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Formal Education and Migration Aspirations in Ethiopia

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Abstract

Expanding access to formal education is a universal aim of development policy worldwide, and young people today are gaining access to schooling on unprecedented levels. Taking Ethiopia as a case study, this paper explores the mobility impacts of increasing educational attainment. First, we analyse internal migration data for Ethiopia using national Labour Force Survey data, and find that rural-to-urban migration has now replaced rural-to-rural migration as most common migration trajectory within Ethiopia. The pursuit of work and education were key motivations for rural-to-urban migration, and those with higher levels of education moved more. Second, we show how rising levels of primary and secondary education influence aspirations to migrate, distinguishing between internal and international destinations. Using novel survey data collected among rural and urban Ethiopian youth for the Young Lives project, we find that even completing primary levels of education increases the aspiration to live elsewhere. By studying the linkages between education and migration aspirations, alongside other development indicators like wealth, employment, and levels of self-efficacy, this paper contributes to an on-going debate about the relationship between development and migration and challenges common assumptions that migration is simply driven by poverty and need in poorer countries.

Non-technical summary: We show how the aspirations of young people in Ethiopia are increasingly oriented away from rural, agrarian livelihoods towards urban, professional futures. We show how expanding access to formal education, even after the primary level, is one important driver of the aspiration to live elsewhere.

Keywords: *migration, aspirations, education, Ethiopia, development*

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Introduction

Expanding access to formal education is a universal and uncontested aim of development policy worldwide, and the last several decades have ushered in dramatic shifts in access to formal schooling, particularly at the primary and secondary level. Gross enrolment ratios in primary school in low-income countries, for example, grew from 46 per cent in 1970 to over 100 per cent in 2015 (World Bank 2017).¹ Alongside its intrinsic value, the social benefits of widening access to formal education are well known: education tends to diversify economic opportunity, promote health, and contribute to greater gender equality (Benavot 2006). However, the impact of rising access to formal education on migration has received comparatively little attention. Migration, unlike income, health or gender equality, is often not perceived as a universal good. On the contrary, increased political interest in migration often focuses on reducing the internal and international mobility of the world's poorest people. Governments and non-governmental institutions alike, across a wide variety of contexts, perceive growing rural-to-urban migration as a threat to rural futures and urban capacity, and the international migration of skilled workers as a challenge to national development (e.g. the so-called "brain drain").

The purpose of this paper is to explore the relationship between access to educational attainment and migration in Ethiopia, focusing in particular on the influence of primary and secondary schooling on young people's imagined futures. In Ethiopia, the current generation of young people is the first to receive access to primary education on a wide scale. Net enrolment rates have increased from 21 to 93 per cent over the last two decades (UN 2014).

The need to understand how rising access to formal education relates to changing migration patterns is important for Ethiopia and other countries in sub-Saharan Africa that place agriculture at the centre of strategies for economic growth, industrialisation and poverty reduction.² Key to the success and sustainability of these agriculture-led development agendas is a new generation of "future farmers," rural young people equipped with fresh attitudes and technological expertise to bring about agricultural transformation (Anyidoho et al. 2012). However, the excitement about the future of agriculture in Africa exists alongside a growing concern for whether young people will aspire to be a part of it (Leavy and Smith 2010; Tadele and Gella 2014). Africa's agrarian workforce is aging, and more and more young people aspire to urban, non-agrarian livelihoods. While opportunities in

¹ Gross enrolment ratios refer to total enrolment in primary education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population of official primary education age. GER often exceeds 100 per cent due to the inclusion of over-aged and under-aged students because of early or late school entrance and grade repetition.

² As exemplified in the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) of recent decades. Espoused as "the most ambitious and comprehensive agricultural reform effort ever undertaken in Africa," this initiative of the African Union and New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) responds to the rural, agrarian base of their populations to address what it sees as the core obstacles to agricultural prosperity, primarily low levels of productivity and institutional support.

industry and services are increasing across the continent, the capacity for these sectors to employ significant shares of the population remains limited. There may be a mismatch between national and international development strategies and the actual livelihoods young people wish to pursue (Anyidoho et al. 2012).

The common reasons offered for the reluctance of young generations to pursue agricultural livelihoods are structural and include: the chronic neglect of government support and investment in small-scale agriculture or rural infrastructure; economic shifts that make small-scale agriculture less and less viable—even if more productive than previous generations; environmental degradation; population growth and the inability of young people to acquire their own land to farm (White 2012; Leavy and Smith 2010; Sumberg et al. 2012; Tadele and Gella 2012; Bezu and Holden 2014). These explanations, contested as they may be, all paint the shift away from agriculture as resulting from negative forces, or in other words, (rural) development failure.

However, alongside these commonly offered structural shifts is an underappreciated change in young people's aspirations and expectations for the future, influenced by what is generally regarded as a positive development: the rise of formal schooling. Sociologists have long argued that modern education is an “agency of socialization,” where in addition to learning knowledge and skills, children are taught particular norms and attitudes towards work and society (cf. Durkheim 1956; Parsons 1964). White argues that formal schooling, as it is currently practiced, “teaches young people not to want to be farmers” (2012, p. 12).³ Others suggest formal education tends to ‘inflate’ aspirations and expectations for the future, creating a gap between young people's professional aspirations and the opportunities that are available to them in rural areas (Sumberg et al. 2014). Changing aspirations are thus likely a significant force, among others, shaping migration trajectories towards urban centres or abroad.

Research on aspirations has recently come in vogue in both the migration and development fields. In migration research, this is signalled by the rise in surveys that seek to capture migration aspirations in origin countries (Gallup 2008; van Dalen et al. 2005; Wood et al. 2010; Becerra 2012; Bal and Willems 2014; Creighton 2013). One limitation to these surveys is the almost exclusive focus on international migration aspirations, which misses the diversity of migration trajectories considered by potential migrants, within their country or outside of it. Throughout this paper we examine both internal and international migration aspirations, something uncommon in today's migration research that often makes an artificial and inefficient distinction between the two, leading to largely separate

³ The International Fund for Agricultural Development confirms this, and in their Rural Poverty Report call for a new type of curricula, arguing that “agriculture must be accorded prestige, and sustainable agricultural intensification must be recognised and presented as modern and profitable, so that the aspirations of rural youth – girls as well as boys – can converge around it” (171).

research and policy agendas (King and Skeldon 2010). We argue that crossing national borders does not distinguish the migration process in any fundamental way; rather, borders present an additional obstacle that migrants negotiate. After all, a young person moving from a remote rural area to Addis Ababa may experience as many capability constraints and cultural shocks as a young person from Addis Ababa moving to Washington DC. With this perspective in mind, we define migration as the change in residence across an administrative boundary, whether within a country or outside of it, and migration aspirations as the desire to move residence across an administrative boundary.

In the field of development, aspirations are increasingly studied as they relate to economic decision-making, levels of self-efficacy (i.e. one's confidence in one's ability to succeed; see Bandura 1977), and, using an old but increasingly relevant term today, "achievement motivation" (McClelland 1961; Ray 2003; Dalton, Ghosal and Mani 2015). How to develop the "capacity to aspire" among poor populations, a concept first coined by Appadurai in 2004, is increasingly a conscious objective of development interventions (World Bank 2015). As Debraj Ray emphasized at a World Bank conference on *Aspirations, Poverty, and Inequality*, "getting aspirations right is important: too low and people will not take action; too high and it might lead to frustration" (Vakis 2014). Much of the most provocative research being done on aspirations and development has focused on Ethiopia, where researchers debate whether low aspirations and fatalistic beliefs are obstacles to development (see Bernard et al 2011; 2014 and Tafere 2014)⁴.

A focus on aspirations contributes to development thinking by extending our understanding of decision-making beyond the limitations of rational choice assumptions. Rather than being the outcome of simple cost-benefit analyses, aspirations are better understood as the subjective hopes and goals that guide a decision-making process, setting the horizons within which life choices are made. Aspirations are not formed in isolation; they are fundamentally social, shaped by our observation of others, particularly those like ourselves, within a cultural context (Appadurai 2004; Ray 2003; Bandura 1977). However, recent research on aspirations often remains vague, and what type of aspiration is being addressed requires clarification in the debate: whether economic, educational, occupational, or other.

This paper focuses on the determinants of the aspiration to migrate, giving particular attention to the influence of formal education, though other aspirations—for work or for further education—are also given attention here. The main research question we address is: how does access to primary and

⁴ Bernard et al (2011; 2014), for example, suggest low aspirations and fatalistic beliefs impede poor people from making economic investments in their futures. They suggest development interventions targeted towards raising aspirations and shaping mental models towards investment, hard work, and future planning is one way forward. Tafere (2014), on the other hand, countered this perspective with a paper showing that children from poor families in Ethiopia actually hold high aspirations for the future, particularly towards higher levels of education, and argues that rather than focusing on the raising or reorienting of aspirations, development interventions should aim to increase the capabilities young people have to realise their aspirations.

secondary education shape the aspiration to migrate, internally or internationally? To answer this question, we begin by reviewing how education has been treated within migration theory to date, leading to some initial hypotheses about how, and why formal education may influence the likelihood of internal or international migration. Second, we review the context of our case study, Ethiopia, and elaborate on the development and education policies that have been implemented. We also sketch recent internal and international migration trends within and from Ethiopia. In response to the limited availability of empirical data on internal migration in Ethiopia, we make use of Labour Force Survey data to give an overview of migration within Ethiopia over the past decades, and the characteristics of internal migrants. Third, we consider the forces shaping the aspiration to migrate. Drawing on novel survey data from the Young Lives study, we map the internal and international migration horizons of the rural and urban youth surveyed and study how educational attainment, among other variables like current enrolment, employment, wealth, future work and education aspirations, and levels of self-efficacy, relates to internal and international migration aspirations. We conclude with reflections on the relation between education and migration in contexts where formal education is being introduced for the first time on a wide scale, and the implications for development policy.

Education and Aspirations in Migration Theory

At the migration-development nexus, most research focusing on the links between migration and education fall into two categories: studies of migrant remittances and their investment in children's education; and the effect of 'brain drain,' or the emigration of skilled workers, on development in origin countries (Rao 2010). This reflects a more general trend in migration and development research that focuses on how migration impacts development in origin areas, and neglects how the transformations associated with 'development' (such as the expansion of formal education) impact migration. Although education is regularly treated as a key demographic variable in many studies, less attention has been given to understanding the mechanisms through which rising access to formal education relates to shifting migration patterns. The purpose of this paper is to contribute to a growing body of research on migration determinants by examining the intersection between education and changing aspirations.

First, however, the ways in which education has been directly treated within migration theory more broadly deserve attention. Though patchy and somewhat scattered, migration theories generally hypothesize that participation in formal education should increase the likelihood of migration. Generally speaking, the explanations offered may be viewed from three related perspectives: 1) from the lens of migration decision-making, where education is treated as a variable that boosts the expected economic returns and thus likelihood of internal and international migration; 2) from the angle of labour market structures, where education levels determine the spatial location of economic

opportunity; and 3) as one development process simultaneously shaping the aspiration and capability to migrate.

The first set of perspectives sees education as a form of human capital that increases the potential gains available to an individual at a potential destination (Sjaastad 1962; Schwartz 1971). Within neoclassical migration theory, for example, decision-making is presented as a process in which potential migrants weigh the economic costs and benefits of movement and then migrate where expected net returns are greater than estimated costs over a period of time (Borjas 1990; Massey et al. 1993). Entering the calculus of rational choice, this perspective predicts that education should boost the expected benefits and thus likelihood of migration.

The second set of perspectives focus on the structural dynamics of modern labour markets, which concentrate skilled labour in urban areas. The more specialized the skill-set, the narrower the economic opportunity available and the greater the geographic spread of the labour market an individual must consider. As Everett Lee hypothesized in his seminal *Theory of Migration*, “The aim of prolonged education is to create specialists, for many of whom the demand is small in any one place but widespread. For them migration is a concomitant of their vocations. Thus, engineers and professors have become peripatetic, but so have business executives and actors.” (1966, p. 53). Yet there may be important differences between internal and international Labour markets. Higher educated individuals may be less likely to migrate internationally if their credentials do not transfer fluidly due to differences in language, culture, economic and educational systems (Taylor 1987)⁵ – even if skilled individuals have more opportunities to migrate through legal channels than unskilled migrants in today’s global mobility regime (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013). While we may expect internal migration to present a positive linear relationship with education, international migration may have different dynamics.

A third perspective presents expanding formal education as a development driver of both the aspiration and capability to migrate. The aspiration-capability approach, pioneered by Carling (2002) and de Haas (2007), argues that if we wish to understand why people migrate (or not), we need to analytically distinguish the aspiration and the capability to migrate, both of which are required for migration to occur. Though aspirations and capabilities are mutually constitutive, and shaped within the same political, economic, social and cultural context of an individual, the analytical distinction allows for clarity in our explanations why migration may or may not occur. To understand the influence of formal education on migration, then, two angles of analysis become clear: how education

⁵ Taylor (1987), for example, found that returns to schooling in urban areas of Mexico are higher than in the United States, where the dominant labour demand is for low- or un-skilled labour. Dustmann and Glitz (2011) argue that immigrants face a lower return to schooling in the US than natives do; their wages rise more slowly with education attainment as compared to natives.

influences the aspiration to migrate and how it shapes the capability to migrate. De Haas (2007) uses this approach to argue that in the short-to-medium term, processes of development – particularly formal education and access to information – tend to increase the aspiration to migrate, while greater connectivity, infrastructure development, and access to financial, social, and human capital increases potential migrants’ capability to migrate, internally or internationally. De Haas (2014) defines aspirations as a function of people’s general life aspirations and perceived spatial opportunity structures; in other words, if people have broader life aspirations that cannot be fulfilled at home, the aspiration to migrate emerges. He suggests that education in rural areas increases pupils’ awareness of “alternative, consumerist, and urban lifestyles” – potentially changing people’s notions of the good life, and thus introducing the aspiration to migrate (2014, p. 24; see also Mabogunje 1970; Rhoda 1983). As long as aspirations increase faster than the livelihood opportunities available in sending regions and countries, migration will continue or increase (de Haas 2007).

One limitation to the various theoretical perspectives cited above is the assumption that education is something that happens in origin areas, shaping the migration decision-making process before migration occurs. This perspective neglects the well-documented but little theorised reality that accessing education is often the first reason for rural-to-urban migration in poorer countries. While primary schools are increasingly accessible to rural areas, secondary and tertiary schools may require a move to towns or cities. Complementing a broad literature on “student mobility,” Crivello (2011) refers to this movement as “migration-for-education” and highlights that migration is happening at very young ages. It is after a young person (and potentially their family) moves to a more urban area for education that further movement or return is renegotiated. Thus, rather than the pursuit of work being the impetus for urbanward movement, the pursuit of education often drives the first migration experience of young people.

In sum, migration theories generally predict that formal education should increase the likelihood of migration, for personal and structural reasons. However, the ways in which education interacts with other social forces driving the aspiration to migrate or stay depends on the context and the particular migration trajectory – internal or international – under consideration. The following section reviews the development, education and migration context in Ethiopia, before turning to our analysis on the determinants of migration aspirations.

The Ethiopian Context

Ethiopia is one of the least urbanised countries in Africa, with some 80 per cent of its population living in rural areas, compared to an average of 62 per cent in Sub-Saharan Africa. Yet the country is urbanising quickly, at a rate of 4.9 per cent (2010-2015 est), and the economic, educational, and

demographic transitions unfolding in Ethiopia augur significant shifts for the movement of its populations.

Since the fall of the communist regime and the rise of a more market-oriented developmental state in the 1990s, the Ethiopian government embarked on an ambitious agriculture-led industrialisation agenda that boasted economic growth rates averaging 10.8 per cent per year from 2003/04-2014/15⁶. Some 73 per cent of the population is engaged in agriculture, but with the steady rise of the industry and service sectors (accounting for 7.4 and 19.9 per cent of employment in 2013, respectively; UN 2017), formal and informal employment opportunities outside agriculture are increasing. Alongside these economic transformations, investment in infrastructure has increased connectivity and accessibility of urban areas, such that the number of people residing in or within three hours of a city of at least 50,000 rose from 15.5 per cent of the population in 1984 to almost half in 2007 (Dorosh and Schmidt 2010). Furthermore, Ethiopia is in the early stages of a demographic transition. Infant, child, and maternal mortality have fallen sharply over the past decades, while total fertility rates declined more slowly (today averaging 4.6 live births per woman). With a population now over 100 million, the median age is 17.8 years (UN 2017; CIA 2016 est).

This sizable young generation is also the first to receive formal education on a wide scale. Although Haile Selassie introduced formal education to Ethiopia, only the elite or lucky few had access to it. The communist Derg regime introduced formal education more widely across Ethiopia during the 1970s and 80s, with particular emphasis on expanding access in rural areas, yet the numerical reach remained limited. Galvanised by the Millennium Development Goals, today's federal government has vigorously pursued the achievement of universal primary education. Developing ambitious policies and programs to expand the number of schools in rural areas, abolish school fees, and train new cohorts of teachers, education as a percentage of total government expenditure increased from approximately 12 per cent in 1980 to 27 per cent in 2013 (World Bank 2017; UNESCO 2011; World Bank/UNICEF 2009). The share of GDP spent on education (around 5 per cent during 2003-08, for example) is high by international standards (Ravishankar, Kello and Tiruneh 2010). As a result of these investments, the number of primary schools increased from 9,900 in 1995 to 32,048 in 2014, and primary school net enrolment jumped from 21 per cent in 1996 to 93 per cent in 2014 (UN 2014).

Secondary and tertiary enrolment rates are lower, at just 40 per cent and 9 per cent in 2014, respectively (FDRE 2016). Nevertheless, the government has given what some describe as unbalanced attention to its tertiary education system, the sub-sector that expanded most rapidly in recent years (Ravishankar, Kello and Tiruneh 2010). One reason for this emphasis on higher education is to raise

⁶ Though whether this growth has been equitable is an important topic of concern, highlighted by the political turmoil of recent years. The consequences of these political upheavals on migration patterns remain to be seen.

actors for the national development process. As a recent exhibit at Addis Ababa University boasted: “AAU has been producing trained manpower for the insatiable demand of the modernisation process not only of Ethiopia but also of Africa and the world at large.” In an effort to re-align its higher education curricula to national development strategies, the Ethiopian government decreed in 2008 that seventy per cent of all students should study science and technology subjects and asked all universities to modify their curricula accordingly (Rayner and Ashkroft 2011). However, with rapid expansion comes questions about declining quality, at all levels of education, related to resource constraints and teacher-training (Akalu 2014).

It is not only the Ethiopian government that hopes education can stimulate development and progress, but also the Ethiopian people themselves. Education is widely seen as a key “pathway to success,” through which rural and urban families alike must pass in order to achieve a better future (Mains 2013). As a result, young people and their families increasingly invest in education instead of agricultural or trade livelihoods (Tadele and Gella 2014). Diplomas and university degrees in particular are highly prized because they allow people to pursue stable government positions or more lucrative professional work with foreign organisations.

These rapid transformations foreshadow rising rates of internal and international migration in the years to come (see Zelinsky 1971; Skeldon 1990; de Haas 2010). Yet, at the same time that the Ethiopian government pursues rapid economic growth, infrastructure development, and the expansion of formal education, it fears a large influx of rural youth to urban centres, where livelihood opportunities remain limited. In urban Ethiopia, conservative evaluations of youth unemployment rates estimate 17.5 per cent, although higher rates exist in some large cities like Addis Ababa (23.0 per cent) and Dire Dawa (22.7 per cent) (Kibret 2014). To avoid growing urban unemployment, rural development policy asserted that at least 70 per cent of rural students should be absorbed in agricultural labour (FDRE 2003) and Dorosh and Schmidt (2010) suggest that land rights policies incentivise staying in rural areas, through, for example, regulations prohibiting sale of land, loss of land rights for those who leave rural areas, and registration requirements for new migrants. Nevertheless, many researchers continue to highlight a strong resistance among rural youth in Ethiopia—particularly those with education—to “end up like their farmer parents” (Tadele and Gella 2012: 6; Camfield 2011; Abebe 2008).

Migration within and from Ethiopia over the past decades

Available data on rates and levels of internal and international migration from Ethiopia is unfortunately limited and fragmented (Carter and Rohwerder, 2016). During the time of Haile Selassie, the elite few who migrated abroad did so to study and often returned. After the 1974 revolution and the rise of the communist Derg regime, hundreds of thousands of political refugees

sought asylum elsewhere, introducing the first significant movement of international migrants from Ethiopia. Emigration has continued under the new federated state, yet remains relatively low, hovering around 1 per cent of the population since 2000 (UN 2015). The top five destinations for international migrants in 2013 were the United States, Israel, Sudan, Italy, and Saudi Arabia. While this emigration is small from the perspective of total population, it becomes more significant when viewed from the lens of education levels. In 2000, 10 per cent of the tertiary-educated population had emigrated (World Bank 2011). Top destinations for tertiary students included the United States, South Africa, Sweden, India, and Finland (UN 2013). What these figures miss, however, is irregular forms of international migration, often to the Middle East and Gulf States, which some have estimated make up as much as 60 to 70 per cent of total emigration (Carter and Rohwerder 2016).

Internal migration statistics are scant due to the limited availability of nationally representative data. To set some context for internal migration, then, we use three rounds of Labour Force Survey data (1999, 2005, and 2013) to explore intra-regional migration of recent migrants, aged 15 and over, who made a move within the last 5 years. Ethiopia is divided into 63 regions or zones, which are further divided into approximately 660 rural and 100 urban districts (*woreda*).⁷ While this data is nationally representative, it only captures migration across zones, not movement happening within zones and *woredas*, thus underestimating the extent of internal migration and missing important processes of small-scale urbanisation happening within traditionally rural, agrarian areas.⁸ Nevertheless, this data provides an initial sketch of internal mobility patterns over the last two decades, to complement a small but growing literature on internal migration in Ethiopia (see Blunch and Laderchi 2015).

Approximately 6 per cent of the Ethiopian population aged 15 and over had migrated across zones within the 5 years prior to 2013. The literacy and education levels of internal migrants generally increased since the late 1990s and were consistently higher than those of non-migrants (Table 1). While rural-to-rural migration has typically been the primary mode of movement within Ethiopia, rural-to-urban and urban-to-urban migration replaced migration between rural areas as the most common migration trajectory of internal migrants in the last decade (Table 2).

⁷ Urban centres are defined as localities with 2,000 or more inhabitants. For the purpose of the LFS survey, urban centres include a) all administrative capitals, b) municipal towns not included in (a), c) localities with a population of 1,000 or more persons not included in (a) or (b) having a population of 1000 or more and whose inhabitants are primarily engaged in non-agricultural activities (FDRE, 2014).

⁸ Another important limitation of the data was that the survey questions only referred to the latest migration episode of the individual. This makes it impossible to derive information on recurrent or multiple migration episodes and the exact directions of internal migrations in Ethiopia. From the survey data we only know where people were born and where they moved to in their most recent migration, but we do not have information on potential migration episodes that took place in between these two moments.

Table 1: Characteristics of recent internal migrants over time

Migrant characteristics	1999		2005		2013	
	Internal migrants	Non-migrants	Internal migrants	Non-migrants	Internal migrants	Non-migrants
Age (mean)	27.22	34.70	22.56	25.63	22.72	25.43
Gender (1 = male)	0.44	0.48	0.49	0.49	0.44	0.50
Marital status (1 = married)	0.49	0.61	0.39	0.41	0.36	0.39
Literacy (1 = yes)	0.48	0.28	0.49	0.32	0.64	0.44
Years of schooling (mean)	3.40	1.45	3.18	1.48	4.74	2.35
No schooling (1 = yes)	0.54	0.74	0.54	0.70	0.31	0.49
Primary school (1 = yes)	0.29	0.21	0.31	0.26	0.48	0.44
Secondary school (1 = yes)	0.13	0.04	0.10	0.03	0.18	0.06
Higher education (1 = yes)	0.04	0.01	0.05	0.01	0.02	0.01

Notes. Based on LFS data. Recent migrants are individuals who moved less than five years prior to survey data collection. Based on the population aged 15 and over.

Table 2: Migration patterns by gender: 1999, 2005 and 2013

Migration patterns (%) of recent migrants	1999		2005		2013	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Rural to rural	31.19	39.14	35.70	41.97	24.08	22.32
Rural to urban	21.79	21.58	27.60	23.91	29.42	37.26
Urban to rural	21.65	13.08	16.02	11.09	23.15	14.79
Urban to urban	24.37	25.56	17.78	20.43	23.35	25.63
Total migrations	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Notes. Based on LFS data. Recent migrants are individuals who moved less than five years prior to survey data collection. Based on the population aged 15 and over.

In general, those moving to or leaving urban areas tend to be more highly educated than rural-to-rural migrants and non-migrants (Table 3; Graph 1). Other studies in Ethiopia have found that internal migrants tend to be more highly educated than non-migrants (Tegegne and Penker 2016; Bezu and Holden 2014).⁹ Blunch and Laderchi (2015) also found that migrants obtain higher returns to their education than non-migrants. These authors note that in addition to economic opportunity, however, educational facilities in urban areas can be a ‘pull factor’ in themselves.

Table 4 shows that while the search for work was the most common motivation of rural-to-urban migration, education was the second most common reason given. Family considerations – “to live with relatives” – was a significant motivation, especially for urban-to-rural migrants. While Table 4

⁹ Tegegne and Penker (2016), for example, studied four rural kebeles in North-West Ethiopia and found that most migrants were young, single and had completed primary or higher education. Households with household heads who had some years or completed secondary education were significantly more likely to have a long-term migrant.

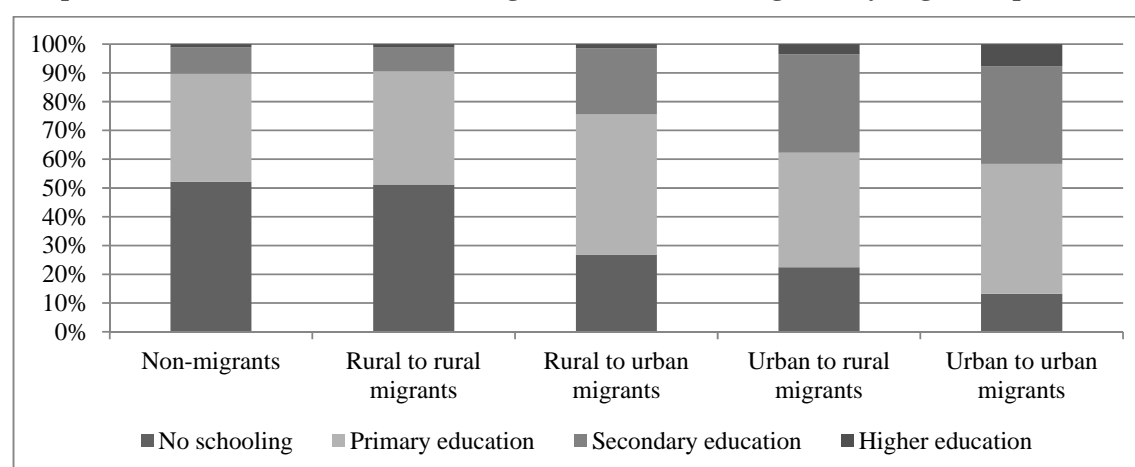
presents migration motivations for all internal migrants over the age of 15, a study by Erulkar *et al.* (2006) of young people (ages 10-19) in poor areas of Addis Ababa found that around half of all boys and girls moved there primarily in pursuit of educational opportunities (Erulkar *et al.*, 2006).

Table 3: Migrant characteristics by migration pattern: 2013

Migrant characteristics	Rural to rural	Rural to urban	Urban to rural	Urban to urban
Age (mean)	27.07	25.34	28.16	26.47
Gender (1 = male)	0.48	0.40	0.56	0.40
Marital status (1 = married)	0.58	0.38	0.48	0.44
Literacy (1 = yes)	0.44	0.70	0.76	0.84
Years of schooling (mean)	2.88	5.77	7.14	7.82

Notes. Based on LFS 2013 data. Recent migrants are individuals who moved less than five years prior to survey data collection. Based on the population aged 15 and over.

Graph 1: Education attainment of non-migrants and internal migrants by migration pattern



Notes. Based on LFS 2013 data. Recent migrants are individuals who moved less than five years prior to survey data collection. Based on the population aged 15 and over.

Table 4: Migration motivations by migration pattern and gender

Migration reasons of recent migrants	Rural to rural		Rural to urban		Urban to rural		Urban to urban	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Search for work	41.28	11.14	50.77	38.96	29.59	25.24	46.64	36.12
Education	1.66	1.45	14.93	14.76	7.81	6.83	9.67	11.55
Marriage formation	3.22	45.12	1.40	14.46	1.72	16.69	1.40	13.47
Marriage dissolution	0.93	7.05	0.38	2.49	0.03	2.13	0.08	2.10
Job transfer	8.64	1.71	7.64	2.42	7.80	6.38	22.21	8.12
Dismissed from work	1.12	0.23	0.26	0.13	2.36	0.42	1.73	0.40
Displacement	3.47	2.62	1.11	0.86	0.24	0.54	0.07	0.53
To live with relatives	15.22	13.80	12.12	13.22	29.03	23.69	9.68	17.68
Return back to home	4.68	5.20	1.44	0.94	5.64	3.25	2.17	2.52
Shortage of land	9.83	4.71	2.14	1.42	0.57	0.93	0.11	0.06
Health problems	2.49	1.88	1.75	2.88	3.71	2.45	1.23	2.26
Family/peer pressure	1.90	2.10	1.28	1.78	0.29	0.95	0.67	0.57
Other reasons	5.55	2.98	4.76	5.70	11.22	10.50	4.34	4.61

Notes. Based on LFS 2013 data. Recent migrants are individuals who moved less than five years prior to survey data collection. Based on the population aged 15 and over.

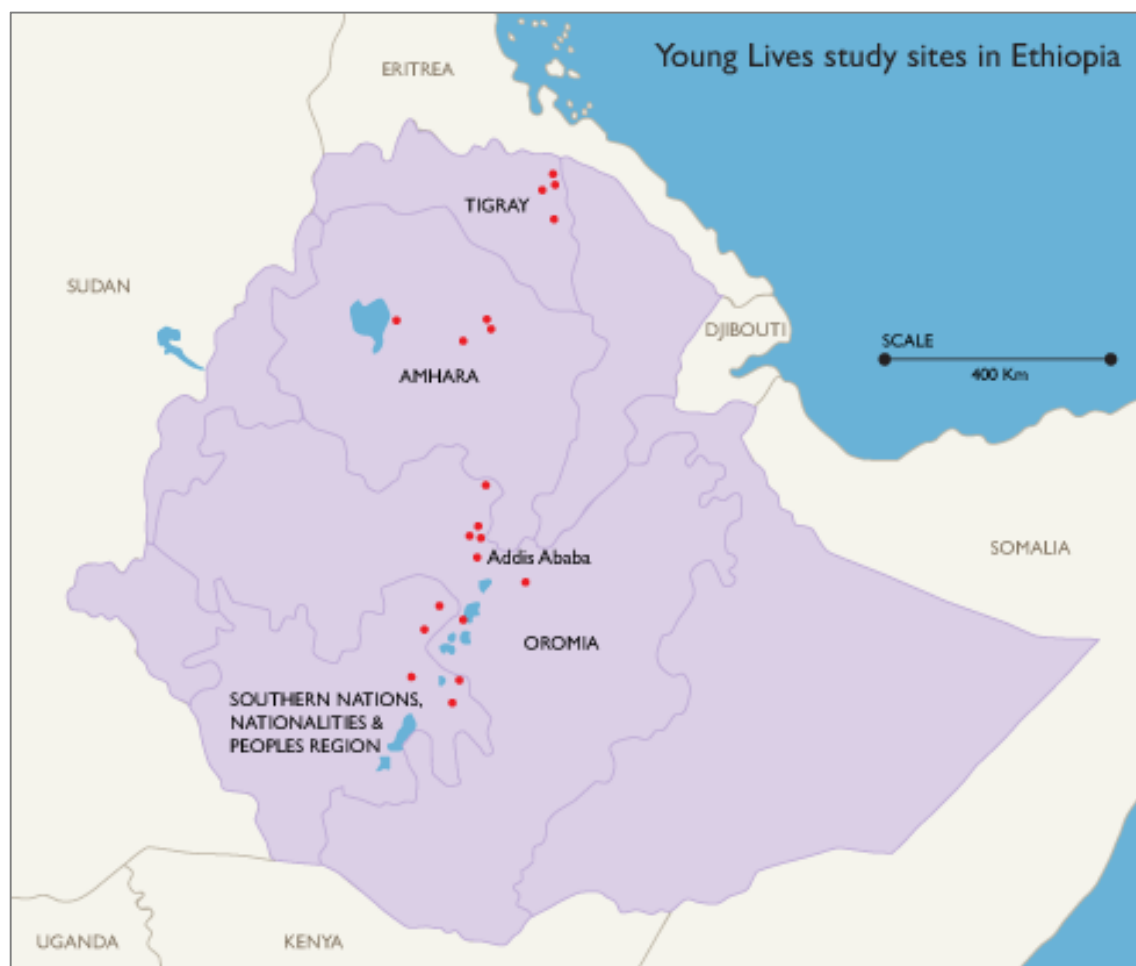
Education and Migration Aspirations: Young Lives Data

Having reviewed the development, education and migration context within Ethiopia, we now turn to the migration aspirations of young people in Ethiopia today. We focus particularly on rural and urban youth, aged 16 to 20, who are the first generation with access to formal education on a wide scale. We ask where these young people envision their futures, and how participation in formal education—among other variables like employment, wealth, feelings of self-efficacy, aspirations for work and/or further education—influences the aspiration to migrate or to stay.

We use data from the *Young Lives* project, a longitudinal study on child and youth poverty, funded by the UK Department for International Development (DfID). This project collected panel data over a fifteen-year period in four countries – Ethiopia, India, Peru, and Vietnam – among a younger cohort (2,000 in each country) and an older cohort (1,000 in each country) of children. It is important to note that the Young Lives data is not nationally representative, but sampled to capture a wide variety of circumstances (Young Lives, 2014). In line with the overall focus of the study on childhood poverty, districts with higher food shortages were, for example, oversampled to ensure the inclusion of poor children, and urban and rural areas were purposively sampled so that children from both areas were included (see Map 1 for study locations). We use the fourth round of data collected among the older cohort in Ethiopia between October 2013 and March 2014. Because of attrition, the 2013/2104 data include 908 of the original 1,000 participants. Most of the participants in our sample were 18 or 19 years of age and a slight majority of the respondents (54 per cent) was male. Around half of the participants (48 per cent) resided in urban areas at the time of the survey, and the respondents were more or less evenly spread among the five survey regions: Addis Ababa, Amhara, Oromia, Tigray, and Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples’ Region.

Unlike earlier survey rounds – which interviewed children on several topics related to their welfare – the fourth round of the Young Lives survey collected additional information on migration aspirations. The survey asked, ‘Would you like to move from your current location to another place?’ and if yes, a follow-up question was asked about where the participant would be most likely to move. Thus, in contrast to most migration aspiration surveys to date that ask only about international migration aspirations, this data provides a unique opportunity to examine internal and international migration aspirations together. Furthermore, it allows us to move beyond simple rural-to-urban dichotomies in analysing internal migration aspirations to see multiple gradients in migration aspirations within and across various administrative boundaries.

Map 1: Young Lives study sites in Ethiopia



Source: Young Lives, November 2014

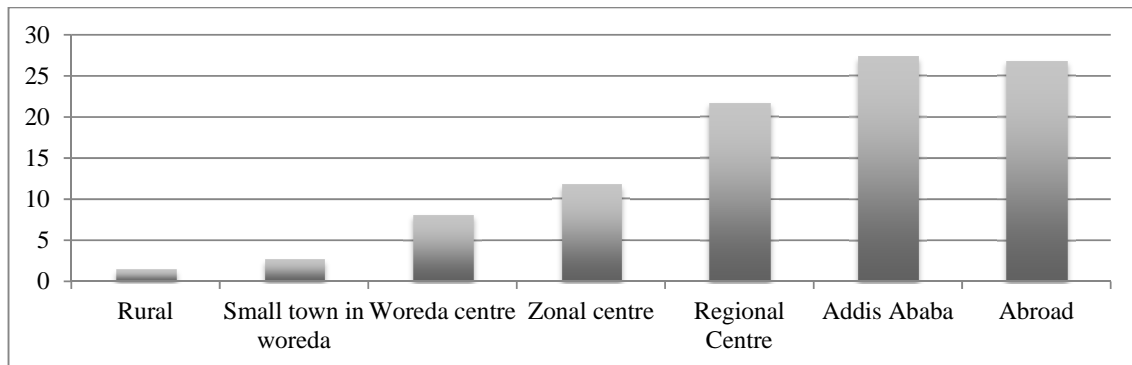
Migration aspirations

Approximately two-thirds of the youth who participated in the Young Lives study in Ethiopia expressed an aspiration to migrate (see Table 5). Of these, almost sixty per cent also gave a preferred destination, which was in most cases an (other) urban location in Ethiopia. In fact, a clear gradient emerges in the migration horizons of young people surveyed, with larger urban centres attracting more young people (Graph 2). The minority of those with a migration aspiration (28 per cent) expressed a wish to migrate abroad. Table 5 depicts the main motivations underlying the aspiration to migrate or to stay: the most common motivations for migration related to employment and education, and the desire to stay was most commonly related to family and community, although many noted on-going participation in school or work that they enjoyed.

Table 5: Migration aspirations: Descriptive statistics

Variable	Categories	Freq.	Perc.
Migration aspiration	No	268	32.10
	Yes	567	67.90
Know migration destination	No	235	41.45
	Yes	332	58.55
Main reason for wanting to migrate	Employment purposes	342	60.75
	Educational purposes	160	28.42
	Health care facilities/housing/public services	18	3.20
	Family reasons	16	2.84
	Broaden horizons/seek independence	8	1.42
	Other reasons	23	3.37
Main reason for not wanting to migrate	Have family/community here	121	45.49
	At school/studying here	44	16.54
	Have a job I like here	33	12.41
	Happy here/have a good life	26	9.77
	Have house/land/property here	10	3.76
	Other reasons	34	12.03

Source: Young lives study Ethiopia, fourth round, older cohort.

Graph 2: Type of most likely migration destination (%)

Source: Young lives study Ethiopia, fourth round, older cohort.

Education and other development-related, independent variables

To better understand the determinants of these migration aspirations, we explored several variables from the Young Lives data including age, gender, urban residence, education levels, wealth, employment, previous migration experience, levels of self-efficacy and future aspirations for education and work (see Table A.1 in the Annex). First, educational attainment was divided into four levels: no education certificate (37 per cent), primary education (31 per cent), secondary education (25 per cent), and those with a higher education entrance certificate (5 per cent).¹⁰ Nevertheless, despite

¹⁰ Those with no education certificate either had no formal schooling or some years of primary school before dropping out. Most youth surveyed fell into this category (37 per cent), suggesting that despite rapid expansion in primary education across Ethiopia, many of the young people surveyed did not finish primary education. Primary education in Ethiopia is divided into two cycles, from grades 1-4 and 5-8. The second category pertains

similar ages, significant variation exists in the educational attainment in our sample. To distinguish current enrolment from attainment, we added an additional variable “currently in school” to capture on-going participation in formal education (59 per cent of our sample).

Second, two indicators were used to study the relationship between household wealth and migration aspirations. These indicators include a wealth index and a subjective measure of wealth, which we use as an indicator of relative poverty. The wealth index was included in the data and is composed of three indices measuring housing quality (rooms per person, floor quality, and roof quality), consumer durables (e.g., a radio, a bicycle, a television and other durables), and access to services (electricity, clean water, a proper toilet, and cooking fuel). The wealth index ranges between 0 and 1, with a higher value indicating higher wealth.¹¹ We also include a squared term of the wealth index to test if the relationship between wealth and migration aspirations is nonlinear. Relative wealth was measured with the question ‘*compared to other households here in your [locality], how would you describe your household?*’, with answer categories from 1 (the poorest) to 7 (the richest). Because few youth had chosen the extreme categories, we recoded the variable into a five-point scale, ranging from 1 (the poorest/among the poorest) to 5 (the richest/among the richest). The average score on the relative wealth variable was 2.89, and the median score was three, which indicates that most youth reported that their household had an average wealth position in their locality. The relative wealth indicator correlated slightly with the wealth index ($r=0.14$) and both variables were therefore included simultaneously in the regression models.

Third, we study how employment is related to migration aspirations by including if the youth had worked a) on own or family-owned farmland, b) a self-owned business or c) in a paid job, in the 7 days prior to the survey. A key motivation for migration is to seek work opportunities (Table 5), and this indicator allows us to see whether existing engagement in different types of employment diminish migration aspirations. As Table A.1 shows, 28 per cent of the youth in the sample had worked on farmland in the previous 7 days, and 15 per cent and 19 per cent had worked in their own business or in a paid job, respectively. To avoid a seasonal bias in the method collection, we confirmed that 78 per cent of those who had worked on the farm in the past seven days had also worked on the farm in the past 12 months.

to those who finished grade 8, when a regional exam is offered to pupils determining whether they may proceed to higher levels; 31 per cent of youth sampled had finished grade 8 and thus completed primary education. Secondary education ends at grade 12 (25 per cent of our sample attained this level), while just 5 per cent passed the national exam after secondary school to obtain their higher education entrance certificate. Only these youth have the possibility of pursuing a university education. Unfortunately, the dataset used did not collect data on vocational or technical diplomas, an education option increasingly pursued by youth who fail out of the formal education pathway described above.

¹¹ See Outes-Leon and Sanchez (2008) for more information on the wealth index construction.

Fourth, previous migration experiences for education or employment were included with the hypothesis that previous experience with migration may increase the likelihood of aspiring to migrate. More young people had moved for education (17 per cent) than they did for employment (13 per cent) since 2009 (round 3 of the survey). Further data explorations (available upon request) revealed that those who had previously moved for education were on average more highly educated, wealthier, and more often enrolled in school than those who had not moved for education, while those who had previously moved for work had lower levels of education and were less often in school, with little difference in wealth levels.

Fifth, we include measures of educational and occupational aspirations, as well as feelings of self-efficacy, to understand how more general aspirations for the future and the confidence to achieve them relate to the aspiration to migrate. Though somewhat controversial, there has long been interest in “achievement motivation” as an indicator of personal and societal development (McClelland 1961; Inkeles and Smith 1974; Holsinger and Theisen 1977), and recent studies suggest low aspirations or “aspirations failure” may be holding back development in Ethiopia (Bernard et al 2008; 2014). We wanted to see 1) if low aspirations or achievement motivation is indeed common among the Ethiopian youth surveyed, and 2) how this relates to migration aspirations. Though general aspirations or “achievement motivation” are inherently multi-dimensional, we chose three questions to reflect this interest. First, we include a measurement of education aspirations, which asked what level of education the youth aspired to attain imagining they had no constraints, ranging from 0 (no education) to 16 (a post-graduate degree – Master or PhD). Interestingly, the youth surveyed aspire to very high levels of education, averaging over 14 years, equivalent to a university education. Second, we include a measurement of aspired employment skill level, which, like the education aspirations question, asked what type of job the youth aspired to do in the future, given there were no constraints. The job titles that the youth provided were transformed into a four-category ordinal variable, based on the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) scale (ILO, 2012), with higher values indicating higher skill levels. The average here, 3.27, reflects work at the skill level of professionals, managers, technicians, among others. The last indicator relates to feelings of self-efficacy, measured by the statement *‘I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort’*, with answer categories ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Because few respondents opted for the ‘strongly disagree’ category, we combined this category with the ‘disagree’ category. Levels of self-efficacy were in fact not low, but nor were they exceptionally high, averaging 2.27.

Although the subsequent analyses focus on those with the aspiration to migrate, it should be noted that youth who preferred to stay were relatively evenly distributed across gender (50 per cent male), region, and rural/urban setting (52 per cent rural). However, those who preferred to stay had lower education levels (48 per cent with no education certificate) than those with migration aspirations (31

per cent with no education certificate), and were less often enrolled in school (48 per cent versus 63 per cent).

Educational attainment and wealth levels are highly correlated ($r=0.44$), ranging from below-average wealth levels for those with no education certificate ($M=0.28$) and rising for each subsequent education level to $M=0.52$ for those with the higher education entrance certificate. In other words, children from wealthier families attained higher levels of education. This is not surprising as these children may be less likely to be pulled out of their schooling to help with economic needs at home. Furthermore, secondary education is most often located in urban areas in Ethiopia, and only those who families can afford to support an urban lifestyle for their children (which often requires payment for housing, food, school fees, etc.) can invest in higher levels of education.

Education seems to be significantly and positively related to aspirations to live elsewhere, with those who completed primary school or higher more often aspiring to migrate (see Table 6). However, there are less significant but nuanced differences in the aspiration to migrate internally or internationally that suggest education may influence these imagined destinations differently. For example, internal migration aspirations were highest among those who completed primary school (Grade 8). International migration aspirations, however, were highest among those with the highest educational attainment and among those with no education certificates; those with intermediate educational attainment less often expressed the desire to migrate abroad. Those students who were currently enrolled in school were more likely to aspire to live elsewhere, but less likely to know their destination. Among those who had a clear destination in mind, however, young people who were no longer in school were more likely to aspire to migrate abroad. The following regression analyses reveal to what degree internal and international migration aspirations differ according to education attainment and status when controlling for other variables (for further descriptive analyses of key indicators, see Table A.2 in Appendix).

Table 6: Migration aspirations and education: Descriptive statistics

	Migration aspiration (n = 835)	Destination is known (n = 567)	Internal migration aspiration (n = 567)	International migration aspiration (n = 567)
Educational attainment				
No certificate	0.58	0.62	0.44	0.18
Primary school completion	0.75	0.61	0.49	0.12
Secondary school completion	0.72	0.51	0.34	0.16
Higher education entrance cert.	0.73	0.63	0.41	0.22
F-value	7.01***	1.82	2.59*	1.34
Currently in school				
No	0.61	0.67	0.47	0.21
Yes	0.73	0.53	0.41	0.12
T-value	-3.36***	3.30***	1.20	2.87***

Source: Young lives study Ethiopia, fourth round, older cohort.

Notes. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Regression results

To explore how educational attainment, enrolment, and other development-related factors relate to the aspiration to migrate, Table 7 shows the results for the general migration aspirations (including internal or international) in a step-wise approach. Education (Model 1) and wealth indicators (Model 2) are included separately to avoid potential multicollinearity and check robustness of the results. In a third model we include previous migration experience, the measurement of self-efficacy, and education aspirations. Previous migration and self-efficacy may be related to educational attainment or wealth and were therefore included separately as well. In Table 8 we apply a multinomial logit to test how youth with internal migration aspirations, international migrations aspirations, and those with migration aspirations but without a preferred location, differ from youth who prefer to stay (the reference group).

The findings in Table 7 on general migration aspirations (internal or international) suggest that even when controlling for other variables, the desire to move elsewhere is significantly influenced by educational attainment, such that those who completed primary school or higher are more likely to aspire to migrate than those with no education certificate. Furthermore, those enrolled in school at the time of the survey were more likely to aspire to move elsewhere. Household wealth levels (and its squared term) had an even stronger effect on the desire to migrate, such that those youth who are “in the middle” of the wealth distribution show the greatest aspirations to leave – neither the poorest nor the richest. This bell-shaped relationship between wealth and migration aspirations challenges common assumptions that it is the poorest people who are “pushed” to migrate, but neither is it those with the greatest capabilities to leave. Relatedly, those youth who had recent employment – in agriculture, business, or paid employment – were no different than unemployed youth in their

migration aspirations, challenging an associated development assumption that generating employment in local areas should reduce the desire to leave.

Table 7: Migration aspirations (general)

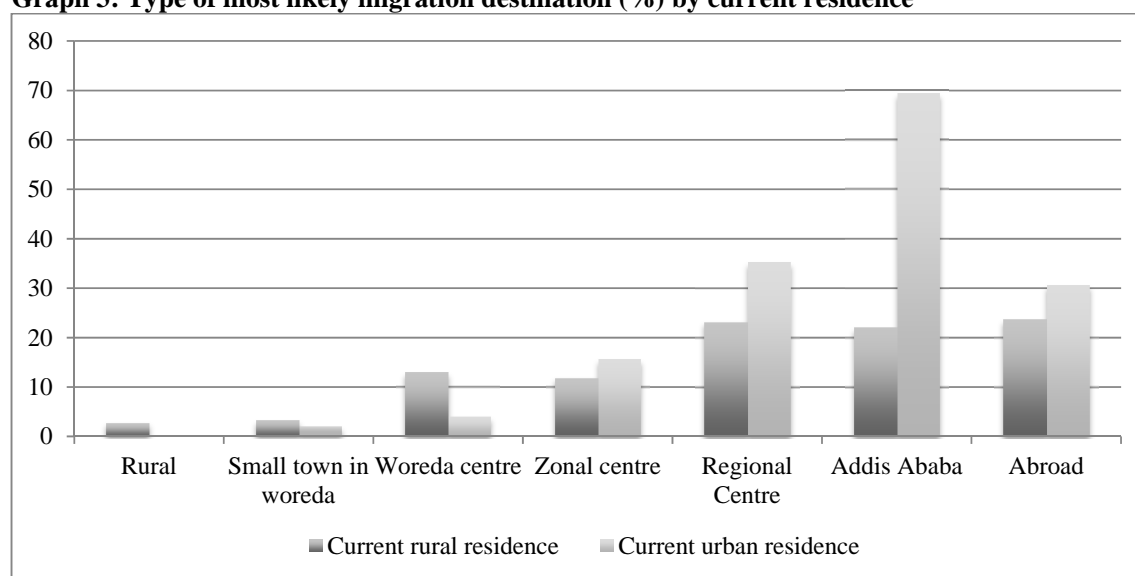
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Age	-0.02 (0.15)	-0.10 (0.15)	-0.06 (0.15)	0.01 (0.15)
Gender (1= male)	0.26 (0.16)	0.13 (0.16)	0.11 (0.16)	0.16 (0.17)
Educational att. (ref. = no certificate)				
Primary school completion	0.68*** (0.20)			0.54** (0.22)
Secondary school completion	0.57*** (0.21)			0.42* (0.24)
Higher education entrance cert.	0.67* (0.36)			0.81* (0.43)
Currently in school	0.42** (0.17)			0.50** (0.20)
Wealth index		5.31*** (1.91)		5.12*** (1.98)
Wealth index squared		-5.88*** (2.19)		-6.35*** (2.25)
Relative wealth		-0.00 (0.09)		-0.04 (0.10)
Worked - farm in past 7 days		-0.09 (0.20)		-0.12 (0.21)
Worked - business in past 7 days		0.21 (0.23)		0.22 (0.25)
Worked - paid job in past 7 days		-0.07 (0.21)		0.12 (0.23)
Previously moved for educ.			-0.21 (0.24)	-0.53** (0.26)
Previously moved for work			0.39 (0.26)	0.69** (0.27)
Feel able to solve most problems			0.43*** (0.15)	0.41*** (0.16)
Aspired education			0.13*** (0.03)	0.08** (0.03)
Aspired empl. skill level			0.21*** (0.08)	0.21** (0.08)
Urban residence	-0.15 (0.18)	-0.07 (0.23)	-0.09 (0.18)	-0.42* (0.24)
Constant	0.01 (2.87)	1.14 (2.72)	-2.18 (2.84)	-3.93 (2.94)
N	820	820	820	820
Pseudo R-Squared	0.05	0.03	0.07	0.09

Notes. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. The region of residence was controlled for by including dummy variables.

Youth who had higher levels of self-efficacy, as well as those with higher education aspirations and an orientation towards more professional forms of work were more likely to aspire to move elsewhere. These findings suggest that more general aspirations for the future, and the confidence to achieve them, are forces driving the aspiration to migrate. Previous experience with migration varied in its influence on the aspiration to do so again. If youth had already migrated for education, they were less likely to aspire to leave again, perhaps because they are already in an urban area where they could envision further education and livelihood opportunities. However, youth who had previously moved for work were more likely to aspire to leave again.

Finally, general migration aspirations do not appear to differ significantly across age groups or sex, though youth currently living in rural areas are more likely to aspire to leave their current location than their urban counterparts. Mapping aspired destinations by current location suggests that youth in urban areas tended to imagine moving to larger urban destinations, particularly the capital city Addis Ababa, while youth in rural areas often looked to local or regional urban centres (see Graph 3).

Graph 3: Type of most likely migration destination (%) by current residence



Source: Young lives study Ethiopia, fourth round, older cohort.

These findings hold for the desire to leave at a general level, but as Table 8 will show, some of these findings shift when we distinguish between aspired migration trajectories, or between internal and international migration. The trends regarding internal migration largely confirm those found in Table 7. Youth who attain higher levels of education (particularly beyond primary school) are more likely to want to move within Ethiopia. So too are youth with higher feelings of self-efficacy, higher education aspirations and those who aspire towards work at higher skill levels. The bell-shaped relationship

between migration aspirations and wealth also holds for internal migration aspirations, confirming that those youth who are “in the middle” of the wealth distribution show the greatest aspirations to leave.

International migration aspirations, however, show more varied trends. It should be noted that only 16% of the sample aspired to migrate abroad, which is an important finding when much of the public discourse on migration assumes that all those in poor countries want to move to the “West.” Interestingly, education is not a significant predictor of the aspiration to migrate internationally, when controlling for other factors, nor were aspired education or employment levels, current employment or enrolment, or rural/urban residence. Rather, the strongest predictors of the aspiration to migrate abroad were gender, previous experience moving for work, and feelings of self-efficacy. While gender did not predict the general desire to migrate (Table 8), men appear to be more likely to aspire to move within Ethiopia or simply “elsewhere” without a clear destination in mind, whereas women are more likely to want to migrate abroad. Of all youth in the sample, 23 per cent of women aspired to migrate internationally, whereas only 11 per cent of men aspired to do so. This finding likely reflects current migration trends, where opportunities to migrate internationally are highly gendered; an increasingly common international trajectory, for example, is women migrating as domestic workers to the Gulf.

The consistent influence of feelings of self-efficacy is notable. The belief that one can overcome obstacles if one invests the necessary effort is a strong predictor of the aspiration to migrate internally and internationally. Migration aspirations, then, likely reflect greater confidence in one’s self and one’s future and represent a key strategy young people use to navigate their way to a better future. Separate analyses show that feelings of self-efficacy appear to increase with each education level ($F=2.29$, $p=0.08$). The consistent influence of this variable in the regression analyses also points to the fact that beyond socioeconomic circumstances, individual characteristics and beliefs are important factors influencing the aspiration to migrate.

Table 8: Internal and International migration aspirations (mlogit)

	Internal migration aspiration				International migration aspiration				Don't know location			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Age	0.01 (0.17)	-0.08 (0.17)	-0.05 (0.17)	0.04 (0.18)	-0.37 (0.25)	-0.30 (0.24)	-0.35 (0.24)	-0.38 (0.25)	0.13 (0.18)	-0.02 (0.17)	0.08 (0.18)	0.21 (0.19)
Gender (1= male)	0.40** (0.19)	0.25 (0.19)	0.26 (0.19)	0.32 (0.20)	-0.71*** (0.27)	-0.69** (0.27)	-0.94*** (0.28)	-0.87*** (0.28)	0.54*** (0.20)	0.35* (0.20)	0.38* (0.20)	0.49** (0.22)
Educational att. (ref. = no cert.)												
Primary school completion	0.84*** (0.24)			0.69*** (0.26)	0.43 (0.35)			0.16 (0.39)	0.59** (0.25)			0.56** (0.27)
Secondary school completio.	0.46* (0.26)			0.27 (0.29)	0.53 (0.36)			0.13 (0.40)	0.66** (0.27)			0.69** (0.31)
Higher education entrance cert.	0.92** (0.43)			0.99* (0.51)	0.93* (0.56)			0.58 (0.63)	0.30 (0.46)			0.70 (0.52)
Currently in school	0.33 (0.20)			0.42* (0.25)	-0.47 (0.29)			-0.37 (0.36)	0.94*** (0.22)			0.92*** (0.25)
Wealth index		4.35*** (2.19)		4.49* (2.35)		3.58 (3.08)		5.21 (3.26)		7.86*** (2.70)		6.63** (2.76)
Wealth index squared		-4.56* (2.57)		-5.39** (2.70)		-2.84 (3.62)		-4.86 (3.84)		-9.75*** (3.19)		-9.13*** (3.26)
Relative wealth		-0.02 (0.11)		-0.04 (0.12)		0.17 (0.16)		0.21 (0.17)		-0.09 (0.11)		-0.19 (0.12)
Worked - farm in past 7 days		-0.10 (0.23)		-0.13 (0.24)		-0.53 (0.34)		-0.60* (0.34)		0.11 (0.26)		0.08 (0.28)
Worked - business in past 7 days		0.23 (0.27)		0.25 (0.29)		0.00 (0.38)		-0.24 (0.41)		0.25 (0.28)		0.41 (0.30)
Worked - paid job in past 7 days		0.15 (0.24)		0.31 (0.27)		0.44 (0.32)		0.27 (0.34)		-0.59** (0.26)		-0.27 (0.29)
Previously moved for educ.			-0.20 (0.28)	-0.50* (0.30)			0.44 (0.38)	0.22 (0.41)			-0.53* (0.28)	-0.87*** (0.32)
Previously moved for work			0.58** (0.29)	0.79** (0.31)			1.16*** (0.34)	1.14*** (0.38)			-0.47 (0.36)	-0.02 (0.38)
Feel able to solve most problems			0.41** (0.17)	0.39** (0.18)			0.66*** (0.25)	0.68*** (0.26)			0.33* (0.18)	0.28 (0.19)
Aspired education			0.13*** (0.04)	0.09** (0.04)			0.06 (0.04)	0.05 (0.05)			0.17*** (0.05)	0.09* (0.05)
Aspired empl. skill level			0.33*** (0.10)	0.34*** (0.10)			0.01 (0.13)	0.09 (0.14)			0.15 (0.10)	0.10 (0.10)
Urban residence	-0.07 (0.21)	-0.04 (0.27)	-0.03 (0.21)	-0.39 (0.29)	-0.19 (0.34)	-0.48 (0.39)	-0.14 (0.32)	-0.53 (0.39)	-0.22 (0.24)	0.05 (0.28)	-0.11 (0.22)	-0.37 (0.31)
Constant	-1.38 (3.24)	0.19 (3.15)	-3.60 (3.33)	-5.77* (3.44)	6.43 (4.73)	4.00 (4.67)	3.29 (4.58)	2.72 (4.64)		-2.29 (3.31)	-6.73* (3.46)	-9.14** (3.68)
N	820	820	820	820	820	820	820	820	820	820	820	820
Pseudo R-Squared	0.08	0.07	0.09	0.12	0.08	0.07	0.09	0.12	0.08	0.07	0.09	0.12

Note. The reference group includes those without migration aspirations. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. The region of residence was controlled for by including dummy variables.

Discussion

The experience of formal education impacts where young people in Ethiopia see their futures, and more often than not it is elsewhere – an urban centre, and for a minority, abroad. Over two-thirds of young people surveyed in the Young Lives study desired to leave their current location, most often with the hope of achieving professional work or further educational opportunities within Ethiopia. Even though our aspirations data are not nationally representative, the observation that young people increasingly eschew rural, agrarian livelihoods is supported by our findings.

The nationally representative Labour Force data confirms that, even across longer distances within Ethiopia and taking older adults into account, migration for education is one notable motivation for urbanward movement, and those with higher levels of education migrate more. This likely reflects greater capabilities – after all, access to higher levels of education often requires the capability to migrate (e.g. the means to live in an urban area, to pay for the costs of school, etc.). However, the Young Lives data suggests that this trend is not only a reflection of differing capabilities or household wealth. Formal education itself is one notable force shaping the aspiration to live elsewhere.

Taking migration aspirations as a whole, or the expressed desire to move someplace else, clear patterns emerge, and most relevant to our study, education—even simply attaining primary and secondary levels—increases the likelihood of aspiring to migrate. Wealth, economic and occupational aspirations, and feelings of self-efficacy also shape the desire to leave, yet their influence varies depending on the aspired migration trajectory: whether it was to a destination within Ethiopia or abroad.

For those looking towards destinations within Ethiopia, youth who had completed primary education were more likely to aspire to migrate compared to those with less or no education. Furthermore, youth who aspired to higher levels of education and more professional forms of work, and the belief that they could overcome obstacles that arose in their path towards achieving those, were also more likely to aspire to migrate. These findings challenge common assumptions about the motivations behind rural-to-urban and international migration in poor countries. Rather than a simple tale of poverty, desperation or other “push factors,” there is a more nuanced relationship between poverty, education, future hopes and the aspiration to migrate. Concerning wealth, for example, the poorest were more likely to prefer to stay where they were than those with medial levels of wealth. Likewise, those with little or no education were more likely to prefer to stay where they were than those with higher levels. These findings lend support to the hypothesis proposed by de Haas (2007) that higher levels of development—here referring to higher levels of income and education—may actually increase the aspiration to migrate. Nevertheless, it is intriguing that those with the highest wealth levels (and likely

the greatest capability to leave) are less likely to aspire to migrate internally than those “in the middle.” Some reasons may be that those with greater wealth are more content, have location-specific economic ties or advantages (cf. Fischer et al 1998), and/or have the capability to achieve their broader life aspirations where they are. However, it is also notable that youth who had recent employment – in agriculture, business, or paid employment – were no different than unemployed youth in their migration aspirations, challenging a common-sense development assumption that generating employment in local areas should reduce the desire to leave.

International migration aspirations showed different dynamics among our sample. The aspiration to migrate abroad was, surprisingly, less clearly influenced by education, wealth, employment, or occupational and education aspirations, yet gender had a more powerful influence on these aspirations than internal ones. This is likely explained by the two common international migration trajectories pursued by young people in Ethiopia today. One is the migration of the higher educated for further education or high-skilled work abroad, often to destinations in Europe or North America. However, another increasingly common international trajectory is for low-skilled, and often less educated, labour migrants to Gulf States. This is a highly gendered migration flow, as women have more economic opportunity there as domestic workers. Though researchers suggest this migration to the Gulf States is largely irregular (Carter and Rohwerder 2016), a significant share of this migration is legal and facilitated. Our findings would benefit from the ability to distinguish between the desired international trajectory, to understand the varying influence of education and wealth on these two very different types of international migration aspirations.

Finally, it is important to note that, in contrast to the development literature on “low aspirations” and “aspirations failure” in poor countries and in Ethiopia (see Bernard et al 2011; 2014), young people expressed “high” future ambitions—reflecting the spirit of optimism we tend to associate with the period of youth. Most young people surveyed believe they could solve the problems that they face if they put in the necessary effort, showed remarkably high educational aspirations, often to university degrees, and the desire for professional work thereafter. Nevertheless, despite significant progress in the expansion of Ethiopia’s public education system, the majority of youth surveyed had not made it past primary levels. This discrepancy highlights the tension inherent in survey questions that ask about aspirations for the future and the objective constraints people face to realise those aspirations. Like migration, there is always variance between those who may aspire to migrate and those who actually do. Nevertheless, capturing the aspirational horizons of these youth illuminates the hopes and goals that guide their life choices and signals where young people envision their futures. For a country where some 80 per cent of the population still live in rural areas, the overwhelmingly urban aspirations of young people surveyed in this study is striking.

Our findings on aspirations both confirm and challenge the explanations migration theories offer about the relationship between education and migration. On the one hand, our findings confirm the general prediction that higher levels of education should predict a greater likelihood of migration, at least internally. On the other hand, the explanations offered by common migration theories remain inadequate to explain these aspirational shifts after relatively low levels of education. Migration theories generally explain that, from the lens of migration decision-making, education boosts the expected economic returns and thus likelihood of internal and international migration; and from the angle of labour market structures, the skilled work that higher levels of education promise are generally dispersed across urban areas. However, the fact that migration aspirations increase even after completing the primary level – where students would still be considered “low-skilled” and little is gained in terms of the Labour market opportunities afforded by migration – suggests a more profound shift in aspirations that extends beyond rational economic decision-making.

Further qualitative research can help disentangle the forces shaping future aspirations at local levels. For example, Maurus’ (2016) research among agro-pastoral societies in Southern Ethiopia suggests that through “the influence of schooling, young people’s concept of time shifts from a cyclical one, concentrated on the reproduction of the social world, towards a linear one, focused on personal and ‘national’ development” (2016: abstract). Tadele and Gella’s (2014) work in two rural sites of Amhara and SNNPR showed that boys and girls came “to see how backward and traditional the lives of their parents are, as a result of their education” (37). It is likely such explorations beyond the economic frame – to the forces that shape notions of the ‘good life’ and ‘good work’ more broadly – that will further illumine our understanding of the impact of education on changing aspirations and migration trajectories.

Conclusion

This paper makes two important empirical contributions to the literatures on migration, development, education, and aspirations. First, we present novel internal migration data for Ethiopia, using national Labour Force Survey data, to examine the educational and other characteristics of internal migrants to better understand the scale and trajectories of internal migrants. We find that rural-to-urban migration is becoming the more common migration trajectory within Ethiopia, and that those with higher levels of education move more. Secondly, we explored where young people envision their futures, to understand how the experience of formal education at the primary and secondary level shapes the desire to live elsewhere. Unique in its ability to reveal gradients of internal and international migration aspirations, the Young Lives data shows that most youth aspire to an urban future within Ethiopia, and that these aspirations are shaped at the level of primary and secondary schooling.

Many countries the world over are pursuing the expansion of universal primary education at an unprecedented level. This paper proposes that this admirable development accomplishment has predictable mobility consequences. Formal education is one force, among others, shaping the migration trajectories of young people in two important ways: 1) structurally, because secondary and higher education is often only found in urban centres and thus the pursuit of higher education requires migration for rural youth (see also Crivello 2011) and 2) aspirationally, because the experience of formal education and the professional opportunities it promises shape young people's notions of the good life, good work, and expectations about where these might be achieved.

Our findings have important implications for migration research and development policy. First, much of the discussion on migration and development focuses overwhelmingly on economic factors. We argue that in addition to economic transformations, the rapid expansion of mass formal education in the modern period is one major factor (among other political, social and cultural drivers) shaping migration trends and trajectories the world over. Studying the influence of formal education on migration aspirations and trajectories – particularly in poorer countries today where new generations of young people experience widening access to primary and secondary education at an unprecedented level – is required to understand how processes associated with development relate to changing migration patterns more broadly.

Second, our analyses show that considering the general aspiration to migrate, or the more specific internal or international migration aspirations, yields different conclusions about the drivers of these aspirations. For example, while gender did not predict the general aspiration to migrate in our first analysis, it did significantly predict migration aspirations when differentiating internal versus international destinations; women were more likely to aspire to migrate abroad, while men were more likely to want to move, without knowing exactly where. As King and Skeldon (2010) argue, to study only internal or international migration lends only a partial analysis of the drivers of migration. To understand changing migration patterns in the years to come, much can be gained from disentangling how social transformations (like widening access to formal education) are experienced and navigated by local populations, which is reflected through their (im)mobility within or across borders. Empirical studies that examine the determinants of internal and international migration together will enrich our understanding of the dynamics of each.

Finally, development agendas that aim to keep people “on the farm” (cf. Rhoda 1983; Bakewell 2008) while at the same time provide higher levels of education are in tension. This study shows that widening access to formal education, even at the primary level, tends to increase the aspiration to leave. Yet this relationship between formal education and migration aspirations is not necessarily fixed. Unaddressed here, but certainly important, is how different kinds of education at the lower

levels (for example, rural education initiatives; see Kwauk and Robinson 2016) and at higher levels (for example, vocational, trade, or technical diplomas; tertiary degrees and certifications; and continuing education) shape migration trajectories. Important questions related to education and changing aspirations likewise persist: particularly how formal education as it is currently practiced acts as the arena in which social norms, aspirations and expectations for the future are shaped; how education curricula and the capacities it develops relate to socioeconomic realities and opportunities on the ground; and how changing values and expectations shaped by education relate to migration decision-making, both internal and international.

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Annex

Table A.1: Descriptive statistics of the main explanatory variables (n = 882)

Variable	M	SD	Min.	Max.
Age	18.50	0.55	16	20
Gender (1 = male)	0.54	0.50	0	1
Urban residence	0.46	0.50	0	1
Highest educational attainment				
No certificate	0.37	0.46	0	1
Primary school completion	0.31	0.46	0	1
Secondary school completion	0.25	0.44	0	1
Higher education entrance certificate	0.07	0.25	0	1
Currently in school	0.59	0.49	0	1
Wealth index	0.36	0.16	0.01	0.88
Relative wealth	2.89	0.90	1	5
Worked on own farm in the past 7 days	0.29	0.46	0	1
Worked on own business in the past 7 days	0.16	0.36	0	1
Worked in a paid job in the past 7 days	0.19	0.39	0	1
Moved for education since 2009	0.17	0.37	0	1
Moved for work since 2009	0.13	0.33	0	1
I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort	2.27	0.55	1	4
Aspired educational attainment	14.02	2.87	0	16
Aspired employment skill level	3.27	1.01	1	4

Source: Young lives study Ethiopia, fourth round, older cohort.

Table A.2: Migration aspirations, wealth and employment: Descriptive statistics

	Migration aspiration (n = 835)	Destination is known (n = 567)	Internal migr. aspiration (n = 567)	International migr. aspiration (n = 567)
Gender				
Female	0.66	0.63	0.40	0.22
Male	0.70	0.55	0.45	0.10
T-value	-1.15	1.72*	-1.12	3.90***
Urban residence				
Rural	0.69	0.60	0.46	0.14
Urban	0.67	0.57	0.40	0.17
T-value	0.41	0.70	1.46	-1.04
Wealth index				
Very low wealth	0.62	0.69	0.52	0.16
Low wealth	0.72	0.52	0.38	0.15
High wealth	0.72	0.52	0.40	0.12
Very high wealth	0.66	0.63	0.42	0.20
F-value	2.18*	3.96***	2.35*	1.36
Relative wealth				
Poorest/among the poorest	0.70	0.57	0.43	0.13
Poorer than most	0.66	0.53	0.35	0.18
About average	0.68	0.58	0.43	0.14
Richer than most	0.75	0.68	0.51	0.16
Richest/among the richest	0.58	0.68	0.36	0.32
F-value	1.02	1.10	1.08	1.51
Worked on own farm in past 7 days				
No	0.69	0.59	0.42	0.17
Yes	0.65	0.58	0.46	0.12
T-value	1.15	0.13	-1.02	1.60
Worked on own business in past 7 days				
No	0.67	0.59	0.43	0.16
Yes	0.71	0.57	0.45	0.12
T-value	-0.76	0.43	-0.36	1.08
Worked in a paid job in past 7 days				
No	0.68	0.56	0.41	0.15
Yes	0.68	0.70	0.50	0.21
T-value	0.05	-2.76***	-1.53	-1.64*
Moved for education since 2009				
No	0.68	0.57	0.42	0.15
Yes	0.67	0.66	0.45	0.20
T-value	0.14	-1.51	-0.49	-1.37
Moved for work since 2009				
No	0.67	0.55	0.42	0.13
Yes	0.73	0.79	0.50	0.29
T-value	-1.18	-4.09***	-1.37	-3.64***
I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort				
Strongly disagree/disagree	0.48	0.59	0.36	0.23
Agree	0.66	0.58	0.44	0.14
Strongly agree	0.74	0.60	0.42	0.18
F-value	7.32***	0.09	0.31	1.18
Aspired education				
Low	0.56	0.63	0.42	0.21
Medium	0.71	0.60	0.45	0.15
High	0.74	0.51	0.39	0.12
F-value	10.13***	2.26	0.72	2.03
Aspired employment skill level				
1	0.55	0.43	0.26	0.17
2	0.60	0.57	0.39	0.18
3	0.76	0.66	0.49	0.17
4	0.72	0.59	0.45	0.15
F-value	5.18***	1.02	1.49	0.39

Notes. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.