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**Working Paper**

## Governance, climate change and mobility in Ethiopia

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# GOVERNANCE, CLIMATE CHANGE AND MOBILITY IN ETHIOPIA

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Further information on GCM is available on the programme's website <https://www.diis.dk/node/14960>

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ADP	Amhara Democratic Party
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency (US)
CMS	Centre for Migration Studies
CSA	Central Statistics Agency of Ethiopia
ESID	Effective States and Inclusive Development
EPID	Extension and Project Implementation Department
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
FSS	Forum for Social Studies
GCM	Governing Climate Mobility
GTP	Growth and Transformation Plan
ICG	International Crisis Group
MoLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
ODP	Oroma Democratic Party
PA	Peasant Association
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Project
SNNPR	Southern Nations Nationalities and People Region
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front

## **PREFACE**

DIIS Working Paper 2020: 05 has been prepared as part of the first work package of the research programme 'Governing Climate Mobility' (GCM). The programme examines how governance contexts influence mobility options and practices in areas affected by climate change. Development literature and interventions have long emphasised local governance, particularly policies for the decentralisation of government, but the interest in local governance has waned in recent years, while the global governance of climate change has grown in focus. We argue that attention should be paid to the role of local governance, not least in attempting to understand the interplay of structural forces behind households' and individuals' climate-related mobility and the social conditions under which people move or experience (im)mobility.

Research for the GCM programme is being undertaken in two countries, Ghana and Ethiopia, both of which are experiencing significant climate change which is directly impacting upon large sections of the population in both rural and urban areas. The research is undertaken by the Centre for Migration Studies (CMS) at the University of Ghana and the Forum for Social Studies (FSS) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in partnership with the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS).

The Working Paper presents the existing states of governance, climate change and the diverse forms of mobility that are practised in Ethiopia. It draws on the GCM conceptual framing paper<sup>1</sup> for its conceptual and analytical discussions and on various secondary data sources<sup>2</sup> for evidence to substantiate these discussions.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Ethiopia's geostrategic position in the Horn of Africa and its political status within Africa, including accommodating the headquarters of the African Union, ensures that its political stability and economic development are in the international spotlight. Its population, approaching 110 million, urgently needs the benefits of economic development, as the country is currently ranked 173 out of 189 on the global Human Development Index (2017) and has a per capita income of \$790 (2018). The international community needs Ethiopia to remain a factor of stability in a highly unstable region. Both sets of needs have direct significance for the form and practice of governance.

<sup>1</sup> Shortly to be made available on the GCM website.

<sup>2</sup> These include studies based on original data.

**Table 1.** Basic socio-economic and demographic data

Population	109 million (2018)
Per capita income	\$790
Growth rate, average for 2007/8 to 2017/18	9.9%
GDP in 2017/18	7.7%
Population below poverty line	2011: 30%; 2016: 24%

Source: World Bank.

Ethiopia's population is predominantly young: according to the 2007 census,<sup>3</sup> some 35 percent of the population is in the 15-34 age group, while those over 45 make up less than 17 percent of the total. Youth unemployment is very high, and the lack of job opportunities has encouraged many to seek to migrate to the Gulf, South Africa and Europe using both formal and informal channels. Internal mobility<sup>4</sup> has been practised in multiple ways throughout the country's history, often related to forms and shifts in land rights, employment needs, processes of urbanisation and industrialisation, and not least famines, droughts, soil erosion and conflict. Climate change has long been a contributing factor, the difference today being that it has not only become a focus for researchers, politicians and the media, it has also gained currency as an important explanatory factor for migration. Recognising this, the paper uses the concept of climate-related mobility to cover individual, household and occasionally government decisions to move. Whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, the fact that climate change is a contributory factor underlies the use of the term.

### **A developmental state?**

Once the focus is on the significance of governance contexts to the study of climate-related mobility, it becomes necessary to examine the nature of the Ethiopian state. On the significance of context and capacity for the role of the state, the work led by Sam Hickey and others linked to Manchester University and the Effective States and Inclusive Development (ESID) research<sup>5</sup> is important, but to understand trajectories of development, one needs to look at the literature on political settlements, where studies by David Booth (2013), Lindsay Whitfield and Ole Therkildsen (2015), and Mushtaq Khan (2010) are relevant. However, taking the discussion of the place of elites and elite coalitions in development back to an earlier point, in an article of 1995 Adrian Leftwich presented a powerful argument,

<sup>3</sup> A new census was due in 2017 but has been delayed several times due to fears that its findings will lead to political unrest; the census forms the basis for a range of policy decisions and is therefore quite sensitive.

<sup>4</sup> Used here in the sense presented later in the paper, namely that one of the basic features of human livelihoods is mobility. The concept of mobile livelihoods is useful in exploring the various practices involved in 'making a living'. These vary by locality, social group, historical period, and much more. A mobile livelihood approach makes it possible to delineate changes in mobility patterns through time in the form of retractions and extensions of livelihood strategies and to pay attention to the various factors that may have caused changes to take place. Both domestic and international migration practices can be placed within this analytical framework.

<sup>5</sup> For an excellent podcast on this, see <https://soundcloud.com/fp2p/sam-hickey-esid-interview>



both theoretical and empirical, for the role of a developmental state in bringing about effective economic development. Such a state tends to be *de facto* or *de jure* a one-party state with a purposeful and determined elite that is relatively incorrupt. This developmental elite possesses a degree of relative autonomy with respect to the demands of special interests, which helps to shape a powerful, highly competent and insulated economic bureaucracy with the authority to direct and manage economic and social development. The power of the state is established prior to national or foreign capital becoming an important and influential factor. However, this same power also contributes to the tendency for civil society to be a weak, poorly formed presence, often being effectively in the hands of the state and the dominant political elite. The combination of these factors results in a state that is not democratic by either liberal or socialist standards and that operates with policies that combine claims to legitimacy with a politics of repression. However, what such a state does display is a drive to develop, to 'catch up with the west' and to project its development success into national and regional arenas.

Some 25 years later, Christopher Clapham writes that 'Ethiopia provides one of the clearest examples of a "developmental state" in Africa. Drawing on a deeply entrenched experience of statehood, the present Ethiopian regime has embarked on an ambitious programme, depending on the central capture of "rents", to fund a massive expansion, especially in communications, education and hydroelectricity. High initial rates of growth have been achieved. However, the political setting is tightly constrained, and the state has not allowed the private sector freedom of action to generate the required levels of production. Ultimate success will depend on the capacity to transform a state that has itself been central to the development process' (Clapham, 2018: 1151). Others agree, such as Robert Wade, who describes how accountability in Ethiopia's governance system is subordinated to the needs of economic growth and how the state guides economic and social development (Wade, 2018). Its approach to land and resource management is described as 'statist' (Boone, 2013). Such claims appear to be well substantiated by the government's policies; the country's first Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP I, 2010-15) placed the emphasis on greater state investment in education and health services while maintaining agriculture as the driver of economic growth. Under GTP II (2015/16- 2019/20), the economy is planned to be given a structural transformation with rapid industrialisation to enable Ethiopia to attain lower middle-income status by 2025. With GTP II, it is suggested that the emphasis has shifted away from state investment towards a greater role for the private sector and, not least, foreign investments. Major state assets are beginning to be offered for sale in sectors such as telecommunications, power generation and sugar production. The state is also using its control of land to open up large-scale commercial agricultural investments by domestic and foreign investors.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Discussion with Dessalegn Rahmato, 16/03/2020.

In 1995 Leftwich also issued a critique of the donor 'good governance' agenda: 'If overcoming the continuing offence of poverty, ignorance and disease is the real objective, then weakly calling for good governance in states which cannot sustain it is not likely to help much in many parts of the developing world' (1995: 381). Twenty-five years later the critique continues to present a challenge for those looking at Ethiopia's governance 'condition'. While not necessarily framed in a discussion on good governance, there remains the argument that democracy is the best framework for providing politicians, policy-makers and civil servants with a form of authorisation that can strengthen political stability and socially inclusive economic development (Booth, 2009; Lefort, 2010, 2012; Clapham, 2018). However, democracy in itself is not necessarily enough; it needs to be unpacked a little. Here it is useful to look more specifically at representative democracy, in which representatives are acting for and not just standing for those they represent. This is captured in Pitkin's concept of substantive representation (Pitkin 1967; Stokke, 2012) and involves iterative engagements between representatives and represented, politicians and citizens. Here lies the potential for the claim to be in favour of inclusive development and its practice in Ethiopia to break down: weak substantive representation creates the basis for possible elite capture of development at the national and provincial levels of government, as well as locally.

If authorisation raises the issue of the relationship between government and governed, another body of analysis focuses on the political condition of the government. It makes a strong case for the importance for recognising the existence of political settlements between dominant elites that possess and collaborate on the basis of mutual interests. The stronger and thereby more focused the collaboration the stronger the political leadership, making it capable of fending off distributional demands or conflicting interests from other factions in the broader ruling coalition. It can also overcome any resistance from societal groups for changes to be made in the institutions and rules that govern economic benefits. The latter might range from national trade unions obstructing the reorganisation of employment practices through to informal authorities resisting the restructuring of land rights and associated land markets (Kaviraj, 1991; Ferme, 2018).

In light of the above, it is not surprising that Ethiopia divides opinion; it fits the bill of a strong political leadership exercising highly centralised state power and possessing a monopoly of violence such that it quite rarely needs to use it. On the one hand it is seen to be a success, with its double-figure economic growth rate in the first decade of the new millennium. On the other hand there is international concern with what is interpreted as Ethiopia's poor record on human rights and with the fact that institutions that could promote a more accountable and democratic trajectory are seriously under-resourced and lack the independence necessary to facilitate such a trajectory in the country's development, not least in

the field of justice (ICG, 2019).<sup>7</sup> It is argued here that in fact it is not an either-or situation and that Ethiopia is undergoing economic development and a process of political transition that is linked directly and indirectly to the demands for and effects of economic development and the policies adopted to achieve it.

Domestic political tensions often reveal themselves in protest. As in many other countries in the region, the political domain is affected by ethnic divisions. Especially since an ethnicity-based constitution was adopted in 1991, such political tensions have increasingly taken on an ethnic dimension (ICG, 2009; Abbink, 2011). Protests can erupt from frustration with a perceived lack of improvement in people's livelihoods or from the perceived bias in the distribution of whatever benefits have been generated.

In 2019, the smallholder and pastoral nature of much of Ethiopia's agriculture left many potentially vulnerable to climate change and food insecurity. Moving to subsistence cultivation or reducing cattle numbers as a response to problems related to climate change is at best a short-term coping strategy. It carries inherent costs for future production and thereby threatens increased vulnerability and food insecurity. It is not surprising, therefore, that the agrarian economy has experienced significant internal mobility, both seasonal and permanent, accompanied by an urban population growth rate of 4.6% annually (CIA, 2018).

Local government bodies, potentially key institutions for households' livelihoods, have tended to function not so much as agencies serving the needs and interests of vulnerable households but as deconcentrated<sup>8</sup> agencies of regional and federal government with funds allocated for specific programmes. Their capacity to adapt to and affect policy on aspects of climate change is weakened by the constrained decision-making powers they possess, in particular the limited autonomy they have in allocating expenditure.

Resource shortages at all levels of government have limited the government's capacity to support household livelihoods.<sup>9</sup> Where there has been some success is with the Rural Productive Safety Net Project (PSNP). The Government of Ethiopia launched PSNP in 2005. The programme replaced earlier near-annual appeals by the government for emergency food aid and sought, with help from donors, to provide food to chronic food-deficit households in food-deficit areas. The objective was to prevent the loss of household assets and enable the creation of community assets. In this connection it is important to note that Ethiopia has had to cope with a number of acute food shortages due to harvest failures. In the past fifty years alone there have been fifteen serious droughts linked to rising temperatures and reduced rainfall; for 2015-16 the estimated impact was a 2-3% reduction in GNP (Danida, 2018).

<sup>7</sup> For example, the Human Rights Watch 2010 report, entitled 'Development Without Freedom: How Aid Underwrites Repression in Ethiopia', argues that aid is used to suppress political dissent by making access to safety-net programmes conditional on supporting the ruling party.

<sup>8</sup> Deconcentrated is used to suggest the little by way of local input to decision-making.

<sup>9</sup> See p. 15 for other initiatives directed towards rural households' livelihoods.

## THE ORIGINS OF CONTEMPORARY GOVERNANCE IN ETHIOPIA

Emperor Menelik of Shoa reunited and expanded Ethiopia into a state with memories of the nearly two-thousand-year-old Kingdom of Axum. Eritrea was subsequently taken over by Italian colonial rule. Menelik actively worked to bring about change and development in the country, a project that Haile Selassie, King and Regent from 1928 to 1930 and Emperor from 1930 to 1974, continued with even greater urgency. Based on educational and administrative reforms, he created a centralised bureaucracy, largely Amharic, with which to counter the regional aristocracy. He restored Ethiopia's independence following five years of Italian occupation under Mussolini (1936-41). This included the re-incorporation of Eritrea.

The economic development that followed was oriented towards a strong centralised state facilitating the development of the private sector (Kelsall, 2018: 94). Tax incentives, import-export privileges and finance were provided to foreign investors. Mixed-origin communities, Ethio-Greek, Ethio-Armenian and Ethio-Italian, played a significant role as investors in the commercial life of Addis Ababa and other cities. Domestic (Ethiopian) investors were actively encouraged from the early 1960s. The overall economic growth rate, averaging 4% between 1960 and 1974, reflected the economic progress achieved (Geda, 2005: 6).

Centralised rule might have enabled a period of relative political stability and economic growth, but at a price, increasing the already high degree of economic and accompanying social inequality within and between the different regions of the country, with long-lasting consequences. Eritrean resistance to being re-incorporated into Ethiopia was also growing, and a major famine broke out in northern parts of the country in 1973-74, with little response or even recognition from the government.

In 1974 Emperor Haile Selassie was overthrown by a military committee, the Derg, initially with the backing of radical students mainly from urban areas. The Derg, led by Mengistu Haile Mariam, almost immediately nationalised the land, thereby winning over many small and subsistence farmers (see the significance of this in the discussion on land below), but its political support quickly shifted, and over 100,000 intellectuals are estimated to have been killed in the following periods of 'White' and then 'Red' terror (Zewde, 2009).

The invasion of Ethiopia by Somalia, allegedly to reclaim a region inhabited by the Somali population ruled by Ethiopia, coincided with a shift in Cold War politics in the Horn of Africa. The Soviet Union switched its support from Somalia to Ethiopia. In line with this change, the Derg adopted a development strategy it claimed was Marxist in nature with the aim of protecting its 'revolution' in Ethiopia. Businesses and property were nationalised, marketing was state-organised, and peasant farmers were brought into cooperatives and controlled through a local government that was itself tightly controlled by central government. Garrison socialism, conscription, enforced villagisation and relocations of populations became common experiences for many. Resistance to

this political strategy, already present in Eritrea, grew in strength in Tigray, Oromo and elsewhere, identity linked to ethnicity and locality being an important factor<sup>10</sup> (Clapham, 1988; Makarkis, 1987; Eshetu Chole, 1993; Gebre Ynitso, 2009). During this period famines became increasingly recurrent, a major famine occurring in 1984, only ten years after the disastrous famine of 1972-74.

Several agricultural commercialisation schemes intended for smaller farmers were launched in the southern provinces during the Derg's rule. They were usually designed and implemented by foreign aid agencies and implemented through the Extension and Project Implementation Department (EPID) of the Ministry of Agriculture. These programmes provided a full cycle of support, including credit, planning, some mechanisation, agricultural extension services, storage and marketing facilities and price stabilisation. However, while there were some successes in terms of increasing agricultural production and its marketing, it also emerged that land prices and rents increased, tenants were evicted, and the beneficiaries were often wealthier cultivators and entrepreneurs from outside the locality.

In the northern highland areas of Ethiopia, which were especially prone to famine, little change occurred. An estimated two-thirds of the cultivated land, lacking terracing, had slopes of more than 25 degrees, leading to serious soil erosion during periods of heavy rain. At the same time, cultivation was affected by ongoing deforestation, and a shortage of firewood resulted in dung being burnt as fuel, reducing the main source of fertiliser. Jansson notes how the effects of dependence on rain for irrigation, erratic rains, subsistence agriculture and the consequences of population growth had a cumulative negative impact on poverty, food insecurity, serious inequalities and not least frequent famines during this period, sometimes resulting in large movements of population towards and across what was then the Sudanese border (Jansson et al., 1987). The management of land as a governance issue and the consequences of climate change are clearly linked. Might stronger engagement by a better resourced and more effective set of local governance institutions have been able to support climate change adaptation and significantly reduce such population movements? It is a difficult question to answer, not least given the political context of that time. However, the question does point to the importance of local governance for addressing current challenges presented by climate change.

<sup>10</sup> There are more than sixty ethnic groups in Ethiopia.

## The role of land rights in shaping local governance

At the beginning of the 1970s over a hundred different systems of land tenure were being practised in Ethiopia. At risk of over-simplification, these can be grouped into two predominant forms:<sup>11</sup>

*Gult*. The equivalent of a fief,<sup>12</sup> it was granted by the Church or Emperor to vassals for military or administrative service. It often involved absentee landlords collecting revenues in kind and/or as labour from those who lived on and cultivated the land. *Gult*-holders had full judicial and administrative authority over the cultivating farmers, who possessed no original right to the land. In the ancient Abyssinian region *gults* tended to be hereditary, though the Emperor could transfer the rights to other family members if he wished. In other areas that had been seized by the emperors, their control over the land was more direct, and the *gults* could be assigned and reassigned directly by them.

*Rist*. Under this system of tenure, most farmers held several plots of land, and as the principle (law) of primogeniture (first-born succession) was not the rule, the consequent fragmentation of landholdings made for a more complex situation. One consequence was that a cultivating farmer's plots could be in several different locations, often involving different types of land (e.g. '*dega*', '*woynadega*' and '*quola*'). The need to use diverse cropping practices and to move between plots often resulted in inefficient land-use.

Under *gult* the actual cultivators faced insecurity of tenure, while under *rist* their holdings were increasingly fragmented. Both create significant obstacles to attempts to improve agriculture and increase food security among the majority of the population that are reliant upon cultivation for their livelihoods. For its part, the government did little and remained part of the problem rather than contributing to any solution, a situation further reflected in the fact that between 1963 and 1973 agriculture was allotted just 4.2 % of the government's combined ordinary and capital expenditure (CSO, 1974).

The Derg's Public Ownership of Rural Lands Proclamation, No. 31/1975, was designed to dismantle the political and economic basis for feudalism and mobilise the agrarian population behind the new regime (Sikor and Muller, 2009). It abolished the landlord-tenant relationship and replaced it with 'collective ownership' by the 'Ethiopian people'. Redistribution of land became the delegated task of the *kebele*<sup>13</sup> through the local Peasants Associations. However, this emerged to be more of a top-down delegation of responsibility rather than a measure making land policy more accountable and thus more responsive to the cultivators

<sup>11</sup> There were and remain elements of other systems of land management, including clan-based systems with their own specific features. However, this paper will focus on the main forms.

<sup>12</sup> A 'fief' is a source of revenue granted to a person in return for which services will be provided. Used usually in the context of feudalism, it usually involved the grant of revenue rights to a piece of land. Peasant farmers would then be tied to the cultivation of the land and providing the fief-holder with a percentage of the production in revenue. The fief-holder then provides service to the person granting the fief, for example, a king who often required military services in the shape of a certain number of soldiers and their equipment.

<sup>13</sup> The *kebele* is the lowest level of government administration and is found in both rural and urban areas.

and the agrarian population generally. Access to and control over land became more politicised, with party affiliation becoming a major factor determining access. Policies including resettlement began to be practised, often to secure political ends pursued by the government. Loss of support from the rural population in reaction to the Derg's centralised policies contributed to its eventual fall.

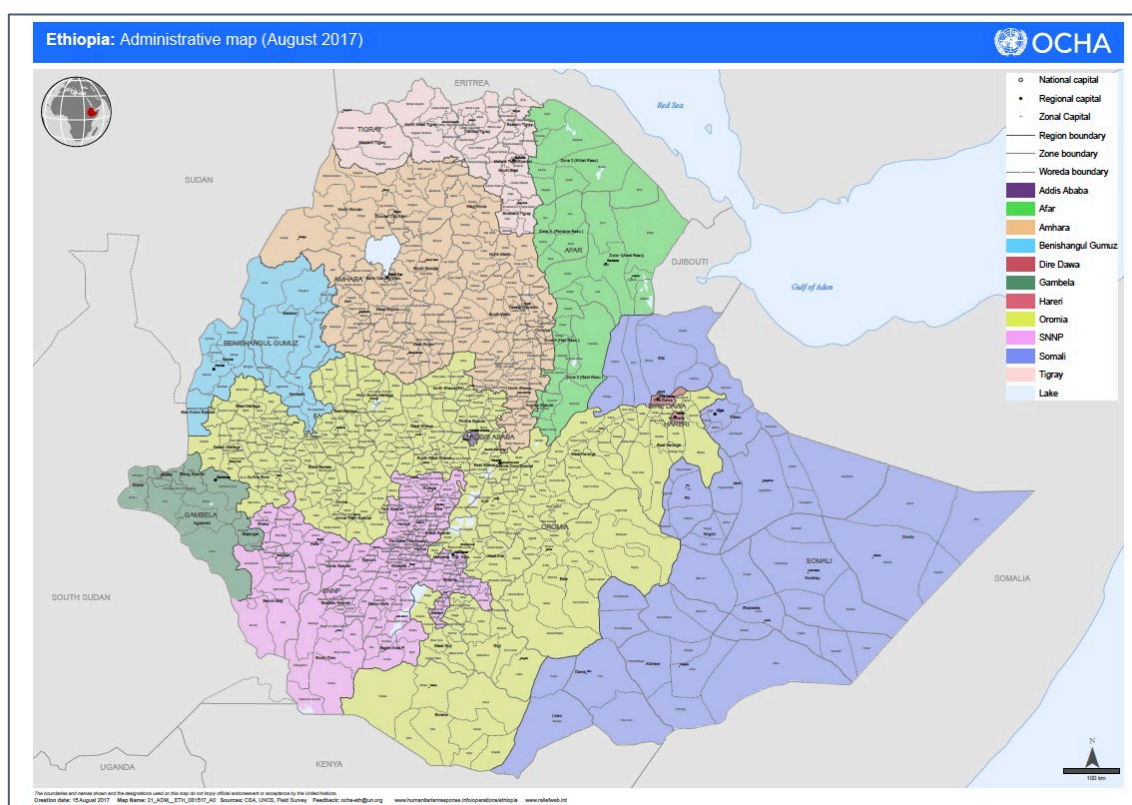
Despite the change in government, the land policy introduced by the Derg in 1975 has not been changed significantly. Currently, the Constitution stipulates that land is under the ownership of the state and that the people thereby have 'ownership'. This remains a subject of debate among policy advisers, politicians and potential investors, among others, due to the considerable power held by the state and the government's approach to rural economic development. The idea of 'people's ownership' perhaps suits the needs of a developmental state approach to development, but it carries costs, not least with respect to the interests and needs of local populations in managing their livelihoods and in coping with the effects of climate change. A move towards increased private ownership could set several other dynamics in motion, not least in shifting decision-making towards those cultivating the land, but it also has negative potential in areas such as distress sales, increasing inequality through land concentration and greater vulnerability to food insecurity. Involuntary mobility is a potential effect of both approaches.<sup>14</sup>

### **The institutional structure of formal government, post-derg**

Ethiopia is divided into nine regions and two administrative states: Tigray, Afar, Amhara, Oromia, Somali, Benishangul-Gumuz, Southern Nations Nationalities and People Region (SNNPR), Gambella and Harari, and two Administrative states (Addis Ababa City administration and Dire Dawa city council). Regions are based on ethno-linguistic communities, though boundaries are often contested, and several significant ethnic groups have no region of their own (see Map 1). The regions are divided administratively into 68 or more zones. The exact number of zones is unclear: the names and number of zones given in documents by Ethiopia's Central Statistical Agency in some cases changed between 2005 and 2007 when the boundaries were redrawn. *Woredas* (districts) are governed by a *woreda* council, whose members are directly elected to represent each *kebele* in the district. There are about 670 rural *woredas* and about 100 urban *woredas* in Ethiopia. The *kebele* is the smallest administrative unit in Ethiopia, similar to a ward, and comprises a neighbourhood or small settlement. Each *kebele* consists of at least five hundred families, or the equivalent of 3,500 to 4,000 persons.

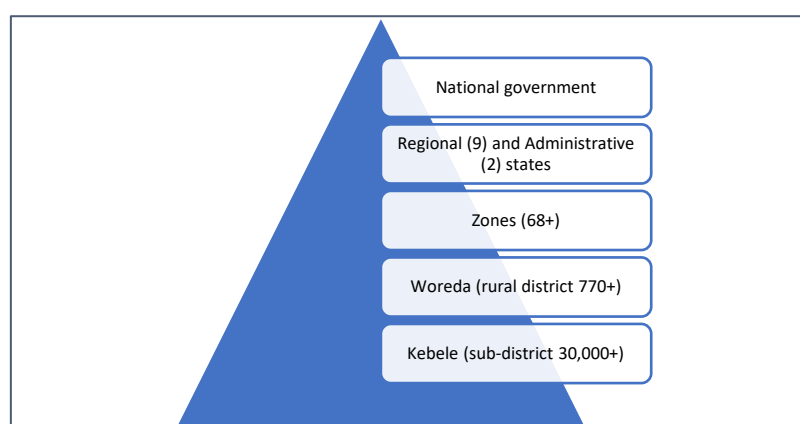
<sup>14</sup>A number of other alternatives are also present in the debate (Hussen, 2017).

**Map 1.** Administrative map of Ethiopia (2017)



The *kebele*, sometimes referred to as a peasant association (PA), was created by the Derg in 1975 to promote development and manage land reform. They became a key element in factional struggles during the ‘Red Terror’.<sup>15</sup> The PAs’ armed members formed neighbourhood defence units and were responsible for many of the brutal excesses of the period, matching the terror launched against students in the main cities. Post-Derg, the present government has kept the *kebeles* as the lowest administrative unit of government and uses them to implement government programmes.

**Figure 1.** Structure of government in Ethiopia



<sup>15</sup> This name is given to the period of struggle between the Derg and an opposition of students and the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF).

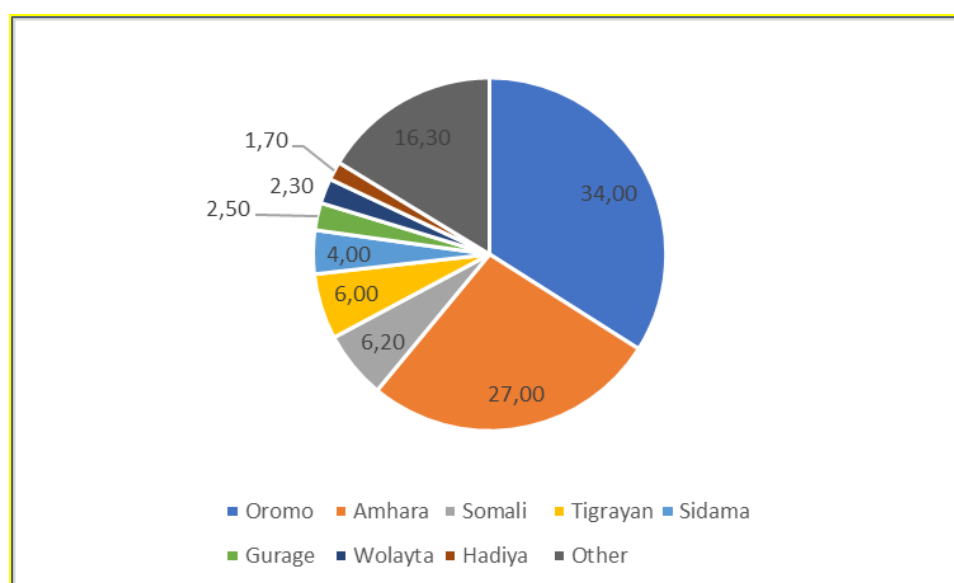


In many ways the constitutional arrangements that emerged out of the fall of the Derg and the establishment of a new 'regime' in Ethiopia reflect a 'coalition' approach towards the management of development. That is, state capacity and accountability are part of an attempt at a balanced approach towards economic development, one where a developmental state pursues a more inclusive form of development. Here we see the important role of elite coalitions in achieving and maintaining such a balance. The significance of politics at the local level cannot be ignored as a part of this, given the existence of political settlements between elites both nationally and locally and with strong links between them. When it works, the political system of coalitions and balances enables a more coherent and balanced approach to the pursuit of local economic development.

Mushtaq Khan writes that 'At a deeper level, a political settlement implies an institutional structure that creates benefits for different classes and groups in line with their relative power. The commonsensical understanding of a political settlement as a stable agreement between elites (or a social order) is therefore only likely to be viable if it is underpinned at a deeper level by a viable combination of institutions and a distribution of power between organisationally powerful groups in that society. A distribution of benefits that is economically unsustainable will collapse. But an institutional structure that attempts to achieve economic viability with a distribution of benefits that is unacceptable to powerful groups will also collapse. By definition, a social order defined by the absence of violence must be based on a consistent set of institutions and power relationships to achieve minimal levels of economic and political viability' (Khan, 2010: 20). Hence the political settlement needs to be mutually 'compatible' and 'sustainable' in terms of its economic and political viability.

The relevance of Khan's discussion of the role of political settlements in the analysis of Ethiopia's contemporary political context is considerable. Since 1991 the government of Ethiopia has been led by a coalition of four parties constituting the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), which currently controls every seat in the Ethiopian parliament. The coalition was formed in 1988 by ethnic-based groups fighting the Derg under Mengistu Haile Mariam. It brought together the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the Amhara Democratic Party (ADP), the Oromo Democratic Party (ODP) and the Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement. A new Prosperity Party, backed by the Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, brings all but the TPLF into a common party, one which will bring in other ethnic elements in Ethiopia on an equal footing. Ahmed has hailed the move as a 'crucial step in harnessing our energy to work toward a shared vision' (BBC interview, 22/11/2019). Both the move and the previous coalition approach to governance can be seen as pointing to a political settlement between key political and ethnic elites. However, the fact that the TPLF has not joined the move to a single party illustrates the element of fragility present within political settlements in Ethiopia. The TPLF played a critical role in the ousting of the Derg regime under Mengistu and in the subsequent government that was established. Figure 2 provides a breakdown of the population according to the main ethnic groups.

**Figure 2.** Ethiopia's main ethnic groups (per cent)



Source: Ethiopia Population Census, 2007

In working with the challenges arising from climate change and mobility practices in the case of Ethiopia, several important dimensions of governance appear relevant. Coherence of policies and their implementation point to the importance of consensus among political and administrative authorities, both horizontally and vertically, to achieve a desired or planned development trajectory in the country. Similarly, the response to, and management of, different forms of mobility would require a similar degree of consensus. The registration of mobility has usually been a task for local government for purposes of revenue collection (taxation, diverse fees, etc.) and for service provision. It is also important for social monitoring to manage and/or prevent possible political unrest.

This is also the case in managing responses to climate change and not least ensuring a coherent set of policies and their implementation at the household, local administration, provincial and national levels. From a governance perspective, the state of elite consensus (political settlement) and the centralised and hierarchical nature of governance can be seen to facilitate policies that enable households to manage their adaptations to climate change, albeit it in a manner that more often than not is determined by government. However, the same characteristics of Ethiopian governance can be characterised as neo-patrimonialism, leading discussion back to the heterodox argument (Kelsall, 2011), the developmental state (Clapham, 2018) and more generally to assessments of the potential dangers arising from identity politics rooted in ethnicity and locality.

### **A brief summary of key governance issues in contemporary Ethiopia**

Despite the success reflected in the economic growth figures, there remains considerable poverty and inequality, often grounded in regional, social, ethnic and economic conditions or, perhaps more often, perceived to be such. While there has been some improvement in 'managing' famine and its effects, famines continue to

threaten periodically, and there remains chronic food insecurity for large sections of the population. It is a situation that provides considerable challenges to political stability and the practice of governance both nationally and locally.

As indicated previously, the country has a history of governance that is characterised by violent and dramatic changes, especially in the recent past. Social and political structures remain very hierarchical, with political, economic and bureaucratic elites (perhaps elite factions) in close alliances, though with a strong capacity to sudden and radical shifts and splits. This is not aided by the fact that the country is a federation of ethnically delineated provinces, most with minority ethnic groups within or straddling their respective boundaries. Following Booth and Cammack, while recognising the role of cultural commonalities and, within these, the role of ethnicity, we do not wish to exaggerate the extent to which actions are rooted in the 'traditions' they espouse (de Sardan 2008). The mobilisation of ethnicity around demands in Ethiopia has been part of the historical emergence of the current state of governance, but it is not sufficient to explain it. It is part of a strategy for action (Swidler, 1986; Booth and Cammack, 2013), which returns the discussion to the importance of the manner and nature of authorisation embodied in political representatives and the form and degree of accountability to the population among those in positions of political authority.

The ruling elite coalition has pursued a strong developmental state approach to bring about economic development, and this has had a price in terms of the space available to civil society, human rights and multi-party democracy, together with strong downward accountability. It is an approach reflected in the history of land rights discussed earlier, a history that affects much of the mainly agrarian population. It should be noted that land has been and remains the primary source of formal (government) and informal (landlords, entrepreneurs) revenues, including the recent moves towards commercial and export-oriented agricultural production.

Reflected in the above, Ethiopia's economic and political history has laid the basis for significant mobility for employment and food-security reasons and includes mobility to urban areas as central to the rapid urbanisation now under way. But mobility has not been linked just to shifts in the economy and changes in household livelihoods, it has also been explicitly politicised and not least 'weaponised' during famines, examples of which are discussed later in this paper. Understanding the inter-relationships between climate change, mobility practices and governance is critical.

## **CLIMATE CHANGE IN ETHIOPIA**

The agro-climatic and environmental diversity found in Ethiopia has long rendered it susceptible to the effects of climate change, partly linked to which is the experience of famine as a regular occurrence and a constant threat. But more generally, food insecurity, soil erosion, deforestation, malaria and similar vector-

borne illnesses, insecurity of water for drinking and irrigation, and loss of pastureland are just a few examples of the impact slow-onset climate change is having.

The influence of such changes on the mobility decisions of individuals and families is less apparent and less documented in the literature on Ethiopia. Here it is not so easy to identify 'climate migrants', and any imputed causality between climate change and various forms of mobility is difficult to prove. On the contrary, mobility that is documented is presented as the product of the interplay of complex political, economic and social factors, not least linked to the organisation of agriculture and shifting forms of land rights. As to the direct or indirect role played by climate change, increased food insecurity and associated poverty can also be obstacles to mobility, as they leave no surplus for travelling or job-seeking. Hand-to-mouth poverty often indicates that the ability to find alternative livelihoods has ceased. Hence it is important to see immobility as an undesired impact of climate change alongside other forms of mobility practice.

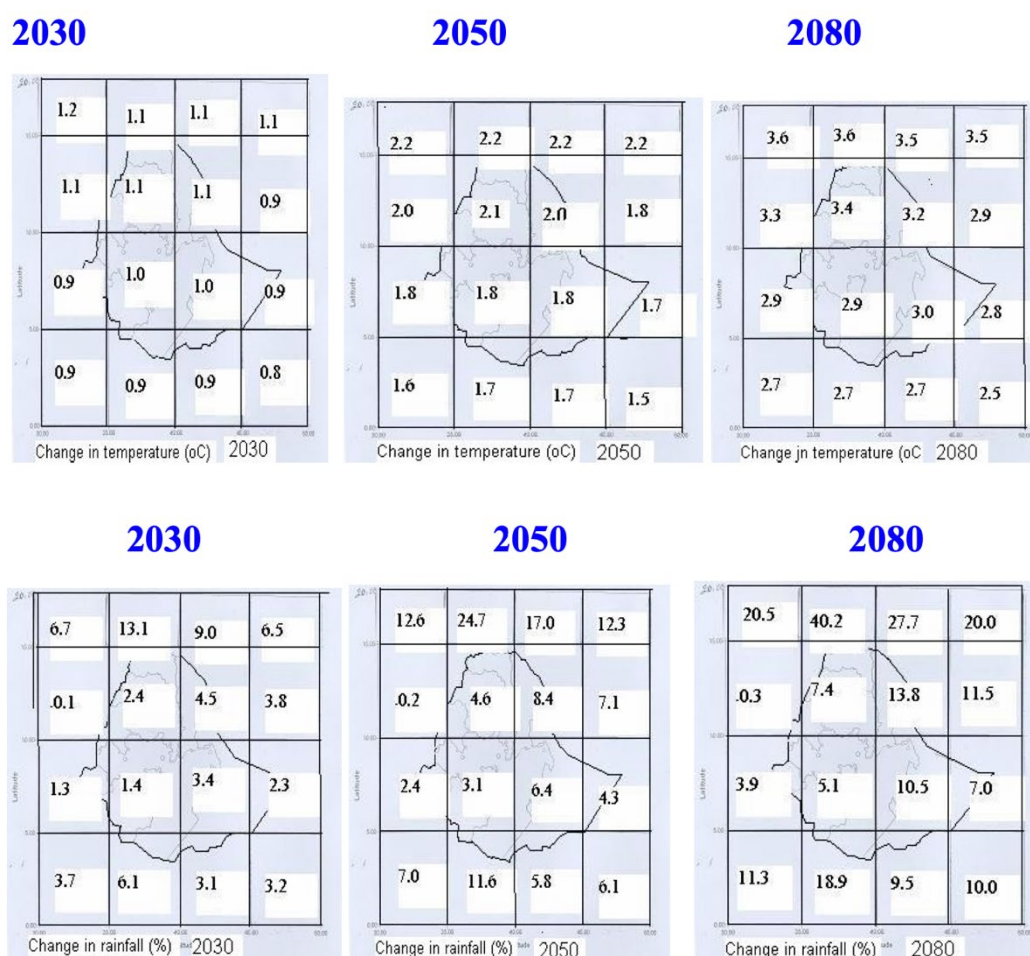
The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2019) stressed that climate change will have a more severe impact on African countries and that, because of their low adaptive capacity, such countries will face greater challenges than most countries elsewhere in the world. Agriculture is also said to be more vulnerable to the effects of climate change than other economic sectors, since farming (in Ethiopia as well as in other African countries) is heavily dependent on rainfall and moisture availability.

Studies by several Ethiopian government agencies show that temperatures have been rising for several decades and that there is a higher degree of rainfall variability. The frequency and severity of droughts has increased: The Disaster Commission's annual reports indicate that there have been nine severe droughts in the country since 2000 affecting anywhere from six to ten million people on each occasion. Since the mid-1960s, in 1965/66, 1973/74 and 1984/85, there have been three catastrophic famines in the country, the last of which is estimated to have caused at least half a million deaths. There were also 'near famines' in 1987/88 and 1999/2000 in which 7.7 million people were affected; it was only the timely delivery of relief assistance that prevented large-scale human mortality. In this disaster, the human death toll was put at ten to twenty thousand. Flooding and landslides have become serious hazards in recent decades as the intensity of rainfall has increased, causing the country's rivers to break their banks, flooding the surrounding areas and in some places triggering landslides. Both the IPCC assessment and the government's own reporting places Ethiopia among the countries that are most vulnerable to climate change (see Figure 3).

The Ethiopian government's predictions for the future suggest that the effects of climate change are going to intensify. Figure 3 presents the government's projections for temperature and rainfall up to 2080. The implications of these projections, if proved correct, are extremely serious.

**Figure 3.** Average climate change projections used by the Ethiopian government<sup>16</sup>

Change in temperature (in °C) and rainfall (in %) in Ethiopia for 2030, 2050 and 2080 (relative to norm for period 1961-1990).



Source: NAPA, Ethiopia. (2007) p 4.

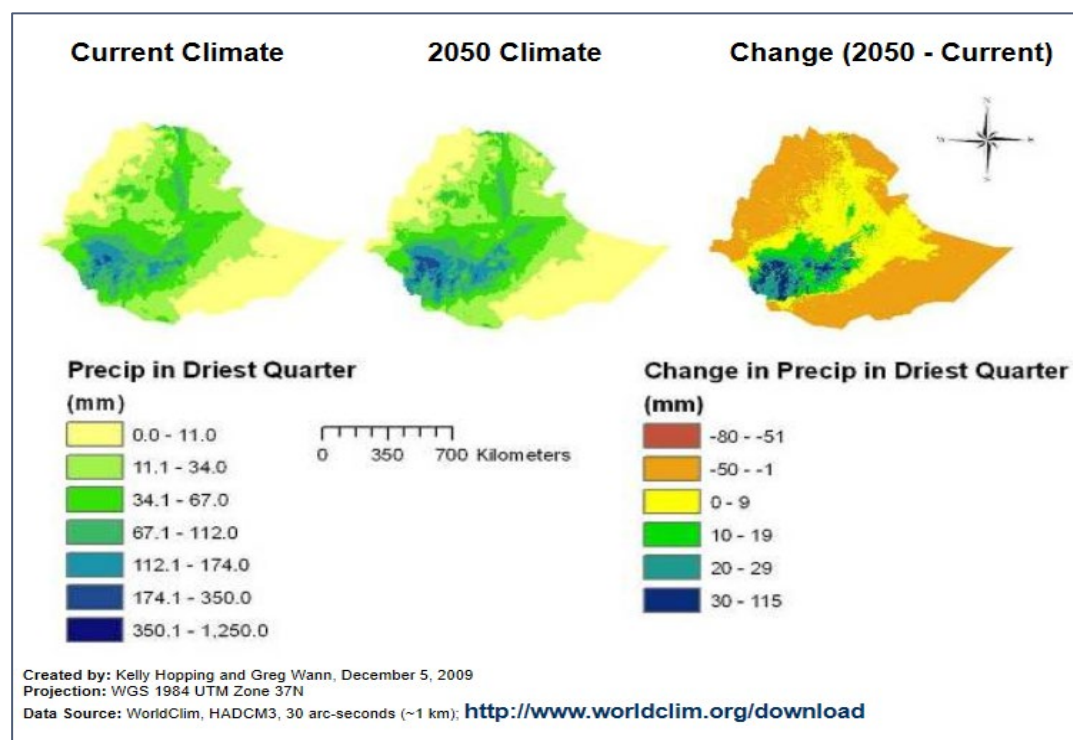
Soil erosion and the degradation of natural resources are collateral hazards associated with climate change. Droughts and the unreliability of moisture availability are expected to reduce crop production and farm productivity in general, all of which will impact on rural livelihoods, giving rise to greater unemployment, especially for young people, and the risk of increased food insecurity.

The populations affected by climate shocks in the rural areas are many and diverse: they include poor and marginalised households (i.e. the majority of the rural population), people living in riverine and flood-prone areas, pastoralists whose range ecology is under severe stress due to frequent droughts, women-

<sup>16</sup>Source: NAPA 2007, p4.

headed households, households consisting of the elderly and infirm, and young people in both rural and urban areas.<sup>17</sup>

**Figure 4.** Current precipitation during the driest season (left) and projected change (right)<sup>18</sup>



## Government responses to climate change

The Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) is an important government response to poverty and vulnerability in the country and is clearly linked to the effects of climate change. It is the largest such programme in Africa. Launched in 2005 and largely financed by international donors, it now supports ten million rural people. In addition, environmental crises, which have occurred with regular frequency since the mid-1990s, have required emergency food and nutritional aid for millions of rural people, the cost of which has been borne by the same international donors. The former might well be a key instrument in the government's support to households seeking to adapt to the changing environmental conditions. The latter reflects emergency humanitarian interventions to counter the more immediate consequences of drought.

Other areas of government intervention that directly or indirectly address climate change include agricultural extension services managed by the Ministry of

<sup>17</sup> The two sites we have selected for the research project – one *woreda* or district in South Wollo, with Haiq as the focal urban center, and another in the Rift Valley area with Shashemene town at its centre – are differentiated in terms of agro-ecology, land forms, crops grown, farm commercialisation and mobility experience. This will mean that, as we hope to find through our investigation, the impacts of climate change will likewise be differentially distributed.

<sup>18</sup> MoFA, NL (2018) p. 17.

Agriculture, health extension services managed by the Ministry of Health, community-based health insurance schemes, technical education for selected farmers, rural electrification, and anti-malaria programmes for families living in malaria-prone areas, both rural and urban. Other support programmes targeting mainly the urban poor include support to micro- and small-enterprise initiatives, youth employment revolving funds, support to affordable housing schemes, and access to essential food items at subsidised prices.

The government has begun to accelerate its direct response to climate change through a number of programmes and interventions. These include several that aim to enhance the country's resilience to climate shocks such as the green economy policy (CRGE 2011) and the use of mitigation instruments as in NAPA/EPACC (2011), and NAMA (2010). Under the advocacy of the new prime minister, Abiy Ahmed, the government is promoting climate resilience in several sectors, including investment in roads and transport infrastructure, thus increasing accessibility in many parts of the country, investments in hydropower and renewable energy such as wind, solar and thermal energy, and expanded extension services in agriculture and health.

At the same time, it should be noted that, despite the problems with erratic rainfall and rising temperatures, the government has not increased its investments in water management schemes designed to benefit small farmers. This would require a substantial investment in irrigation and domestic water infrastructure targeting small and marginal farmers. Similarly, reforestation and afforestation initiatives have not been prioritised by the federal government, which has left regional states to take the initiative. The notable exception is the recent drive to plant four billion tree seedlings, launched by the Prime Minister in May 2019.

While the range of agricultural and other services targeting rural and urban households is considerable, questions have been raised regarding the efficacy and inclusivity of the service delivery. The poor and the marginalised, households headed by women and the elderly, and young people do not often benefit from the full range of the services on offer. Moreover, some of the goods and services in question are either inadequate, inappropriate, or not delivered when they are needed the most.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Field interviews conducted in Shashamane.

### **Rural households' responses to climate change**

Farmers and pastoralists employ a wide range of adaptive measures, some of which are the product of indigenous knowledge, others introduced by agricultural extension services to cope with weather variability. Drought-tolerant and early maturing crops, such as sorghum in Wollo and maize in the Rift Valley, have been adopted in some parts of the country, but the supply of new improved seeds has fallen far short of demand. Other measures undertaken by farming households include significant increases in the use of chemical fertiliser usage, investments in soil and water conservation, changes in the crops cultivated, reductions in livestock numbers, and occasionally taking out crop insurance.

As will quickly be apparent, such measures face numerous challenges, not least the resources and capacity to turn to them and utilise them. Facing a shortage of cultivable land, a lack of more resistant crop species, with limited access to irrigation and water management schemes, little by way of climate information or appropriate technology and a shortage of finance, it can be argued that the situation is extremely restrictive for farmers wishing to adopt climate change adaptation measures.

## **PATTERNS OF MOBILITY IN ETHIOPIA AND (IM)MOBILITY AS ADAPTATION**

While the relationship between development and human mobility, and increasingly climate change and human mobility, has been subject to considerable academic scrutiny and policy debate, governance often remains the missing link in attempts to establish a nexus in the relationships between migration, development, conflict and climate change. As such it can be argued that the politics of climate-related migration remain understudied (Sadliwala and de Waal, 2018). Whether poverty and the effects of climate change lead to migration depends on a number of factors beyond environmental conditions (Schewel and Bahir, 2019). Nevertheless, several reports published over the past ten years repeatedly predict 'unprecedented waves of mass migration' triggered by a variety of climate change-induced processes (Fritz, 2010: 1). It is the contention of the GCM programme that a lack of attention to the governance issues involved has provoked oversimplified assumptions of a somewhat deterministic and monocausal nature linking environmental change to population mobility. The following section looks at Ethiopian mobility patterns over time and shows how these might be shaped by the role and interests of the Ethiopian state as it pursues a range of objectives including, but not necessarily limited to, development and the environment.

This section takes its point of departure in a set of conceptual and theoretical suggestions presented in a background paper to a workshop held in Addis in



November 2019.<sup>20</sup> In particular we would point to different actors' engagement with migration in situations of crisis and similar (Zickgraf, 2019), the degree of force involved in im/mobility, displacement and emplacement (Jansen and Löfving, 2009), and the importance of replacing 'migration' with a broader notion of mobility (Cresswell, 2010). On the more empirical level, findings from five recent studies have made important contributions to our knowledge of past and present Ethiopian mobility patterns, namely Laura Hammond's (2011) study of Ethiopia's population management in response to famine; Kerilyn Schewel and Asmamaw Legass Bahir's (2019) study of key trends in Ethiopian migration patterns over the last century and the drivers of migration transitions; Tom Bundervoet's (2018) World Bank study of internal migration in Ethiopia; Asnake Kefale and Zerihun Mohammed's (2015) study on 'Ethiopian Labour Migration to the Gulf and South Africa' (and the follow-up study from 2018 on remittances and socio-economic well-being), and finally Asmelash Haile Tsegay and Julie Litchfield's (2019) study of changing migration patterns under the 'Migrating Out of Poverty' research programme consortium. A few of the many graphs and tables presented in several of these works are included here. They draw on census data and labour-force surveys conducted by the Central Statistics Agency of Ethiopia (CSA), with 2013 being the latest year, and the Ethiopia Socioeconomic Survey 2015-16 conducted by CSA in collaboration with the World Bank.

### **Development: social transformation or governmentality in motion?**

Throughout history, demographic, economic, environmental, religious and political developments, as well as wars and conflicts, have resulted in human mobility, which again has reconstituted the social fabric of communities in Ethiopia. The country's 'unusual combination of displacement causes, types, magnitudes and outcomes' has attracted attention from both social scientists and international organisations and agencies (Cernea, 2009: xxv), making it a 'compelling case to analyse' (Schewel and Bahir, 2019: 4), not least because of the strong presence of the state. Mobility experiences include those related to pastoralist and agro-pastoralist livelihood strategies alongside those resulting from conflict, disasters and development. In these latter instances, the key role that the state has assumed in displacement and relocation processes cannot be overplayed. The Horn of Africa's history of conflict has produced refugees, returnees, internally displaced persons and demobilised soldiers. Resettlement schemes for drought-affected people, refugees, returnees and demobilised soldiers, as well as state and private investment projects, have increased the pressure on resources and alienated the customary land and resource rights of local groups, notably pastoralists, often leading to conflict (Pankhurst and Piquet, 2009). The political overthrow of the Ethiopian Government in 1974, Eritrea's independence struggle, the war between Ethiopia and Somalia in 1977-78 and internal strife in Sudan and Somalia are some of the major catalysts of large involuntary im/mobility in the region, manifested in large flows of internal migration and displacement. Regarding international migration, Ethiopia has

<sup>20</sup> See 'GCM: A Conceptual Background paper' available on [www.diis.dk/GCM](http://www.diis.dk/GCM)

steadily developed into a source, transit (especially for mixed migration flows) and, to a lesser extent, destination country (Fransen and Kuschminder, 2009).

If Ethiopia provides one of the clearest examples of a 'developmental state' (Clapham, 2018),<sup>21</sup> the development strategy being pursued has been one of using migration policy 'as a form of governmentality, an architecture of policy, law and practice that defines the relationship between state and citizens', as Hammond (2011: 416) argues.<sup>22</sup> Through the management of mobility inside the country and the resettlement of refugees returning or being repatriated from neighbouring countries, different Ethiopian governments have reinforced patterns of geographical, economic and political marginalisation, and disrupted and undermined mobile livelihoods, sometimes (even if unintended) aided by international humanitarian and development assistance.

Given the historical prominence of nomadic and semi-nomadic mobility across Ethiopia's vast lowlands, Schewel and Bahir (2019) find it useful to look beyond the definitions conventionally used in migration studies. Contrary to a 'move in residence across an administrative boundary', over the past hundred years Ethiopia has witnessed the settlement of populations that historically have been highly mobile. Thus, 'Ethiopia's pursuit of development [...] at least initially, brought a decline in the mobility of many Ethiopian peoples' (Schewel and Bahir, *op cit.*: 7). Based on population and housing census data for Ethiopia and United Nations and World Bank population and migration estimates, Schewel and Bahir find evidence of a threefold process of (im)mobility consisting of 1) the sedentarization of nomadic and semi-nomadic populations; 2) a reconfiguration of internal migration trends away from rural destinations toward urban ones; and 3) a steady increase in and diversification of internal migration trajectories. Within these overarching trends, periods of state-driven resettlement, famine and political conflict have led to moments of massive displacement as well as involuntary immobility (Carling 2002), both within Ethiopia and to neighbouring states. These processes are integral to the history of Ethiopian migration.

## **Empire, regime change and continuity in mobility control**

### **Internal migration**

Internal migration patterns in Ethiopia are commonly discussed in relation to resettlement, internal displacement or rural-urban migration. Links between the three are not always discussed.

During the latter half of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, an imperial system of governance, originally based in the highlands of what are today the Tigray and Amhara regions, expanded its territory southwards,

<sup>21</sup> But see also Clapman (2002), cited in Hammond (2011).

<sup>22</sup> To quote Laura Hammond: 'One of the benefits of tracing a particular state's engagement with mobility through its governmentality practices is that it sets the study of governmentality in motion – not only are citizens moving within and across international borders, policies and practices often move with people, seeking to impose order on, or to derive benefit from, movement that might otherwise be seen as not serving the state's interests' (Hammond, 2011: 417).

eastwards and westwards through a mobility strategy of dispatching loyal citizens to the peripheries of the empire to 'settle and pacify the newly incorporated areas and their inhabitants' (Oromo, Somali, Afar and other smaller groups). The creation of an empowered settler class (*neftenya*) and attempts at establishing a loyal group of allies through local administrators became the main means of expansion, one that nevertheless 'never led to full cooptation of the newly incorporated areas' (Hammond, op cit.: 418).

The first state-planned relocation programme was that initiated under the Imperial government in the 1960s and early 1970s. The rationale for it was to relieve some of the congested areas in the north of the country from population pressures and land scarcity, and to promote food security. Policy-makers reasoned that there was plenty of unused land in the southern provinces, some of which was held by the government in the form of state domain land. It is worth noting that there is a remarkable similarity between this justification and that used for the massive resettlement programmes of the Derg and Meles Zenawi regimes. Participation was to be voluntary, with the selection of settlers and management of the scheme to be the responsibility of several government and non-government agencies. By the time the Imperial regime fell in 1974, the programme had managed to settle a few thousand peasants in Wollega, Gamo Gofa, the Awash and Rift Valleys, Kaffa province and the Ogaden area. On the other hand, there was spontaneous settlement or 'colonisation' of the Setit Humera area in north-west Ethiopia close to the border with the Sudan.

The Derg's response to the famine of the mid-1980s was to launch a massive (and, in the end, tragic) programme of forced resettlement involving something like 600,000 peasants from the northern provinces, who were hard hit by the tragedy. The victims were settled in the western provinces, including Gambella and Beni Shangul. The Meles Zenawi government, which at first was critical of the Derg's resettlement programme, launched its own large-scale programme in 2003 aimed at relocating 440,000 households or 2.2 million people. A critical difference between the programmes was that the latter sought to resettle people within a region, thereby maintaining an element of regional identity in the approach. The programme was suspended before it was fully implemented, but not before some 400,000 people had been resettled in various parts of the country.

Hammond's study shows that mobility played a central role in the 1984-85 great Ethiopian famine and the responses it provoked: from the displacement of famine-affected people and war and their resettlement outside famine- and conflict-affected areas to restrictions on the movements of traders, relief workers and media. 'Management of migration was a strategy employed by all parties to the conflict as a tactic of war as well as means of protecting supporters'. Thus, while famine was exacerbated by several years of recurrent drought related to slow-onset climate change, 'its primary causes were man-made' (Hammond, op cit.: 420). The 'manipulation of mobility' that played a major role in the Derg government's counterinsurgency tactics continued to inform the EPRDF's 2003-05 resettlement programme, as 'the idea of settling people on the land of the periphery of the country, of using control of mobility as both a political and

economic strategy to deal with dissent and poverty, [had] already been established as a useful approach' (Hammond, op cit.: 425). In each of the cases discussed – the *neftenaya* movement of the late 1800s-early 1900s, the repatriation of 1993-95 and the 2003-05 resettlement programme – the ruling elite's orchestration of mobility has served a geopolitical end by helping to change the demographics of areas that are considered less loyal to the ruling elite and serving the goal of sedentarising mobile populations.

### **Internal displacement**

Ethiopia recorded 3,191,000 IDPs in 2018. The largest share of these displacements were found to be conflict-induced, related to ethnic and border disputes.<sup>23</sup> According to the government, 1.8 million IDPs had returned to their places of origin by June 2019. IOM's National Displacement Report found that the total number of IDPs had declined to 1,642,458 by October 2019, with 1,089,589 remaining IDPs being displaced due to conflict, 424,845 to drought and 35,995 to seasonal flooding (IOM 2019). In terms of climate-induced displacement, the IOM report points to displacements being caused mainly by drought and floods. Beginning in 2015, Ethiopia faced one of the strongest impacts from El Niño, a periodic heating of the eastern tropical Pacific, which reduced the *kiremt* rainfall and successively resulted in drought in the south and south-east of the country. Prolonged drought continued to impact agricultural and pastoralist communities across Ethiopia in 2019, primarily by driving down crop yields of the main *meher* harvest, reducing pastures for livestock and the drying up of water resources. While certain areas experienced reduced rainfall, many low-lying areas experienced heavy rainfall and floods during the *kiremt* rainy season. IOM predicted that heavy rains and flooding affected up to 1.3 million people in 2019 and displaced up to 331,000.

### **Rural-urban migration**

Rural-to-rural movements have historically been the most common type of internal migration over the last century, whether seeking land, work or marriage. Only recently has rural-to-urban migration replaced mobility between rural areas as the most common internal migration trajectory (Schewel and Bahir, 2019). Bundervoet's 2018 study nevertheless suggests that, compared to other countries, internal labour mobility in Ethiopia remains limited. It shows that in the five years prior to 2013, only approximately 6 per cent of the adult population changed their zone of residence, marginally higher than the share in 1999. However, the structure of internal mobility patterns changed, with rural-to-urban movements becoming the dominant migration flow in the period (2008-2013), primarily spearheaded by increasing movements of young rural-dwellers to urban areas in search of improved livelihood opportunities. The study also finds that internal

<sup>23</sup> IOM (2019) reports that by August 2018, 748,499 IDPs had been displaced by the Gedeo-West Guji conflict alone, whereas inter-communal violence in Jijiga resulted in the displacement of approximately 141,410 IDPs from the Somali regional capital in the same month. Also, more than 90,000 IDPs were displaced in the Amhara region in September 2018 due to longstanding tensions and sporadic conflict between the Amhara and Qemant communities, while a localised conflict in Benishangul Gumuz region and the East and West Wellega zones of Oromia displaced an estimated 191,995 IDPs.

labour mobility in Ethiopia has had positive economic effects on both aggregate growth and individual migrants' welfare. Despite the positive effects of migration, the study points to existing barriers to people moving to places where objectively they would be better off. Although no explicit laws or policies restrict internal mobility, the migration experience is significantly complicated by the difficulty in obtaining urban ID cards and, related to this, of accessing certain public services, topped by the negative attitude of local authorities towards migrants, as several offices and bureaus consider rural to urban migration, if not illegal, then unacceptable.

Tsegay and Lichtfield point to a direct relationship between conflict and a current decline in internal mobility: conflict, and especially the potential for ethnic conflict, has hindered mobility from one place to another to look for work or start a business. The threat, present or perceived, has forced many migrants working outside their region to return to their villages in order to avoid the risk of being attacked (Tsegay and Lichtfield 2019: 26). This finding is interesting as it contradicts basic migration theory's prediction of migration as a continuing cumulative process. Not least it points to the importance of ethnicity in Ethiopia's policies when it comes to influencing types of mobility practices, including the immobility of those who might be expected to practice migration. The fact that many of Ethiopia's towns are relatively recent and have been populated by migrants from rural areas, together with the role of ethnic identity and ethnicity in the constitution and government policies, carry significant risks for political and social cohesion in Ethiopia. The fact that ethnicity is built into the constitution and political institutions of the country at all levels plays a significant role in shaping access to resources, assets and thereby people's livelihood conditions. Ethnic tensions are never far below the surface and impact directly on people's movements: for example, a recent increase in incidents involving ethnic conflict has reduced seasonal migration for agricultural work and seen students leaving their studies and returning to their own regions. Many groups are affected in different ways, but they have ethnic identity as a common causal factor.

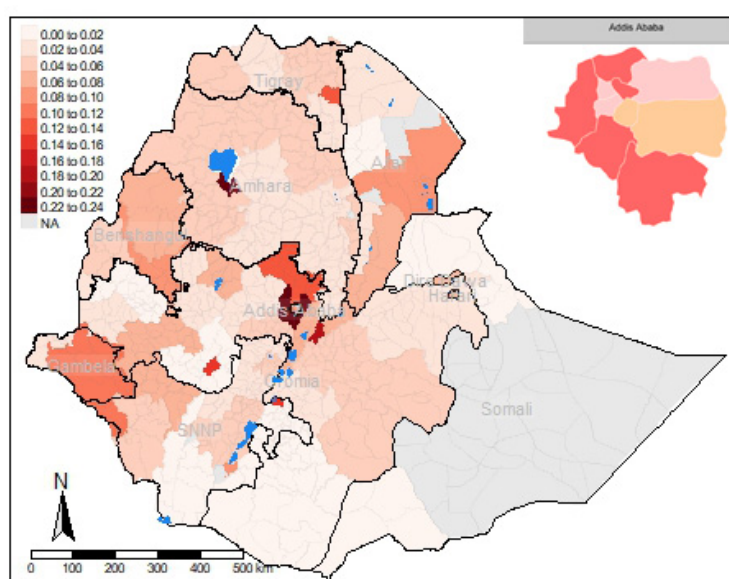
### **International migration**

With religious relations between Ethiopia and the Arabian peninsula having a long history, Muslim Ethiopians having maintained religious movements to Saudi Arabia for the purpose of pilgrimage for centuries, and Jewish Ethiopians beginning to migrate to what was to become Israel as early as 1935. During the imperial period, international migration was largely the purview of the elite, who often left to pursue educational opportunities and later returned to take up high positions within the government. Significant migration to neighbouring countries such as Djibouti, Sudan, Kenya, Yemen and Saudi Arabia was accelerated during the period of Derg rule. Schewel and Bahir's (2019) study suggests that a sizeable number were students who were being targeted by the Derg in their campaign against intellectuals, as they were seen to be opposing the government. They often travelled on to North American or European destinations during the 1980s and onwards.

International migration flows from Ethiopia continued to increase in volume, composition and diversity of destinations after the fall of the Derg government in 1991. While Ethiopians continued to flee political persecution, family reunification, education, and high- and low-skilled migration to destinations across Africa, North America, Europe and the Middle East became increasingly common (Kuschminder and Siegel, 2014). Thus, while some migration systems have existed for centuries, the nature of movement within these systems has been transformed over time (Schewel and Bahir, 2019: 14).

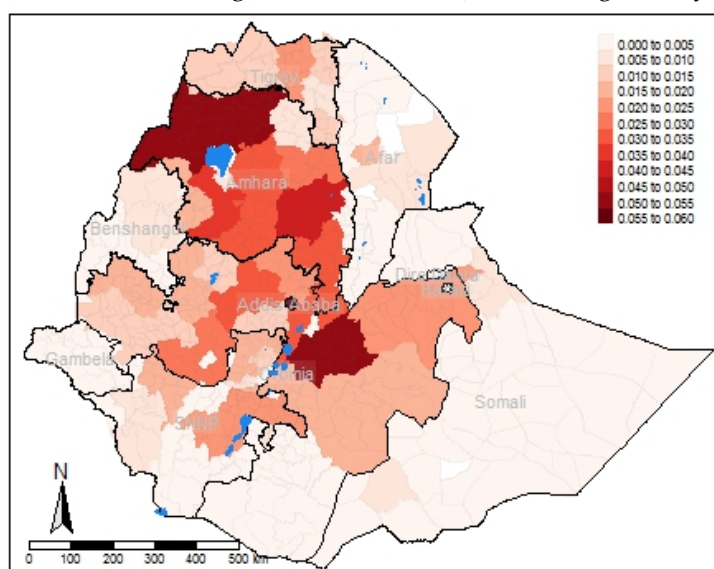
While the rate of Ethiopia's international migration has increased over the past few years, it nevertheless remains low (0.6 percent) when compared to the African average (1.9 percent) (Kefale and Mohammed, 2015). Unlike previous flows that should mainly be interpreted as forced migration, more recent international migration flows from Ethiopia tend to be conceptualised as 'voluntary' labour migration (Kuschminder, Andersson and Siegel, 2012), and their effects to be narrowly correlated with composition and destination (Kuschminder, Andersson and Seigel, 2018). There are presently three main destinations for emigrants from Ethiopia: the Gulf and Middle East, South Africa, and the 'North' (North America and Europe).

**Figure 5.** Where do internal migrants go? (internal migrants as a share of zone population)



Source: LFS, 2013. World Bank Staff calculations. (Source: Bundervoet, 2018)

**Figure 6.** Where do internal migrants come from? (share of migrants by zone of origin)

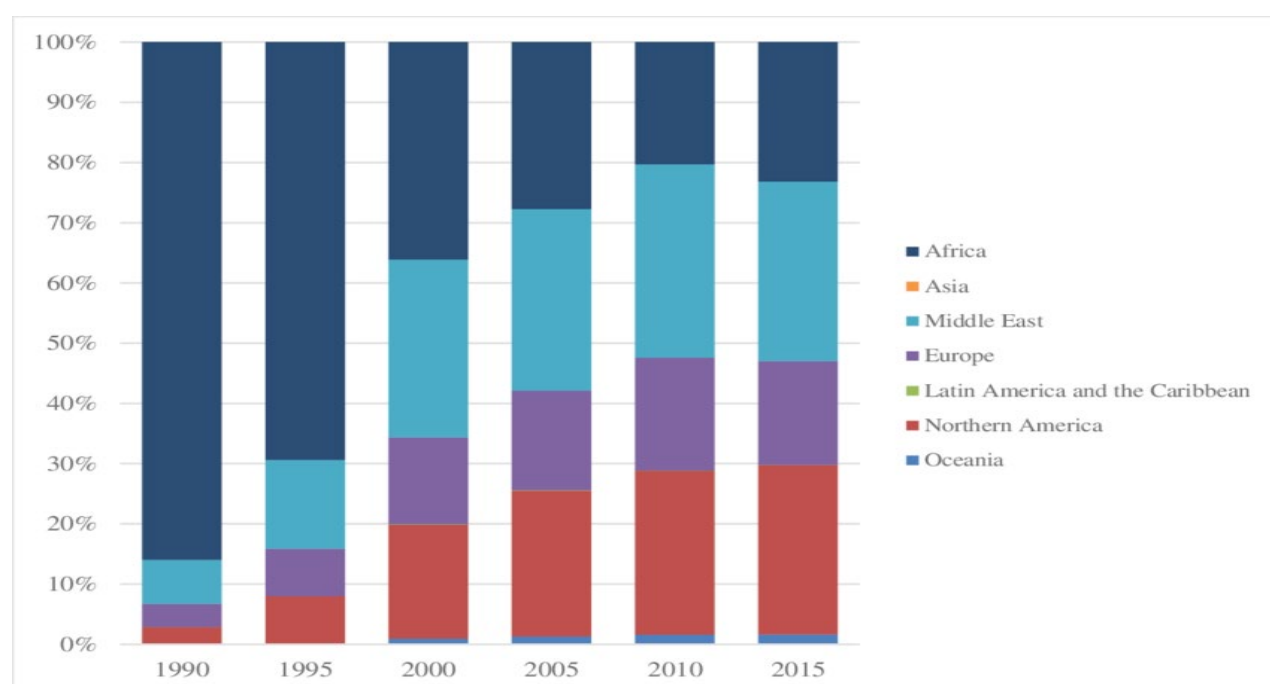


Source: LFS, 2013. World Bank Staff calculations. (Source: Bundervoet, 2018)

The governance of international labour migration from Ethiopia is entrusted to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) and the Immigration Department. The main responsibility lies with MoLSA, which is supposed to approve labour contracts but reportedly does not have the capacity to undertake the task. The second institution involved is the Immigration Department, which is responsible for issuing passports. Given that the country has only recently initialised work to put in place a standardised national identification card system,<sup>24</sup> the use of a *kebele* identity card to issue a passport is found to be fraught with problems, including providing a business opportunity for forging ID cards and corruption of officials. There is little cooperation between MoLSA and the Immigration Department. A National Committee tasked with looking into human smuggling and trafficking was instituted in 1999 but did not come up with any major response until 2007. The same year an Inter-ministerial Taskforce to combat human trafficking was established, although it failed to convene until 2009. It was reinstituted and expanded to all levels of government, including the *woreda* in 2012. In addition to public education (information campaigns), the Taskforce has aimed at reducing and prevent human smuggling by increasing the cooperation of law enforcement officers in regional and local governments (Kefale and Mohammed, 2015: 41-48). Thus, the criminalisation of 'illegal' migration, rather than the protection of Ethiopian citizens abroad, seems to have driven the migration management agenda, with consequences for the migrants' and their families' perceptions of, and engagement with, their government. Figure 7 presents an overview of Ethiopian migrants' international destinations.

<sup>24</sup>A proclamation issued in 2012 establishes two new government agencies tasked with the implementation and management of a civil registry and a national ID card system. Implementation began in August 2016.

**Figure 7.** Regional destination of Ethiopian international migrants between 1990 - 2015



Source: UN Population Division, Trends in International Migrant Stock: 2015 (Total migrant stock at mid-year). Found in Schewel and Bahir, 2019

### Drivers of mobility in Ethiopia

Schewel and Bahir's 2019 study finds that poverty, drought, land scarcity and conflict have played a major role in the country's more recent history. 'Yet, to reduce Ethiopia's migration history to them would neglect the deeper and more gradual shifts in the political, demographic, economic, technological, and cultural realms that are also crucial to understand how and why migration trajectories transformed over the last century' (Schewel and Bahir, op cit.: 34). What their study suggests is that it is important to distinguish between the relatively abrupt moments of population displacement due, for example, to political conflict and famine, and the underlying gradual shifts in the structure of society that make certain types of migration more likely. Another important suggestion is that the timing and particular constellation of social changes gives rise to particular kinds of im/mobility behaviour. The overwhelming percentage of the national population lives in rural areas with high incidences of poverty and vulnerability often rooted in food insecurity and underemployment for significant parts of the year. At the same time, internal and international migration remain relatively low, the latter particularly so. Why this is the case remains unclear, given the livelihood conditions of large sections of the population.



Table 2 shows the patterns of internal migration by region. As can be seen, most internal migration is within a region rather than between regions.

**Table 2.** Destination region of internal migrants, by region of origin (percentages)

Origin Region	Destination region (% of migrants)										
	Tigray	Afar	Amhara	Oromiya	Somali	Benishan	SNNP	Gambela	Harari	Addis Ababa	Dire Dawa
Tigray	68.26	2.98	13.49	2.28	0.08	0.73	5.32	0.20	0.13	6.40	0.14
Afar	4.29	51.52	15.34	13.50	0.19	0.09	11.66	0.04	0.05	3.21	0.11
Amhara	1.87	2.15	71.32	8.25	0.22	1.81	3.27	0.29	0.17	10.53	0.13
Oromiya	0.20	0.28	3.07	81.46	0.42	1.01	4.13	0.47	0.54	7.40	1.01
Somali	0.72	0.00	0.00	46.49	33.54	0.34	1.65	0.07	1.71	5.44	10.04
Benishan	0.00	0.28	23.64	9.08	0.00	63.50	0.31	1.01	0.31	1.87	0.00
SNNP	0.09	1.30	1.20	12.46	0.35	0.08	72.53	1.53	0.29	9.59	0.58
Gambela	0.00	0.00	1.51	14.25	0.00	0.00	31.78	50.44	0.00	1.71	0.31
Harari	0.00	0.62	34.00	32.52	6.68	0.81	0.00	0.00	3.02	10.66	11.69
Addis Ababa	3.61	0.68	21.11	51.08	0.33	0.54	20.58	0.35	0.53	0.00	1.19
Dire Dawa	0.00	0.96	9.02	28.98	11.48	1.23	11.99	0.16	9.89	9.16	17.13

*Note: recent migrants are individuals who moved less than five years prior to survey data collection. Based on the population aged 15 and over. Source: LFS, 2013; World Bank Staff calculations.*

Source: Bundervoet, 2018

Table 3 presents research into the motivations behind the decision to migrate.

**Table 3.** Motivation for migrating amongst recent migrants 1999 - 2013 (percentages)

Primary motivation for migrating	Survey year		
	1999	2005	2013
Search for work	21.80	18.50	36.02
Education	9.08	15.92	9.35
Marriage arrangement	18.49	12.26	12.08
Marriage dissolution	4.13	2.52	1.93
Job transfer	7.20	7.97	7.66
Displacement	3.14	4.49	1.17
Health problems	0.77	2.22	2.35
Shortage of land	2.48	13.80	2.41
Returning to home	12.47	6.82	2.98
Living with relatives	7.23	3.67	16.12
Moving along with family	10.63	10.04	-
Lost family	0.24	-	-
Displacement or work	-	0.72	-
Dismissed from work	-	-	0.76
Family or peer pressure	-	-	1.25
Other reasons	2.35	1.06	5.92

*Note: recent migrants are individuals who moved less than five years prior to survey data collection. Based on the population aged 15 and over. Source: LFS, 1999; 2005; 2013; World Bank Staff calculations.*

Source: Bundervoet, 2018

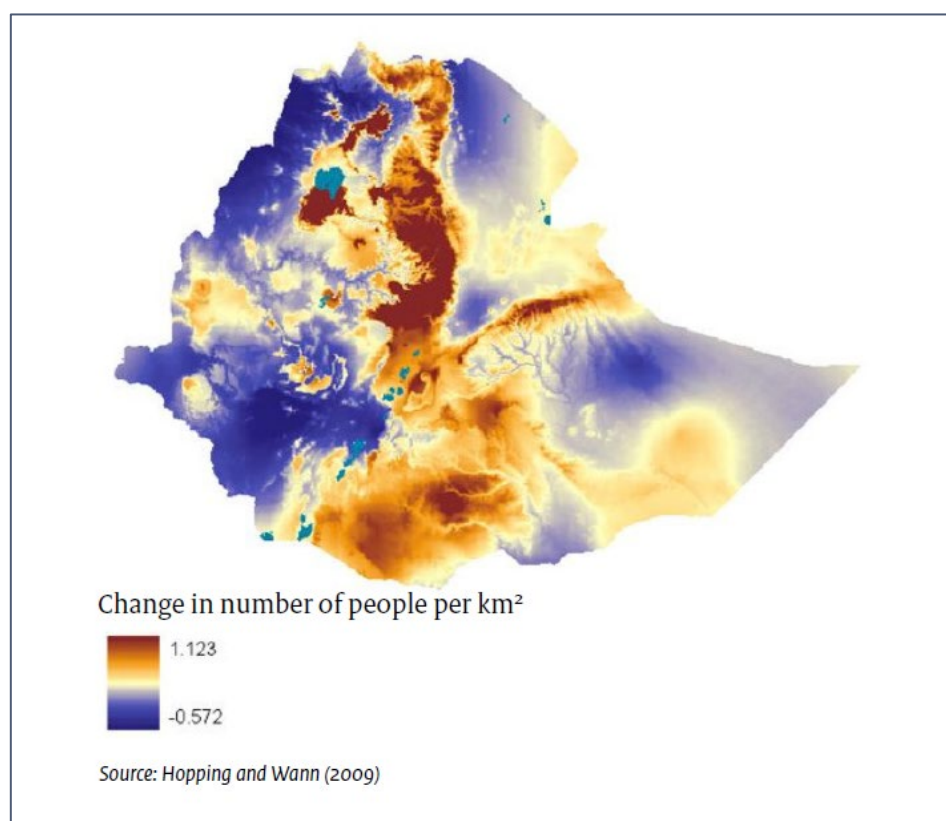
To what extent are mobility practices related to climate change? There is relatively little research investigating the direct links, and Table 2 does not indicate a connection with motivations for migrating. However, it might well have not figured in the survey's questions. It is apparent that major movements by whole households, and not just individuals, occur at times of famine. This may involve households and communities taking the decision to move to other locations and become 'refugees' if movement means crossing a border. It may also involve resettlement by the government.

Slow-onset climate change is more complex, and attributing patterns of mobility directly to its effects is neither simple nor easily justifiable. When it involves

government strategies, then attribution can be based on the indicated cause and intention behind the strategy. When it involves the individual household, then attribution is much more difficult, not least as it involves working with proxy indicators of climate change, such as changes in yield, increases in pests and crop diseases, or issues with water and its management. In assessing the basis for household and individual decision-making, the contribution of fieldwork undertaken by the GCM programme will be central.

For the moment, it can be suggested that two of the more important forms of mobility involving internal migration are movement to urban localities and movement to rural areas possessing greater resilience to climate change, for example, irrigation systems, better types of land (soils, accessibility, productivity), better access to extension services, etc. Hopping and Wan have made a projection of changing population densities as a response to climate change (Figure 8) that reflects these drivers, among others.

**Figure 8.** Map of changes in population density in response to climate change, 2005 - 2050



## BACK TO GOVERNING CLIMATE MOBILITY

As this paper has sought to show, the role of governance locally, nationally and globally has been and remains critical to climate change and mobility practices in Ethiopia. The strength and purpose of the state can be seen in the developmental approach, as well as in its political and cultural nature. Operating with a

constitution rooted in ethnic identity might resolve significant conditions for conflict in Ethiopia's recent history, but it has also served to project past divisions into the politics of the present. The pursuit of a modern developed economy and a leading regional and continental presence might require a strong and quite centralised approach to government, as some argue (e.g. Clapham). One consequence of this may be the subordination of individuals' political and human rights to the economic needs of improving the livelihoods of all households in all settlements in all regions. An example would be the resettling of subsistence farmers to enable large commercial agricultural enterprises to be established in a locality. A consequence of this has been the resettlement of communities from lands they have traditionally farmed and that their cattle have traditionally grazed. Mobility, whether voluntary or involuntary, whether climate-induced or in pursuit of a 'better life', has in turn led to grievances among the migrants and their host communities, often involving an ethnic dimension in conflicts over perceived inequalities involving resources, services and other benefits. The effects of climate change and ways of adapting to them need to be woven into this analysis.

At this stage in the GMC research programme there is no attempt made to impute causality or degree of attribution between climate change and various forms of mobility. These topics have not been researched in depth and applying the lens of governance to climate change and mobility is new in Ethiopia. Little in the way of research has moved beyond the boundaries of each of these field and attempts to make such moves have tended to be descriptive and reflecting assumption rather than analysis. However, it is suggested here that taking up the analysis of mobility and climate change and viewing it through the lens of governance is a significant step forward, one that can potentially lay the basis for strengthening adaptation to climate change in Ethiopia while not losing sight of the goal of economic development rooted in accountable government.

## **A POSTSCRIPT: THE COVID-19 EPIDEMIC IN ETHIOPIA**

The effects of the current Covid-19 epidemic in Ethiopia are already proving to be considerable and long-term. They will undoubtedly have profound consequences for mobility practices in the country. These in turn are likely to affect the pattern of economic development seriously in terms of its pace and its character. The rate of economic development will be significantly reduced, with consequences for livelihoods, communities, businesses and the national economy generally. Economic indicators such as employment, exports and overall GDP are already reflecting the effects on industry, the reduction in remittances, and increasing unemployment and underemployment. As urban-based workers return to their home villages, agrarian household economies are expected to edge more towards subsistence with reductions in commercial production by smaller farms.

Covid-19 is proving to be a test of governance at all levels. The location and prevalence of the illness casts a strong light on the extent of the government's

ability to meet the needs and expectations of its peoples. Similarly, social networks, civil society and the private sector now find themselves having to adjust and adapt to challenges that were unforeseen just a few months ago. This is a situation where, in all probability, widespread personal crises and losses will test the social contract between citizen and state to the utmost. Whether other institutional actors can work with government in a coordinated strategy will be a critical factor in shaping the context for governing climate mobility in the coming months and years.

From a research perspective, there are two sets of issues that need to be addressed. First, Covid-19 is not a temporary phenomenon. It needs to become a variable in the GCM's research and be addressed through the research instruments used. Adaptation to climate change will undoubtedly take on less importance in people's minds and government policies as the challenges of Covid-19 are addressed. However, the need to address climate change and to adapt will take on a greater urgency in this new context. Failure to adapt will weaken livelihoods, increase food insecurity, threaten increased social tensions and aggravate the potential for conflict, not least ethnic conflict. To this end, the GCM research programme will seek to research the nature, need and potential for climate-change adaptation, focusing on the role mobility practices could and do play in this.

The second set of issues concerns the logistical approach to undertaking the research. The partnerships underwriting the programme, those between the Centre for Migration Studies in Ghana, the Forum for Social Studies in Ethiopia and the Danish Institute for International Studies, form an important basis for taking the research programme forward in this developing context. 'Localisation' of the field studies through the national partners and their field-study teams can address some of the potential issues attached to 'outsiders' undertaking field studies. In Ethiopia, for example, this will involve avoiding inter-regional engagements by recruiting field assistants to reflect community identities and associated sensitivities, but many more steps will need to be identified and taken in order to address the challenges posed.

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