

# Expectations and belonging in Dire Dawa Drivers, dynamics and challenges of rural to urban mobility

SUBMITTED TO THE RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE FACILITY

FEBRUARY 2018



Rift Valley Institute  
Taasisi ya Bonde Kuu  
معهد الأخود العظيم  
Machadka Dooxada Rift  
የሰሜን ሸልቆ የጥናት ተቋም  
Instituto do Vale do Rift  
东非大裂谷研究院  
Institut de la Vallée du Rift



Research  
& Evidence  
Facility  
Funded by the EU Trust Fund  
for the Horn of Africa



## Contents

Glossary of acronyms, words and phrases	3
Map of Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda	4
Summary	5
1. Introduction	7
Project contexts and aims of research	7
Significance of the site of investigation	7
Methodology	8
Constraints and limitations	9
2. Research setting and context	10
Socio-cultural context	10
Political context	11
Economic context	12
Rural to urban migration in historical perspective	15
Impact on urban development	17
3. Migrant experiences	23
Drivers of migration	23
Role of social networks	35
Opportunities and challenges	37
Financial practices	40
Impact on site of origin	41
Onward migration	43
4. Conclusion	47
Bibliography	49

---

This report was written by Dereje Feyissa with contributions from Milkessa Midega and Ketema Wakjira. This report was edited by Kate McGuinness.

Cover image: Saido labour market in Dire Dawa, Ethiopia © Dereje Feyissa.

This report was commissioned by the Research and Evidence Facility (REF), a research consortium led by the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London and funded by the EU Trust Fund.

The Rift Valley Institute works in eastern and central Africa to bring local knowledge to bear on social, political and economic development.

The views expressed in this report are those of the researchers and do not indicate a position or opinion on the part of the Research and Evidence Facility, the Rift Valley Institute, the European Union or the EU Trust Fund for Africa.

Copyright © Rift Valley Institute 2018. This work is published under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0).

---

## Glossary of acronyms, words and phrases

ANDM	Amhara National Democratic Movement
CSA	Central Statistics Agency
DDIP	Dire Dawa Industrial Park
EPRDF	Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front
ESPDP	Ethiopian Somali People’s Democratic Party
FGD	focus group discussion
IGLF	Issa–Gurgura Liberation Front
<i>kebele</i>	( <i>Amharic</i> ) the smallest administrative unit of Ethiopia; similar to a ward
<i>khat</i>	a mildly narcotic plant ( <i>catha edulis</i> ) native to the Horn of Africa
KII	key informant interview
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
ONLF	Ogaden National Liberation Front
OPDO	Oromo People’s Democratic Organization
SEPDP	South Ethiopian People’s Democratic Movement
<i>sidet</i>	( <i>Amharic</i> ) international migration
TPLF	Tigrayan People’s Liberation Front
<i>ye Dire lij</i>	( <i>Amharic</i> ) sons and daughters of Dire Dawa

# Map of Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda



© MAPgrafix 2018

Data source: OpenStreetMap

## Summary

As a secondary city, the competitive advantage of Dire Dawa, Ethiopia is location. It is the closest large city to the port of Djibouti, making it an important transit hub for international migration via Djibouti and Somalia to the Gulf States and Europe. Whether migrants end up staying in Dire Dawa or migrating onward depends on their experiences in the city's labour market and their initial expectations.

According to the 2007 census, Dire Dawa is the second largest city in Ethiopia. With an urban population of less than 20 per cent, Ethiopia significantly lags behind the sub-Saharan average of 37 per cent. Urbanization is, however, rapidly increasing in the country. The urban population is projected to triple from 15.2 million in 2012 to 42.3 million in 2037, growing at a rate of 3.8 per cent a year. One of the factors for the growth of the urban population in Dire Dawa is rural to urban migration. Migrants constitute close to 30 per cent of the city's population. Of these migrants, 45 per cent come to the city from rural areas and 55 per cent migrate to the city from other urban areas.

Migrants come to Dire Dawa for various reasons. For many, the city's cosmopolitan image and its reputation for socio-cultural integration across religious and ethnic boundaries is an attraction. Affectionately called *ye dire lij* (sons [and daughters] of Dire Dawa), residents of the city are considered to be welcoming, progressive, laid back and sociable. These qualities contrast with the perception of those from Addis Ababa, who are regarded as more individualistic and less sociable.

Previously known as a railway town, and for the associated contraband trade, Dire Dawa is struggling to develop a post-contraband economy defined as a service and industrial hub for eastern Ethiopia. Migrants come to Dire Dawa because of economic push factors, including land shortages and degradation in rural areas, which is particularly the case for migrants from rural Dire Dawa, eastern Oromia Regional State and Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Regional State. This is compounded by environmental drivers, especially the recurrent drought in rural Dire Dawa and the East and West Hararge Zones of Oromia Regional State, where the rain-fed farming system is stressed and can no longer provide subsistence to the farming community.

A significant dynamic impacting migration in Dire Dawa is the contested nature of political entitlements in the city between its two largest ethnic groups, the Oromo and the Somali. According to a power sharing formula worked out to maintain stability in the city in 2006, the Oromo and the Somali have 40 per cent each of the political and administrative offices. The remaining 20 per cent is given to other members of the ruling party, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). Both Oromos and Somalis deeply resent this power sharing formula and consequently encourage migration from their respective regions in order to change the demographic composition of the city. As such, some migration to Dire Dawa is perceived to be politically driven. The third

national census (2017–2018) is likely to fuel this politics of numbers, as it is directly related to political entitlement over the city.

This study finds that access to basic social services, such as health and education, are an important pull factor. There is no high school in rural Dire Dawa and students who complete grade eight and wish to continue their education must go to Dire Dawa to do so, resulting in a large student migrant population. Access to education is also constrained by cultural practices, particularly for girls. Traditional practices, such as early and forced marriage, are widespread in rural Dire Dawa and in the neighbouring Oromia and Somali regions. Dire Dawa is considered to be a safe haven for women subjected to domestic violence and gender discrimination.

Friendship networks and peer pressure are strongly linked to migration patterns to the city, with migration often occurring in a chain. In encouraging their friends or relatives to join them, migrants to urban Dire Dawa tend to minimize the difficulties and hardships they face and instead exaggerate their accomplishments. The proximity of urban Dire Dawa to rural areas is enabled by improved infrastructure (roads) and technology (mobile phones), which have made travel and information exchange much easier, thereby encouraging migration. The emergence of ethnic-based neighbourhoods, which provide migrants access to ethnic-based social networks, has put a strain on the city's cosmopolitan legacy.

Despite having higher expectations, most migrants end up working as day labourers, street vendors, domestic workers, commercial sex workers and beggars. They all struggle with either joblessness or exploitation in the labour market place. There also appears to be an ethnic stratification of migrant labour. Most of the domestic and commercial sex workers are migrants from rural Dire Dawa and eastern Oromia Regional State, whereas most day labourers in the construction sector are migrants from the south. Somalis do not tend to work as domestic workers or day labourers for cultural reasons. These types of jobs are viewed negatively, not least because wages are low. Migrants, particularly from the south, have depressed wages because they are willing to be paid lower rates. They are also preferred for the quality of their labour. This ethnic stratification of migrant labour has brought about tensions among migrants, and between migrants and natives of Dire Dawa.

The impact of rural–urban migration on sites of origin is predominantly positive, with migrants providing remittances to support family, particularly for health and education costs, and money to invest in land and housing. A positive impact is also seen in shifting gender relations, especially improved attitudes toward girls' education.

# 1. Introduction

## Project context and aims of research

This project aims to better understand the dynamics of rural to urban migration and the ways in which this phenomenon impacts the social and infrastructural fabric of these cities. It is conducted within the framework of the Research and Evidence Facility on Migration in the Horn of Africa, supported by the EU Trust Fund. It is carried out in three secondary cities in East Africa: Dire Dawa, Ethiopia; Gulu, Uganda; and Eldoret, Kenya. Although secondary cities have witnessed tremendous growth in the past few decades, playing an important role between rural and urban areas, most research on rural–urban migration is conducted in capital cities. Hence, a study of migration to secondary cities is particularly relevant and timely. The research is organized around three sets of questions:

- i. To what extent and how does rural–urban migration enhance people’s livelihoods and resilience? To what extent do such movements lead to improved access to services, higher incomes, better employment and improved security? How effective are urban linkages in introducing a safety net for those who live in rural areas?
- ii. What is the impact of people’s movement into secondary cities on infrastructure and services, social cohesion, and security? What impact does a growing population have on strengthening the urban economy, or on putting pressure on services, exacerbating tensions, and contributing to insecurity?
- iii. How does migration to secondary cities affect subsequent migration? Does the first experience of migration prepare people for further migration? Does population pressure from new arrivals encourage others to leave or help establish a market for smuggling?

## Significance of the site of investigation

With a population of 233,224, Dire Dawa city is the second largest city in Ethiopia. It has huge potential for growth. Strategically located between Ethiopia and Djibouti, Dire Dawa is the country’s economic artery and outlet to the sea. A large rural area with a population of 108,610 is also attached to the city. Both these urban and rural areas are under the jurisdiction of the Dire Dawa Administration. According to the latest census, in 2007, the combined urban and rural population of Dire Dawa is 341,834, marking a significant increase over the last several decades: in 1967, the population of this area was only 50,733.

With a view to fostering urban development and industrialization across the country, in 2015 the Ethiopian government announced a plan to establish ten industrial parks

within five years (2015–2020), including one in Dire Dawa. These industrial parks are intended to provide the necessary services and facilities for industries as a means to encourage more foreign direct investment and domestic investment. Believed to be a gateway to achieving sustainable economic development through industrialization, these industrial parks will facilitate the growth of secondary cities across the nation, including Dire Dawa.

Through successive five-year transformation plans, Ethiopia aspires to transform the structural base of the economy from agriculture to service and industry. This process involves a shift of labour from rural areas to urban centres, as is seen in Dire Dawa. Estimated to be only 17.3 per cent in 2012, Ethiopia’s urban to rural ratio is one of the smallest in the world, well below the sub-Saharan Africa average of 37 per cent. According to projections made by the Central Statistics Agency (CSA), the urban population is projected to nearly triple from 15.2 million in 2012 to 42.3 million in 2037, growing at 3.8 per cent per year. Even if the level of urbanization in Ethiopia is low by African standards, the rates of urbanization in Ethiopia are exceptional. Dire Dawa city has one of the fastest rates of urbanization, with a 50 per cent growth rate from 1985 to 2015.

Dire Dawa is significant for better understanding how migration to secondary cities affects subsequent migration; that is, whether the first experience of migration prepares or influences people for further migration. This issue plays out in different ways in Dire Dawa. Above all, it relates to the geography of Dire Dawa, which is situated between Addis Ababa and Djibouti, the country’s capital and major access to the sea. It is only about 300 km from Djibouti, which is a major transit route for migration to the Gulf States and Europe. As such, some migrants come to Dire Dawa with the intention of onward migration. Some of these migrants then revise their plan and stay in Dire Dawa permanently, while others revise their plans when the city fails to meet their expectations, with the aim of migrating on to the Gulf States or Europe through Djibouti or Somalia. For other migrants, particularly from southern Ethiopia, Dire Dawa is a means to generate income to fund their preferred onward migration destination, such as South Africa.

## Methodology

The field research took place in August and September 2017. The research team consisted of three core members: Dr Dereje Feyissa (lead researcher, staff of Addis Ababa University); Dr Milkessa Midega (research associate, staff of Dire Dawa University), and Dr Ketema Waqjira (research associate, staff of Addis Ababa University). In addition, field facilitators assisted in identifying migrants and providing a security alert throughout the course of the fieldwork.

The research used a variety of qualitative research methods, including key informant interviews (KII); focus group discussions (FGDs), in-depth interviews and a number of participatory mapping exercises with elders and experts in government institutions. In



total, 13 KIIs, 12 FGDs and 5 in-depth interviews were conducted. The FGDs consisted of 5 to 7 participants each, including day labourers, migrants, residents in informal settlements, rural villagers and traditional elders. KIIs were held with government officials in various departments and individuals from the business, housing, development and banking sectors. In-depth interviews were conducted with migrants, rural residents, street vendors, students, teachers, and hospitality and service providers. In addition, numerous informal conversations were held to generate insight on issues related to rural to urban migration and the contested status of Dire Dawa city.

## Constraints and limitations

The fieldwork was constrained by three factors, including two specific conflicts and the emergence of a challenging situation with the prosecutor's office in Dire Dawa. First, on 1 September 2017, the federal police in Dire Dawa attempted to stop a car carrying contraband goods. They killed seven individuals and wounded several others in the largely Somali-inhabited area on the road to Djibouti. The dead included women, which increased tension in the city and resulted in clashes between the public and police. Two police officers were wounded during this riot and several youths were detained. These high levels of tension greatly constrained the smooth operation of the fieldwork.

Second, the continued territorial dispute between Oromia Regional State and Somali Regional State also had a direct impact on the security situation in Dire Dawa during fieldwork. The ruling political parties in Oromia Regional State, the Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO), and in Somali Regional State, the Ethiopian Somali People's Democratic Party (ESPDP), rotate leadership in the administration of the city. In September 2017, at the height of the territorial conflict between these two parties, hundreds of people were killed from both sides, particularly in the East Hararge Zone bordering Dire Dawa, including the major *khat* producing area of Aweday. More than 50,000 people were initially displaced because of this conflict. Among these, approximately 1,200 Oromos were displaced from the Afdem, Sitti (formerly Shinile), Aysha and Hurso areas of Somali Regional State and are presently camped in Dire Dawa city. This conflict created an atmosphere of insecurity, especially during the last week of fieldwork. In particular, these security-related challenges restricted the research team's mobility to only two rural areas of Dire Dawa (Harla and Mudi Aneno villages), selected because of their proximity to Dire Dawa.

Third, attempts to probe the perception among some study respondents (including government officials) that there is a link between migrants and crime was politicized, in particular by the prosecutor's office. The prosecutor's office initially misunderstood the intention to learn more about this perception, especially as it applies to migrants from southern Ethiopia. At issue was a concern that southern migrants *de facto* were being labelled as criminals. All necessary efforts were made to explain the objectives of the research, which the prosecutor eventually accepted, thus resolving this issue.

## 2. Research setting and context

### Socio-cultural context

Dire Dawa is known for its cosmopolitan character due to its high level of cultural diversity. Unlike Addis Ababa and other major Ethiopian cities, bilingualism—and for some multilingualism—is part of everyday life.

The Amharic, Oromiffa and Somali languages are spoken by many residents of Dire Dawa, allowing a greater degree of social blending that typifies Dire Dawa as a melting pot. Until the 1974 revolution, Dire Dawa had a well-established expatriate community of largely Italian, French, Indian, Arab and Sudanese origin. This cosmopolitan legacy proves to be resilient, even in the context of the rising ethnic and religious cleavages that have been reinforced by Ethiopia's post-1991 ethno-federal political order.

Perhaps the most notable change in the social landscape of Dire Dawa is the ethnic re-affiliation of the Gurgura from Oromo to Somali ethnic identity. The Gurgura share both Somali and Oromo identities, speaking the Oromo language and tracing their genealogy to the Dir, a Somali clan family. Thus, by origin the Gurgura are Somali, similar to their neighbours, the Issa. Historically, however, they have been assimilated into the Oromo, specifically the Nolle clan that live in areas surrounding Dire Dawa. This ethnic shift, induced by the ethno-politics of federal Ethiopia, is deeply resented by the Oromo who feel betrayed, whereas the Somalis, who predominantly belong to the Issa clan, have encouraged and welcomed this as a way to augment their demographic size and thus enhance their political ownership of Dire Dawa. The contested ethnic identity of the Gurgura constitutes one of the major social fault lines in contemporary Dire Dawa.

The total population of the Dire Dawa Administration is 341,834. Rural Dire Dawa has a population of 108,610 spread over 38 rural *kebeles* (smallest administrative unit) and is mainly inhabited by Oromo (73.5 per cent) and Somali (26 per cent). The population of Dire Dawa city is 233,224, which is subdivided into nine urban *kebeles*. The city is composed of members of the following ethnic groups: Oromo (33 per cent), Amhara (29.5 per cent), Somali (23.5 per cent), Gurage (6.7 per cent), Tigrayan (1.8 per cent), Harari (1.6 per cent) and people from southern Ethiopia, who have a history and culture of migration.

In terms of religion, Dire Dawa is a Muslim majority city (70.9 per cent), followed by Orthodox Christians (25.6 per cent), Protestants (2.8 per cent), Catholics (0.4 per cent) and others (0.3 per cent). In urban Dire Dawa, Muslims constitute 57.4 per cent of the population and Orthodox Christians constitute 37.4 per cent, while in rural Dire Dawa, the population is almost entirely Muslim at 99.5 per cent.

A comparison of census data from 1994 and 2007 shows significant changes in the demography of some ethnic groups in Dire Dawa. For instance, while the popula-

tion of Oromo and Amhara declined by 1.9 and 7.6 per cent, respectively, the Somali population rose by 10.3 per cent. The increase in the Somali population is attributed both to migration to the city and to the ethnic re-affiliation of the Gurgura as Somali. In contrast to the growth in the Somali population, the decline of the Amhara population is attributed to the conflict and security risks following the demise of the Derg.

## Political context

One of the major challenges of Ethiopia's ethno-federal political order is contested identities and territorial disputes between the new regional states, with Dire Dawa one of the most politically contested areas in post-1991 Ethiopia. This contestation is evident, above all, in the high turnover of its administrative structure and changes in political ownership of the city. From 1991 to 1993, Dire Dawa was administered by the OPDO–EPRDF as part of Oromia. This was contested by Somali political organizations, particularly the Issa–Gurgura Liberation Front (IGLF). Political competition and tension became more acute after the establishment of Somali Regional State in 1993, which claimed Dire Dawa as its capital. While claiming the city itself, which was then administered by the OPDO, the IGLF annexed most of the Issa-inhabited areas formerly included within the Dire Dawa Administration into the new Somali Regional State. This is the genesis of the long-standing territorial dispute between Dire Dawa and Somali Regional State.

### BOX 1: Political parties in Ethiopia

Claiming to redress past ethnic inequalities and ensure justice, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) came to power in 1991, ousting the Derg military dictatorship that had ruled the country from 1974 to 1991. The EPRDF is a coalition of four ethno-regional parties: The Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF; Tigray); the Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM; Amhara); the Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO; Oromia); and the South Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (SEPDP; South). Regional parties allied with EPRDF have ruled the remaining five regions: Somali, Afar, Gambella, Harari and Benishangul–Gumuz. The Ethiopian Somali People's Democratic Party (ESPDP) is the ruling party in Somali Regional State.

In response to the political instability caused by the competition between Oromo and Somali political organizations over control of Dire Dawa, a power-sharing formula was agreed between the OPDO and ESPDP under the auspices of the federal government in 2006. This power-sharing formula is known as 40:40:20, according to which regional political leadership is equally divided between the OPDO and ESPDP (40 per cent each). The remaining 20 per cent is reserved for all other ethnicities represented by the two EPRDF member parties, ANDM and SEPDM, of Amhara and southern origin, respectively. The office of the mayor rotates every five years between the OPDO and the ESPDP, with

a single term in office. The first election was held in 2008. In addition to the power sharing agreement, Dire Dawa is a two-tier system of administration, which aims to better decentralize the political and economic power of city administration.

While formally complying with this power-sharing formula, both the OPDO and ESPDP deeply resent it, making Dire Dawa's consociation democracy very fragile. The OPDO claims a larger share, if not exclusive political ownership, based on demographic and historical arguments. The ESPDP advances similar claims based on administrative history (Somalis have administered the city since the imperial period), as well as in reference to the Somali origin of the Gurgura, who could tip the demography of Dire Dawa in their favour. Marred by political competitions and ethnic tensions, Dire Dawa is currently far from articulating a shared vision that draws on its cosmopolitan legacy.

## **Economic context**

The economic mainstay in rural Dire Dawa is agro-pastoralism. Livestock includes cattle, sheep, goats and camels, among others. The main crops grown in rural Dire Dawa are sorghum, maize, fruit and, in a few places, coffee and khat. Poor soil for crop production, the vagaries of climate change and lack of political will from the city's leadership have seriously undermined the agricultural sector in rural Dire Dawa, making it particularly vulnerable to recurrent drought.

The economic mainstay of urban Dire Dawa is trade and its function as a logistics hub. Located on the eastern edge of the Rift Valley, Dire Dawa lies at the intersection of roads from Addis Ababa, Harar and Djibouti. The Dire Dawa airport offers flights to and from Addis Ababa and Djibouti. Additionally, the Selam Bus Line Share Company provides inter-city bus services between Dire Dawa and Addis Ababa. Minibuses connect the city to rural Dire Dawa, the neighbouring Hararge Zones in Oromia Regional State, and Somali Regional State. Dire Dawa is also home to several business centres; notably Taiwan (the largest) and Qefira.

In the 1960s, Dire Dawa's economy was booming as a result of the then railway line, and the emergence of small and medium scale industries. From the 1970s to the early 1990s, Dire Dawa's economy was highly dependent on contraband goods coming from Djibouti and Somalia. Although illicit and informal, trade in contraband was the lifeline of the town until its demise in the 1990s due to the decline of the railway and government crackdown. Tighter border control and stricter law enforcement by the EPRDF government further undermined this vibrant trade. After contraband trade slowly dried up, business activity dwindled in the city and Dire Dawa lost its former vitality.

Dire Dawa also thrives on the khat economy. Much of Ethiopia's prime khat grows in the hills around the cities of Dire Dawa and Harar, about 150 km from the border with Somaliland. At Dire Dawa's khat market in Chattera, trading continues late into the night. The khat trade is related to Dire Dawa's economy in a number of ways. First, Dire Dawa has been a favoured investment destination for rich khat growers and traders

## **BOX 2: The broader political economy of *khat***

Between Dire Dawa and Harar, lies the small town of Aweday, nicknamed Khat city. Located in East Hararge Zone of Oromia Regional State, it is the hub of Ethiopia's khat trade. In the Horn of Africa, khat is an institution wielding enormous economic power. In Ethiopia, it is a major earner: Somaliland, for example, spends approximately USD 524 million per year (about 30 per cent of its gross domestic product) on Ethiopian khat, although many suspect the true figure to be much higher.\* Djibouti is also a lucrative external market for Ethiopian khat.

An Oromo resident of Dire Dawa, who is also a former government official, explains the complex politics of the khat trade:

The Aweday farmers used to be the richest in the country because of booming khat export to neighbouring countries. Some of the wealthy Aweday farmers invested in Dire Dawa, especially building houses. This is how the Aweday Sefer [a Dire Dawa neighbourhood] came to exist. The khat traders from Aweday established an association for khat export. They even opened a branch office for the Italian Kachamali bus company. The local Kachamali transport business used to operate up to Tigray, Djibouti, Somaliland. That was 1994–1995.

Many Oromos became rich and some of them from Aweday bought land and built houses in Dire Dawa ... Eventually, the Oromo khat export association was displaced by Guna Trading [a member of the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front–Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (TPLF–EPRDF) endowment companies known as EFFORT]\*\*. The pretext was that they supported the OLF [Oromo Liberation Front] economically. The Issa also became active in the khat trade, such as Sojik, a Djiboutian trading company. Shura Company, established by Shura Adnan, an Isaq Somali woman from Jijiga, also became very prominent in the khat trade.

Oromo khat farmers were reduced to being suppliers to the Somali khat exporters. Shura Company was affiliated with the former first lady [Azeb Mesfin, wife of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi] and that is why she became very wealthy and recognized as one of the most successful women entrepreneurs in Ethiopia. She even owned two aeroplanes for khat export trade. She used to export khat from Dire Dawa International Airport. Currently Shura is displaced by an Ogaden businesswomen with close links with Abdile, president of Somali Regional State, and the military stationed in the region.

\* For example, in 2014, according to the Ministry of Finance in Somaliland, khat sales generated 20 per cent of the government's USD 152 million budget.

\*\* Endowment Fund for the Rehabilitation of Tigray, an umbrella company for a group of business involved in large-scale industrial activities in Ethiopia; e.g. banking and insurance, import and export, media and communications, construction, agribusiness, and mining, etc.

from Aweday, evident in the emergence of a neighbourhood known as Genda Aweday. Second, Dire Dawa is one of the highest consumers of khat in Ethiopia, providing income generating opportunities for many khat traders, including migrant street vendors. Third, Dire Dawa is a major transit area for the international khat trade. Many of the khat traders in Dire Dawa are migrants from East Hararge Zone in Oromia Regional State, including Aweday.

The Dire Dawa Administration is struggling to build a post-contraband economy.<sup>1</sup> Significant reduction in contraband trade has positively affected tax collection. In 2015, for instance, the administration collected close to ETB 500 million (USD 22.5 million)<sup>2</sup> in taxes, a big step for a city once known for its minimal tax collection.<sup>3</sup> Shortly after the completion of the new electric railway between Dire Dawa and Djibouti in 2013, Dire Dawa's entire business sector experienced a boom in industry, including small-scale manufacturing, hotels, cafes and other businesses along the railway route. It is expected that in a decade or so, more than 20,000 employment opportunities will be created for Dire Dawans through small and medium enterprises. The city administration has provided more than ETB 70 million (USD 3.2 million) for individual and association applicants. More than 167,000 m<sup>2</sup> of land has been set aside by the administration for small and medium enterprises. Six market centres, more than 800 shops and 1,335 kiosks have also become operational in recent years.

Huge public and private investments have been made in the service and manufacturing sectors in Dire Dawa. From an industrial zone built at Melka—previously a contraband site west of the city—to investments in the health and hospitality sectors, the economy of Dire Dawa is improving. Currently, Dire Dawa boasts six four-star hotels, with more planned. Investment in the health sector (Art General Hospital and its associated medical college) is attracting medical service customers from Mogadishu, Djibouti and the Somali regions outside Ethiopia.

Boosting the confidence of this awakening city, the manufacturing sector is picking up. Once a city of no more than four factories, Dire Dawa's industrial zone at Melka is now home to more than 18 large-scale private sector manufacturing plants and other businesses engaged in food, detergent, textile and steel production, as well as three cement factories. The construction sector has also been revitalized with new opportunities,

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise specified, the data in the rest of this section of the report is based on secondary data collected from the Dire Dawa mayor's office on 23 August 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Currency rates are approximate and reflect oanda rates as of September 2017, when this study was completed. In direct quotes from respondents, reference to birr is retained to better reflect speech patterns. Otherwise, the international currency code, ETB, is used. See: <https://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/>.

<sup>3</sup> More recently, the Dire Dawa Administration Revenues and Customs Authority estimates that it expects to collect ETB 927 million (USD 29 million) in taxes. 'DDRCA Collects over 487m Br' [USD 15.2 million], Dire Dawa Administration, [http://www.dire-dawa.gov.et/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=326:ddrca-collects-over-487m-br&catid=141&Itemid=435&lang=en](http://www.dire-dawa.gov.et/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=326:ddrca-collects-over-487m-br&catid=141&Itemid=435&lang=en).

including a roughly ETB 700 million (USD 32 million) water project, the construction of Dire Dawa University and the Dire Dawa dry port.

The expected economic game changer for the city is the Dire Dawa Industrial Park (DDIP). Located in the west of the city, DDIP is being developed as an integrated zone modelled as an international Special Economic Zone. The first phase of construction was completed at the end of 2017. Enterprises operating in DDIP are expected to employ 68,000 people. The planned industrial park has initiated an ambitious new master plan for the future of Dire Dawa, informed by modernist urban development thinking that has neatly laid out residential, service and industrial areas.

### **Rural to urban mobility in historical perspective**

Migration to Dire Dawa city has occurred at various times and in various phases.<sup>4</sup> The first period is linked to the railway during the early twentieth century, when not only Ethiopians from other regions but also expatriates from various countries came and settled in Dire Dawa to avail themselves of new economic opportunities. Ethiopians, particularly ethnic Somalis, came to Dire Dawa as railway construction workers. Later, in the 1960s, Dire Dawa experienced an initial phase of industrialization that attracted labourers from various parts of the country, in particular to work in the cement and food processing factories. The rise of the contraband trade from the 1970s through to the 1990s also attracted a number of migrants to the city, as has the khat trade.

With the decline of the contraband trade in the 1990s, Dire Dawa lost some of its appeal for migrants. Some of its long-time residents, particularly the Amharas, also left Dire Dawa at this time because of the new ethnic dispensation that overnight defined them as outsiders: Dire Dawa has come to be regarded as a city of Oromos and Somalis. To be expected, the number of Oromos and Somalis in the city has grown in response to the autochthonous claims advanced by both ethnic groups over Dire Dawa. The economic revival of Dire Dawa since the mid-2000s has attracted many migrants, with those from southern Ethiopia the most visible addition to the city, many of whom are day labourers or mobile street vendors.

According to the 2007 census, the number of migrants in Dire Dawa is as high as 29.6 per cent (101,316) of the total population of Dire Dawa, with 52.3 per cent of this total migrant population female and 47.8 per cent male. Among these migrants, 45,842 people

<sup>4</sup> 2007 census data on places of birth and duration of residence shows that rural–urban migration is the driving force of urbanization in Ethiopia. Migrants have constituted almost half of the urban population for the past 20 years, with the majority of these migrants coming directly from rural areas. Urban–urban migration has also increased. Dire Dawa follows this pattern.

(45.2 per cent) came to the city from rural areas<sup>5</sup> and 55,474 people (54.7 per cent) migrated to the city from other urban areas. Although there is no clear documentation on where migrants to Dire Dawa come from, study findings suggest that the majority of recent migrants to Dire Dawa come from Oromia Regional State, particularly from East and West Hararge Zones. Based on evidence from the key informant interviews, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews, the origin of migrants and the main activities in which they are engaged in Dire Dawa are categorized in Table 1.

**Table 1: Category of migrants in contemporary Dire Dawa city**

Category of migrants	Origin
Day labourers	Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Regional State (SNNPR); East and West Hararge Zone; Oromia Regional State
Domestic workers	East and West Hararge Zones; Amhara Regional State
Sex workers	East and West Hararge Zones; Amhara Regional State
Beggars	East and West Hararge Zones; Amhara Regional State and Tigray Regional State
Civil servants	Oromia Regional State; Somali Regional State; Amhara Regional State and SNNPR
Investors from the rural areas	East Hararge Zone (Aweday)
Cultural and educational migrants	East and West Hararge Zones
Transit migrants to Djibouti	All over the country, particularly Oromia Regional State and Amhara Regional State
Seasonal migrants	Rural Dire Dawa; Djibouti
Traders	All over the country, particularly Gurage
Environmental refugees (drought affected)	East and West Hararge Zones; Somali Regional State

Source: Key informant interviews, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews

<sup>5</sup> It is not clear, however, whether migrants from rural Dire Dawa were considered as migrants from rural areas or if the census only recognized migrants from rural areas outside the Dire Dawa Administration. As the last census was conducted after the status of Dire Dawa had been defined as the Dire Dawa Administration, with surrounding rural areas included, it is unlikely that migrants from these rural areas were included as migrants.



## Impact on urban development

Closely associated with the economic revival of Dire Dawa, the city has one of the fastest rates of urbanization in Ethiopia, with a 50 per cent growth rate from 1985 to 2015.<sup>6</sup> This rapid urbanization has created at least three major impacts on urban development in Dire Dawa.

### *Informal settlements*

Since its inception, spontaneous urban development has been a primary attribute of Dire Dawa. As a result, most of the city's settlements are considered to be slums. In fact, only two city quarters—Kezira (including Greek Camp) and Number One—are not regarded as slums. The remainder of Dire Dawa largely consists of informal settlements, most of which have insufficient social services, such as education, health and recreation (parks and sports) facilities.

In Dire Dawa city, an estimated 182,000 people live in sub-standard housing, most of whom are Oromo migrants from rural Dire Dawa and eastern Oromia Regional State; at least half of these people live in simple mud-houses or shacks.<sup>7</sup> Many of these housing structures are located on hills and flood plains, rendering a significant proportion of the inhabitants—at least 15,000 residents live in high-risk flooding areas—vulnerable to natural hazards and disasters, such as landslides and floods. Floods are common during the rainy season in June to September. In August 2006, for example, the Dechatu River overflowed, flooding the city and resulting in hundreds dead, thousands displaced and extensive damage to homes and markets.<sup>8</sup> The location of slum dwellings in flood-prone areas, coupled with the lack of a sufficient flood drainage system, poses health and sanitation threats to the city.

There is a backlog of demand for an estimated 24,000 houses, with demand expected to grow annually by an additional 2,900 houses. The huge gap between supply and demand is leading to a substantial increase in informal settlements. At present, informal settlements proliferate mainly on the peripheries along the Djibouti Road. Cognizant of this critical problem, the federal government of Ethiopia and the Dire Dawa Administration have prioritized housing development. In 2010, the Dire Dawa Administration allocated ETB 300 million (USD 13.5 million) to build low cost apartments for 3,500 households. This number, however, has since been reduced by more than half—to only 1,050 households.

<sup>6</sup> Hailu, 'Why Ethiopia Needs Fast Growing Secondary Cities'.

<sup>7</sup> UN-Habitat, 'Ethiopia: Dire Dawa Urban Profile', Nairobi: United Nations Human Settlements Programme, 2008, 12, [http://www.humanitarianlibrary.org/sites/default/files/2013/07/2740\\_alt.pdf](http://www.humanitarianlibrary.org/sites/default/files/2013/07/2740_alt.pdf). Unless otherwise specified, the data in the rest of this section of the report is derived from this source.

<sup>8</sup> 'Scores killed in Ethiopia Floods', BBC News, 7 August 2006, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/5250386.stm>. Flooding in 2005 also caused similar levels of casualties and damage.

Moreover, the executive body of Dire Dawa discussed the issue of illegal settlements in 2014 and passed a resolution legalizing all of those built before 2011. According to a land use expert at the Dire Dawa Administration, the executive body also decided to consider legalizing those built between 2011 and 2014 because so many were built but this decision has not yet been formally approved. Settlements in Mermarsa, Genda Miskina and Kebele 01 on the Melka Jebdu Road, where the railway and the industrial park are being built, are all considered illegal. This situation is made more complex by the fact that Somali Regional State has not yet enforced the new lease policy agreed by the Dire Dawa Administration.

### *Unemployment*

Seen as a significant driver of the violent protests in 2015–2016, youth unemployment is now a top priority across all government levels, including in the Dire Dawa Administration. According to the Dire Dawa Urban Job Creation and Food Security Agency, the youth unemployment rate is 18.5 per cent, which is above the national average (see Table 2).

**Table 2: Youth unemployment rate over a five-year period (2011–2016), Dire Dawa**

Fiscal year		2011– 2012	2012– 2013	2013– 2014	2014– 2015	2015– 2016	2016– 2017
<b>Unemployment rate (per cent)</b>	National	17.5	16.5	17.4	16.8	16.9	
	Dire Dawa	22.7	22.3	22.8	18.1	23.9	18.5

Source: Dire Dawa Administration Urban Job Creation and Food Security Agency

The relatively high rate of youth unemployment in Dire Dawa impacts on urban development in Dire Dawa in terms of access to jobs and job creation. For example, this has given rise to ambivalence among residents and business owners with respect to growing rates of migration. On the one hand, they view migrants through the cosmopolitan lens for which the city is known. Migrant labour is also sought after because many natives of Dire Dawa, particularly the Somali population, are not interested in working as day labourers. On the other hand, there is an emerging tension between migrants and the natives of Dire Dawa, as a respondent from the Dire Dawa Urban Job Creation and Food Security Agency indicates:

Rural to urban migration has affected residents of Dire Dawa in terms of access to jobs and employment in the city. Despite some efforts on the part of the city government to plan and create urban jobs year after year, the rapid rate of migration from other regional states, such as the south [SNNPR] and Oromia, to the city has challenged the city’s plan for creation of urban jobs. The rate of unemploy-

ment has not been reduced due to rapid rate of migration to the city. Most of the unemployed natives of Dire Dawa cannot get access to work in construction projects—industry, railway and water projects. This is because the companies prefer day labourers who can work for minimal rates.

Those who accept lower wages are mainly from Debub [south] and to some extent from neighbouring zones in Oromia—East Hararge and West Hararge. As a result, the unemployed youth of Dire Dawa cannot get jobs. Hence, the target population of Dire Dawa, for whom the city should facilitate access to jobs, remains a challenge. We give priority to youth of our own. They alone are our burden. The federal government also does not consider the rate of migration to a city when it assesses whether a regional government has delivered on job creation. In addition, compared to the migrants, the unemployed youth in Dire Dawa have unfavourable attitudes to wage labour, and they do not have a saving culture.

The regulatory mechanism for managing rural to urban migration is also not well developed. We are cognizant of the constitutionally guaranteed freedom of citizens' rights to reside any place in the country, if they so wish. Whatever regulation is there, it is about the requirement of migrants to apply and get a kebele ID card. Anyone with a kebele ID card is recognized as a legal resident of the city and entitled to all rights reserved for the native population, including access to jobs.

The acting head of the security directorate of the Social and Labor Affairs Office of the city of Dire Dawa offers some concrete examples of these increasing tensions between migrants and the natives of Dire Dawa related to competition in the labour market and the growing sense of exclusion on the part of the former:

Natives of Dire Dawa perceive that the migration of people from other regions has reduced not only their job opportunities but also their negotiating power vis-a-vis employers. This tension played out in the disagreement between farmers of Gandasar Kebele and the city administration, when the former refused to participate in the environmental and watershed development activities designed by the city. They justified their refusal based on their exclusion from job opportunities, which is being increasingly dominated by migrants, particularly by migrants from the south saying, 'Let these migrants do the conservation work for you!' There is a growing awareness among private companies that the security of their organization or business depends on the positive relations that it creates with local communities.

There was another incident in 2016 between migrant day labourers and residents of the city while competing for jobs offered by the industrial zone in Melka [Kebele 01]. The unemployed youth of the city put up a fight with migrants from the south. We intervened and facilitated the recruitment of about 30 native youth to work alongside the migrants. The Dire Dawa Administration, in collabo-

ration with private companies, have been working to ensure the recruitment of the youth of Dire Dawa in the jobs created by companies in order to reduce the tension between the migrants and the local community. Although there is lack of coherent regulation and directive on how to deal with the tension that rural to urban migration has put on the employment opportunities in the city, private organizations are advised to first get the approval from the city kebele administration about the background of the applicants and who they should employ. Those who have kebele residence ID cards would be given priority.

According to this same respondent, an additional complicating factor that feeds into the tensions between migrants and members of the local community is the absence of a minimum wage. This has created a favourable condition for employers, while simultaneously making day labourers vulnerable to exploitation. As migrants tend to take less payment than what is conventionally acceptable, the wage scale is getting lower for people from Dire Dawa and the surrounding areas. He goes on to explain:

The government has not yet fixed minimum wage rates for day labour. The focus now is on creation of jobs rather than on determining what amount of wage the investors or private companies should pay. Lack of a mechanism to regulate labour relations has created many problems. First, the lack of a clear minimum wage scale has attracted migrants who are always ready to work at any rate, if they have no other alternative. Second, some private organizations discriminate against female day labourers, who are offered lower wages than their male counterparts. Third, the commissioned private agencies (brokers) are also part of the problem.

Informal employment in mobile street vending is also seen to be one of the major challenges in urban planning, according to a study respondent in the Dire Dawa Administration. It undermines the city's ambition to become a modern city. Mobile street vending is associated with migrants, who sell items ranging from books and small electronic goods to roasted chickpeas and sunflower seeds. Traditional street vending is more tolerated, however, as it is stationary and involves selling local goods, such as fruits, cosmetics and khat. The majority of migrants involved in mobile street vending are under eighteen years old and tend to come from the south. Because they are under age, they cannot be employed as day labourers, so become mobile street vendors instead. They carry small shop materials and move from one corner of the city to another, selling their wares.

### *Security and social cohesion*

The growing culture of migration, especially onward migration (see below), in Dire Dawa has widespread social impacts, as the vice head of the Justice, Legal and Security Affairs Bureau of the Dire Dawa Administration, explains:

International migration to and from Dire Dawa has affected the community of the city. Migrants from eastern Ethiopia come to Dire Dawa. They stay in Dire

Dawa and decide which direction to take. One route is Sudan–Libya–Europe. The other route is Djibouti–Hargeysa–Yemen–Saudi Arabia (if possible to Europe). Many Dire Dawa- born migrants died in the Mediterranean Sea. We mourn for our dead. Some were also killed by ISIS fighters on the Libyan coasts. These all have brought social crisis. Since youths may migrate at any time by dropping out of school, parents have become uncertain about their children. Family stability, societal stability is threatened. Even middle-income people sell their property and plan for migration to Europe. We know people who sold their vehicles to go abroad. Some also borrow money to migrate. They do not have money to work in Ethiopia but they do have money to go to Saudi or Libya. Are they successful and reach their destiny? Only one per cent may succeed.

Many natives of Dire Dawa also associate the growing crime rates in the city with migrants, particularly those from the south. A female resident of Dire Dawa remarks, ‘We, people of Dire Dawa, started locking our house after migrants started coming in numbers, particularly the day labourers.’ Government officials in the Dire Dawa Administration also share the perception that migrants are linked with crime, as this official explains:

Migrants from the south live in the Sabian and Goro areas. There are cases of robbery in these areas. A group of labourers broke into houses and stole gold, laptops and money. Not only that. There are migrants who use drugs, such as hashish or alcohol, to perpetrate crimes. Previously, the people of Dire Dawa knew only khat! Petty crime is more common in Sabian, Dechatu and Chattera, where most of the migrants live.

Related to increased levels of crime, migration is further associated with Dire Dawa’s growing population of street children and adults. Poverty, caused by environmental degradation, drought and famine, is the main push factor for children to live on the street in urban Dire Dawa. This is more visible in the upscale Kezira neighborhood. Themselves vulnerable to the violation of their rights, street children are nevertheless associated with growing crime in the city, such as stealing, robbing, shoplifting and theft during the night.

In addition to increased numbers of street people in Dire Dawa, the city has developed a culture of begging. Among other things, this has an adverse impact on work ethics and drains productive labour from the agriculture sector. There are three types of migrant beggars in Dire Dawa: Friday beggars from rural Dire Dawa, who travel to the city to receive alms (*sedeqa*); seasonal beggars from northern Ethiopia; and full-time beggars. Every Friday, people from the neighbouring rural areas come to Dire Dawa to generate income from alms. The business districts witness long queues in front of shops or at mosques to collect the money donated by the faithful and the wealthy as an act of religious duty (the Islamic precept of giving alms to the poor). Similarly, some migrants from the north, particularly from Tigray and Amhara region, congregate in Christian churches, especially on saints’ days, begging for money. Some of these part-time beggars return

to their home areas and use the money they have collected to supplement their livelihoods. Others, both Muslim and Christian, are full-time beggars and make a living out of it.

Some migrants, particularly from the Amhara region and East and West Hararge Zones of Oromia, are also linked to the rise of commercial sex workers in the city. There are approximately 2,500 (1,500 permanent and 1,000 transient) commercial sex workers in Dire Dawa operating in hotels, bars and breweries in Dire Dawa.

The Dechatu neighborhood, Dire Dawa's red light district, is where many of these commercial sex workers conduct business. They are also blamed for the city's high HIV infection rate. The HIV prevalence rate in Dire Dawa among adults was estimated at 4.3 per cent in 2007, which is among the highest in the country.

In 2011, however, prevalence among 15–49 year olds was estimated at 4.0 per cent. Dire Dawa's location along the Addis Ababa–Djibouti corridor makes the city particularly susceptible to the spread of other communicable diseases, as well.

## 3. Migrant experiences

### Drivers of migration

There are different push and pull factors that inform migrants' decision to move to Dire Dawa city.

#### *Push factors*

- Conflicts; e.g. the continued territorial dispute between Oromia Regional State and Somali Regional State and the population of internally displaced persons in Dire Dawa
- Land shortage and degradation in rural areas
- Climate change and recurrent drought
- Violence against women in rural Dire Dawa

#### *Pull factors*

- Dire Dawa's image as a progressive (liberal) cosmopolitan city, with greater blending across ethnic and religious boundaries
- Economic revival, daily wage labour in the construction sector and expectations generated by development of the DDIP
- Perceptions that Dire Dawa city is a safe haven for rural women subjected to domestic violence and forced marriage
- Educational opportunities, in particular access to high schools
- Access to health services; e.g. the Dil Chora Referral Hospital
- To augment political claims via demographic changes (politics of numbers)
- Dire Dawa as a transit stop for international migration, via Djibouti and Somalia
- Ethnically determined job opportunities for civil servants

#### *Dire Dawa's cosmopolitan image*

Dire Dawa is branded as the most cosmopolitan city in Ethiopia. The city features prominently in the country's artistic landscape, with many songs by famous singers—from Tilahun Gesese to the legendary Tedi Afro—dedicated to its cosmopolitan social fabric and robust socio-cultural integration across ethnic and religious boundaries. Affectionately calling themselves '*ye Dire Iij*' (the sons [and daughters] of Dire Dawa), the

population of Dire Dawa is considered more open, progressive, hospitable and relaxed in contrast to Addis Ababa, which is widely viewed as more hierarchical, individualized and conservative. Reflecting the cultural diversity of the city, many people in Dire Dawa are bilingual, with some speaking more than two languages. The Dire Dawa Administration has institutionalized the multicultural legacy of the city by adopting a multilingual educational policy. Unlike Addis Ababa, where the Amharic language is the sole language used in schools, three languages—Amharic, Oromiffa and Somali—are taught and used in Dire Dawa schools.

### **BOX 3: Contraband and cross-border trade**

Small and large-scale official and unofficial cross-border trade is present at Togochale, a border town situated between Jijiga and Somaliland, and currently a major smuggling route. This trade involves livestock, khat,\* some grains and cereals, coffee and second hand clothing. Informal or unofficial trade in Togochale is regulated by government import–export licenses, which are issued for fixed commodities to individual traders. Some of these licences are capped at USD 2,000 a month for people who live in Togochale and surrounding areas. This legal informal cross-border trade becomes illegal (contraband) when it is transported outside of Togochale and distributed to other parts of the country, including Dire Dawa, from Jijiga.

\* In the Ethiopian context, khat is not considered to be a drug. Hence its designation as contraband rather than a banned substance.

The image of Dire Dawa as migrant-friendly is often considered as a pull factor. As this migrant from Hadiya, in the south, explains:

I used to admire Dire Dawa as if it were a foreign land, a land of opportunity. My aunt told me about Dire Dawa, exaggerating its image. ... Dire Dawa at night looks like a European or American city for those of us who come from rural areas. The night deceives you! Despite all the challenges that I have faced, I still prefer Dire Dawa to Addis Ababa or any other city in Ethiopia. Unlike in Addis Ababa, you can live on 100 birr [USD 4.5] per day in Dire Dawa. People here are very sociable and honest and welcome migrants. I owe Dire Dawa big time. It brought me up, no matter the difficulties at the workplace. I have even managed to get a kebele ID card. That means I am a legal resident of Dire Dawa. From what I heard from friends and relatives who migrated to Addis Ababa, it is not that easy for a migrant to have a kebele ID.

For some, Dire Dawa's image of being a welcoming cosmopolitan city is a factor in redefining Dire Dawa as a transit place to a permanent destination. This migrant from Welayta, also in the south, elaborates:

You always get something to eat because there is a culture of sharing. It is not like in Addis, where people eat behind closed doors. Initially, I came to Dire Dawa



with the intention of going to the Gulf States through Djibouti. When I heard that the journey to Djibouti and the Gulf States is not only expensive but also very risky, I revised my plan and decided to stay in Dire Dawa. After all, Dire is a nice place to live. The people are friendly and you do not spend much for clothing ... If you do not have enough money to pay for your rent, you can even live on the street. After all, Dire Dawa is not cold at night.

### *Economic drivers*

The economic pull factors are largely related to Dire Dawa's strategic location near the port of Djibouti, making the city a logistics and trade hub. The new railway has attracted migrants from all over the country because of opportunities for informal cross-border trade, or contraband trade, as the government refers to it. Contraband trade consists of smuggling legal goods to avoid taxes; it does not include banned goods, such as drugs or weapons. Business areas in Dire Dawa, such as Taiwan and Ashewa, are closely linked to informal cross-border trade. A wide range of goods—electronics, clothes, shoes and cosmetics—from Somalia, Somaliland and Djibouti are sold in these markets at far lower prices than in other cities, particularly Addis Ababa. Despite the continued government crackdown on contraband trade, many residents of Dire Dawa city—migrants and original inhabitants alike—still make a living from it.<sup>9</sup>

The construction boom in recent years also attracts migrants, particularly from SNNPR. In addition to the large-scale construction projects underway in Dire Dawa, migrants find work building hotels and private houses. For some migrants, Dire Dawa is preferred over other cities (particularly Addis Ababa), where the daily wage labour force is saturated and the cost of living higher. Although the average daily wage for day labour in the construction sector in Dire Dawa (ETB 60 to 100 per day; USD 3 to 4.5) is similar to that in Addis Ababa, the cost of living in Dire Dawa is lower. When completed, the DDIP is expected to draw yet more migrants to the city because of the number of jobs on offer. Migrants are expected from the surrounding Oromia Regional State and various other parts of the country, including southern Ethiopia (Hadiya Zone and Welayta Zone).

Landlessness is described as a major economic push factor for migration to Dire Dawa, especially among respondents from the south, as this migrant explains:

I came to Dire Dawa from Welayta. I am the youngest child in our family. We are a family of eight. My father owns only half a hectare of land after he distributed it to my older brothers. I still have two older brothers who expect their share of that half hectare. It would be useless for me to wait until I can make a claim on my share, if this is at all possible. Nor is education the alternative. I learnt up to grade eight and I was not hopeful of a better life if I continued studying. Many people from my village, and even from Sodo [the capital of Welayta Zone], could

<sup>9</sup> The shootout between smugglers and the security forces on 1 September 2017, along with subsequent public protests, indicates the continued resilience and significance of this trade.

not get a job after completing high school. Some are even unemployed with a college degree. I thought of migrating to Addis Ababa to work as a day labourer but people who I know who migrated to Addis Ababa are not happy about life there. Instead, I came to Dire Dawa when I heard that there are a lot of jobs for day labourers.

There appears to be an ethnic stratification of migrants' labour, with migrants from southern Ethiopia dominating the construction sector as day labourers. These migrants are especially attractive to prospective employers because of the quality of their labour and their relative affordability.<sup>10</sup> More recently, there are also a growing number of migrants from the East and West Hararge Zones of Oromia Regional State working as day labourers.

Interestingly, there are hardly any Somali day labourers in Dire Dawa. This is due to socio-cultural reasons. This Somali respondent resident in Dire Dawa clarifies:

You do not find a single Somali at the Saido labour market [where day labourers are hired]. This is because of the nature of Somali social life. One does not need to work to make a living. It is enough if a member of the family makes a good living either as a trader, politician or civil servant. There is a system of redistribution. What one can get from friends and relatives is a lot more than the earnings from day labour. After all, day labour is very demanding and yet you get little. On average one gets as a day labourer around 1,500 birr [USD 68] per month. And 1,500 birr is nothing for a Somali. It is not even enough for three days. You need money for food, for khat, etc.

There are various sources of money. There is contraband trade. Although it is much more reduced now than before, Somalis still make money from contraband trade. Have you heard what happened yesterday [1 September 2017]? During the skirmish between the security forces and the contraband traders, the entire Somali neighbourhood in the Kela area went out to show solidarity with the contraband traders. This is because of the trickle-down effect of contraband trade for many Somalis. There is also money coming from politicians. Whatever they get, they eat it with relatives, friends and clan members. Money also comes from the diaspora. There are many Somali diaspora who remit money to friends and relatives.

Another economic pull factor is the strong rural–urban link between Dire Dawa city and the surrounding rural areas. Dire Dawa is closely connected to the rural areas of Hararge Zone in Oromia Regional State in terms of food, khat and livestock production. There are

<sup>10</sup> In particular, southern migrants appear more physically fit than labourers from other regions. Often struggling with stronger push factors at home (particularly severe land shortages), southern migrants tend to take lower wages than average. Moreover, they are more experienced in wage labour, based on their background working in commercial farms or as migrant day labourers in the Awash valley since the 1960s.

three livestock markets in the city of Dire Dawa.<sup>11</sup> Most cattle found in these markets are supplied from the East and West Hararge Zones (Bedeno, Dawe, Weter, Chelenko, Kulubi, Langie and Alemaya *woredas* [district; third level administrative unit]), the Shinile Zone of Somali Regional State and the various peasant associations of the Dire Dawa Administrative Council.

Investment opportunities are yet another economic pull factor for migration to Dire Dawa, in particular for some wealthier Somalis from Somali Regional State, notably those from neighbouring Shinile Zone. Dire Dawa is the closest urban centre to the Issa Somali, whereas Jijiga is both further away and dominated by the Ogaden Somalis. As a Somali respondent, a native resident of Dire Dawa, notes, 'When Issa become rich they come to Dire Dawa. They buy land and build houses.' The emerging upscale Somali neighbourhood, Mermarsa, at the contested border between the Dire Dawa Administration and the Shinile Zone of Somali Regional State, is a case in point. As this same respondent explains:

Most of the residents at Mermarsa are Issa, from Shinile Zone and Dire Dawa. But there are also some Djiboutians. Djiboutians come to Dire Dawa for a summer retreat. But now some of them have started investing in houses, as house renting has become very expensive. Instead of paying for rent they prefer to build their own summer houses. They also generate money by renting them when they go back to Djibouti. They get land not as Djiboutians but as Somalis from Somali Regional State. They claim Ethiopian national identity and no one asks whether this is true or not. Probably some of them also bribe the local officials. After all, Djiboutians do not need a visa to come to Ethiopia. They are allowed by the Ethiopian government to cross the border as they wish. ... It is the same with people coming from Somaliland. You see also cars in Dire Dawa with Somaliland number plates.

Job opportunities in the city's civil service also serve as an economic pull factor. Dire Dawa has attracted two kinds of civil servant migrants: Amharic speakers and civil servants from the Oromia and Somali regions. The Dire Dawa Administration is a charter city,<sup>12</sup> with Amharic as the official language of government, which has drawn Amharic speakers (mainly from the Amhara region) to Dire Dawa's civil service sector. The designation of the Oromia and the Somalis as power-sharing partners of the Dire Dawa Administration has also attracted Oromiffa- and Somali-speaking civil servants to the city.

<sup>11</sup> The first is for cattle, located at Sabian. The second, located about 4 km from the city centre on the Djibouti Road, is for goats. The third market, also for cattle, is found 10 km from the city centre on the Dire Dawa–Harar Road.

<sup>12</sup> A charter city is one in which the system of government is defined by the city's own charter document rather than by state, provincial, regional or national laws. Such a city can adopt or change its organizing charter by decision of the administration, according to the procedures established in the city charter.

**Table 3: Dire Dawa Administration Civil Service Employees by Ethnicity (2004–2014)**

Ethnic group	Employee percentage by fiscal year										Average
	2004	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	
Amhara	60.5	59.7	61.2	57.6	42.7	42.5	44.0	45.4	45.0	46.8	50.5
Oromo	30.7	27.2	25.8	28.8	36.3	35.5	36.1	38.1	37.5	37.7	33.4
Somali	0.9	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	5.0	4.8	5.6	4.6	4.8	3.8
Gurage	2.8	4.1	4.1	4.6	4.4	4.7	4.3	4.7	3.5	4.5	4.2
Tigrayan	2.6	2.9	2.6	3.0	0.4	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.5	3.4	2.8
Others	2.5	3.0	3.3	3.3	13.1	9.3	7.4	2.8	5.9	2.7	5.3
Employee	3409	4460	4528	5438	5487	6250	6324	6384	7248	7448	5701

Source: Dire Dawa Administration Civil Service Bureau, (2004–2014)

As Table 3 indicates, with a 50 per cent share (on average, over a ten-year period), the Amhara are still disproportionately represented in the civil service. Since 2008, however, slight changes in the representation of ethnic groups in Dire Dawa’s public institutions have been seen, which might be the influence of the 40:40:20 power-sharing arrangement. By 2012, for example, Amhara speakers employed as civil servants declined to 45.4 per cent, while the number of Oromo and Somali rose to 38.1 per cent and 5.6 per cent, respectively.

Most of the leadership of the Dire Dawa Administration are migrants who come from either Oromia Regional State or Somali Regional State. This is deeply resented by natives of Dire Dawa, across the ethnic divide, based on concerns that Dire Dawa will become a city of migrants. A Gurgura Somali respondent elaborates this:

Nearly all Dire Dawa administrators come from outside, whether the Issa from Shinile Zone or the Oromo from East or West Hararge Zone. Dire Dawa needs to be governed by its own sons [and daughters]. Migrants do not understand Dire Dawa’s social fabric and instead impose an external agenda on the city, such as the political competition between the Oromo and the Somali elites.

Similar nativist discourses are evident in discussions with native Oromo and Amhara residents of the city.

### *Political drivers*

One consistent theme raised by both Oromo and Somali respondents is politically motivated migration to Dire Dawa by members of these two ethnic groups under the auspices of their respective political parties. At stake is the politics of numbers, or influencing demographic change in Dire Dawa. The Oromo political elite advances a largely demographic argument for political ownership of the city, a reference to their larger percentage (47 per cent) of the Dire Dawa Administration population. Somalis reject the 2007 census results, especially after the Gurgura's recent ethnic re-affiliation as Somali. According to Oromo perspectives, Somali elites have actively encouraged Somali migration to the city in order to alter its demographic structure to back up their ownership claim over Dire Dawa. In particular, they refer to new Somali neighbourhoods, such as Sebategna and Mermarsa. This Oromo resident of Dire Dawa explains at length:

The Issa took all their lands outside of Dire Dawa city and placed it within Somali Regional State. Yet they claim equal power over the remaining part of Dire Dawa, which is basically Oromo and some Gurgura. This has dangerous implications. Shinile Zone is 9 km north of the Dire Dawa Administration but they claimed all the areas up to and including Dire Dawa University. They took the land and redistributed it to Somalis.

Dire Dawa has implemented a new lease policy—recognizing all illegal settlements before 2011 as legal and outlawing any illegal settlement since then. However, Somali Regional State has not accepted the new lease policy. This has made it easier for Somalis in Dire Dawa to acquire land from the Somali region adjacent to the Dire Dawa Administration [in Shinile Zone]. They build new houses on both sides of the border and yet they get services from the Dire Dawa Administration. Somali Regional State has planned to settle 30,000 households adjacent to Dire Dawa but it does not have the capacity to provide services. This is the new political game, which is played by the Issa political class.

The new neighbourhood, called Sebategna, is like Bole Medhanealem, the burgeoning Somali neighbourhood in Addis Ababa. This is a neighbourhood established by migrant Issa and it has become an Issa neighbourhood in Dire Dawa. Previously, the Issa had only one neighbourhood in Dire Dawa city, Afete Issa. Ogaden businesspeople are also behind this Somali expansion in Dire Dawa. Ogaden Somalis are treated like an egg [treated carefully] by the federal government because of the ONLF [Ogaden National Liberation Front] insurgency. The Ogaden business class already took over business in Jijiga from the highlanders. They want to do the same in Dire Dawa.

Land in Dire Dawa has become very expensive since 2012, when illegal settlement intensified after the new lease policy. Now 250 square metres of land [with a title deed] is sold for one million birr [USD 45,000]; without title deed, 400,000 birr [USD 18,000]. Most people who are buying land in Dire Dawa are Issa Somalis. They also get land from Shinile Zone illegally [because Somali Regional State has

not yet accepted the new lease policy], some of which is technically within Dire Dawa Administration.

A Somali counter narrative would present the growing number of Somalis in Dire Dawa as a comeback not an expansion, while characterizing the Oromo as late comers, albeit with a preferential access to land and housing thanks to the political leverage they have in the Dire Dawa Administration. This Somali resident of Dire Dawa elaborates in detail:

Dire Dawa is a railway town. This is important because history of Dire Dawa is directly related to the contested issue of political ownership of Dire Dawa. Note that the railway was built on the backs of Somali camels. The labourers were also Somalis. If the history of Dire Dawa is related to the railway, and given the fact that the railway was built by the Somalis, as such Dire Dawa belongs to the Somalis. Dire Dawa used to be called Issa and Gurgura Awraja. This is a clear recognition of Somali claims over Dire Dawa. Even the Derg recognized the Somali ownership of Dire Dawa.

Problems have started to come since the Ethio–Somali war of 1977–1978. All Somalis were derogatorily called '*shiritam* Somali' [skirted Somali; an insult based on the emasculation of Somali men, in reference to the traditional garb they wear]. We wear *shirit* not because we cannot afford to buy trousers but rather because it is our tradition. Many Ethiopian Somalis left from all over the country, including Dire Dawa, and went to Somalia. At the same time, many people from other parts of Ethiopia came to Dire Dawa in search of jobs and contraband trade. Others came as day labourers and domestic workers. Also, many people came to Dire Dawa during the 1978 drought. The Ethiopia–Somali war hurt the Ethiopian Somalis the most.

The Somalis have sought to regain their status in Dire Dawa since 1991, after the regime change. But there was the problem of the OLF, which fought the Somalis in Erer, Melka, etc. Many Somalis were displaced by the OLF and came to Dire Dawa. The Oromos have become prominent since 1998, when they got power. Many Oromos, from places such as Aweday, came to Dire Dawa. The evidence for that is the establishment of a new Oromo neighbourhood in Dire Dawa, Genda Aweday. It was a lot easier for Oromo migrants to acquire land in Dire Dawa than the native Somalis. The illegal settlers are the Oromo. They have filled all the hills of Dire Dawa.

And yet they removed Somali settlements near Dire Dawa University. Note that the land upon which Dire Dawa University was built was part of Shinile Zone. This is because ESPDP is a very weak party. ESPDP's main job is to combat ONLF; nothing more, nothing less. Otherwise they do not exercise real power, neither in Dire Dawa nor in Somali Regional State. They are worth selling EPRDF's newspapers and pamphlets. After all they are affiliated with EPRDF without being members. This is because they are not treated as equal to the OPDO.

The political drivers for inward migration to Dire Dawa are complex. At the heart of the contestation surrounding the power-sharing formula between the OPDO and the ESPDP is the question of Gurgura identity: Are they Oromos, Somalis or both? A Gurgura resident in Dire Dawa sheds light on the conflicted nature of Gurgura identity and the political claims made in reference to ownership of Dire Dawa:

All Somalis belong to two broad clan confederations: Dir and Darod. Gurgura belong to the Dir Somali. Issa is also Dir Somali. The relationship between Gurgura and Oromo starts with the Nolle Oromo. The Nolle Oromo were fighting with the Alla Oromo. The Alla were very powerful. The Nolle made alliance with the Gurgura because the Gurgura were known as warriors. The Nolle adopted the Gurgura. Gurgura men married Nolle women and all of the descendants claimed their mother's descent because that was where they were living. That is how a section of the Gurgura became Oromo and why many Gurgura now speak Oromiffa. Otherwise, they are all Somalis by origin.

Many of the eastern kebeles in rural Dire Dawa are Gurgura, though they speak Oromiffa. But to the west, up to Erer, the Gurgura speak Somali. Nowadays you find three types of Gurgura: those who speak Oromiffa; those who speak Somali and those who are bilingual. According to the law of the land, the people who live in the immediate surroundings of a city determine the ownership of that city. The Oromos are the minority in rural Dire Dawa and yet they claimed equal power, sharing it with the Somalis. Most of the people who live in the surrounding areas of Dire Dawa city are the Gurgura and the Issa. In eastern rural Dire Dawa, there is only one Oromo kebele and even that is not pure Oromo but mixed with Gurgura. In western rural Dire Dawa there are five to six Oromo kebeles. That is all.

The so-called power-sharing formula is not genuine. In real terms, it is not 40:40:20 but 60:40 because the 20 per cent belongs to the EPRDF and the OPDO is a member of the EPRDF ruling party. It should have been 50 per cent each. The reason why the ESPDP is weak is because of the power-sharing formula. It can easily be out voted by the OPDO.

I do not understand when the Oromo say the Gurgura turned them down [cut their affiliation to re-affiliate with Somalis]. The issue of who Gurgura are can only be decided by the Gurgura. No one should impose an identity on them. And the Gurgura have clearly identified as Somali. This is not the first time that the Gurgura have claimed Somali identity. They did that during the Ethio–Somali war. The problem is also the way the census is conducted in Ethiopia. In the 1994 census, the enumerators just identified the Gurgura as Oromo because they speak Oromiffa. Of the 600 students and teachers [who took the census], only 20 were Somalis. The rest were Oromos.

There seems to be an instrumentalist thrust underlying the contested nature of Gurgura ethnic identity, as the same Gurgura interviewee further notes:

There is also problem with the Oromo—the queue on the Oromo side is longer than the Somali side. We not only compete with the Oromos of Dire Dawa but also with Oromos from all over Oromia, who come to Dire Dawa in search of jobs or as government officials. They are too many. In contrast, the queue on the Somali side is shorter. The Gurgura belong to the Somali ethnic group and their interest is best served as Somali. What the Gurgura could not get as Somali, they would not get as Gurgura.

In rural areas, however, the Gurgura do not draw such a sharp ethnic boundary between themselves and the Oromo. In fact, they emphasize their dual identity with the Somali and the Oromo. This is a position that comes out clearly during a focus group discussion with the Gurgura in Mudi Aneno village.

The Oromo response recognizes the Somali ethnic origin of the Gurgura but emphasizes their thorough assimilation into Oromo culture and way of life. During a focus group discussion with the Aba Gada Council in Laga Hare, respondents suggest that the Gurgura have to choose between being Oromo or Somali. Should they prefer the latter, then as this respondent asserts, ‘They can go back to the Somalis but without our language and our land. The Gurgura are like a gourd without a hanger. They cannot hang on a wall without being supported.’ At the heart of Oromo frustrations is the ethnic re-affiliation of the Gurguras with Somalis, which has given the Somalis justification to claim control of Dire Dawa and encourage migration to the city in order to change its demography.

Political drivers for inward migration to Dire Dawa also operate among other ethnic groups. Although it was difficult to corroborate, some residents of Dire Dawa, as well as government officials, believe that migrants from the south are actively supported by the SNNPR government, particularly the Southern Ethiopia Development Association, as the following explanation by a native of Dire Dawa indicates:

People from all over the country come to Dire Dawa. But the way migrants from the south come to Dire Dawa is a bit strange. They come in numbers and a day after their arrival you see them as street vendors or day labourers. How is this possible unless they are supported by their regional government? The Southern Ethiopia Development Association gives them seed capital. Migrants from the south also do not stay long in one place. They are mobile. Maybe they also work as intelligence for the federal government, which does not like the fact that Dire Dawa belongs to the Oromo and the Somalis.

### *Environmental drivers*

Rural Dire Dawa and the surrounding East and West Hararge Zones of Oromia Regional State and the Shinile Zone of Somali Regional State are drought prone. Despite this,



the economies of the rural kebeles depend on agriculture.<sup>13</sup> In addition to the debilitating effects of climate change, the agriculture sector in the Dire Dawa Administration is severely constrained by other critical factors that drive rural residents to migrate to the city in search of work as day labourers or to become beggars and street people. These factors include:

- Land scarcity: The average size of rain-fed farmland to household is 0.25 hectares, while that of irrigated farmland to household is 0.1 hectares. This is below the national average of 0.5 hectares. When farmland is divided by the number of households, there is acute landlessness.
- Shortage of water for irrigation: Approximately 70 per cent of farmers practice rain-fed agriculture. No rain means a total failure of assets for these rain-dependent farmers, as happened to many farmers in 2015–2016, following El Niño.
- Poor soil character and infertility: Soil in rural Dire Dawa is predominately sand, with 99.3 per cent requiring treatment for acidity and other related problems, leaving only 0.7 per cent suitable for agriculture without intensive treatment.<sup>14</sup> The topography of the farmlands is also a challenge, with most situated on hillsides, not flat areas, rendering crops more susceptible to flooding, which often leads to significant asset losses for farmers.
- Severe food insecurity: Nearly all rural Dire Dawa households are in the productive safety net program.

Largely driven to leave because of drought, most rural migrants to Dire Dawa city live in slum areas and illegal settlements, such as Ganda Miskina. Among those drought-affected farmers who remain in rural areas, immobility and entrapment can prevent their migration. For example, some farmers might prefer to relocate to Dire Dawa as daily wage labourers but feel constrained by lack of language competence. This rural migrant to Dire Dawa city encapsulates the dynamics in which drought-affected farmers are caught:

I came from Lega Ado village. I came to Dire Dawa three years ago. The problem of landlessness is a very serious problem in Lega Ado. Mine is a family of ten people and we only have 0.3 hectares of land. It is the same for our neighbours. Besides, in recent years our area has been hit by drought. Many people, especially young people, would like to come to Dire Dawa to work as day labourers. But the problem is language. Employers prefer to employ people who speak

<sup>13</sup> In rural Dire Dawa kebeles, there are approximately 22,000 households, with an average household size of seven. This means that approximately 154,000 people depend directly on agriculture. Source: Dire Dawa Administration, Agriculture, Water, Mines and Energy Bureau, August 2017. Unless otherwise specified, the data in the rest of this section of the report is derived from this source.

<sup>14</sup> This is according to the soil fertility mapping exercise currently underway for the Dire Dawa Administration and conducted by the Agriculture, Water, Mines and Energy Bureau, August 2017.

Amharic so that they can directly communicate with them. We also do not understand how the system works.

### *Educational and cultural drivers*

Various harmful traditional practices, most of which constitute violence against women, are important drivers of rural to urban migration in Ethiopia.<sup>15</sup> Female genital mutilation and early marriage are widely practiced in rural Dire Dawa and in the neighbouring Oromia and Somali regions. This has pushed many women and girls to leave their homes and migrate to Dire Dawa. Oftentimes, parents in rural areas compel underage girls to marry. In some cases, these girls divorce and escape to Dire Dawa, where many of them work as domestic labourers.

Access to higher education is another driver of rural to urban migration. There are only three junior high schools (above grade six) serving the 38 kebeles in rural Dire Dawa. These schools are very far from some villages, which means students can only continue their education if they go to Dire Dawa city. The problem is more acute for female

#### **BOX 3: A success story: Famia Abadir**

Famia is from Harla, a village 10 km from Dire Dawa city. In 2001, the dire warning by a religious leader in Harla that girls who didn't marry that year would not be able to marry for the next seven years, set off a spate of child marriages that resulted in more than 80 girls marrying and dropping out of Dujuma Primary School. Famia, fifteen years old at the time, was one of them. Famia missed an entire year of school after she was abducted and raped in what turned out to be failed attempts to marry her against her will and the consent of her parents.

The events in Dujuma in 2001 led to a focused awareness raising campaign and community mobilization in rural Dire Dawa to end the practice of early marriage and simultaneously highlight the importance of girls' education. As a result, Famia left her husband and convinced her parents to send her to the girls' hostel in Dire Dawa to continue her education.

Famia attended junior high school at Jalo Balina and then moved to Sabian secondary school in Dire Dawa city. She was transferred to Dire Dawa Preparatory School, where she completed grades eleven and twelve. She then joined Mekelle University and earned a BA degree. After graduating, Famia was employed in office work for three years. She continued to pursue post-graduate study at Bahir Dar University. From there, she got a scholarship to Norway, where she currently resides.

<sup>15</sup> Violence against women in rural Dire Dawa is so rampant that the Dire Dawa Administration established the Women's Rehabilitation Center in 2012, which is the first such centre in Ethiopia that is entirely funded and managed with government resources. It treats women who migrate to Dire Dawa from rural areas and female transit migrants who have been victims of abductions, early marriages, bigamy and other violations. UN Women, 'Shelters for Women and Girls who are Survivors of Violence in Ethiopia', New York: UN Women, 2016, <http://www.peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/shelters-for-survivors-of-violence-ethiopia.pdf>.

students, who are culturally constrained from pursuing their education. Those parents who support their daughters' education are often hesitant to send them to Dire Dawa for fear of violence. Moreover, students from rural areas attending secondary school in Dire Dawa mean additional costs for parents; namely accommodation and subsistence. To alleviate these challenges and better enable girls from rural areas to go on to secondary education, the Dire Dawa Administration (in partnership with UNICEF) built an all-girl hostel in 2007 in Dire Dawa city. According to the director of the hostel, to date, 1,025 female students have been hosted there, all from rural Dire Dawa. Of these, 389 have successfully completed their high school education and are employed by the government or in the private sector; others have gone on to pursue higher education.

### **Role of social networks**

The role of social networks in rural to urban migration plays out in Dire Dawa in various ways. First, it explains the issue of immobility. Most migrants from rural areas have friends, relatives or, at the very least, acquaintances in Dire Dawa who serve as contact persons. For people from Mudi Anano village—7 km north-east of Dire Dawa—lack of social networks in Dire Dawa is cited as a reason for immobility, despite the desire to migrate because of recurrent drought. As this rural village resident says:

Our village has been hit by recurrent drought. We used to be agro-pastoralists, combining sorghum and maize cultivation with cattle and camel. We used to sell milk in Dire Dawa city. But now, crops have failed and we no longer rear cattle. Only goats and camels. We are left with only goats and camels thanks to their capacity to survive even extreme drought. We see people going to Dire Dawa, where they work during drought. But you cannot simply go there without relatives who support you to get a job or until you start working. As a result, we depend on relief distributed by the government. Our children are also not educated. There is only one primary school (grades one to four) in Mudi Anano. We complained that if the children pass to grade five, they have to go to Dire Dawa. And we cannot afford to pay for their cost of living there. Those who have relatives in the city could continue their education. So far, only eight students from Mudi Anano who have relatives in Dire Dawa are pursuing their education above grade five.

Second, peer pressure is considered to be a major pull factor for rural to urban mobility. Both male and female migrants often exaggerate what they have in Dire Dawa (or elsewhere), generating a higher expectation for future migrants. They also do not communicate the problems they face in the city. For example, a woman from a rural area who migrated to Dire Dawa would normally go back to her village a year later to impress her friends, wearing better clothes and shoes. The remaining women would then be tempted to migrate to the city. The fact that Dire Dawa is an open society, where new arrivals are well integrated into the city, seems to have more of an influence on women and children's desire to migrate. The head of the Women's, Youth and

Children's Affairs Bureau in Dire Dawa describes the role of peer pressure in relation to growing rural to urban migration in the following way:

One of the major factors in migrations of women and children to Dire Dawa is *yeguadegna gefet* [peer pressure]. Previous migrants who made some money in the city and somewhat changed their lives go back to their homes [in rural areas] wearing better cloths and shoes, and overact in the community to attract more girls and children to migration. They usually tell their peers back home 'it is as if gold rains in Dire Dawa town'. Then, not only women and children from poor backgrounds but also from well to do families decide to migrate to Dire Dawa.

The issue of peer pressure as a pull factor clearly comes out in FDGs with migrants. With an emphasis on the role of peer pressure, one migrant from southern Ethiopia recounts his story:

I am from Hadiya. Many of my friends migrated to South Africa, Addis Ababa, Shalemene and Hawasa. I was very much impressed by how much their life has changed. Most of them also send remittances to support their families. Go to any village in Hadiya and you see the difference. Migrant families are way better off than any other family. Do you know why Debu Global bank has become very profitable? It is because many migrants from the south send remittances, particularly from South Africa. I was in contact with my migrant friends thanks to viber, telegram and immo. These days it does not cost much to make international calls through social media. All of my migrant friends used to send me nice photos—posing with fashionable clothes and shoes. They also encouraged me to come to where they are at any cost. After all, in the south families are also more willing to pay for their children to migrate than giving them some money to start business in the homeland. But now I say my friends very much exaggerated how much they have changed. It is kind of showing off. Some of them even sent me photos leaning on a car. I thought they have become so rich that they could afford to buy a car. I do not blame them. I am doing the same with friends who I left behind.

Third, ethnic (social and cultural) networks also play an important role in rural to urban migration. The hardening of the ethnic and religious boundaries in the context of the identity politics of federal Ethiopia has undermined Dire Dawa's cosmopolitan legacy, evident in the emergence of ethnic-based neighbourhoods. Lamenting the erosion of Dire Dawa's cosmopolitan legacy, an Oromo native of the city recollects during an interview:

Dire Dawa's cosmopolitanism has roots in the French built Kezira neighbourhood when it was established as a railway town in 1902. The Kezira neighbourhood was very international, where the French, the Arabs, the Turks, etc. lived. Then the Amistegna neighbourhood evolved, where Ethiopians of diverse ethnic origins lived together, gradually creating the Dire Dawa way of life. The Oromos, Somalis, Hararis, Amharas, Gurages, etc. were intermingled. It was a pity to see Oromos and Amharas fighting in 1992. Except for the Amharas in Amistegna, the rest left

Dire Dawa because of the ethnic conflict. It was ironic, however, because four of the so-called Oromo instigators of the conflict turned out to be non-Oromos. They were all from Amstegna and they identified with the Oromo. There was only one Oromo on the wanted list. Most non-Oromos from Amstegna even joined the OLF. Currently, however, the Amistegna neighbourhood has lost its cosmopolitan character and people are divided ethnically and religiously.

Dire Dawa's new ethnic neighbourhoods include: Afette Issa, Mermarsa, Boren and city centre area (Somali); Genda Aweday, Genda Miskina and Gara Dimma (Oromo); Addis Ketema (Amhara); and Genda Gurage (Gurage). These ethnic neighbourhoods serve as information pools and social support networks for new migrants, further reconfiguring the social landscape of Dire Dawa city based on ethnic identity. The intense competition and rivalry between the Oromo and Somali political elites on issues related to the political ownership of Dire Dawa is likely to further accentuate ethnic fault lines, with a direct impact on the pattern of migration to the city, including a new spin on who is a native and who is a migrant.

Because there is contestation between Oromo and Somali ethnic groups over control of the city, the two competing cultural institutions of the Oromo and the Somali, the *Aba Gada* and *Ugaz*, respectively, have been recognized and promoted by the city government as a conflict management strategy. For example, an Oromo council of elders [*Gadaa*] was established 'in an attempt to give a coherent voice to the different Oromo groups within Dire Dawa and thereby counterbalance the Issa'.<sup>16</sup> These cultural affiliations attract both Somali and Oromo from surrounding rural areas to the city of Dire Dawa. As such, the political structure puts a higher premium on ethnic identity, which migrants mobilize as part of their localizing strategies, particularly Oromo and Somali migrants to the city, while migrants from other ethnic groups increasingly find themselves in disadvantaged positions.

## Opportunities and challenges

Although the khat industry offers many migrants livelihood opportunities, they also face challenges when they engage in this business. For example, the continued violent conflict between the Oromia and Somali regional states could further undermine the Oromo standing in the international khat trade, and with that, Dire Dawa's share of this lucrative trade. On 18 September 2017, around 50 Somalis, some of them traders from Somaliland, were killed in Aweday where they were actively engaged in the international khat trade. In response, Oromos were killed in Hargeysa, Somaliland and massively displaced from Jijiga and other towns and villages in Somali Regional State. This is an indication of wider geopolitical repercussions related to the Oromo–Somali conflict, with an impact on Ethiopia's khat export to Somalia. In an effort to diversify its dependence on Ethiopia for khat, for example, Somaliland has begun importing *mirra*—

<sup>16</sup> Kefale, 'Ethnic Decentralization', 596.

the Kenyan version of khat—potentially costing Ethiopia millions of dollars. The waning of Aweday in the international khat trade will have significant economic repercussions for the economy of Dire Dawa, and therefore the livelihoods of many migrants who are connected one way or another to the khat trade.

The contentious issue of who controls Dire Dawa city, which is sensitive to the city's demographic structure, also poses challenges—for natives and migrants alike. This native Dire Dawa Somali respondent, for example, is concerned about the socio-political implications of the construction sector being dominated by non-Somalis:

This will create serious problems. If Somalis do not work in the industrial park, in construction and in other forms of wage labour, they will be economically poorer. But responsibility lays with the party, which claims to represent the Somalis—the ESPDP [Ethiopian Somali People's Democratic Party]. They are busy with other things than thinking about their own people. This is the time to create awareness among the Somalis regarding participation in the day labour market. But sadly, this is not what is happening. ... I fear that Dire Dawa will be a city of migrants if ESPDP does not do its homework, including awareness raising among Somalis to participate in the day labour market. We Somalis are overly social. We do not live as mere individuals. We also live for others. I, for instance, have four jobs to earn enough to support an extended family and a plethora of relatives and friends. But the Oromos and other peoples of Ethiopia live as individuals. That is why they become rich.<sup>17</sup>

This Somali respondent expresses a political concern regarding the absorption of non-Somalis into the Dire Dawa labour market (thus engendering further migration by non-Somalis to Dire Dawa), rather than a cost–benefit analysis that compares the profitability of daily wage labour and a social capital-backed business sector.

Whereas political organizations put great emphasis on cultural affiliation, religious networks, in contrast, offer migrants opportunities to develop cross-cutting ties across ethnic boundaries. Except in a few cases, in Ethiopia, ethnic boundaries rarely overlap with religious boundaries. Whereas Somalis are almost entirely Muslim, Oromos are almost equally divided between Christian and Muslim. That the majority of the Oromos in Dire Dawa and the surrounding areas are Muslim, like their Somali neighbours, helps prevent a hardening of ethnic boundaries. Many Oromo civil servants in Dire Dawa are from central and western Oromia and are predominantly Christian, bringing them closer to the Amhara and other migrants from the north, who also tend to be Christian. This means that religious networks could help migrants to negotiate the challenges of their ethnic predicaments and build bridges across ethnic boundaries.

<sup>17</sup> This is an interesting view of the negative side of social capital, for which Somalis are known. In other contexts, it is precisely the social networks and inter-linkages among Somalis that enable them to thrive in business, while others who are more individualist struggle. In particular, this statement reveals a politically driven perspective on Somali social capital in the specific context of the labour market in Dire Dawa.

Moreover, religious institutions also offer migrants stability as they adapt to their new environment. All faiths in Dire Dawa—Muslim, Orthodox Christian, Protestant and Catholic—have well-established religious institutions with active faith-based associations. For some migrants, such as this one from southern Ethiopia, regular church attendance is important in making sense of and coping with the rigors of life in a new environment.

I came to Dire Dawa in 2005 from Hosanna Ashegraramo village in Hadiya in southern Ethiopia. I am twenty-eight years old. Life in the city is tough. One is expected to be self-reliant. At the beginning, I did not have any other option than doing menial work, such as carrying. I have also worked at various places. Some are very abusive. They even beat employees. Ethiopia is not good for the poor. The system favours the rich [employers]. That is why they either pay below the standard or do not pay at all. They blackmail you saying, 'All it takes is a phone call' [bribing the judges]. Even modern companies, such as Moenco, are not good for the poor. ...

What is sad is that this government claims to stand for the poor but in practice it favours the rich. The government is also hypocritical. It condemns international migration day in, day out. And yet it pushes people to migration. For most poor people, international migration is a question of justice. That is why many people are migrating at any cost. They say, 'It is better to die on the journey than to stay at home and suffer from lack of justice.' The government says, 'Wait for some time. We will find you a job!' Had I not been a [Christian] believer, I would have migrated to Arab countries like anyone else. ... For me as a believer, *sidet* [international migration] is not an option.

Agricultural policies in rural Dire Dawa also factor into the equation of opportunities and challenges that migrants face. The Agriculture, Water, Mines and Energy Bureau in the Dire Dawa Administration has sought to support rural livelihoods in a sustainable manner, with some encouraging initial results. As this agricultural expert from the bureau indicates, however, a successful pilot project had to be discontinued due to lack of budget, an absence of political will and political fragmentation:

We have identified that Dire Dawa rural kebeles are more suitable for irrigated vegetable farming rather than cereal crops. We started a pilot project to determine how productive a rural kebele could be if local growers focused on vegetable production based on irrigation. ... First, we worked with 12 households and proved that it is productive. We then chose 542 households from 13 rural kebeles. We have intensively worked with these households on the production of vegetables like onions, tomatoes and peppers. These households on average got 50,000 birr [USD 2,300] within five months from a 0.1 hectare of irrigated land per farmer. ...

In 2015–2016, the federal government allocated 3.8 million birr [USD 171,000] for supporting the El Niño impacted rural households in Dire Dawa. We utilized the money and the return was 37 million birr [USD 1.7 million]. Unfortunately,

improving the agricultural sector is not the Dire Dawa Administration's priority. For example, the agriculture bureau requested 9 million birr [USD 405,000] for the expansion of highly productive agricultural extension works. But the budget allocated for us was 2 million birr [USD 90,000]. In contrast, they allocated 300 million birr [USD 13.5 million] for building a stadium. I am not against sport but my view is that we should give priority for food security concerns rather than sporting activities.

Improved rural life through food security and minimum asset losses can reduce rural to urban migration. If rural youth are mobilized and enter into agricultural activities equipped with modern agricultural technology, there would not be unnecessary rural–urban migration. The rural kebeles of Dire Dawa have great opportunities for rural development or investing in agriculture. Three factors can make this happen: First, good agro-ecology for vegetable production; second, good marketing opportunities; and third, excess labour, or human power. What matters in arid and semi-arid agro-ecological areas like rural Dire Dawa is technology. Not even topography or an abundance of water resources. But politicians are busy squabbling for power. There is also no continuity in development projects. What a Somali mayor starts would not be continued by his Oromo successor and vice versa, no matter how beneficial it might be to the people.

Vegetable production in rural Dire Dawa and export to neighbouring countries could have played a crucial role in strengthening rural–urban linkages, as well as reducing migration—had there been the necessary political will. There is a huge demand for vegetables from Ethiopia in Djibouti and Somalia. Dire Dawa could have benefited from this economic niche, along with the attendant investment opportunities, but local politics obstructed this opportunity.

## Financial practices

Migrants to Dire Dawa use different financial practices. Two important areas that bear on their financial practices are the cost of migration and obtaining jobs after arriving in the city. In addition to contact persons and wider social networks, migrants in Dire Dawa city need capital to get started. Migrants with some capital have better chances of obtaining a job, as they can afford to survive the first 30 days until payday, unless they take up day labour. This is one reason why poorer migrants forego employment opportunities in the government and private construction companies. Unless attention is paid to the income inequality of migrants—and natives of Dire Dawa—the new opportunities that the industrial park and similar job creation schemes offer will be unlikely to deliver to the poorest section of the society. Most poor migrants, many who are drought-affected farmers, cannot survive for a month without an income.

For those who can sustain themselves for a month until their salary is paid, access to jobs—whether in the government or private sector—requires bribing. This exemplifies



the city as a place of expectation but not necessarily opportunity. A migrant from Hadiya sheds light on the difficulties of finding a job in Dire Dawa:

You need to bribe to get better jobs. There are brokers and you need to pay all kinds of brokers to get a good job. Sometimes you get a job on the fourth chance. Once I asked somebody to help me get a job. He asked me, 'Have you come through your hand or through your feet?' This is an Amharic code word: 'coming with hand' means bribing and 'coming with feet' means the normal channel, without paying. I took it literally and replied, 'Of course I came through my feet.' He replied, 'Then go back with the same feet you came with.' I never tried a broker or intermediary ever since.

## Impact on the sites of origin

### *Remittances*

Sending remittances back home is one of the most visible impacts of migrants on their sites of origin. This practice has a long history in the Dire Dawa Administration. In the 1980s and 1990s, for example, migrants from Aweday were active in sending remittances from the lucrative khat trade that they established in Dire Dawa.<sup>18</sup> Migrants who send remittances do so either to support their families or to invest, particularly in land. A southern migrant tells his success story:

I came to Dire Dawa four years ago from Ara Shefite, Gamo Gofa Zone in southern Ethiopia. Life in Dire Dawa is very good. With better job opportunities than in Addis Ababa and other cities. There is construction everywhere—the railway, the industrial park, dry port, roads, cement factories, private houses, etc. So far, I have sent money home twice. Once to buy land and the other to build a house. I bought one hectare of land from which I got 30 quintal<sup>19</sup> of maize. One quintal of maize is sold for 600 birr [USD 27] and I earned 18,000 birr [USD 810] in one year alone. I will see whether I will save enough money so that I might consider migrating to South Africa. Many of my relatives, friends have gone to South Africa. But I hear that it is getting more and more difficult to go to South

<sup>18</sup> Interestingly, the flow of resources was on both sides: rich khat farmers from Aweday used to come and invest in property in Dire Dawa (visible in Genda Aweday) and some farmers moved to Dire Dawa and made a fortune from the khat trade, part of which they sent back to Aweday to expand khat farm land, support family members and contribute to local infrastructure development. In the early 1990s, khat farmers even established a union, although it was short-lived due to a government crackdown because of the supposed links between khat producers and the OLF. According to interviews with Oromo residents of Dire Dawa city, the government partially nationalized the khat trade and replaced Oromos with Somalis, including in the export trade to neighbouring countries. Oromos in Dire Dawa continue to complain that they are unfairly excluded from the khat trade. As a result, they are no longer able to help their families and relatives in rural areas.

<sup>19</sup> A quintal is a unit for measuring mass, usually defined as 100 base units of kilograms.

Africa. Perhaps I will stay here in Dire Dawa. I have already become *ye Dire lij* [a son of Dire Dawa]. I even started chewing khat. It feels good to live in Dire Dawa.

### *Shifting gender relations*

Dire Dawa's growing reputation as a safe haven, in particular for rural women subjected to domestic violence, offers an alternative for such women to consider divorce as an option and migrate to the city. This is a social process that is further reinforced by the new family law that came into force in 2002, which provides women with the right of unilateral divorce. Although some men in rural areas (for example, those from Harla village) view this development as socially destabilizing, women migrants to Dire Dawa city see this in starkly different terms—an opportunity for them to pursue a freer and happier life, as this survivor of domestic violence attests:

I was married as a child. It was an arranged marriage. I never liked my husband and we never got along. He was very jealous and used to beat me frequently. Elders tried to reconcile us several times but it never worked. I left him and went back to my parents. However, we are eight siblings, of which six are men. They are all married. Three of my brothers live with my parents, together with their wives. It was not suitable for me to live with my parents. My husband threatened me with my child. That if I persisted in my decision to leave, he would keep the child. I chose to miss my child than live with an abusive husband. Of course, I miss my child but what can I do? Life is a lot better without my husband. Good that divorce has now become a lot easier for women. It has been two years since I have come to Dire Dawa. I work as day labourer and above all I re-married to a man of my choice. Life is a lot better here in Dire Dawa.

The story of a rural migrant from East Hararge Zone is another case in point, as a representative from the Women's, Youth and Children's Affairs Bureau explains. The female migrant was married with children and left her husband because he used to beat her. She recently came to Dire Dawa, where she works as a domestic worker. Her husband followed her to Dire Dawa. He tried to force her to go back. She appealed to the bureau. The police intervened on her behalf and her husband returned home without her.

The hostel for female students in Dire Dawa, which enables them to continue their education, also contributes to changing gender relations in their places of origin. One mother from Harla village reflects on her daughter's troubled journey from being a victim of gender-based violence to a successful, educated woman and an admirable role model for other girls in her village:

I and her father wanted to see our daughter married, not in school. Her father bought bicycle for her brother, who rides it to Balo Jalina School to attend grade seven and eight. Our son attended his education up to grade eight. Then he quit his education because he wanted to be a minibuss driver, although we were supportive of his education. By contrast, we decided that our daughter should not proceed beyond grade four. If we let her simply continue her education, she

would have to transfer to Dire Dawa to attend grade nine. We were concerned that would expose her to sexual assault by the city boys. After all, we thought education takes girls nowhere but marriage does. That women are meant for marriage, not for education.

That is why we had arranged an early marriage for our daughter when she was in grade four. She was married for a while to a man but she left him and came back to us to continue her education. We wanted her to bear children and settle in her marriage. She ran away from her husband and reported to her teacher, who protected her. He reported to the Women's, Youth and Children's Affairs Bureau in Dire Dawa city. They came and told us that preventing girls from obtaining an education for early marriage is wrong and illegal.

We accepted their advice and let our daughter continue her education. We returned all the money that her husband gave as the bride wealth. Her father was later on convinced and worked as day labourer at Dire Dawa University's construction site for four years to support her education. Her brother did the same.

Our daughter's case has set a precedent for other girls in the village. She is now a role model for girls when it comes to education and marriage. Almost all the girls have been against early marriage because of our daughter's exemplary life and motivational speeches to girls in the village. She herself has shared a lot regarding the hardships that girls might have to face to attain their life goal, education. She is the first girl in our rural kebele who rejected an early, forced marriage.

## Onward migration

Dire Dawa is one of the major transit routes in the region for international migration. There is a well-established route that links Dire Dawa to the Gulf States via Djibouti (the Dire Dawa–Bosasso–Yemen–Saudi Arabia–Kuwait–Qatar–Dubai route). Most migrants who travel this route are from rural areas, such as Jimma (western Oromia) and Bati and Kemisse (Amhara region). They tend to have minimal education, leaving them especially vulnerable to exploitation. Recently, Dire Dawa natives have also started travelling to the Gulf via Djibouti. This Dire Dawa local government respondent explains:

Previously, Dire Dawa was a transit point in international human trafficking but now it has become a major participant. The presence of transit migrants from all over the country has created a new culture of migration for the people of Dire Dawa. Migrants are brought from different parts of Ethiopia, including from Dire Dawa. They are put in a hall found at the back of Number One area, specifically called Old Industry Sefer. In that hall, illegal brokers sell migrants one loaf of bread for 10 birr [USD 0.5]. There was also a case when human traffickers brought migrants and deceived them, saying that they had arrived in Djibouti. They released them at the gate of Dire Dawa National Cement Share Factory,

pretending as if the lights of the factory were the promised land of Djibouti or Arab countries, for which migrants pay a lot.

Some migrants are abandoned there after they pay the brokerage fee. Those who are left at the cement factory or caught while trying to cross the border to Djibouti are brought to the police station in Dire Dawa and then returned to their place of origin.<sup>20</sup> Others who are successful in reaching Djibouti remain there or are caught and returned to Dire Dawa. Yet others make their way to the Gulf States. As Table 4 shows, in 2015–2016 alone 1,480 migrants were caught in Dire Dawa, including 1,377 males and 110 females.

**Table 4: Origin and sex of migrants caught by police**

Migrant's origin	Sex		Total	Per cent
	Male	Female		
Tigray	165	22	187	5.5
Afar	2	0	2	0.13
Amhara	477	69	546	36.7
Oromia	644	17	661	44.5
Somali	1	0	1	0.06
SNNPR	77	1	78	5.5
Benishangul-Gumuz	1	0	1	0.06
Addis Ababa	1	1	2	0.13
Dire Dawa	9	0	9	0.6
	1,377	110	1,480	100

Source: Labour and Social Affairs Agency of Dire Dawa Administration 2016.

The pull of onward migration can be strong. For example, migrants whose expectations of Dire Dawa have not been met may reconsider their stay and decide to migrate further, as this migrant from the south explains: 'I came to Dire Dawa from Welayta hoping that I get a job here. Although I work as day labourer, what I earn is not enough. If I have

<sup>20</sup> The Dire Dawa Administration has inter-governmental agreements with the Somali, Oromia, Harari and Amhara regional states to jointly manage the migration issue, including the repatriation of migrants who are caught.

enough money, I would like to go to the Arab countries through Djibouti.’ A twenty-eight-year-old migrant, also from the south, admits that the very reason he came to Dire Dawa was to save money so that he could migrate to South Africa. He says, ‘Many of my relatives and friends are now in South Africa. I also wanted to go to South Africa during the 2010 World Cup but a broker took our money and ran away. Unfortunately, I am stuck in Dire Dawa. Let alone saving, I am struggling to get by. I hope life will be better when the industrial park is completed.’

For those migrants to Dire Dawa who are not thinking of onward migration, some are sceptical that plans for industrialization in the city offer an alternative to international migration. Another migrant from the south, married with two children, explains his view:

The government talks about change in the country. Who is getting changed? It is those who are already rich who are getting richer. This change has no place for poor people like me. The government is also talking about skills training. What is training for if it does not help you get a job? Worse, you give up your work for the sake of training and then who will feed your family? We have seen what happened to those who were trained by the government. After the training in Awash for one year, they just dumped them in Dire Dawa! These trainees sit idle or they do what we do as day labourers. Some of the skills they were trained in are also irrelevant for getting jobs in Dire Dawa. Those who were trained in driving, for instance, were not given a driving license. They were asked to pay 11,000 birr [USD 495] for the license. All they got is a certificate. What is a certificate for if it does not help you get a job? That is why many people go to Arab countries despite the high risk associated with it.

*Sidet* [international migration] also needs lots of money. Many people from Jimma, Tigray and Amhara come to Dire Dawa with lots of money to travel to Somalia. When they reach Somalia, they would be robbed of their money and come back to Dire Dawa and stay here. There is only a 5 per cent chance of success. They starve during the journey and some are even eaten by hyenas or drowned in the sea. Still, they pay as high as 30,000 birr [USD 1,350]. If I had 30,000 birr I would invest it here and change my life. Either I would become a businessperson [trading in Dire Dawa] or go back to my home village and invest in land. We have seen the life of those who have come back from Djibouti, from Arab countries. It is terrible.

Now the government is talking about the industrial park and the new companies and how they will improve the lives of poor people. But I do not see the industrial park as an alternative. First, the pay will be very low, as was the case with the railway construction company, which is lower than what we earn as day labourers—on average 800–1,000 birr [USD 35–45] per month. We earn 80–100 birr [USD 3.5–4.5] per day as day labourers. You are also paid only for five days, not the whole week. Sometimes there is nothing to do for more than a week for which you are not paid. Companies such as the sack factory and the

Turkish textile factory say they pay a lot if the benefit package is included, such as pension and service compensation. What value does this add in helping me survive now? Also forget about compensation money. You will not get it even if you go to court.

After all, the court is for rich people. Employers prefer to pay a 10,000 birr [USD 450] bribe to the judge rather than pay 3,000 birr [USD 135] for us [day labourers]. This is because they do not want to set a precedent. The government should not employ us through agencies or brokers. It can directly employ us. I am a self-taught construction worker. I worked at the Qulubi Construction Company for three years at 100 birr [USD 4.5] per day, where I learned *terbiya* [stone carving]. The standard rate is 300 birr [USD 13.5] per day.

I have seen how cruel people can be. Some do not want to pay you even after cleaning their toilet. When you ask for the pay, they say, 'This is not a foreign land. You are in Ethiopia. Wait.' Ethiopians hurt Ethiopians. I understand why people are determined to migrate outside of Ethiopia at any cost.

The Dire Dawa Administration has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Oromia, Somali, Harari and Amhara regional governments to tackle the problem of human trafficking. The Ethiopian government also has recently begun a major crackdown on human trafficking.<sup>21</sup> For example, the federal government has assisted in the interception of more than 30,000 individuals vulnerable to trafficking, convicted 640 traffickers and embarked on a media campaign to raise awareness about human trafficking.<sup>22</sup> These efforts, however, do not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of human trafficking.<sup>23</sup> For Dire Dawa's anti-human trafficking efforts to succeed, the Dire Dawa Administration requires greater political commitment and follow-up by the Ethiopian government, including a sustained awareness campaign. The Dire Dawa cement factory passing as Djibouti or somewhere else outside Ethiopia speaks volumes about the degree of vulnerability of the migrants seeking to transit through Dire Dawa to the Gulf States.

<sup>21</sup> The 2015 Proclamation to Provide for the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants, for example, criminalizes all forms of trafficking in Ethiopia, prescribing penalties of 15–25 years of imprisonment and a fine of 150,000–300,000 birr.

<sup>22</sup> 'Ethiopia', Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, US Department of State, <https://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2017/271186.htm>.

<sup>23</sup> These minimum standards include the following: Prohibit severe forms of trafficking in persons and punish acts of such trafficking; for the knowing commission of any act of sex trafficking the government of the country should prescribe punishment commensurate with that for grave crimes, such as forcible sexual assault; for the knowing commission of any act of a severe form of trafficking in persons, the government of the country should prescribe punishment that is sufficiently stringent to deter and that adequately reflects the heinous nature of the offense; and the government of the country should make serious and sustained efforts to eliminate severe forms of trafficking in persons. Source: United States Congress, 'Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000', Section 108, Public Law 106–386, Washington, DC: 106<sup>th</sup> US Congress, 20 October 2000, <https://www.state.gov/j/tip/laws/61124.htm>.

## 4. Conclusion

This study shows that rural to urban migration to Dire Dawa impacts not only Dire Dawa city and its rural environs but also beyond, affecting areas as far as remote villages in southern Ethiopia, eastern Oromia and Amhara regions. Dire Dawa's cosmopolitan image in a country that is dominated by identity politics and ethnic conflict is one of its appeals. Its planned industrialization and strategic location near Djibouti also make Dire Dawa attractive for internal migrants. Most migrants work as day labourers, domestic workers, street vendors and commercial sex workers. Increasing numbers of migrants also use Dire Dawa as a transit to Djibouti, some of whom continue their journey to the Gulf States and Europe. The political status of Dire Dawa as a federal chartered city has also attracted people to the city, particularly Amharic speakers, as the city has adopted Amharic as the working language for local government.

The political fragility of the city—engendered by the contested ownership of Dire Dawa by two of its largest inhabitants, the Oromo and the Somali—has undermined the city's growth potential. Some migrants are also disappointed by the low wages in the government construction sector (including the new railway company) and foreign companies that operate without a minimum wage labour regulatory framework. Some migrants come to the city anticipating that the near completed industrial park will create an attractive job market for migrants. In Dire Dawa, however, few migrants have sustained their enthusiasm for the hyped industrial park. Some recount workplace abuse. Disappointment may then be translated into redefining Dire Dawa from a destination to a transit point, further encouraged by Dire Dawa's proximity to Djibouti.

Some migrants are proud to claim a Dire Dawan identity, which connotes progressive-ness, sociability and open-mindedness. This is often contrasted with the residents of cities such as Addis Ababa, where life is viewed as more individualized. Migrants have provided the city and its residents with quality labour, in particular migrants from the south. Migrant labour is also attractive because of its availability. In contrast, there are hardly any Somali construction or domestic workers both because of the unattractive wages and for cultural reasons.

There are, however, also emerging tensions between migrants and native residents of the city. Xenophobic sentiments are expressed by associating migrants with rising crime rates in the city, which is evident in statements such as 'we started locking our doors since migrants started flocking into the city'. There is also tension in the labour market place. Some residents of Dire Dawa city and in nearby rural areas deeply resent migrants for depressing wages. In some cases, people consider migrants to be 'free riders' who do not contribute to the growth of the city but extract the most from it.

Rural to urban migration to Dire Dawa is set to steadily increase in the years to come, given the growing impoverishment of rural Dire Dawa and the escalation of inter-ethnic

conflict in the neighbouring Oromia and Somali regions. The view of Dire Dawa as a safer place for women and a place with educational opportunities, the planned industrialization and its role as a transit stop for international migration will continue to be pull factors. A lot remains to be done, however, for Dire Dawa to sustain its appeal to migrants as a secondary city.



## Bibliography

- Asnake Kefale. 'Ethnic Decentralization and the Challenges of Inclusive Governance in Multiethnic Cities: The Case of **Dire Dawa**, Ethiopia'. *Regional & Federal Studies*, 24/5 (2014): 589–605.
- BBC News. 'Scores killed in Ethiopia Floods'. 7 August 2006. (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/5250386.stm>)
- Central Statistics Agency. '2007 Population and Housing Census of Ethiopia'. Dire Dawa Report. Addis Ababa: Central Statistics Agency, 2012.
- Central Statistical Agency and ICF International. 'Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey 2011'. Addis Ababa and Calverton, Maryland: Central Statistical Agency and ICF International, 2012.
- Deribew, Amare. 'Distribution of Most-at-risk Population Groups and Their Perceptions Towards HIV/AIDS: A Baseline Survey in Dire Dawa for the Implementation of Mobile HIV Counseling and Testing'. Bethesda, MD: Private Sector Program-Ethiopia, Abt Associates Inc., February 2009. ([http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/Pnadq243.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pnadq243.pdf))
- Dire Dawa Administration. 'DDRCA Collects over 487m Br'. ([http://www.dire-dawa.gov.et/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=326:ddrca-collects-over-487m-br&catid=141&Itemid=435&lang=en](http://www.dire-dawa.gov.et/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=326:ddrca-collects-over-487m-br&catid=141&Itemid=435&lang=en))
- Hailu, Abiy. 'Ethiopia: Why Ethiopia Needs Fast Growing Secondary Cities?'. *allAfrica*. 14 June 2014. (<http://allafrica.com/stories/201606141195.html>)
- Midega, Milkessa. 'Ethiopian Federalism and the Ethnic Politics of Divided Cities: Consociationalism without Competitive Multiparty Politics in Dire Dawa'. *Journal of Ethnopolitics* 16/3 (2016): 279–294.
- Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, US Department of State. 'Ethiopia'. 2017. (<https://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2017/271186.htm>)
- United Nations Children's Fund. 'Investing in Boys and Girls in Ethiopia: Past, Present and Future'. Ethiopia: Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and the United Nations in Ethiopia, 2012.
- UN-Habitat. 'Ethiopia: Dire Dawa Urban Profile'. Nairobi: United Nations Human Settlements Programme, 2008. ([http://www.humanitarianlibrary.org/sites/default/files/2013/07/2740\\_alt.pdf](http://www.humanitarianlibrary.org/sites/default/files/2013/07/2740_alt.pdf))
- UN Women. 'Shelters for Women and Girls who are Survivors of Violence in Ethiopia'. New York: UN Women, 2016 (<http://www.peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/shelters-for-survivors-of-violence-ethiopia.pdf>)

United States Congress. 'Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000'.  
Public Law 106-386. Washington, DC: 106<sup>th</sup> US Congress, 20 October 2000.  
(<https://www.state.gov/j/tip/laws/61124.htm>)

World Bank Group. 'Ethiopia Urbanization Review: Urban Institutions for a Middle-  
Income Ethiopia'. Washington, DC: World Bank Group, no date.

