiopian embassy under my leadership supported the movement of people. I remember writing as many as twenty invitation letters so that people could come to South Africa. Hadiya and Kembata migrants and their families credit me for the fortunes brought by migration probably more than I deserve. Once an elder approached me during a funeral I attended in Kembatta full of tears. He showed me his bank account with a deposit of 650,000 birr sent by his children from South Africa and then said, ‘all this is because of you.’ On the other hand, the then Minister of Foreign Affairs [a Northerner] was not happy that I encouraged people from Southern Ethiopia to migrate to South Africa. He reprimanded me for taking my entire family to South Africa. I courageously replied ‘what is wrong with helping the poorer southerners to come and work in South Africa? Isn’t it the case that you guys [Northerners] take your relatives and countrymen to North America and Europe?’ Soon after I was transferred to Uganda as if I did something wrong.’ I am happy that at least the migration that I supported brought a temporary relief to so many deprived southerners. It was then mainly through a direct flight from Addis Ababa to Johannesburg. The land route, which is riskier, started much later.

During the interview the Ambassador also reflected on a different side of political network that is implicated in the migration process, i.e., Ethiopia’s contribution to the South African liberation movement:

Then it was a lot easier to migrate to South Africa. Mandela was very much sympathetic to Ethiopian migrants, and he used to say ‘do not touch Ethiopians’. As a result, the Home Affairs was more lenient to asylum claims by Ethiopians. I met Mandela several times during which he expressed gratitude to Ethiopia’s contribution during the liberation movement. The idea of Ethiopia was central in the formation of black South African nationalism.

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46 During fieldwork in Durame, many research participants also mentioned the role played by the ambassador for Hadiya and Kembata migration to South Africa. If the spread of education in Kembatta is associated with the name Alemu Weldehana, so is the name of the ambassador with migration.


48 Ibid. Mandela had briefly undergone military training in Ethiopia in 1962 where he entered under the cover
The language of reciprocity was also strategically deployed by PM Abiy Ahmed during his conversations with the South African political leadership and with Ethiopian migrants when he visited South Africa in January 2020. His speeches were replete with references to “Ethiopian contributions to South Africa.” These references were accompanied by a call for a preferential treatment for Ethiopian migrants. He lobbied the South African political leadership to give greater recognition to Ethiopian migrants’ contribution to the South African economy. He also framed the recognition demand in the language of reciprocity. While addressing South Africans at the ANC’s 108th birthday rally in Kimberley, Northern Cape, PM Abiy invoked the political intimacy between Mandela and Ethiopia, as if he wanted to project Ethiopian exceptionalism on to Ethiopian migrants:

In his autobiography, Madiba speaks fondly about Ethiopia as a country that inspired him to continue with the struggle against apartheid. The building in which Madiba was housed while undergoing his military training in Ethiopia is still standing but far from the manner that represents the great history it witnessed. Let me seize this opportunity, comrade president, to call upon our two countries’ cooperation into developing this historic place. Regardless of the differing political orientations, all successive Ethiopian governments had firmly supported the cause of the people of South Africa for freedom and equality.\(^{49}\)

PM Abiy also moralized his demand for recognition and protection of Ethiopian migrants: that Ethiopians are a different kind of migrants as ‘they do not involve in criminality but just work hard’, although he acknowledged the increasing violence and criminality involving Ethiopian migrants as well, including migrants on migrants’ violence in a separate consultation meeting with Ethiopian migrants.\(^{50}\) If PM Abiy succeeds in improving the status of Ethiopian migrants in South Africa, in the context of steadily growing bilateral ties between the two countries, this will have a huge impact on the evolution of the Ethiopian migrant community in South Africa. Not least, it will contribute to the already existing sense of entitlement among Ethiopian migrants, particularly Hadiya migrants who regard South Africa as a promised land. Legal status at destination also greatly shapes the transnational activities of immigrants and their families left behind further fueling aspiration of potential migrants.

Political networks have been reinforced by robust social networks that facilitate Hadiya migration to South Africa. Transnational social networks often play crucial roles in facilitating migration and at times resulting in a geographical concentration of places of origin of the migrants. As noted by de Haas\(^{51}\), “migration may begin for a variety of reasons [but a single initial cause] alone cannot explain the actual, patterned and geographically clustered morphology of migration, typically linking particular places and regions. One area to look at is migrant networks


\(^{50}\) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M2eULKxrbpQ.

\(^{51}\) De Haas 2021: 1589.
'the sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through bonds of kinship, friendship and shared community origin.” In the case of Ethiopian migrants in South Africa, the geographic concentration of place of origin of the migrants partly relates to the emergence of a social network that responds to local realities of both destination and place of origin. Once a critical number of migrants have settled at the destination, migration becomes self-perpetuating because it creates the social structures to sustain the process. Apart from migrants themselves as networks, there are various intermediate, self-sustaining structures. This includes the “migration industry,” which involves brokers and smugglers, which have an interest in and tend to facilitate the continuation of migration. The migration industry in the Ethiopia-South Africa corridor is based on access to information and trust given the higher risks associated with the journey.

The Hadiya are fairly represented in the brokerage industry who closely cooperate with the Somali, Kenyan and Eritrean smugglers further linked with various intermediaries in Southern African countries. The movement is typically organized directly from Hosanna or Nairobi. Access to quality (effective) brokerage is very important in the Ethiopia-South Africa migration corridor which is increasingly securitized by the Ethiopian government because many of the migrants fall under ‘irregular migrants’ vulnerable to manipulation by “human traffickers.” Concerning the documents required for international travel, a study indicated that the overwhelming percentages of Hadiya migrants (over 83 per cent) reported they had a legal passport but no valid/legal visa, and nearly 9 per cent of them had neither legal passport nor visa. They pointed out that forged forms of such documents are arranged by smugglers or other facilitators in Addis Ababa and/or Nairobi.

Unlike the Derg regime (1974–1990) that curtailed labour exits, the current government (1991 to date) has liberalized emigration policy in Ethiopia. Several proclamations and legal infrastructures have been developed to facilitate formal labour migrations from Ethiopia. The Overseas Employment Proclamation of 1998 resulted in the establishment of 400 Private Employment Agencies (PEAs), however the licensing was limited to the Gulf countries. That left other significant labour migrations to South Africa and Europe to facilitation by informal brokers. Over 95 per cent of Ethiopian migrants entered South Africa through irregular means but immediately applied for asylum to regularize their situation. With increased media coverage of the death of Ethiopian migrants in transit countries such as Tanzania and Malawi — and the violence they face at destinations and when opposition to government was building momentum at home — the Ethiopian government responded by criminalizing informal brokers and banning all PEAs.

The government’s intensification of migration control and regulatory infrastructures always manifests itself through the criminalization of brokers and portrayal of migrants as “victims of human trafficking practices.” Until 2013, when the Government of Ethiopia started an organized

52 Castles and Miller 2012.
54 Adugna, Deshingkar and Ayalew 2019.
55 Zewdu 2014.
campaign on “illegal” brokers to combat trafficking in persons and migrant smuggling, most of the lead brokers had lived in Hosanna and Addis Ababa. Since then, some of them have been imprisoned, and others went underground by changing their places of residence. Some moved to the transit countries from where they facilitated the mobility of Hadiya migrants. As further noted by Fekadu, Deshingkar and Tekalign et al.,\textsuperscript{57} “from those transnational locations they continued to provide services including organizing supply and departures from places of origin and arranging clandestine journeys with the involvement of their chains at several conjunction points. They also organized money transfers to these several nodes along the route of the long overland journey to South Africa.”

The fact that most of the migrants from Hadiya to South Africa are either un- or little educated and do not speak any of the languages spoken en route makes the services of the intermediaries’ indispensable. Aspirant migrants have a clear preference to transnationally connected local brokers who are more trusted. Fekadu, Deshingkar and Tekalign (2019) noted that migration brokerage in Hadiya is a socio-culturally embedded business because:

\begin{quote}
Migration brokers live among the community, they worship with the community, and their children go to the same school as the children from the local community. Migration to South Africa is a long journey with a high risk of being intercepted and deported. Thus, for potential migrants using the services of a broker with whom they share multiple relationships, and whom they believe will respect the local values and norms, is a strategy to reduce risks. Brokers will work hard and use their own money to mitigate migration failures as these impacts on their reputation.\textsuperscript{58}
\end{quote}

There are many cases in which brokers paid back the brokerage fee for a failed migration project. Being Hadiya is thus already a social capital allowing a differential access to effective and “responsible” brokerage service. It is no wonder that contrary to government designation of brokers as ‘human traffickers’ they are perceived by migrants and potential migrants as “door openers”\textsuperscript{59} and some research participants even recast them as Moses who would guide the journey to ‘the promised land’, i.e., South Africa.

Social networks are also important in the process of adaption and settlement in destination places, including a jump start into the labor market. Social networks are particularly important in the migrants’ labor arrangement in South Africa between established migrants (popularly known as boss) and new arrivals (borders). Social relatedness is particularly active in the mutually supportive contractual relationship between established and newly arrived Hadiya migrants in South Africa. According to Yordanos and Zack (2020), the boss-border patronage system works in the following manner:

\begin{quote}
Borders from southern Ethiopia are typically related to their bosses through blood, kinship, friendship, religion, etc. […] the relationship
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{58} Op cit.
\textsuperscript{59} Op cit: 16.
between bosses and borders in the host space is primarily economic. There are indications of an element of profit making and exploitation of borders. Nevertheless, the borders use the job opportunities provided by the bosses as a transition period and apprenticeship to establishing their own businesses.\textsuperscript{60}

The relationship between a boss and a border is not formal thus the junior migrant vulnerable to exploitation. Even family members recognize the exploitative dimension of the boss-border patronage system, and yet they recognize how important social networks are in the process of settlement at destination, as the following commentary by a returnee indicates:

My father went to South Africa first. He got his passport and flew from Addis Ababa to Maputo. He was welcomed by his friend who was already in South Africa. He sent me money to come to South Africa. During my journey I was supported by Hadiya brokers, my father, and migrants from Jajura where my family comes from. Shortly upon arrival I started working for my father as a border in his shop in Limpopo. It was hard for me to get used to the work as street vendor or house to house delivery of goods in townships. My job was transporting commodities such as utensils, belts, and heavy blankets. I used to complain a lot about the nature of the work and at times wishing to run away and start my own business than working for my father. My father’s friends reprimand me as being unthankful mentioning that other new arrivals work in a harsher condition. Over time I got used to the work and not long after I managed to open my own shop when I saved 30,000 Rand through iqub [traditional saving mechanism]. I bought a brand-new car to transport the goods together with my friend, also from the same village I come from.\textsuperscript{61}

Most Hadiya migrants in South Africa are from the rural areas and this is dictated by the nature of the labor market in destination. The sector which most migrants in South Africa are engaged, and certainly the Ethiopian migrants, is the informal retail trade, initially in the townships but currently mostly in shops in major urban areas such as Johannesburg and Durban. Migrants without a social network face stronger entry barrier and struggle a lot to set afoot in South Africa’s informal economy. This echoes the argument made by de Haas\textsuperscript{62} that “relatively poor, low-skilled migrants are generally more dependent on social capital in the form of networks to migrate than relatively wealthy, high-skilled migrants. Their relatively high dependence on social capital to facilitate migration partly helps to explain why low-skilled migrants tend to cluster in specific towns and neighborhoods as opposed to the more individualized and spatially more diffuse settlement patterns of high-skilled, wealthy migrants who are able to migrate more independently.” Besides,

\textsuperscript{60} Yordanos and Zack 2020.
\textsuperscript{61} Interview with a returnee businessman, Addis Ababa, November 14, 2020.
\textsuperscript{62} de Haas 2010.
the pervasive violence related to xenophobia and petty crime in South Africa has compelled migrants to resort to personal security arrangements such as relying on own family members.

**Conclusion**

Economics still dominate migration studies in explaining both aspiration and capability. Economic factors are certainly a crucial part of the migration story. Hadiya migration to South Africa is no exception. However, the almost exclusive focus on economic factors has sidelined the role non-economic factors play in migration processes. This contribution has examined non-economic factors that have shaped the specificity of the Ethiopia-South Africa corridor. While making sense of why most Ethiopian migrants in South Africa are from Hadiya-Kembata area the contribution examined this pattern through three variables. First is the wider culture of mobility of Hadiya society within which the current international migration to South Africa is situated. The Hadiya have a physical mobility norm which encourages the youth to explore the world and expand their horizon. In such conception of population movement, migration is experienced as part of the normal order of things, not an aberration which needs to be managed, as in much of the discourse of migration in the policy communities. Among the Hadiya, movement of people is understood in its seasonality currently depicted as a ‘South African time’. As such Hadiya migration to South Africa is experienced as the latest iteration of movement of people, part of a repertoire of life options pursued either to deal with practical problems or as an expression of the deep-seated exploratory mind set.

A second non-economic factor that the article examined is the spirituality of migration. A prophecy delivered by a transnational pastor set the spiritual tone for Hadiya migration to South Africa. The prophecy, or at least its interpretations, casts South Africa as a ‘promised land’ attributing to migration a spiritual quality. The timing of the Hadiya mass migration to South Africa and the success stories of the migrants both at destination and place of origin (laudable when measured against a low base) is interpreted as signs of a prophecy fulfilled that has fueled the aspirations of potential migrants. Local church leaders have elaborated on this transnational prophecy customized to individual needs and migration decision making processes. In Hadiya migration to South Africa, we find an overarching spiritual frame of reference which operates both at the level of aspiration creation (a migration project sanctioned by God) and capability (a spiritually animated migratory agency). On the other hand, the link between spirituality and migration has generated a peculiar prayer economy. Church leaders bless the journey to South Africa, and migrants send collective remittance supporting local churches in return for the service they got and in the spirit of reciprocity.

A third non-economic factor for Hadiya migration to South Africa which this contribution examined is the role of socio-political networks. This has been expressed in two ways. First is the political network. The Ethiopian ambassador to South Africa in the early 2000s encouraged people from Hadiya-Kembata area (to which he belongs) to South Africa. His politics of concern is situated within a historical context; the regional inequality embedded within a core-periphery dyad shaped by the political economy of state formation in Ethiopia. Southern Ethiopia, Hadiya included, form a periphery lagging the core regions of central and northern highlands in terms of human development indicators. The ambassador is very politically conscious, and he has sought to
renegotiate this regional inequality in various domains of life including leveraging his government post to encourage fellow southerners avail the opportunities South Africa offered in what appears to be part of a project of ‘catching up’. PM Abiy Ahmed’s strategic deployment of the language of reciprocity – the reference to Ethiopia’s contribution to the struggle against Apartheid – during his visit to South Africa in 2020 has also provided Ethiopian migrants with a new discursive resource to negotiate status and ‘otherness’ not only with the South African society but also with migrants from the Southern Africa region who feel more entitled as neighbors to South Africa than the ‘upstart’ migrants from the Horn of Africa.

Equally important is the role played by social networks particularly in access to the trust-based and quality brokerage service. The increasing securitization of the Ethiopia-South Africa corridor has increased the demand for reliable migration brokers. Classified as irregular migration corridor, the Ethiopian government has recast aspirant migrants to South Africa as ‘victims’ to ‘smugglers. This is oblivious of the agency of aspirant migrants who often initiate the process of brokerage. Most brokers have gone underground, while others were imprisoned for extortion and misleading the ‘vulnerable’ youth. This has created a locally embedded brokerage that operates based on trust and social relatedness. Over time local Hadiya migration brokers have started operating clandestinely but well connected with the transnational brokerage industry which is a characteristic feature of the Ethiopia-South Africa corridor given the longer distance between origin and destination and the risks associated with crossing too many state borders. Hadiya’s stronger presence in the cross-border brokerage industry and the emergence of effective and ‘responsible’ brokerage partly explains the geographical concentration of place of origin of Ethiopian migrants in South Africa.

Social networks are also intimately connected to the steadily increasing Hadiya migration to South Africa, expressed mainly in the form of chain migration: migrants sponsor the migration of family members not only as an act of solidarity but also because of the imperatives of the labour market in South Africa. Nearly all Hadiya migrants are engaged in the arduous informal trade in townships and the addition of a family member play the role of redressing labour shortage as well as mitigating the risk of a labor arrangement with strangers. The combined and cumulative effects of these non-economic factors partly explain the unequal access to the Ethiopia-South Africa corridor. The preponderance of Hadiya among Ethiopian migrants in South Africa is explicated in reference to a mobility norm, a spiritual scheme of interpretation and a differential access to political and social networks.
References


