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Migration of Skilled Ethiopians...

Cause and Impact:

The Case of Ethiopians in Washington D.C.

By: Bisrat Yared

Addis Ababa University Graduate School of Social Work

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Advisor Abye Tasse (PhD)

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Skilled Migration of Ethiopians :Cause and Impact:
The Case of Ethiopians in Washington D.C.

Bisrat Yared

Graduate School of social work

Approved by Examining Board

Advisor

Signature

Date

Examiner

Signature

Date

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Abstract

There are many reasons why people would want to uproot themselves from their established communities. The reasons and motivations for each migration are different. This paper analyzes the issue of skilled migration of Ethiopians by taking the case of migrants residing in Washington D.C. Purposive and snowball sampling method were applied to identify the respondents. The tools applied to collect data are in-depth interview guide and observation. For the compilation of the data, 20 skilled migrants were interviewed. The findings of the study gravitate towards “economic” reason, as the main cause for the departure of migrants to the destination. The study proposes some intervention modalities to address the migration of skilled people.

The Context of the Problem

In the light of its trite everyday use, migration has achieved its hackneyed appellation to the moving of people from one region or country to another. In different areas, regions and along the trek of time migration has been forging different causes and justifications. People move for different reasons.

The history of migration has got a tremendous depth. It has always been a familiar human activity. It used to be contrived as a means of existence. Human movement was effected for reasons that range from personal and family demand and needs up to community or tribal ascension rummaging for better environment, natural resource and/or safety. Seeking better life and fleeing for safety has always been conceived to be the major causatives for migration. This has always been and still continues to be true.

The present day conceptualization into the whole phenomenon of migration has broadened the justifications and causative motives for migration in to wider and very delicate social etiquettes and issues. Based on this layer of understanding the relatively recent categorical driving factors of migration namely economics and politics are not the only major factors for the present day emigration.

Emigrants have multitudes of issues, which drive them to relocate themselves in new countries or regions. In broader sense these issues are more of subjective in nature. They include individuals' determination to start a new life from "clean slate" which could be following job environment dissatisfaction, decision in self-improvement and/or decisions to trade once position for the socio-economic comfort and

satisfaction. Looking for more organized lifestyle, environmental satisfaction such as entertainment possibilities, housing, and cleanliness are among some of the other reasons, which could be listed in order to understand the reasons for migration.

The international migration of people from Ethiopia is a recent phenomenon. It is generally believed that, it all started with the coming in to power of the military government. Different literatures pointed out that before the time of the military government very few Ethiopians choose to migrate to other countries. Even those who were sent abroad for higher education could not wait to return back. There were times; it was documented, that in their longing to get back home soon, they will not wait for the graduation ceremony to take place. Migration was considered a taboo at the time (Getachew and Maigenet [∇], 1991; Shinn, 2002).

In the early 1970s, youngsters of the time and college graduates were taking the initiative to go to the rural areas to engage in rural-agricultural investment. Young entrepreneurs of the day were taking the platform to lead the national economy. For instance, from central Ethiopia to Afar region, the young were involved in the farming sector like commercial production of cotton. In the words of Teketel [∇] (2002) *“a truly middle class group of entrepreneurs, well versed in modern management and technical skills, was emerging.”*

Today, the general trend identified at the national level is alarming. According to Shinn (2002),

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[∇]

of the Ethiopian students sent abroad for study between 1968/1969 and 1995/1996 academic years, 35 percent failed to return to Ethiopia. A study of four government organizations, including Addis Ababa University, indicated that out of every 100 professionals sent overseas for training between 1982 and 1997, 35 did not return

According to another study “*each year thousands of Ethiopians, especially young women between the ages of 18 and 25, migrate for work to the Middle East*” (Emebet [∇], no date).

Furthermore, the data from Ethiopian Airlines revised for the study also depicts the same trend of a significant number of professionals leaving the country. As to the data from the human resource department of the airline, in the last five years, on average 184 employees have left the company yearly due to various reasons to live abroad. Although the number might not seem high, there is a justifiable reason for concern, as most leaving the airline are key professionals such as Aircraft Technicians, Marketing Agents, Cockpit Crew etc. where the airline had invested highly on their training and thus are difficult to easily replace from the market.

We also observe that there are lots of people queuing at the immigration office to have a passport. If you happen to make one-day observation to the embassy of Western and Middle East countries, then you would see number of people waiting outside hoping they will get a visa. Even, in the words of Regt (no date),” *a relatively poor country like Yemen is attracting many Ethiopian female migrants who take up*

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paid domestic work.” This was not the trend four or five decades before. Today you will find people who will pay around hundred thousand birr in cash to get out of the country, perhaps if it is invested would bring a change in an individual’s life let alone in the societal development.

What is the difference between now and then? Of course, in the old days those who were sent for further education were, in the majority of the cases, people who were members of families who are in the highest echelon of the society and as such it could be argued that they returned because they had a stake in the system. The rest might not have the means as well as the opportunity to develop their career as well as their status. What about now? Perhaps, besides the failure of the economy to provide a decent living condition, it could be the result of globalization: the need to pursue the western lifestyle. Today, the world has become “a village”. There is a dynamic change in the sphere of society: be it economical, technological, social and so on. The development of the Internet has also played a major role making people aware of the situations around them.

In addition, the presence of social networks at the host countries that disseminate information, accurate or not, using the aforementioned technologies and other means to their friends and relatives might also be cited to be a springboard for the causes of migration of skilled people from Ethiopia.

Having all these and other much-related points in the bucket, the general research question posed by this study is, why are skilled people migrating from Ethiopia to the United States of America? The paper attempts to analyze all the

possible practical and theoretical issues, which have caused their relocation and would summarize the study result in the direction of what causes the migration of skilled people from Ethiopia, what the effects of their migration to the country, what does their adaptation and affiliation to the host country looks like. The paper will also attempt to look in to the role played by social networks in perpetuating the migration phenomena and the selectivity of the process. The paper will abstract the issue of skilled migration with the understanding that these people are in the higher income group by the national standard of the country.

Methodology

The rationale behind the selection of the methodological approach for the research was merely related to the general purpose of the research, to the research questions and objectives and to the kind of data to be collected in the field. The place where the research is conducted is Washington D.C. The selection is based on the fact that the majority of Ethiopian immigrants in the US reside in Washington D.C area.

The sampling method used for the research is purposive sampling. A head of actual intensive interview, initial contacts were made with the informants via telephone as well as Internet or e-mail access. The role of kinship and friendship networks of immigrants proved to be useful to the completion of the research.

In addition, I used the snowball sampling technique in order to proceed with the fieldwork. Snowball sampling relies on referrals from initial contacts to generate additional personnel. Due to this, it is usually susceptible for biases and reduces the

likelihood that the sample will be representative of the population. In order to reduce the chance of such biases and to increase the reliability of the samples I incorporated various mechanisms during the fieldwork. One way I used was to ask individual migrants to guide me to other migrants who had different characteristics than theirs based on length of stay, occupational specialization, socio-economic status, and so on.

Methods of data collection: in-depth interviews and observation

The first fieldwork strategy was to undertake semi-structured, in-depth interviews with immigrants in Washington DC. Through purposive and snowball sampling technique, I interviewed 20 immigrants. The main tool used in these face-to-face interviews was an interview guide. The interview was conducted at different places depending on the convenience of the respondents. Some of the interviews were undertaken at leisure places like starbucks and the others at the home of the interviewees. The interviews at their place of residence were more informational than the starbucks as it helped me to relate what they were saying with what I was looking in the house of the respondents.

The interview guide was broken in to four sub topics. The first part consists of questions about the demographic characteristics of the migrants such as age, gender, and family condition and where about? The second part is about reasons for migration to the USA and especially to Washington DC, and plans and so on. The third part is employment related questions like levels of education and training, working conditions in DC, type of employment, and questions about discrimination at the work place or elsewhere. Finally, the last part is comprised of questions about the

lifestyle immigrants undergo such as area of residence, places of leisure, the food they prefer, and type of friends they have in the host country. The interview was held and transcribed in Amharic. The summary of the interview is translated in to English with out losing its original idea.

The fieldwork strategy, besides the face-to-face interview, included observation. The observation were mainly conducted at places that Ethiopian immigrants used collectively as leisure or meeting points, such as religious places, certain cafés or bar, places of living and working places and sites. The observation helped me to better understand what is going on in the migrants' life and see beyond what they are telling me during the interview. It also helped me to make additional contacts.

'Practical' problems

My fieldwork research in Washington D.C was not smooth as silk. I faced many problems of different nature. In the beginning, my respondents had rescheduled the interview program many times. After my arrival in the area of research, six of them took their words back and refused to appear for the interview. The reasons for their denial to give an interview might be the result of the May 2005 election and the attitude they developed towards those who came from Ethiopia to return. Because of this incidence, I have to look for other respondents. Of those I met, some rejected my request outright, as they were not interested. This perhaps might be because of the life situation they are in. If people do not have the standard of living they expect to have, it is highly unlikely that they will tell about it. Others request for a pay. In the words of one of the respondent, "*here in US "he told me," time is money. If you want*

to get information, just pay." I think they thought that my trip to the United States of America has some monetary gains and they do not want to give what they have for free. However, after a while I managed to interview 20 immigrants.

During the interview, I got some problems also. The most important of these problems was the reluctance of the immigrants to talk openly. The respondents were not willing to tell me openly their views to my questions. This is because of the nature and type of the questions I raised to them. The questions were more of personal and sensitive in nature. It was very difficult for me to get the information from the subjects of the interview even if I tried to assure them about the confidentiality of the research. Therefore, in order to conduct a successful interview, I had to make some balances about the extent and depth of information and data I wanted to gather on the field. This reduces their stress as well the suspicion they have about the real purpose of the research.

Furthermore, I used to skip sensitive questions when I was feeling that the interviewee did not want to give specific information about those matters. Finally I opted for note taking instead of recording the interviews in order to have a free and lively interview.

The other related problem is the limitation in scope and coverage of the study due to resource constraints. The most constraining factor was time. I was in the study area for almost one month and due to my respondents engagement in their life it was difficult for me to make effective use of the days. As a result I could not provide full

picture and general conclusion about skilled migrants from Ethiopia to the United States of America.

Ethics and Confidentiality

Ethics is one of the most important stances, which a research presupposes. These are related mainly with informed consent and confidentiality as well as with efforts to reduce possible risks and dangers for the participants. During the fieldwork research, confidentiality was guaranteed to the respondents. I also tried to make the respondents at ease when they felt stressed and did not want to answer questions by skipping the question for later consumption. These stances played a significant role to the development of trustful relationships with participants and to the collection of rich and meaningful data from the field

Delimitation of the study

The major delimitation of this study is that it considers only immigrants in Washington D.C area. Therefore, it is not to be considered as representative in any case.

Definition of terms

Migration: human migration is defined as” a permanent or semi-permanent change of residence of an individual or group of people” (Oderth, 2002).

Immigrant: refers to a person who comes to a country to take up permanent residence.

Emigrant: refers to a person who departs from a country to settle elsewhere.

Skilled migration: emigration of persons with skills that a country is short of.

International migration: an overview

International migration, whether it is voluntary or forced, legal or undocumented, has grown in volume and it has become a major factor of social transformation in all regions of the world. As Sowell (1996:38) indicated clearly, *“migration is not merely a relocation of bodies but more fundamentally, a redistribution of skills, experience and other “human capital” across the planet.”* It is this process that transforms nations and nationalities. Migration also brings cultural and ethnic diversification in to societies.

According to Castle and Miller (2003), *“the number of people estimated to live outside of their origin country has reached 100 million.”* The majority of these people, according to the same study, indicate that they move to developing countries. This might be the result of proximity of the regions for the migrants and the effect of outsourcing of the mass production industries of developed countries in to developing countries where there are cheap sources of raw material and labor.

Different countries classify migrants into certain categories, and it is recorded that some of them encourage certain types of mobility while restricting others (Castles, 2000). The reasons usually cited for the differentiation in allowing certain types of migration is the result of the need for reducing the unemployment rate of the country of origin and the necessity to control the out flow of professionals.

International migration can be understood using the ‘push’ and ‘pull’ model. The push factors describe the situations that forces people to leave their own

countries. It includes both economic and political causes in the country of origin. The lack of economic development would produce high rates of unemployment, low wages, corruption and economic mismanagement. As a result, the economy of the country will not be strong enough to provide jobs and decent living conditions to its citizens. This would push people to leave their country. This fact seemed to describe perhaps most of the migrations from developing countries.

In Ethiopia, for example, the inability of the economy has made the challenge considerable for youngsters to find jobs in the country. In order to overcome the unemployment and the resulting poverty, many Ethiopians search for alternative opportunities. One option will be to leave the country. In the May 2006 issue of The Reporter newspaper Bathseba [∇] stated that *“faced with growing rates of unemployment, financial insecurity, limited access to education...a growing number of Ethiopian women are leaving the country as migrant workers to middle east countries.”* She further indicated that in the years between 1992 and 2000 there were 6000 female workers who left the country on Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA) approved contracts.

However, the push factor seems not to fully explain the rationale behind migration of people. For instances, in the urban areas of Ethiopia the unemployment rate has reached an alarming 50 percent (Serneels, 2001). But still the number of migrants from Ethiopia is small. This might be because of lack of money for transportation as well as other expenses required for travel. Further more, developed

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countries like United States of America and European countries have other requirements to be fulfilled before issuing a visa. The requirement is usually related to something, which can show one will return after his/her journey to their country. This includes, but not limited to, money deposited in bank and a house registered in the person's name that requested the visa and marriage certificate.

The other push factor is political instability. It is usually strongly related to the malfunction in the economic development. Takougang (1995) pointed out that the *“authoritarian rule in most African states hindered open discussion and constructive criticisms necessary for a healthy and sustained economy development”*. Politics and economics usually go hand in hand. Soaring rate of unemployment, rapid population growth, disease and illiteracy would create a tension in the political system of a government. This would result in civil strife, riots and other forms of political violence with ramification of displacement of people as migrants, refugees, or asylees (Gordon 1998).

Apart from the above facts, the other political related push factors include: poor human rights practice, political and/or arbitrary arrests, lack of academic freedom, favoritism based on ethnic affiliation, civil conflict and ravages of war and so on. The 1974 revolution in Ethiopia might be taken as case in point here as many people were forced to leave the country following the 1974 revolution and the subsequent killings that occurred after that (Shinn, 2002).

The pull factor is another reason that contributes to the rise in international migration. It is the situations at the destinations that draw the attention of a particular

migrant. Even if a country can somehow control the push factors, it has no control on the pull factors. The pull factors are related to the host country. The development of an increased global economy and the need for cheaper foreign labor has shown a dramatic surge after World War II. This has led to a change in immigration policies of the developed countries to attract cheap labor from outside. In 1965, for example, the United States abolished the law that restricts the coming of foreigners from any country except Canada and Western Europe in order to fulfill the demand of labor shortage in the country (Gordon 1998).

Migrants pack off with different background: they might be either skilled or unskilled. Migrants with professional background leave their country to be employed and earn reasonable income to make a living. They migrate, by using legal means, to join the formal sector with desirable facilities even though there are some exceptions.

However, those unskilled migrants will engage themselves in any job that is available to them (ILO, 2004). In addition, they are ready to work for extended hours and will be exhausted to look for an alternative way of life (Sowell, 1996).

Various literatures indicate that United States is still the preferred destination for the majority of the world's migrants. This is perhaps because of the fact that migrants, especially those who are illegal, can find work with out securing their work permit. However, currently Europe is also experiencing a rise in the number of migrants. But the majority of the world's migrants remain within their region. For example with in Sub-Saharan Africa, many migrants prefer to move to South Africa (McKinley, Klekowski, Koppenfels, and Laczko, 2001).

The above-mentioned fact about South Africa might probably be due to the availability of informal jobs and the possibility to enter the country with little cost compared to developed countries. Per the information gathered for this study, for instance, migrants from Ethiopia first will go to Zimbabwe using air transport service. Then after that they will take surface transport clandestinely to enter South Africa through borders. The total cost to reach South Africa is estimated to be around 23000 Ethiopian birr as compared to the 80,000-100,000 requested for Europe and America.

Conceptual and Theoretical Perspectives on International Migration

There are different sets of reasons and factors for which individuals decide to move from their places of origin. The causes and motivations are different for each individual. These differences that exist within each migration flow made it difficult to produce a theory, which can be used to produce effective migration policies. However, in order to understand the cause of these movements, several migration studies are carried out thereby developing some theories.

Some argue that the first and foremost reason for migration is individual decision. They consider the individual as a rational human actor who makes a cost-benefit analysis in order to travel abroad. While, on the other hand, others indicate that migration is structural. It is determined by social, economic and political structures of modern industrial countries.

Neo Classical Economics Theory of Migration

The Neo classical economics theory, in the most elementary terms, is a theory of migration based on the look out for better opportunity. It seems to have a

fundamental natural and historical link into the human nature and trends of communal as well as social movements in search of better natural resources. Historical human lifestyle has always been speaking out loud that people have always been nomadic mainly following population growth and the need to have additional land and related resources. In very concise statement, the movement of people has always been the search for better standard of living in all types of society.

The neo classical theory of migration looks in to movement of people at two levels: macro and micro level. The explanation by Massey & others of the macro economic theory of migration indicates, *“differences in wages causes international migration and the elimination of wage differentials will end the movement of labor and migration will not occur in the absence of such differentials”* (Massey, Arango, Hugo, Kouaouci, Pellegrino, and Taylor, 1993:432).

Massey & others further asserts that at micro level, individuals are the actors and decide to migrate or not based on analysis of opportunities at the departure and destination countries. The central concept in the microeconomics theory of migration, according to different scholars, is ‘Human Capital’. People are motivated to move from country to country because they thought that doing so will reward their ‘human capital’ and will have a future monetary return (Castles and Miller, 2003:23, Massey et al 1993:435).

This theory of migration, neo classic economics, revolves around the main issues of wage and employment. Though it is obvious where there is employment there is wage, at times this wage concept serves as an instrument to measure the

economical gain that an individual or a society drives in its economy. The wage in the most rudimentary analysis could be used as a magnitude to measure the standard of living in a certain community, society, or geographical location. Wage and employment in turn have got this role as a factor to determine or be determined in the labor market based on the economics of the market.

In the conceptualization process of this theory in the Ethiopian context it may be stereotypic to raise questions such as: how much is wage and employment a factor for the migration of Ethiopians in search of betterment; Which sets of skills are in demand in destination areas which offer additional packages to influence people to migrate with their skills in hope of advancement related to income? These and many more questions are to be answered before concluding pro or against the validation of this theory in the Ethiopian default settings. Even though there are varieties of opinions and answers to questions of this nature, the core issue remains that if Ethiopians are migrating merely having the wage scale-up as the main drive is a kind of one reason among the list of many to be true.

In the preliminary sense of the migration of Ethiopians following the availability of more paying jobs is rather done in more arbitrary fashion. This encompasses the migration of people from Ethiopia to the west as well as to the Middle East. The sporadic nature of this movement of people has always been managed with the individuals' probability of getting an opportunity and a means to go abroad than the availability of organized hiring and immigration facilitating agencies and/or organizations which operate taking into account & advertising the possibilities of these employment opportunities in the destination point.

In short, though the neo classical economics theory of migration doesn't explain all the migrations of Ethiopians, it has a number of migrants whose migration decision would be attributed with. Here it would rather be said that, this theory has a significant truth for a certain number of migrants at the macro economic level. This leads us to a point to realize that the migration factor and cause for Ethiopians would not be explained by a single theory such as this. As an element of this theory the individual decision has some truth in the Ethiopian context of migration.

New economics Theory of migration

Family is one of the most important elements of a society. All through out modern human history family has been playing extremely important role both in the economics and social aspects of a given society. The significant influence that family has in the structure of a society would always help to analyze the foundation of the socio-economical strength of a society in a certain geographical location. The basic definition of what family is may remain to be simple as to closely related group of people who in the majority of the time make their economical and social decisions in the best interest of the group.

Before going into the validation of the new economics theory of migration in the Ethiopian context it may be a good idea to compare it with the neo classical economics theory of migration. When we look in to these theories and contrast, one would be able to notice that they are different mainly on the level of who makes the decision to migrate. Massey & others (1993:436) explains the new economics theory as

migration decisions are not made by isolated individual actors, but by larger units of related people-typically families or house holds-in which people act collectively not only to maximize expected income, but also to minimize risks and to loosen constraints associated with a variety of market failures, apart from those in the labor market

However, both theories are similar in fundamental factor as prescribing migration caused for economical reasons.

To the proponents of the new economics of migration, a wage differential doesn't have leverage on migration. To them, migration is one form of an investment to protect the family or house hold in time of loss of income. In developed countries such risks are compensated through private insurance scheme or government program. However, in the least developed countries these schemes to protect people in times of loss of income are unavailable or are not easily accessible. Therefore, the strategy employed by families or household to pass over the rainy days is to place one of its members in the migration cycle. This would help families to get income through remittances in case of loss of income (Massey et al, 1993:436).

Does the New economic theory of migration explain the migration causes in the Ethiopian context? The answer to this question might be both yes and no. And it is true that the new economic theory of migration can explain some of the migrations of Ethiopians into whichever directions the destination of the migrant is directed specifically to the United States of America.

Here the unique characteristic of the Ethiopian family attachments and the tradition of large family may tend to partly explain the reasons why people are

migrating from Ethiopia into different parts of the world. Ethiopians' have a culture of lending hand in times of difficulty. As such, it is only natural to observe people who migrate to send money to their families and friends.

The theory of new economics of migration has some truth in the Ethiopian setting. A study conducted by Dejene [∇](2005) indicates that” *in the absence of credit and insurance market (even in urban areas), vulnerable households' attempt to smooth their consumption by partially relying on both sources of remittances (i.e. domestics and international).*” The study further indicates that, remittance usually ascribes to class structure. People from better family background do not remit money to their families for consumption purposes. If they happen to send money, it is for investment.

However, the fact that the theory of the new economic migration concept is using migration as diversification or security of income to a family may raise an argument for two reasons. First what a single-family member doing abroad to have a better income to support the family temporarily is open to debate as to consider it whether it is a migration for income diversification or not. Secondly, what has been started as a single-handed migration by an individual at times may end-up to enrich some of the ideas in the neo economic theory of migration. Furthermore, this study has observed that once a family member migrates there is a high probability for others to follow.

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However, the single core element in the new economic theory of migration seems to have its drive in the diversification of income opportunities for members of family in the country of origin. This theory in its superficial meaning encompasses its explanation in the context of Ethiopian migration settings. On the other hand, the more vested nature of the intent to migrate with a decision of a family to have plans that would work for the group as a whole is the corner stone in this theory of migration which caluminate to have a wrong application in explaining the context of the reasons for Ethiopians to migrate.

World systems theory of migration

The world systems theory is another theory developed to explain the causes of international migration. The theory asserts that *“driven by a desire for higher profits and greater wealth, owners and managers of capitalists firms enter poor countries on the periphery of the world economy in search of land, raw materials, labor, and new consumer markets”* (Massey et al, 1993:445). Here countries that were former colonial powers are referred to as “peripheral” countries and powerful capitalist countries (e.g. USA) are considered “core” countries. The theory further explains, *“the penetration of capitalist economic relations into peripheral, non capitalist societies creates a mobile population that is prone to migrate abroad”* (Massey et al: 444). The core concept of this theory is that international migration is likely to occur because of linguistic, historical, political and/or economic ties between past colonialists and their former colonies.

Adoption of this theory into the present day modern international circumstance is a very important start before going into depth analysis of its meaning and place in

the Ethiopian context. This would give us an informed standpoint in order to scrutinize the issue at a greater strength and depth. There is an ever-continuous change and evolvement in the international community in all forms of economical, technological, communication and social levels. Here, it is a paramount importance to consider this advancement of global nature to have a potentiated view of the theory.

These days the world economy is characterized by the dynamic reality of globalization. A relatively new term with huge economic, social and global issues bundled up in it. Globalization would let us have products made in different parts of the world assembled and packed for to day's consumers. The world economy is more of information driven than, as it was commodity driven a few decades back. The industrially advanced countries are more set to push the commodity production into locations where there are cheaper sources of raw materials and labor. This same advanced countries, which were once a magnate for both skilled & unskilled labor are now a days more of an attraction to the more advanced information suited labor force. It is not nil but it is rare to find massive labor demand in these countries.

The technological evolution of the present moment has made it possible to produce products/commodities in countries that were not produced before. This has contributed to a greater extent in the globalization of the market trend. Labor-intensive jobs are pushed into countries where the labor is inexpensive in comparative terms. It would clearly shows that the migration of people and capital would have different features than they used to have.

Having mentioned these globalization fundamental concepts in the relatively new world order the world system theory of migration would mean dramatically

different than it has typically been in the past. Furthermore putting this theory in test with the Ethiopian context might have something to tell. This theory encompasses two sets of migrants: capital and people. The capital migration or movement focuses in the direction of profit. In the more global meaning, it is investment. Investment is becoming a cliché term due to its present day regular application in all sorts of economical and social sectors. Investment & capital moves to under developed or developed countries in the hope of growth and development along a set purpose and opportunity. With this common global phenomenon the Ethiopian social, economical, political and geographical factors has played insignificant role by way of attracting capital migration into the country. As the country is very poor in terms of financial and technical capability this types of migration out of the country is almost null.

The other compound of this migration theory is the migration of people. Though this part of the theory involves far too many factors as a cause of migration of individuals to a certain destination with a particular national attachment between the country of origin and destination, it has a significant meaning in the Ethiopian context. Ethiopia may not have much of an attachment to any country as a result of colonial relationship; however Ethiopians have been seeking refuge in the possibility of political and ideological freedom in the western countries. Hence, it could be concluded that even though the Ethiopian context does not exactly fit to the world system theory, the elements in the theory would well accommodate to explain some of the causes of migrations of Ethiopian.

Dual Labor market theory of migration

The dual labor market theory states that migration is not generated as a result of push factors in the origin country such as low wage or high unemployment rate. Rather migration is the result of the demand by companies of the host countries for cheap labor. It assumes that characteristics of the industrialized societies, such as structural inflation, motivational problems, economic dualism and the demography of labor supply serve as the pull factors, which generate migration (Massey et al 1993:440).

The dual labor market theory divides the labor force in to primary and secondary segment. The primary segment of labor force is characterized by proficiency and higher level of education. It incorporates a capital-intensive method of production; it employs workers who are skilled and trained for the job. The secondary segment of labor force is characterized by a labor-intensive method of production, which requires little knowledge to perform the task. It is associated with motivational problems. As indicated by Massey & others (1993:440) *“acute motivational problems arise at the bottom of the job hierarchy because there is no status to be maintained and there are few avenues for upward mobility.”*

Historically, women and teenagers are the two sets of people who are recruited to fulfill the secondary segment. However, due to demographic and social changes in modern industrial societies the two sources of secondary labor force were minimized resulting in labor shortages at the bottom of the job hierarchy. This forced employers to look for immigrant labor.

That the dual labor market theory fully explains the causes of international migration is debatable. In fact it could, to some extent, explain the migration of people at some historic time as described by the recruitment program in the 1960s. For instance, in 1945 France established an Office National d'immigration (ONI) to organize recruitment of workers from southern Europe in order to curb the post-war labor shortages. Switzerland also followed a policy of large-scale labor import from 1945 to 1974 (Castles et al, 2003:71). However, the rise in the number and presence of highly skilled professionals in the primary segment of the industrial economies of the western countries can be taken as an alibi to contend the explanatory value of the theory.

The validity of the theory to Ethiopian context is also arguable. In Ethiopia, there is no officially designated structure to facilitate this sort of migration. Rather individuals or groups do arrange it by themselves. In fact, nowadays there are agents who recruit women for Middle East countries. Almost all women will predominantly engage in domestic work and babysitting. However, this does not mean that the dual labor market theory holds true in the Ethiopian case.

Perpetuation of Migration

The reason that causes the movement of people at any particular time from one country to another is different for each migration. Once migration is started it will create conditions that sustain it across time and space. Different theories are developed in order to describe the factors that operate behind the perpetuation of migration. These are network theory, institutional theory and cumulative causation.

Network theory

Naturally, people have a tendency to communicate with each other. Due to this fact any thing that is experienced during an individual's lifetime will be disseminated to others with any available means. Migration is part of man's experience as such there is a possibility for it to be shared to friends and relatives. As the number of people involved in the process increased, a network will be created which facilitates the flow of information. The most important elements of networks in migration process are families and friends.

Network theory of migration points to the fact that the creation of a network between migrants and non-migrants in the host and origin countries will increase the possibility of international migration. This is because; migrant networks will minimize the risks and costs that are associated with migration such as the difficulty of integration of migrants to the labor market of the destination country. Once the network is established, it will increase in number as new migrants join the system.

A government policy at the destination country also plays a role in enriching the migrant network (Massey et al, 1993). For instance, in 1965 the United States of America formulate a policy, which allows people who are American citizens and permanent residents to bring their families with the aim of reuniting families. However, the network theory states that as migrant networks expand, international flows become relatively insensitive to policy interventions.

The network theory of migration has its stake in the increase in the number of international migrants from Ethiopia to the United States of America. The awareness

to the policy of family reunification has helped most permanent residents, Ethiopian-Americans and Diversity Lottery (DV) winners to summon their families there by increasing the flow individuals out of the country. Furthermore, the presence of friends and families has helped most in getting sponsors to travel abroad.

Institutional Theory of Migration

Institutional theory of migration is another theory that explains the perpetuation of migration along time and space. Every country has its own rules and regulations for the issuance of an entry visa. As such it is highly likely that in the process of request for visa there are people who are rejected an issuance for entry in to the country. This happens in the majority of the cases when the request is submitted to the embassy of developed countries. So according to institutional theory of migration, as explained in Massey et al (1993:450)

the imbalance between the large number of people who seek entry visa in to capital rich countries and the limited number of visas these countries typically offer create a lucrative niche for entrepreneurs and institutions dedicated to promoting international movement for profit ,yielding a black market migration.

The theory stresses that looking in to migrations potential for economic reward; private organizations will come in to picture to facilitate and sustain the departure of migrants. These organizations arrange migration through different methods such as labor contracting, counterfeit documents and visa; arranged marriages and so on. In the process of the migration, there is a probability for the migrants to be exploited and

victimized. The exploitation that happens to the migrants includes non-payment (under payment), sexual abuse for women, long hour and no day off and so on. In contrary to these profit driven organizations, voluntary organizations are created in order to counteract the exploitation and victimization of migrants and to help them at the place of destination (Massey et al 1993:450).

The institutional theory of migrations might explain some of the migrations in the developing countries. A study conducted by Sulaimanova (2004) in central Asia indicates that because of the difficulty to obtain visa for an entry in to United States of America most of would-be migrants would turn in to migrant traffickers. Ethiopia also is not free from this kind of clandestine migration. A study carried out by Pearson (2003) points out that there are around 20000-25000 Ethiopian domestic workers in Lebanon, a significant number of whom are trafficked. There are also evidences that indicate illegal migration taking place in Ethiopia to western countries like the United States of America and Europe by clandestine operators.

Cumulative causation

In the day-to-day activity of human life, it is highly likely that people would compare their socio-economic status with others in their neighborhoods and communities. In the present situation of the world and the advancement in technology and advent of Internet this secluded comparison has taken a world stance. Today people have the possibility to look in to what is happening in the world and the place they have in global community. This comparison has positive as well as negative connotation. The positive implication is that it will become an impetus in the

development endeavor of a person and the community. Where as the negative consequence is that it will create envy and a sense of deprivation.

According to the theory of cumulative causation as explained by Massey et al (1993:451) "*each act of migration results in alteration of the social context in which subsequent migration decisions are taken, making new movements more likely*". The theory emphasis that six socio-economic factors are affected in origin areas leading in to new migration flows: distribution of income and land, regional distribution of human capital, organization of agriculture, culture of migration, and the social meaning of work and particular jobs. The two components of this theory of migration have relatively more meaning to the contemporary situation of Ethiopia: income and culture.

It is not a contestable fact that as people migrate they will be better of economically from the point of their origin country. As such, the information they disseminate, whether accurate or not, will have a consequence on the community they left behind. The money and materials they sent to their families will create a sense of deprivation in to those who remained in their community. It is observed that in Ethiopia this fact has produced aspiring migrants who will look for every opportunity to secure a visa and move.

The other aspect of cumulative causation might have some truth in Ethiopian context too. The conspicuous consumption of materials by the families and sometimes by migrants themselves when they come for visit has produced a sense of relative deprivation. This is observed in the extravagant wedding ceremonies that are taking places in Addis Ababa these days. It has become a fact of life that people

would pay 25,000 birr per day to rent a limousine for a wedding in a country where the majority of the citizens live below the poverty line. This might produce an incorporation of destination country lifestyle where lots of people would become potential migrants and would prefer to depart no matter what their situation is in the country.

Overview of International migration in Ethiopia

It was in the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie that, with the theme of modernizing Ethiopia and building its human resource, Ethiopia started sending its youth in significant number to western countries for higher education. During that time, as indicated in Getachew (1991).

twenty students a year were sent to France, England, and as well as other countries by the government. This was briefly interrupted due to the eruption of the Second World War. However, after the end of the Second World War in 1945 Ethiopia restart sending its students to western countries again

At the beginning, Ethiopians were sent only to Europe. In the 1960s, however, the United States of America became prominent in accepting Ethiopians' for higher education. Hence, "*among 4,143 Ethiopians abroad between 1961 and 1973, 53.9 percent were in the United States*" (Getachew et al, 1991:62).

It is difficult to discern as to the when and how the migration of Ethiopians started. But available literatures point to the fall of the emperor regime and the unstable situation that follows as the start point for the international migration

phenomena (Getachew et al, 1991; Shinn, 2002). However, it is arguable that the 1974 revolution was the only reason for the students' decision to remain in the destination country. Other factors like the standard of living they had grown used to while studying or working in the destination country could be a reason for not returning to their country.

It seems that Ethiopians went abroad as a result of government-sponsored programs. This government sponsored scholarship continued even after the fall of the imperial regime. However, the destination changed to the east block with Russia and East Germany at the for-front of the program. This was the result of a change in the ideology of the ruling party of the time, which accepted socialism as its doctrine.

However, with the fall of the 'Derg' or the military government and the coming in to power of the Ethiopian people's revolutionary democratic front (EPRDF) in 1991, the government-sponsored scholarship was discontinued. But a new chapter in the life of Ethiopians came in to picture. The freedom to move to any place at any time, which was banned during the military government, was lifted. Passport is allowed to any one who requested for it. As a result, leaving the country with the help of privately sponsored programs started.

The Middle East became the new Ethiopians destination in the 1990s. Until the early 1990s few people would opt to go to Middle East countries. The right to free movement and the search for 'better life' made Ethiopians, especially women, to grab every opportunity to secure a visa and leave the country. One way to do this is to take the annual Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia as a pretext to move out of

the country. Since the immigration is carried out under the pretext of Islamic pilgrimage, followers of Christianity have to change their names to assume Islamic identity in order to go out of the country.

It is difficult to know the exact number of Ethiopians working in the Middle East. According to Emebet (no date), there were around 6000 female workers, between 1992 and 2001, who left for the Gulf States on MOLSA-approved contracts. However, the figure is small compared to the reality on the ground. It is estimated that there are around 15000 Ethiopian migrant women working in the city of Beirut alone.

This huge number and the extent to which the migrants go (changing their identity) to obtain visa has something to tell. It perhaps indicates how desperate Ethiopians' have become to leave their country and the extent to which they have lost something which identifies them with the country.

Migration of skilled professionals to the United States of America Finding and Analysis

The focus of the study comprises of people who migrated to the United States of America and specifically residing in Washington D.C at different times. Washington D.C. has the biggest Ethiopian community outside Africa. In its 2000 Census report the Embassy indicates that there are 15000 Ethiopians residing in Washington area. However, that who study African immigration argues that this number is far too low, saying the actual number is closer to 200,000.

Different reasons can be cited for the accumulation of large number of Ethiopians in the Washington area. The major ones are: the presence of friends and

relatives, employment opportunities and the perceived absence of racial discrimination. Some of those interviewed for this study indicated that, besides the above factors, Washington D.C is the best place to secure legal status compared to other states.

Demographic Characteristics of respondents

The demographic characteristics of the interviewees' are

Sex: Six are female and 14 are male

Age: all are between the range of 25 and 35 years of age.

Marital status: Six of them are married

Education: all are educated

Migrants Status

The status of the migrants could be seen at two levels: their status before leaving Ethiopia and their present state. The information that I gathered during the interview indicates that migrants' educational background is very good. During the interview, 15 of the respondents indicated that while they were in Ethiopia they were working with their field of expertise, where as the rest five said that they were engaged in personal and family businesses. However, the present state of the migrants indicates that 19 of them work in the service industry. Only one of them works as a professional.

The following are some of the common characteristics exhibited by the migrants:

- All respondents are educated and have college diploma/degree before they migrate.

- Their income level before they leave Ethiopia was in the area between 1000-3000 birr
- They have a family member residing in the US
- Almost all work in the service sector of the US economy
- All the interviewees put 'political' reasons as a pretext to secure their residential/work permit.

This commonality of characteristics has something to tell; it seems that the jobs of my respondents before they leave Ethiopia provided higher rate of wage in the living standard of Ethiopia. Furthermore, the migrants' had all the information about the destination before they depart. The information is collected through network of friends and relatives residing in America or Ethiopia. The information they gather includes, but not limited to, the following points: necessary documents to be carried to secure legal status; where the initial destination should be; type of work they are going to be engaged; where to stay and the like. The other aspect is that, even if the migrants are educated, they work as entry-level workers, which signify their inability to penetrate the higher echelons of the US, labor markets.

The profile of the respondents as depicted in table 1 has some interesting things to tell. When one looks at the marital status of the respondents only 30 percent are married. Looking in to the age range and comparing it to the number of women who are married it indicates that the trend is not in conformity with the Ethiopian tradition. Only two out of the six women are married. This might be the result of too much engagement in work and having little time spared for social gathering. The

other fact is that 8 or 40% of the respondents were not willing to tell the area of work they are involved. This might tell the respondent's dissatisfaction with the nature of the job they are performing.

Table 1: Profile of the Migrants

Code	Age	Education status	Sex	Marital status	Type of work
001	25	Diploma	M	Single	Parking lot attendant
002	25	Diploma	M	Single	Parking lot attendant
003	25	Degree	M	Single	Not willing to tell
004	26	Diploma	M	Single	Not willing to tell
005	26	Diploma	M	Single	Bell boy
006	26	Degree	F	Single	Parking lot attendant
007	27	Degree	M	Married	Taxi
008	27	Technician	M	Single	Not willing to tell
010	28	Diploma	F	Single	Not willing to tell
011	28	Degree	M	Married	Parking lot
012	29	Diploma	F	Married	Nurse
013	29	Degree	M	Single	Bus driver
014	30	Degree	M	Single	Not willing to tell
015	30	Degree	F	Single	Not willing to tell
016	31	Degree	M	Married	Valet parking
017	33	Degree	M	Single	Taxi
018	33	Degree	F	Single	Home care retire
019	34	Degree	M	Married	Not willing to tell
020	34	Degree	F	Married	Not willing to tell

Reasons for Choosing United States of America as Country of Destination

The history of migration of my respondents indicates that 90% (18) of them originate from Addis Ababa. The rest 10% (two) came to America after living in Europe for some time. The reasons given by my interviewees from Addis Ababa for choosing the host nation are family/friends advice, the availability of jobs and good salary. For those coming from Europe, besides the above-mentioned reasons, the comparative absence of racial discrimination motivates them to come to America.

“I was living in Geneva, Switzerland. The way the white folks look at you and the treatment you got in the public service is devastating. You can read on their eyes the hatred they have for black people. One of the biggest differences between America and Europe is that you don't feel alienated in America. You feel you are part of the country.” (Man, age 31)

Ways of departure to America

There are different means to get to the place of a destination. It usually depends on the geographic location of the host country. But, first one has to get an entry clearance from the embassy for his/her travel. There are generally two types of visa in order to go to USA: an immigrant visa or non-immigrant visa. Immigrant visa is a type of visa where you secure your permanent residence status before you travel to America. One can get this kind of visa through marriage to a citizen of the United States of America or through the Diversity Visa (DV) Lottery, which the government of

the United States gives to the selected countries of the world. The other type of visa is the non-immigrant visa, which you secure for business; tourist, student and other short stay travels.

The strategy which most use to go to the USA is the non immigrant option as the other one requires the chance of winning the lottery or having an attachment with a citizen in the US. All of my respondents secured tourist visa to undertake their journey.

Obtaining a non-immigrant visa and going to the USA doesn't mean the right to live. One has to get a residence permit in order to live. All the respondents secured their residence permit giving "political" reasons as a pretext.

"I came to the USA with a tourist visa. In order to secure my work permit I have to give politics as a reason for not wanting to go back to my country even if I had no political inclination." (Man, age 25)

Choosing the place of residence

Washington D.C. is the state where Ethiopian migrants prefer to head most in their journey to the US. Why did they select this place as their initial destination? The network theory on migration might offer an answer to this question: "*the presence of kinship and friendship lowers the cost of migration*" (Massey et al, 1993:449). All the respondents to my research indicated that they come to America knowing that they would settle in Washington D.C. This is because in D.C. they have some one who will accept and show them through. This helped them to find work easily; to get advice when the going gets tough and above all knowing some one is around gives them the

strength to pass through the shock of coming to a foreign country. They also indicated that their expense is shared by their friends and relatives making them save the little money they brought with them. This made the transition in to a new environment smooth.

Occupations in Washington D.C

This is the question, which everyone prefers you never ask. There is a tacit agreement as to what kind of job is available for people who come from developing countries with non-immigrant visa. One of the respondents' uses the phrase "the great equalizer" to describe the employment opportunity that prevails in America.

"It is only back home that your credentials matter most. Here, in USA, immigrants' employment is not related to your professional background. Of course, after sometime you may get the chance to practice your profession. But that is a slim chance and you usually get used to it." (Man, age 27)

However, one of my respondents indicated that the experience and training she had in Ethiopia had helped her very much.

"...When I was in Ethiopia the industry I was in was completely different to the industry I am now. But I think that has prepared me well for the job here. It gives me the ability to communicate and handle customers well." (Woman, age 30)

Causes of migration

People move from country to country for different reasons. It could be categorized in to social, economic, and political reasons. The motivations behind their exit from the country of origin plays a crucial role in understanding many of the aspect's of the migrants lifestyle in the destination.

In the light of the major theories of migration various motivations and explanatory aspects can be discerned. A range of studies on migration depicts economics as the most important factor in migration. Some theories, like the neo classical economics, reflect on the cost-benefit analysis on the part of the individual and the presence of difference on the supply and demand of labor between origin and host countries result in movement of people between countries. Other theories like new economics theory stress on future survival strategy of the family or household. It emphasizes that families will decide, as a unit, on the migration of its members. This investment in migration would payoff in cases of loss of income in the origin country.

The other major theories of migration are dual labor market theory and world systems theory. They underline the role of relations at international level to explain international migration. To the proponents of dual labor market theory, migration is demand based and initiated by recruitment policies of employers or governments in the host country. In view of world systems theory, international migration is the result of the penetration of capitalist economic relation in to peripheral non-capitalist societies. Migration will occur as labor, raw materials and land in areas of departure are incorporated in to the world market economy and traditional systems are disrupted.

The above-mentioned major theories of migration explain to some extent as to why and how migration can be initiated. Apart from these theories, there are other theories, which explain the perpetuation of migration process, across time and space, once it is started. These are network theory, institutional theory and cumulative causation.

The presence of migrant networks, in the view of network theory, increases the likelihood of migration. This is because of the fact that the constraints of migration, i.e. cost and risk of migration, are significantly reduced. On the other hand, institutional theory stresses that the start of international migration creates institutions that sustains it. As such voluntary and private organizations will facilitate the migration by providing transport, labor contracting, housing, and legal and other services. The theory of cumulative causation is the other theory, which explains the perpetuation of international migration. This theory stresses the fact that each migration causes another migration to follow.

All these theories have a stake in explaining the different causes and factors of international migration. In this study, the individual, as the unit of analysis, is placed in these theoretical frameworks along with her/his constraints and choices in both the receiving and sending country.

So, why do people go from Ethiopia to America? This is a million dollar question whose answer would give a better understanding of the rationale behind the movement. The answer forwarded by my respondents in Washington D.C. to this question gravitates around the same idea: "better living".

“...to start from the basic needs, the apartment or home we are living in, including the facilities inside; the nutrition factors that we can get in a daily basis easily; the clothes which are affordable to buy for most of us: all these things give a perfect quality to our life. The overall infrastructure of the America like roads, buildings etc. make our life smooth and easy” (man, age 28)

Most migrants usually start with the aim of making money to improve their status as well as the well being of their family- building house, paying for school and so on. One respondent indicated that his migration has helped him in accomplishing many task to his family. He told me that his migration is

“...to achieve something to myself as well as my family. Have you ever come across the saying,” **ሙቅ ለጉንፋን በዚያውም ለሆድ?**” That is what I am doing here. Besides that aspect of material gain there is the feeling of satisfaction you get from helping *your family* at home. I see my family much better off than they were before. The money I send from here in USA helps in enrolling my siblings to private colleges. If I were in Ethiopia now I would not be able to help myself let alone my family. Within a short five years of stay in America, I accomplished what I would not do the entire day of my life in Ethiopia” (*man, age 27*)

It seems the decision to migrate is based on a cost benefit analysis on the part of the migrant. This calculation, however, is based on pecuniary gains. But literatures

on migration include psychological costs also. This is usually left as unnecessary by migrants. Of all the 20 migrants interviewed for this research only one draws my attention to a very interesting aspect of his migration:

“...I came here and decide to remain because of a respect to my human life. I was not disappointed by the income I generated while I was in Ethiopia. I was not involved in any political activity and my future was even bright while I was there. But one thing haunted me always: the way I was treated in the public sector. Whether you go to “kebele” or any place that gives a service you are treated like shit. No body in the echelon of the system starting from the security guard respects your dignity and humanity. I could not tolerate this aspect of my life in Ethiopia....I visited USA three times before my decision to remain there. I even went to Europe to look at what it looks like...but no country respects my integrity and human right like America...” (Man, age 34)

This perhaps may describe the other factors, which Glovers & others indicate as *“almost anything else that affects the desirability of living/working in the destination as opposed to source country”* (Glover, Gott, Loizillon, Portes, Price, Spencer, Srinivasan, and Willis, 2001:3)

One respondent indicated that migration is not only about money, but it will also give a better social status in Ethiopia.

“I remember “, he told me,

“It was in 2002. Two of my neighbors came from USA. We are of the same age. While they were in Addis Ababa, they were school drop outs and social outcasts. No body treated them well because of their behaviors. They drank a lot and no body wants his/her children to be around them. I was the hero of my surrounding. I was a model of good behavior as well as education. Everybody will tell his/her children to be like me...when they came from America they were treated like heroes. Their social status rises hyperbolically. Everybody wants to be around them. Even the girls, who look down on them, now became attracted...”

My respondent stopped talking at this moment and I did not go further. It seemed that he was affected by the relationship between the girls and the immigrants. But after a while he continued...

“...What I am doing here? If these guys could make it, there is no reason why I couldn't. I decided that I have to go and change myself and my family...” (Man, age 26)

The above responses are more or less what the majority of my respondents pride themselves in. This response has something to tell: migrants do not measure themselves against the standards of the society they live. The money they receive in America is measured in the context of Ethiopia. As one migrant puts it “*if you work ten hours in America, you get the salary of a degree holder in Ethiopia.*” This seems to indicate one truth: low wages you earn abroad seems huge against the standards of the society of your origin country. That is why for most of my respondents the skill,

training and prestige they leave behind means nothing at least in the outside. That is why most of them are working in service areas: they associate work only with its monetary value.

Selectivity of migration

Can anyone who wants to go to America do so easily? In order to answer this question one has first to see the requirement of the travel. As indicated earlier, travel requires securing visa. According to information from US embassy in Addis collected for this research, there are a minimum of hundred people of both sex who submit a request for a tourist visa twice a week. The age group lies, in the majority of the case, between 20 and 37 years. The minimum price the embassy asks for applicants to obtain a visa is around 1000 Ethiopian birr. Besides the money for visa, one has to pay around 10000 Ethiopian birr for the travel to USA. There is also another requirement: the applicant has to show documents, which strongly indicate that he/she will return after a short stay. The documents include bank account, residence house registered on the applicant's name, marriage certificate, and so on.

The above-mentioned fact is only for those lucky enough to get the blessing of the counselor at the window of the interview room to get a visa. Otherwise one has to pay between 60,000 to 100,000 thousand birr through intermediaries in order to obtain the visa.

“...In order to come to United States of America I paid 80,000 birr.

This is not my only case. I can count up to 15 people who come this way including my immediate younger brother.”(Woman, age 29)

This aspect might perhaps leads to a category, which does not seem to be situated in the “poor area” of the community of Ethiopia.

Cultural adaptation and assimilation

In order to discuss the cultural adaptation and assimilation it is better to start from the concept of lifestyle and in the process find where the migrants are. Lifestyle constitutes a great deal of components integrated to signify the characteristics of an individual's way of life. It is not a measurable or quantifiable human distinguishing marker. Lifestyle in a way is corporal unity and part of numerous factors in space and time. It is significantly influenced by social, cultural, economical, educational, religious, technological, and so on elements in the life of a single society or individual.

Lifestyle has had this indivisible attachment to be a product of the progresses and achievements mainly made in the areas of economical and educational reproduction in a community of individuals. The psychological and religious dimensions of a society frame of understanding and the values in life has always been very important in impacting, shaping or modifying peoples way of thinking, living, and communicating in the sense of social competition and comparative co-existence.

There is no definite set of criteria as to differentiate a certain lifestyle to be more favorable than that of another one. There is no trademark symbolizing lifestyle idiosyncratically to a certain society or community. Due to its dynamic and progressive nature it is intermingled in the universal spirit and understanding. In the

present days global nature of human interaction and intermingling it will not be uncommon to find the varieties of lifestyle in any one community at any one place.

There has always been a kind of tacit agreement as the origin of modern lifestyle to be the western world. It is not true that all the mannerism in individuals' life come from this or that part of the world. Each part of the world contributes a greater deal in the formation and dynamism of trends influencing the global way of life. The bigger picture of the United States of American lifestyle has been forming from the melting down of varieties of communities originating from all parts of the world. This newly evolving society has always been exhibiting to the world a trend of evolution in the way people style themselves across the life span of the individuals. United States of America is a heterogeneous mix of people where there is only one strong ties connecting the country: the single language formula enforced by way of law and survival.

Immigrants from Africa and as member of them immigrants from Ethiopia are components in this huge mixture. What is their role in this nation is a broad issue in order to discuss in this paper. Even from the dimensions of the lifestyle of Ethiopian immigrants in the US is a subject of perception and definition. In order to pose this very broad issue for the purpose of this paper, it may be easier to analyze the topic of the lifestyle of Ethiopian immigrants in US, particularly my respondents in the Washington D.C metropolitan, from the lifestyle purviews or determinants; which are economics, customs and education.

Though the fundamentals of the determinants: economics, customs, and education, are basically interrelated to a greater extent; each one of them has got their landmark in the influence they make in the life of individuals anywhere in the world. Here it is briefly overviewed to show the impacts and effects of these factors in the lives of my respondents adopting themselves in Washington D.C.

Economics of a person has always been the fundamental element in shaping the mannerism and categorization of his or her life. It is the drive in the daily struggle to attain a better standard of living. From the interviews I carried out and the observation I undertake, a significant number of Ethiopians in the Washington D.C area are below the middle economic classes of the society. This in turn affects the way they live, the type of schools they attend or send their children, the way they accept themselves and their family, and the extent of their interaction.

Being in the lower level of the middle class and working mainly as menial workers (even if they have good educational back ground from Ethiopia) 90% of my respondents in the Washington might be labeled to be in the bottom class of the life standard in the scales of the varieties of measures as per the US standard. The least annual income, least economic status, low-income housing and the like are some of the classification groups the majority of my respondents are facing in the study area.

Customs is another determinant of lifestyle. The terminology is extremely broad in the general meaning that it carries. Here, mentioning the concept of customs to the Ethiopian immigrants as an element of the US immigrant community is intended to show that in the most fundamental of terms the immigrants I interviewed

and observed are on the edges of integrating themselves in their adopted country. In order to understand the cultural adaptation of my respondents in the host country I used the different indicators which Getachew (1991) used which are “(1) *the type of friends they have; (2) the religious places they attend (3) the kind of entertainment they prefer; (4) the kind of food they prefer.*”

My respondents' answer towards these indicators inclined towards having Ethiopian friends, attending Ethiopian church services, and passing their leisure time with Ethiopians in places where other Ethiopians are present. Most of my respondents indicated that 90% of the time they eat traditional Ethiopian food at home. I also observed this fact when I went to their homes.

The above-mentioned response indicates that migrants prefer to live in the community of colonies than intermingling and homogeneously mixing with the larger community. They are protective of their tradition and culture than picking and adjusting themselves with the greater belt of the society. It is also observed that the way they speak, the way they eat, the way they interact has got ruminants and confusion of incomplete integration.

The strongest stereotypic concept of western education is a myth for the majority of my respondents. Only one of my respondents has studied nursing and enrolled as a professional. The opportunity has its own foibles. As per my finding and observation except very few individuals most are submitting to the low class way of life where they either believe that they can't make it through the higher education or they are economically and socially deprived from progressing through the steps of

education in the elites of the US society. Education has lots and lots to offer to the ways of people's lives, being informed means being powered. It is the key to the progress in the attainment of changes in lifestyle.

During my stay in the study area, I had undertaken observation on Ethiopian restaurants, the religious places and the hangout places like cafes and bars. I observed that the mark up signs in the traditional and cultural specification of this community in the US is distinguished with confusion and typical loss of identity. They suffer the epidemic of confusion in to either maintaining their own customs or adopting and adjusting in to the new values of the society they are trying to communalize and socialize.

All the influential factors here in with the stratification of the issue of lifestyle are hindrance in their confusion of which cultural identification they would gratify themselves with. From the very ordinary and common language chasm up to the failurity to attain the highest level of the success ladder in the larger US community has always functionally stamped the value they have about their original traditional value and personal confidence.

However, I had learned that there are some who has made it possible to cross the boundary and locate themselves in the best of position. But as it has been always the dream of everyone striving for abroad, it is not in the glamorous lifestyle that the Ethiopians are at large in the Washington area.

Summary and conclusion

Every year lots of people leave their country of origin to live in another country. Moving to another place means, in a way, exchanging a life one knew for something different and unfamiliar. Different theories attempted to explain the factors that induce people to voluntarily and/or involuntarily uproot themselves in order to live in a different environment. Generally the models that describe the causatives and factors of migration fall in to two categories: individual and structural. The individual perspective stresses the fact that individuals make a decision to migrate by analyzing the costs and benefits involved in the process. The following theories are included in the individual model of migration: the geographical difference in the supply and demand of labor, the neo classical theory of migration, and the new economics of migration.

The other perspective, structural perspective, point out that the social, economic and political structures of modern societies determine the fate of migrant's. The dual labor market theory and world system theory are parts of the structural approach to migration.

The migration of skilled professionals from Ethiopia is increasing with every passing day. As the specific and isolated commencement point of this case study, to analyze why skilled Ethiopians migrate to the United States of America? This study has utilized an in-depth interview and an intense observation on the field of study. As such, this case study has reached to a certain significant conclusion on its own.

It has been found that 90 percent of the people interviewed for this research claims that their major reason for migration to the United States of America is the search for better socio-economic standard of living. This is a mere direct reflection of the responses of the in-depth interview of the respondents taken as a sample population.

However, the closer scrutinization of the observation indicates that 19 of the respondents out of the sample of 20 are not migrants for the land of opportunity drive. They are rather a living proof to exhibit that their decision for migration is a response for the quest of ultimate psychological satisfaction. They have been and they are striving to tranquil their sense of deprivation in lifestyle, which they have been conceiving from all sources of information they were having.

From the expressed reasoning and unexpressed observation of the study subjects, it has been observed that the major reason for skilled Ethiopians to migrate to the united states of America is the quest formed in their psychological makeup in the form of better economic, educational, social, and so on opportunities conceived as a promise land is there to destine.

Most of the study subjects socio-economic stand in Ethiopia had been relatively well above the average. They still claim that they are 'politically' justified economical migrants and yet they are destined to have the below middle class stratum. Nevertheless almost all of them pronounce that they are doing far better than they would accomplish for themselves and their families where they are than back home.

Having mentioned the observation and finding, concisely the outcome of this case study concludes that though people who have migrated to the United States of America claim that their major reason is economics; it has been observed that they are deemed to migrate for their ever-psychological quest of sensation of relative deprivation of advanced life and opportunity.

Impact of skilled migration to Ethiopia

Migration like any other social process has some impact on any country. Generally the repercussion that migration will bring in to a country is prone for argument. Some held the view that since migrants tend to be young, skilled and educated a “brain drain” will occur that will hinder development. They further argue that labor migration is only profitable for the capitalist economies (Gordon, 1998).

Others argue that emigration is not a bad thing at all. It encourages economic development for both the countries involved and the émigrés. For the country of destination, migration would bring skilled as well as unskilled labor for their labor market thereby improving their global competitiveness. In the case of the sending countries migration would reduce the pool of unemployment and help reduce the strain on the social services. Emigration also helps to offset the shortage in the foreign exchange earnings of a country. On the side of the émigré, migration would provide him/her the chance of advancement professionally as well as financially. It would also create a situation for the migrants’ to support their families in the origin country (Gordon, 1998).

So, what is the impact of skilled migration to Ethiopia? In the contemporary situation of Ethiopia the above-mentioned facts are also applicable. However, when we look in to the impact of the skilled migration, the negative consequence would outweigh the positive ones. As such the positive impact that migration would have to the country reduces to remittances only.

The major negative consequence of the skilled migration from Ethiopia is the fact that it deprives the country of critically needed professional human resources: people who would have been the professional leaders and bright futures of the country. In order to educate these people the country has invested lots of material and human resources. As such losing these professionals to migration would hinder socio-economic development in the country. This would make the whole investment made on them wastage.

Furthermore, as the number of emigrants' increases, there is a chance for the creation of network of migrants with new values and perceptions. The establishment of such network might result in challenge of the existing value system in Ethiopia there by offering alternative world-view and value system to the non-migrant population. This might in turn become a push factor for the remaining population and create potential and aspiring migrants. Besides it would be very difficult for the government to formulate a policy for the effective utilization of its skilled human resource.

Social Work Intervention and Implication for Macro Practice in Ethiopia

How far does the fundamental concept of intervention in this enormously gigantic phenomenon of migration would be effective is extensively controversial in nature. What and which strategy for intercession would be most effective would always be a relative point of view. It is not practical to come up with all rounded supreme formula or recipe to either curb or reduce this issue of human migration. The basic fact that this human migration circumstance involves numerous interrelated social, economical, cultural, political, religious, educational and technological factors makes it almost impossible to have workable intervention plan from both the sides of the origin and destination nation's possible sets of strategies.

However, there are some intervention areas which might ultimately slow down, minimize or cause reverse migration process from the stand point the origin country like Ethiopia. The very fact that the larger proportion of the prefix in the magnitude of the scale of migration shows that migration is mainly from least developed countries such as Ethiopia to highly developed countries like the United States of America has a simple statement to communicate that the major reason for migration follows the trend of development. This term of development has entitled several subtle definitions and understanding disclosures. If not for all for some it is opportunity, for some it is freedom, and yet for some it is an achievement.

What does migration do to a nation like Ethiopia may tend to be debatable than the general assumption of the common cliché of brain drain. There is one emerging truth that migrants from the country of destination are sources of economic values from the smallest unit of family up to a level of national income. This raises the

question whether migration is a circumstance which needs intervention in the simplest meaning of reducing its occurrence or it is a favorable juncture to the overall means's of income source and social and economical empowering. According to Berhanu Nega [∇](2003), in the year 2000, for instance, the total income earned by Ethiopia from Ethiopian and individuals with Ethiopian decent amounts a total of 374.5 million USD which is higher than that earned from exporting which is 5.58 million USD.

This contestable juncture leads one to the request that where does one has to stand: pro migration intervention or against migration intervention? Here the basic economic, social and political statistics indicate that the trend of migration and the potential for it do more of harm and loss to the country than it does good by all means.

There are intricate and interrelated intervention points and areas at all stages of the community from a small unit of family to the coordinated efforts of the national machineries. As these areas are more of interconnected, there are no marked boundaries other than the invisible markers between any chains of possible intervention plans and actions. The model or theoretical base suitable for handling this issue is ecological model or person in environment perspective. The ecosystem perspective uses systems concepts to analyze the complex relationships between the social, economic and demographic conditions of an individual and the environment (Compton, Galaway , and Cournoyer, 2005). Based on this model the study proposes

[∇] In accordance with Ethiopian custom, the first name or given name is substituted for the surname and the father's name & grandfather's name is spelt in full

approaches at macro level in the area of policy makers, social governance and educational mediums.

Policy makers: at the higher governmental echelon, the Ethiopian history always teaches as that the primary focus is political supremacy. Though it seems politically charged the inefficiency of the policy makers and the active politicians surpasses all boundaries to have its impact to affect the socio-economical situation of the society at all levels. The formulation of all kinds of policies and specifically applicable policies to have a minimization result on the issue of migration needs ingenuity and originality.

Policy making at all related social composition and arrangement may sound rather theoretical when related to the issue of migration. Nevertheless it is not. A properly and thoroughly designed policy with consideration of addressing the issue would result in significant changes in the trend of migration. These policies include in the area of human rights, justice, economical sectors, educational possibilities, and religious freedom and over all political and economic freedom. All in all, the emphases in these policies have to consider advancement in the society and supremacy of the law above anyone else.

Social governance: the social part of the community and the nation is composed of different demographic characteristics like sex, age group, and ethnicity and so on. It is the most significant and valuable compound of any community in the universe. The invisible uniting power of this diverse composition of a society depends largely to the capable and suitable governance of its leaders. As governance has got

a huge impact in all levels of the socio-economic life cycle of a society, in its global sense, it has a greater influence to the initiation and as well as influx of people in either direction.

Social governance comprises and interconnects fundamental human needs. These human needs, as much as they are simple, they are vulnerable to the harassments of limited and backward leadership. They affect the major social and economical drives of human migration seeking better life in terms of economical and judicial gratification.

Is social governance a point where migration could be managed in a suitable direction with legal and practical limits? Here, the issue is wide and very controversial for different scholars. The truth is that whenever there is developed social administration supported by applicable policy and socially serving machineries, with in the true meaning of legal boundaries, society and/or community is supposed to have advancement in its economic and psychological goals. This natural need achievement is the theoretical and practical answer to the direction of migration questions.

Education sector: out of the basic social structure and machinery, education could be characterized to have a peculiarity in giving humanity the power to achieve the conceivable. As the fundamental structure of the society arranges itself from the point of policy making, judiciary, and execution in a form of socially oriented effective governance, educational emphasis at all levels of technical, theoretical, ethical, and

psychological level empowers individuals and the community to cross the thin line of economical and psychological advancement even further.

Combined with these information power and formation of a consumer society out of a dedicated and capable social leadership means an economical explosion and opportunity at all levels. This will play a direct or indirect role in determining the direction of migration.

In short, intervention is a possible subtle issue. There is no single point, unit or sector where intervention is the major center of attention. It is to be coordinately programmed in all sectors of the nation to the achievement of a better socio economic standard. And the key to this socio-economic advancement is proper policy combined with effective leadership.

All the intervention modalities discussed above requires social workers who develop responses that aim to address the issue of migration at local as well as international levels. The problem also requires social workers who have developed skills and knowledge about international events and processes and the range of resources on which they can draw. As such, the issue of migration would give a chance for social workers to practice at macro levels on areas of policy formulation, advocacy, social planning and so on apart from the usual micro practices with individuals and groups.

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Annex II

Part 1: Personal information

- Name of the Respondent: (optional)
- Sex: Female Mal
- Date and Place of Birth:
- Age:
- Marital Status: Unmarried Married
- Educational Qualification (Graduation and above)
- Where do your families live? What is their socio-economic status looks like?

Part 2: Reasons for migration

- Why do you live the country?
- In what way did you come to the country of destination? What kind of visa you had before you come?
- What is your residential status now? How did you get it?
- How did you choose the country of destination you now reside?
- Why do you come to the community you now live?

Part 3: type of employment and training

- Where do you work? How do you explain the nature of your work?
- Do the nature of your work and the qualification you had relate? Please explain?
- Do you see any future in your career? What do you think your future looks like?
- How do you explain your relation with your co-workers?
- Have you ever experienced discrimination? If yes, please explain.

Part 4: lifestyle

- How did you pass your leisure time in your country of origin?
- Which were the places you went while there?
- How do you pass your time here?
- Do you have friends who are non-Ethiopian?

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that, this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university, and that all sources of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Name: Bisrat Yared

Signature _____

Place: Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

Date of Submission:

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as a University advisor.

Name: Abye Tasse (PhD)

Signature _____