

Research Report

Time to Look at Girls: Adolescent Girls' Migration to Sudan



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Summary: Key Findings

The Swiss Network of International Studies (SNIS)-funded research “**Time to Look at Girls: Adolescent Girls’ Migration and Development**” explored the links between migration of adolescent girls and development in the Global South through a holistic approach that contextualises adolescents’ and young women’s agency, choices and migration experiences. This mixed-method and multi-sited research focused on adolescent girls who migrate internally and internationally from Bangladesh and Ethiopia and to Sudan. The fieldwork in Sudan took place between March 2014 and September 2015 among Eritrean and Ethiopian adolescent girl and young women migrants and refugees. It was carried out by Dr Katarzyna Grabska supported by a research team composed of four research assistants who were recruited among the Eritrean and Ethiopian migrant and refugees.

Reasons for migration

The data gathered reveals the extremely precarious situations in which the Ethiopian and Eritrean girls found themselves at home. The combination of economic pressures faced by their families, often households experiencing crisis due to the death of one or both parents or separation, abuse experienced from relatives or step-parents, lack of educational and work opportunities, and in some cases religious and political pressures, provided the background to girls’ decision-making processes with regards to migration. As the results of the survey, life stories and focus group discussions reveal, each girl had specific, often very personal, reasons for leaving their places of origin. Yet, they all departed in what could be described as a ‘search for a better life’, often escaping extreme difficulties experienced at home. Helen, from Karen in Eritrea, was 21 years old when she arrived in Sudan,

Everyone is coming to Sudan. I think of it as a transit country because I want to go farther. I don’t want to stay here. I want to go somewhere else. [...] My plan was to change the life of my family and mine. Life is changing.

A desire to help families who had stayed behind, many of whom were in very dire economic or political circumstances, was expressed by both Eritrean and Ethiopian respondents. Also, gender and generational pressures from their families played an important element in the girls’ decision-making processes. A number of girls in Eritrea, and also in Ethiopia, left in order to avoid arranged marriages. Despite laws in both countries prohibiting under-age marriage (under 18 years old) and changing social norms around early marriage, girls as young as 12 still face the danger of arranged marriages often against their will.

Young Eritrean girls and women refugees often referred to the pressure of national service, the lack of work opportunities, political and religious persecution, as well as the impossibility of achieving a life one would like to have. Their migration motives, however, are more complex than this. The image promoted by the Eritrean diaspora of external possibilities, and the visible impact of migrant remittances, combined with a changing youth culture, contribute to Eritrean youth wanting to migrate abroad. Both girls and boys deliberately choose to escape in search of a better future for themselves, and their families.

Other key factors behind the decisions of both Ethiopian and Eritrean adolescent girls and young women to migrate are linked to the gender norms that operate in both societies. Family circumstances also had a decisive impact on girls’ decisions to migrate. In families that experienced some type of crisis, for example the death of one or both parents, divorce or separation, parents’ health problems, or parents’ absence due to the political situation, adolescent girls were more likely to migrate.

Being an adolescent migrant-refugee girl in Khartoum

Arrival: Using personal, family or friends’ networks, or at times, brokers, girls arrive in the city usually without proper documentation. Arriving in the dusty city of Khartoum is usually met with both excitement and relief after a long exhausting trip. ‘When I finally reached Khartoum, on the back of a pickup filled with other Eritreans, after weeks of travelling on foot, running and not eating, and being stressed, I felt relieved’, said Bana, a 17-year old who came to join her sister who had been in Khartoum for six years. I saw Bana on the day she reached her sister’s house. She was one of the lucky ones who had a family connection in

Khartoum and who had a place to stay, rest and get some food. Bana slept for three days because of her exhausting journey.

Other girls who do not have connections to the city, find arrival in Khartoum an overwhelming and threatening experience. Kibra was 17 when she arrived from an Eritrean refugee camp in Ethiopia transported by a smuggler. As she had no money to pay for the journey, she was made to work for the smuggler.

Settling in: Settling in is a process that takes time: time to get to know the city, establish new contacts and relations, and gain some social and financial capital. The living conditions of migrant and refugee communities vary depending on their financial situation, social status, access to social capital, and support networks. The majority of them, however, live in miserable conditions. Most of the respondents lived in overcrowded accommodation, usually sharing with close or even distant family members, or other girls or women from their places of origin.

There is a great solidarity among the Eritrean members of the Catholic Church who tend to help each other. The Ethiopian and Eritrean Pentecostal churches also have strategies to support their members with accommodation. Some churches, for example, rent housing and provide accommodation to those of their members who are in difficult circumstances. This creates a space of safety and security for the migrants.

Work: Among the respondents interviewed for the research, the majority had some type of employment, such as cleaning or selling tea. As the job market is extremely volatile, most of the respondents, even those who arrived had arrived in Khartoum within the last two years, held more than four or five jobs. Half of the respondents, due to low salaries, had to do two jobs at a time. All the girls and young women commented on how hard it was to find a good job in Khartoum, and how exploitative most of the employment was. Those girls who had been in Sudan for a while, noted that in the past the labour market had been better and more open.

The need for money combined with a lack of other viable work opportunities makes girls accept harsh working conditions. As tea-sellers on the street or in cafeterias the girls would earn about 2000-2500 SDG (220 to 240 USD) per month, working 12-hour days with just one day off a week. The girls also explained that they preferred working as tea-sellers despite the abuse and constant police harassment, because they felt they had more freedom and control over their own lives.

Domestic workers in Sudan get very low pay (between 250 and 800 SDG per month/ 22 USD to 70USD), and often suffer from sexual advances and abuse from male members of the family, and harassment and maltreatment from the women. Girls and young women doing domestic work often complained about the long working hours, heavy work-loads, and the lack of adequate food and living conditions.

Transitions and intersections

The issue of time passing and being wasted was a major concern for most of the Eritrean girl and young woman respondents. Families saw their daughters wasting time and being stuck in adolescence rather than establishing their own families and having children. The idea of time also related to the girls' social status within their wider community and their transition to adulthood, which could be attained through marriage and childbirth, as well as their ability to take independent decisions as adult women (within the limits of their household gender and generational relations).

The issue of waiting and being stuck also resonated with the migrants' inability to successfully help their families to progress. With limited work opportunities (most girls who work as domestic workers, cleaners, tea makers, or waitresses earn between 50-100 USD per month), Sudan does not provide a viable option for a better life beyond survival. Most girls and young women expressed their desire of moving elsewhere, to what they referred to as 'another country beyond Africa'.

The girls' and young women's narratives also reveal that migration and the resultant geographical shift have been a way of developing themselves. They are developing a sense of self in their new location, and in the wider world. This is also illustrated by their awareness of there being no option of return. While for Eritreans,

becoming a person is linked to an advance in the world, for Ethiopians, it is the change in their personalities as a result of migration.

For the adolescent girls there are alternative pathways emerging of becoming an adult. Some of these other pathways relate to the girls' postponing marriages, their independent choice of marriage partners, becoming financially autonomous and supporting those who stayed behind, or sponsoring other family members to migrate. Marriage is also taking on a different meaning, as a migration strategy, and in the form of transnational marriages.

Vulnerabilities of young female migrants and refugees

The Ethiopian and Eritrean adolescent girls and young women are particularly vulnerable, due to: their position as girls and women, being of a specific ethnic and national background, their legal situation as foreigners, the absence of parents, guardians or relatives who could provide support, the nature of their work, and that there is almost no support from international, national or community organisations. Migrant girls were therefore more vulnerable than their local (Sudanese, Ethiopian and Eritrean) peers, who were born and grew up in Khartoum.

Violence and death are omnipresent in the lives of migrants and refugees in Sudan. The walls in their homes are plastered with pictures of those who lost their lives or who went missing during their journeys to Sudan or further to Europe. The uncertainty about the lives of relatives, friends and neighbours was a source of a great stress for migrants and refugees.

One type of violence experienced by the girls once they reach Khartoum is due to their permanent impermanent status. While Sudan has been hosting refugees and migrants for decades, according to official policy refugees are supposed to stay in refugee camps, not in the city. Those who move to Khartoum are often subjected to arbitrary arrests, harassment from the police, detention or even deportation. While most migrants and refugees are subject to such treatment, young girls and women in particular are at greater risk of sexual violence.

Another negative consequence of migration is the adverse effect on the girls' and young women's health. The traumatic, often violent experiences of the journey to Sudan, combined with mental stress, hard physical work, the hot and dusty climate, poor diet and bad living conditions often result in the girls and young women becoming ill.

Sudan is a patriarchal society where the status and living conditions of women and girls largely depend on men. Sharia' law operating in the country further ties the rights of women and girls to men. Women and girls without male protection, in addition to being foreigners, experience greater vulnerability. They are often referred to by Sudanese as 'loose' or 'bad girls' because they transgress the moral codes of *adab* (morality and proper behaviour) by living independently.

The absence of their parents, or other close relatives, who can provide for adolescent girls is very deeply felt. Family relations are extremely important in Eritrean and Ethiopian societies and form the main source of support, emotionally, socially and financially. The absence of close relatives, especially male relatives, exposes girls and young women to abuse and exploitation.

The girls' national and ethnic origin also puts them at risk. Ethiopians and Eritreans are generally stigmatised in Sudanese society, and referred to by the derogatory term, *Habesh*. They are seen as racially and ethnically subordinate. These discriminatory attitudes justify abuse and exploitation, as the *Habesh* are not perceived as equally human.

1 Situating the Research Problem

1.1 Background to the study

The Swiss Network of International Studies (SNIS)-funded research ‘Time to Look at Girls: Adolescent Girls’ Migration’ explored the migration of adolescent girls in the Global South through a holistic approach that contextualised adolescents’ and young women’s agency, choices and migration experiences. This mixed-method and multi-sited research focused on adolescent girls who migrate internally and internationally from Bangladesh and Ethiopia and to Sudan. By considering different geographical realities, the research explored variations in the impact the adolescent girls’ migration has on their own lives, on their families and communities, and the types of vulnerabilities and opportunities that girl migrants experience. The research fills an existing gap in knowledge about the reasons adolescent girls migrate and their aspirations and experiences. It provides insights into their agency and capacity to choose, their future opportunities and constraints, and how these are shaped contextually. The project feeds into project partner Terre des Hommes (TDH) recently launched global campaign ‘Destination Unknown’. The research contributes to global policy debates by producing policy relevant analysis, data and recommendations.

The project was initiated in January 2014 and completed in June 2016. It included the following key partner institutions: Global Migration Centre of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva (IHEID), Terre Des Hommes, the International Organisation for Migration, VU University Amsterdam, University of Sussex, the Refugee and Migratory Movement Research Unit, University of Dhaka, Girl Hub Ethiopia, Feminist Review Trust, and Ahfad University for Women in Omdurman Sudan.

1.2 Migration, girls and adolescence

In the past decade the number of children leaving their homes in search of better livelihoods is increasing rapidly. The large majority of these children are adolescents, and many of these adolescent migrants are girls.¹ The age of young migrants is critical because once they include adolescents and especially those who are legally children, the policy and popular discourse undergoes a marked shift. The independent movements of under 18’s are described very negatively as trafficking and exploitation. The focus on exploited and abused child migrants in international advocacy has made it difficult to recognise and address the needs of other migrating children. A number of studies (see for example Whitehead et al. 2007; Jacquemin 2009; Hashim and Thorsen 2011) have criticised this approach, by showing that early migration is often children’s and adolescents’ own decision and that their reasons for migrating are often very similar to those of 20-25 year olds.

In the recent years an increasing body of literature has been published that pays attention to the agency of children (see for example Huijsmans 2011, Punch 2009; Hashim and Thorsen 2011). Few of the more nuanced accounts of children and young people’s motivations and evaluations of migration have included the experiences of adolescent girl migrants. Girls are invisible in both quantitative and qualitative studies.² The few existing academic studies are mainly of domestic workers in Africa (Erulkar 2006; Erulkar and Mekbib 2007) and Southeast Asia (Camacho 2006; Guo et al. 2011) or occasionally of sex workers (Van Blerk 2008). A few studies in West Africa have taken a more rounded view (Jacquemin 2009, 2011; Hertrich and Lesclingand 2012). Yet most regions of the world report that the rates of adolescent girls’ migration both within their regions and across the globe are growing (Temin et al. 2013).

While the link between migration as part of wider social transformations has been addressed to some extent in the literature (see Bakewell 2010; Castles 2010; Grabska 2013, 2014), there has been less focus on the

¹ Demographic data has shown that in most developing countries the peak age of migration is between the early to mid-20s (Temin et al. 2013).

² This point is emphatically made by the Population Council’s report published in May 2013 (Temin et al. 2013), which is the first report of its kind to examine the social and economic drivers of internal migration for adolescent girls in development countries and the links between migration, risk and opportunity.

particular effects of migration on individual life course (Bretell 2002). The link between transitions into adulthood has been only to a limited extent examined by academic scholars (Hertrich and Lesclingand 2013).

Why is this important? The period between 11 and 20 years of age is a crucial one in the individual life course; a period of critical transitions when major life decisions are taken, albeit in context specific ways (Bucholtz 2002; Del Franco 2012). The spatial shift implied in migration is one such critical transition that intersects with other choices that are being made (Gardner and Osella 2003; Gardner 2009; Grabska 2010). Bucholtz (2002) points out that age is not the only important factor that determines adolescence. Youth is a flexible and social category and is based on locally and context-specific practices and norms. Adolescence in Western thought has been regarded as the primary preparation for adulthood in a 'socialisation' framework that sees adolescents as being on a particular trial for adult roles (Schelegel and Barry 1995). In psychodynamic perspectives, the accent has not only been on social position, but on the search for one's identity, sense of selfhood, and individuation. While it is an important phase in people's lives, with spatial moves having significant implications for its outcomes (see for example migration having impact on postponing the stages of adulthood such as marriage and childbearing), transition into a particular type of adulthood is often closely related to the decision to migrate (Hertrich and Lesclingand 2013; Temin et al. 2003). In Sudan among migrants and refugees from Ethiopia and Eritrea, adolescence was often interpreted not only as being linked to a biological age, but rather as to the social status of the respondents (usually understood as not married and without children).

Adolescence is thus a particular stage in the life course; it is a period of *critical transitions* when major life decisions are taken, albeit in context specific ways (Grabska forthcoming; Bucholtz 2002). Adolescence and migration both connote a journey. Adolescence is a temporal context-specific stage between childhood and adulthood. Migration implies both a temporal and spatial shift. Achieving the identity of an adult woman is part of the transition from childhood, to adolescence, to adulthood. Yet, in the context of migration, the type of adult or adolescent identity that girls and young women aspire to can be transformed and negotiated. Stuart Hall (1991), building on Foucault, notes that identity must be conceptualised as the relationship between subjects and broader discursive practices. It has been now long established that adolescence is 'a socially constructed and multiple identity whose relations to other social formations are constantly in flux' (Austin and Willard 1998: 3). The decision to migrate is often closely related to transition into a particular type of adulthood. Migration can also lead to 'immobility' and delay in the development of one's life course.

1.3. Research questions

The research considered four broad sets of questions:

- The first one concerns **migration choices and trajectories**: what are the **reasons for the first migration and for the subsequent choices**; what were the **circumstances under which the decision to migrate has been taken**?
- The second concerns **young girls' life course transition/s**: how does migration as a spatial shift intersect with other **transitions for adolescent girls** and in which ways does it affect their life trajectories in terms of: education, marriage, work, childbearing?
- The third set of questions concerns the **sources of migrant girls' vulnerability** as well as the **sources of support for the adolescent girl migrants**.
- The last set of questions concerns **the legal frameworks and policy** that shape adolescent girls' migration: How do **national and regional policies and projects** address the needs and priorities of these migrants?

2 The Context

Sudan is located at the crossroads of diverse movements. It is a transit for, a destination for, and a producer of, migrants and refugees. Sudan is marked by informality and thus, opens up many possibilities in the search of a 'refuge', 'good' or 'better' life. For example, while Eritreans perceive it as a transit place in the search for better life opportunities and protection outside of the African continent, for Ethiopian women and girls it is mainly a transit place for earning enough money to be able to return to Ethiopia.

According to the last population census, the population of Sudan in May 2008 was over 39 million, double the population recorded 25 years before (NPC 2010). This increase is mostly due to the natural increase of population (i.e. births outnumbering deaths) rather than to net migration. The structure of the population by age shows a very young demographic profile, with 62.2 per cent of the population aged less than 25 years and a child dependency ratio of 81.6 per cent, with women outnumbering men. Yet, as the International Organisation of Migration points out, migratory flows out, into and through Sudan are an important source of demographic dynamics (IOM 2013).

2.1 Sudan: diversity of movements

Sudan is marked by a diversity of population movements. A host and a producer of refugees, internally displaced and migrants, the country faces some of the largest population movements. Yet, there are no comprehensive statistics concerning international migration. The last census (2008) collected information on citizenship, ethnic group, region of origin, state of birth (or foreign country, without the indication of name), county of usual residence, number of years of continuous usual residence and state of usual residence in the previous year. Despite the lack information on the exact country of birth for those born abroad, these questions are useful for working out migration trends for both international and internal migration.

According to UNHCR figures from 2014, some 2.9 million people in Sudan are internally displaced (UNHCR 2014a). The latest estimates suggested that by the end of 2015, there could be up to 460,000 refugees and asylum-seekers in the country, mainly from Eritrea and South Sudan. In addition, there are some 350,000 South Sudanese who have remained in Sudan since separation in 2011, and remain at risk of statelessness. This makes Sudan a major refugee hub in East Africa and a major waiting station for those hoping to reach other destinations. A large number of internally displaced people were displaced due to conflicts in Darfur, the Nuba mountains, and in the east of the country. The humanitarian environment in Sudan has deteriorated over the past two years, with new, conflict-induced internal displacement in Darfur. About 400,000 new internally displaced people (IDPs) were registered between January and August 2014 in the country (UNHCR 2014b).

Recent statistics show 130,000 officially registered refugees from Eritrea in Sudan, with numbers most likely 3-4 times more. It should be noted that almost all Eritreans receive refugee status in the country. Sudan has been a host to Eritrean refugee population since the independence struggle in the 1970s and the war with Ethiopia (Kibreab 2008, 2003, 1999). Until the 1990s, there were not many official channels for resettlement to third countries for Eritreans. Most of the refugees reside in the camps in the Eastern part of the country, while there is an increasing amount residing in urban centres, especially in Khartoum. In Khartoum, a population assessment of urban refugees and asylum-seekers was completed in 2014. At that time, it was estimated that there were some 32,000 urban refugees. The registration of refugees in Khartoum is carried out jointly by UNHCR and the Commissioner for Refugees (COR). Refugees include mainly Eritreans and growing numbers of Syrians. Since the outbreak of civil conflict in South Sudan, there have been increasing numbers of people arriving to refugee camps at the borders, as well as to Khartoum. The UNHCR estimates point to some 200,000 who have arrived between December 2013 and November 2015 in Sudan, mostly residing in the camps in the border areas.

There is a large Ethiopian population without any precise statistics. Some unofficial estimates put the figure at between 2 and 3 million Ethiopians living in the country. For example, on 24 November 2015, whilst addressing a conference on the issues affecting security and criminal status in Khartoum organised by the state police on the recommendation of the security committee, Khartoum State Governor Lt. Gen.

Abdulrahim Mohamed Hussein stated that some 2 million Ethiopians were living illegally in Khartoum.³ This rather political statement reflects the tensions between the countries. The Ethiopian embassy has recently launched a registration process of Ethiopians residing in Khartoum. So far, some 120,000 people have been registered.⁴ However, most of the Ethiopian population resides in the eastern areas of the country and is extremely mobile. Many are seasonal workers, others spend a few years in Sudan and then move on, either to another country in the region, further to Europe or return to Ethiopia. While a significant percentage of Ethiopians who arrived in Sudan during the Ethiopian-Eritrean war and the Ethiopian civil conflict in the 1990s were perceived as refugees, those arriving more recently mainly come for other reasons.

In addition, there is strong internal migration in Sudan. The National Population Census data from 2008 indicates that 3,972,439 people travelled from their birth state to another state.⁵ Khartoum is the major destination for internal migrants, with 1,847,103 arrivals from other states as of the last census (NPC 2010: 44).

Yet Sudan is also an origin country for migration and a producer of refugees. Official sources indicate that the magnitude of Sudanese migration is between 1.7-2 million Sudanese migrated or living abroad: 51 per cent in neighbouring African States and 48.7 per cent in the Gulf States and Europe and North America (Babiker 2011: 3; NPC 2010). Refugees include those who had sought asylum in other countries due to long-standing conflicts and political and religious tensions in the country. Economic migrants include those who have migrated since 1973 to the oil rich Gulf countries seeking employment opportunities and better wages.

The arrival of international migrants and asylum seekers into Sudan should be put into the context of Sudan itself being a country with strong internal migration and conflict-induced displacement. 'The Characteristics of Internal Migrants in Khartoum State: Findings from the Population Census 2008' by Mohamed Mukhtar Ahmed (2012) takes a close look at the census data from 2008. It points out that internal migrants to Khartoum state are overwhelmingly male, with 46 per cent of female migrants married, and another 5 per cent widowed. The discussion does not focus, or indeed touch upon, migrants from other countries, but a table from the census points to the state of origin for migrants and non-migrants to Khartoum state, with roughly 3.8 per cent and 3.1 per cent of migrants (male and female respectively) reporting that they are not Sudanese.

2.2 Locating girls' and women's migration to Sudan

"What the eye refuses to see" (Kibreab 1996)

Historically, there has been strong, mainly labour, migration flows from Ethiopia. In the 1980s and 1990s, Ethiopians arriving in Sudan were mainly refugees, fleeing the repressive regime and civil conflict. The economic situation in Ethiopia, combined with its rapid demographic population growth,⁶ has created constraints in tackling huge unemployment, especially among the increasingly younger population. Women comprise approximately 52 per cent of the youth labour force. In 2011, some 67 per cent of all unemployed youth were women (Broussard and Tekleselassie 2012; de Regt 2016). Both in rural and urban areas, girls and women are more likely to be unemployed, or employed in the informal sector, often underpaid. Although the poverty rate has decreased from 39 per cent in 2004 to 30 per cent in 2011, still more than 60 per cent of the population lives on less than 2 USD per day (World Bank 2014).

In the 1970s and 1980s, particularly during the Derg regime, Ethiopia experienced large-scale refugee outflows to neighbouring countries and to the Global North. International labour migration commenced mainly in the early 1990s (de Regt 2016). Under the socialist regime of Mengistu, international labour migration was restricted. Only in 1991, a new government made free movement a constitutional right. In 2006 there were around 800,000 to 1 million Ethiopians working abroad (Fernandez 2010). For Sudan, while

³ <http://www.tesfanews.net/millions-of-ethiopians-living-illegally-in-khartoum/>

⁴ Interview with Secretary of Ethiopian Association in Khartoum.

⁵ The same data shows that 3,614,416 people migrated to a new state, and the census accounts for this difference by saying that not all people were counted properly.

⁶ Ethiopia has one of the world's highest birth rates (33/1000 in 2013) and 45 per cent of the population is under 15 years of age (CSA and ICF International 2012).

there are no official statistics for Ethiopians residing in the country, or for those seasonally migrating to Sudan, the Wali of Khartoum announced that there is over one million Ethiopians in Sudan (2015). While at first mainly men doing day labouring or working in agriculture, increasingly younger women and adolescent girls are arriving independently in Sudan (Dom et al. 2015). This confirms the general trend of large numbers of young women migrating to the Middle East to fill the demand for domestic labour (Kebede 2001; Ahmed 2008; Fernandez 2010; de Regt 2010, 2016; Afework and Habte 2011; Jones et al. 2014). While Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States have become major destinations for Ethiopian women migrants, less economically stable places such as Sudan and Yemen have also received large numbers of girl and women migrants.

The migration of Ethiopian women has become an increasingly visible and recognised issue. In the past decade, a number of international organisations and Ethiopian researchers have studied Ethiopian women's migration to the Middle East (Kebede 2001; ILO 2011; Minaye 2012; Reda 2012). Yet, there has been a dearth of literature and research that explores the increasing number of adolescent girls that migrate to the Middle East and Arab countries. The SNIS-funded research in Ethiopia (de Regt 2016) and in Sudan, including a study by the Overseas Development Institute (Jones et al 2014a) has started filling that gap. While international migration is officially not allowed under the age of 18, many adolescent girls are able to obtain false identification or migrate without any documents and girls as young as 13 years of age do migrate abroad (Jones et al. 2014). Most of the young Ethiopian women work in the informal sector in Sudan, either as domestic workers, tea-sellers, or servers in restaurants. These sectors of work have become increasingly reliant on Ethiopian migrants due to the outflow of South Sudanese who occupied these jobs until 2011 and the division of Sudan (Jamie 2013).

In response to increasing reports of abuse and human rights violations that young women migrants are subjected to at their places of destination, in November 2013 the Ethiopian government announced a temporary ban on migration to the Middle East. This ban has not been lifted as of April 2016. As a result many women who were intending to migrate are stuck in Ethiopia, or decided to migrate over land to Sudan or Yemen instead. In addition, migration via Kenya increased as Ethiopians do not need a visa to enter Kenya. Brokers facilitated the use of these irregular migration routes, with all their consequences. Sudanese consulates in response to the Ethiopian ban, put a ban on granting visas to young Ethiopians, especially women. In consequence, migration and work without papers to Sudan have increased, putting girls and younger women at greater risk.

Sudan has been a host to Eritrean refugees and migrants for at least three decades. After the 1952 Federation with Ethiopia, and then the de-facto annexation by Ethiopia, many migrated first to Addis Ababa. In the 1950s, less privileged Muslims left for nearby Arab countries, first as migrant labour, but then in the 1960s, as Eritrea's nationalist struggle against Ethiopia intensified, increasingly as political refugees (Kifleyesus 2012; Connell 2013). Most of the Eritrean refugees residing in Sudan stem from the independence war against Ethiopia. A large Eritrean diaspora was created as a result. Some estimate that around one million Eritreans live outside the country across Africa, the Gulf, Middle East, Europe, the US, Canada, Australia and Israel (ICG 2014). The Eritrean People's Liberation Front won the de facto independence from Ethiopia in 1991 (de jure in 1993). Many decided to return to build a new state and contribute to its growth. While relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea at first seemed to normalise, they deteriorated further into war a couple of years after Eritrea introduced its own currency in 1997. Another war broke out in May 1998 over a border dispute, but more concretely over differences relating to ethnic tensions and economic approaches. It resulted in 100,000 deaths and millions of dollars diverted from much needed development into military activities and weapons procurements. It also led to the closing of the border between the two countries, with families being divided by the new political situation.

The new political situation did not result in an opening of political space; authoritarian rule under Isaias Afwerki persisted despite initial promises, and multi-party system and governance reforms failed (ICG 2014). A highly militarised state was created that was 'shaped by war and run by warriors' (ICG 2013). While this was initially supported by pastoralists and peasants who were not much affected by the rules, urban educated elites increasingly resisted the idea of unending military service instituted in 1995. As a result, since 2001, increasing numbers of young people have deserted national service and crossed over to Ethiopia, Sudan or Djibouti as transit points to third countries with well-established Eritrean communities. Their aim was also to obtain a meaningful asylum and better economic opportunities.

The government instituted a ‘shoot-to-kill policy’ to deter potential deserters, but quickly this evolved into ‘a chaotic “pay-to-leave” trade in which the threat from the Rashaida ex-paramilitaries⁷ was crucial to generate revenues’ (ICG 2014: 8).⁸ Linking up with other Sahelian and Saharan criminal elements (already active along traditional smuggling routes toward Europe), a complex smuggling network through which Eritrean migrants were channelled was established. As a result, vicious human trafficking exposing migrants and asylum seekers to gross human rights abuses emerged.

Most of the young Eritrean girls and women interviewed in Khartoum, as well as their relatives who came to visit from Eritrea, explained that most of the young people have left Eritrea,

In the evenings, we used to go out on the main street in Asmara, to have a walk, to find friends, to chat, to relax, to drink tea and go to bars. But now, when you go out especially on the weekends, almost no young people are there. You only see the old people, those who have health problems, everyone else is gone.

Since 2002, with the introduction of obligatory national service, there has been a significant increase of outmigration of young people from Eritrea. Some have referred to it as an ‘exodus’, claiming that some 40 per cent of the young people are gone from Eritrea (Adom 2015).⁹ Whether these numbers are correct, it is hard to confirm. However, the dominant Eritrean asylum seeking population reaching Sudan and Ethiopia is young and predominantly male, but increasingly becoming female. There are also increasing numbers of young children crossing the borders on their own (UNHCR 2014a).

In the Sudanese landscape Eritreans and Ethiopians tended to and continue to be conflated as *Habesh*.¹⁰ The choice of these two nationalities for the research was also to see what are the commonalities and differences in their migratory trajectories.

2.3 City as a space: Khartoum: a multi-face city

Khartoum, in the desert, is located where the two Niles meet, and is known as the *المقرون* (*al-Mogran*), meaning the confluence. Divided by the Niles, Khartoum is a tripartite metropolis with an estimated population of over five million people, consisting of Khartoum proper, and linked by bridges to Khartoum North (*al-Khartūm Bahri*) and Omdurman (*Umm Durmān*) to the west. It is a place of enormous power and privilege, discrepancies and contradictions, a place of aspirations, corruptions, dreams, and failed attempts to construct a ‘new’ life. The ‘modernity dream’ of making Khartoum into a Dubai of North Africa clashes with the everyday reality and struggle for survival of the impoverished. This is most apparent when one looks at the ‘unfinished’ or ‘in progress’ architectural landscape of the city, with skyscrapers in the Mugran area, new quarters on the Nile with large villas constructed for the elites, unfinished apartment and office buildings from the era of the economic boom, and dirt roads full of holes, uncollected garbage, and unmaintained low houses (Franck 2015). Khartoum exemplifies that contradiction: a dream of crossing into a different world... yet often getting stuck in the daily experience of desperation, discrimination, and destitution.

⁷ See ‘Report of the Monitoring Group’ (2011) and ‘Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2060 (2012)’, UNSC S/2013/440, 19 June 2013 for further explanation on the connections between Eritrean officials and Raishada gangs.

⁸ For reported Rashaida abuses of Eritrean migrants and ransom demands to family members, see “‘I Wanted to Lie Down and Die’: Trafficking and Torture of Eritreans in Sudan and Egypt’, Human Rights Watch, February 2014; also, for a more nuanced analysis of reported Rashaida involvement, Rachel Humphris, ‘Refugees and the Rashaida’, 2013. The Rashaida’s leading politician and Sudanese minister, Mabrouk Mabarok Salim, denies any involvement from his community, ‘Sudan blames foreigners for proliferation in human trafficking’, *Al-Monitor*, 31 January 2013.

⁹ In a 38-page letter addressed to the Eritrean people, four Eritrean Catholic Archbishops (of Asmara, Keren, Barentu and Segeneiti) described the situation in the country and appealed to the faithful to solve the economic crisis, exile and other predicaments from which they suffer, ‘Eritrean Catholic Bishops ask: “Where Is Your Brother?”’, *Awate* (awate.com), 7 June 2014.

¹⁰ In Sudan, the term *Habesh* is used to have a derogatory meaning. It also collides Ethiopians and Eritreans into one society. *Habesha* is commonly used by Tigrinya speakers, Eritreans and the inhabitants of the Ethiopian side of the Plateau, such as Tigrinya, Amhara and Oromo, to point to their cultural, social and political connection (Smidt 2010). It is not perceived as derogatory by them.



Khartoum with its oil boom era architectural constructions



Streets in Khartoum

During the 2004-2011 oil boom and before the separation with the South Sudan, Khartoum offered a wide range of work opportunities for migrants and refugees. Yet, since the creation of South Sudan and the cutting off of main oil supplies to the North, Khartoum's economic growth and expansion has declined. This is most visible from the unfinished construction projects that were going to transform the landscape of this historically sleepy and slow-pace city into a global bustling metropolis.

It is a largely low-built, sprawling city, under an almost perpetual haze of dust. Upon arrival in Khartoum one is struck on the one hand by its chaotic arrangement, but on the other its still relatively slow pace. Its frequent

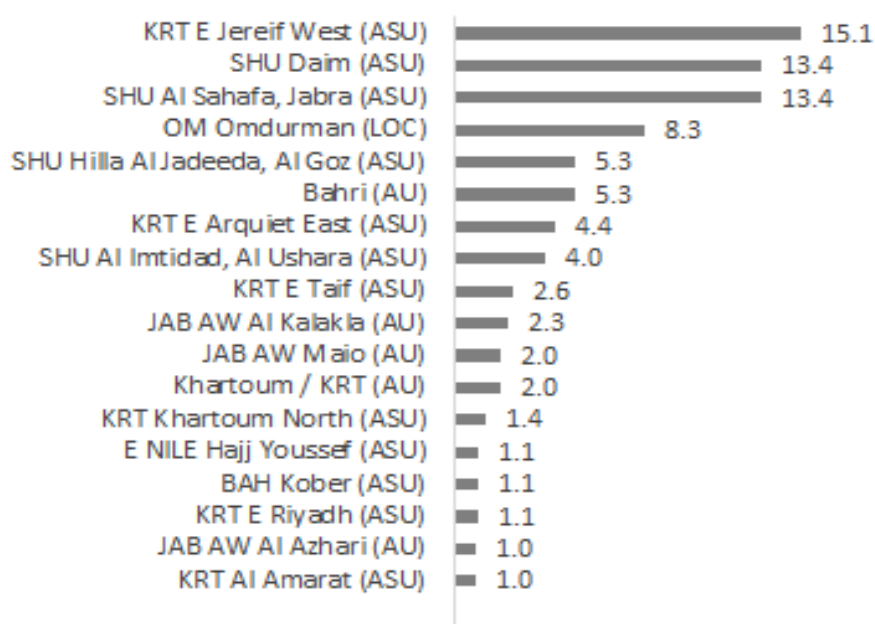
power cuts and the oppressive heat infuse everything with a sticky torpor. Unlike Cairo to the north or Nairobi to the south, Khartoum does not have that frenetic energy or drama. The country's international reputation for hard-line Islamism and ethnic warfare jars with the city's subdued mood.

Today, with the South seceded in 2011 in a referendum, Khartoum is less diverse, as the city's large southern minority moved almost en masse to South Sudan. It is quieter, poorer, the loss of the South's resources hurting economically and the loss of the southern territory smarting on a visceral, existential level. War still rages in the Nuba Mountains and tensions simmer in the east and west of the country. Rebel movements have twice approached and once entered Khartoum in the past five years.

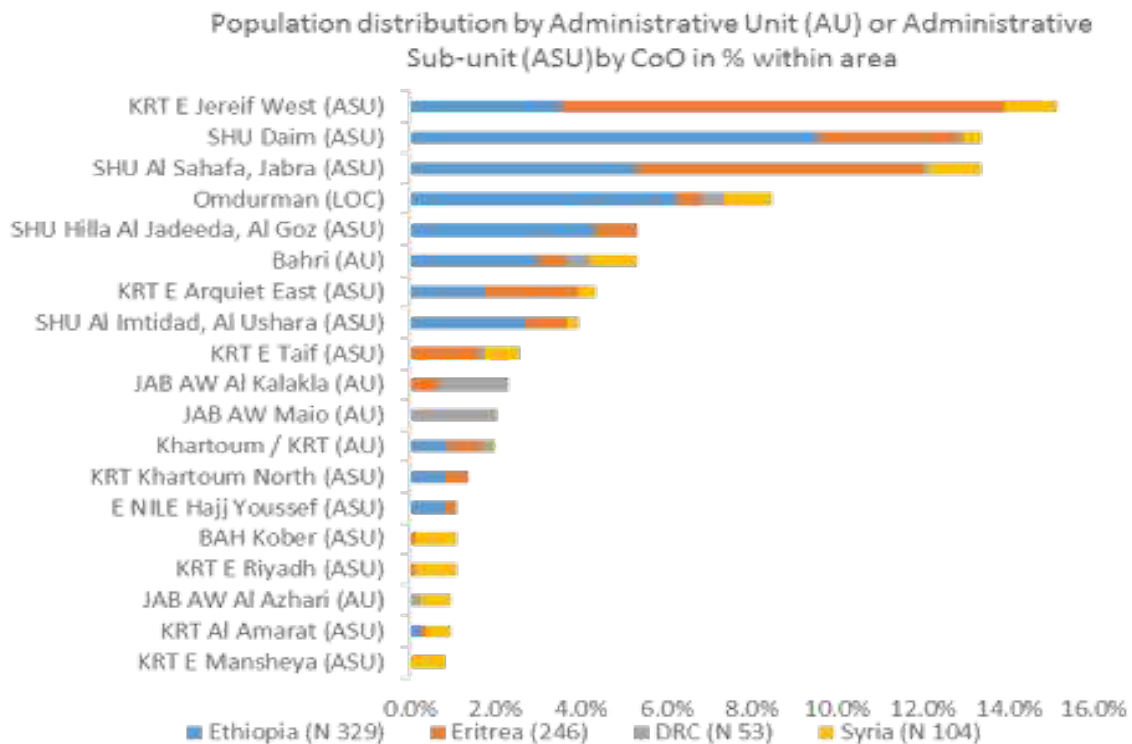
Over the period of our fieldwork (2014-2015), it is noticeable how wealth in Khartoum has become more and more entrenched in the hands of the few, and the rest of the population has become poorer. With sanctions still in place against Sudan, the inflation rate has been rocketing through the roof (in 2013 \$1 was exchanged for 8 SDG in the black market, whereas at April of 2016 it reached 13.5 SDG). When South Sudan declared independence in July 2011, it took with it about 75 per cent of the country's oil output. The Sudanese pound has lost 100 per cent of its value since South Sudan's secession, pushing inflation rates to record levels given that the East African nation imports most of its food. The Khartoumians experience lack of basic commodities, including shortages of bread, milk, gas, and petrol. The prices of basic goods have almost doubled, while salaries remain low.

The city has immense class and ethnic diversity, yet spatially these are very intermixed, with unclear divisions between the very rich and the very poor. Large numbers of internal migrants and displaced people reside throughout the city, although mainly in the shanty outskirts. There are, however, some city quarters that are more popular with international migrants. The urban population assessment that was carried out by UNHCR in 2013-2014 (UNHCR 2015) identified the following distribution of refugee and asylum seekers throughout the city (in order of density): Jereif West, Daim, Al Sahafa, Jabra, Imtidad, Omdurman, Bahri, Arkawet East and Taif, Jabal Awliya (including Kalakla, Mayo, Al Azhari). These areas were also the main residential areas for the Eritrean and Ethiopian girl and women migrants interviewed for this study.

Population distribution by Administrative Unit (AU) or Administrative Sub-unit (ASU) in % within area



UNHCR Khartoum Population Assessment Report 2015 – Main Migrant and Refugee Residential Areas in Khartoum



UNHCR Khartoum Population Assessment Report 2015 – Distribution of Refugee Population in the Different Neighbourhoods in Khartoum (CoO - country of origin)

The neighbourhoods hosting refugees in Khartoum are very mixed, with a variety of nationalities and Sudanese ethnic groups of internal migrants sharing the same living spaces. As the UNHCR (2015) notes, the Eritrean and Congolese communities are geographically concentrated in certain areas, while the Ethiopian and Syrian communities are more spread out throughout the city. For the Eritreans, the main residency areas include, Jereif West, Sahafa and Jabra, Daim and Arkaweeet East. Ethiopians tend to live in the same areas as the Eritreans, but with higher densities in Daim and Hilla Jadeeda. These are also areas that have been historically inhabited by Ethiopians. A significant number of Ethiopians live in Omdurman and some are in Bahri.

Jereif West is a popular neighbourhood with large numbers of Ethiopians and Eritreans residing there. Along the main street that runs through the area, Jereif Street, there are numbers of Ethiopian and Eritrean cafes, restaurants, internet cafes, shops selling traditional attire, incense and books in Tigrinya and Amharic, but also money exchanges and dealings in smuggled goods between Eritrea, Ethiopia and Sudan. The neighbourhood is a *bricolage* as next to impoverished migrants and refugees living in shacks without water, functioning sewage systems, or electricity, there are stunning villas and affluent houses where the Khartoum elites dwell.

One of the advantages once offered by Sudan, and by Khartoum more specifically, was relatively easy access to jobs both in the formal and informal sectors. Before the separation with the South, Khartoum used to offer quite a number of job opportunities for migrants. Qualified Eritreans and Ethiopians worked as technical staff, often bringing in higher educational skills than the local population. Ethiopians still work as both seasonal and long-term workers in the East in the agricultural sector. Yet, since the economic decline beginning in 2011, and the growing pressure from the Sudanese young educated population to enter the labour market, there are less profitable opportunities in the city. As a result, government regulations have become much stricter on work permits for foreigners. Even well-educated Ethiopians and Eritreans are finding it increasingly difficult to access formal employment. The majority of migrants work in the food industry, running restaurants, or working as waiters or cleaners. Some work as teachers, others are self-employed as rickshaw drivers, and some work in construction. For girls and women, work opportunities are

rather restricted. As the labour market is highly gendered and regulated by conservative Islamic norms, female foreign migrants take up jobs that Sudanese women are not allowed to do. This includes working as domestic workers, waitresses, working in fast-food places, or as cleaners.

2.4 Migration policies and regulations

Main regulations

Sudan does not have a comprehensive migration policy or what is referred to as a ‘migration management strategy’ (IOM 2013: 73), but many ministries and national institutions are involved in the overall framework for migration. Sudan has also signed and in some cases ratified a number of international conventions relating to migration (IOM 2013: 77). The legislation regulating the admission and residency of foreigners, the acquisition of citizenship, the exit of nationals, the management of international refugees and other migration related aspects is mainly covered by the following legislation:

- The constitutions of the Republic Sudan and the revised Nationality Law
- The Labour Law (1997)
- The Refugees Law (1974, currently under revision)
- The Sudanese Nationality Act (1957, with amendments in 1974 and 1994, 2011)
- The Passport and Migration Law (1994)
- The Humanitarian Aid Commission Act (1995, with amendments in 1999)
- The Investment Law (1999, with amendments in 2003)
- The Law of Employment of Foreigners (2001)
- The Regulations of Foreigners (2006)
- The Tripartite Agreements on Refugees jointly established by Sudan, UNHCR and selected neighbouring countries

Immigration and passports regulation 1994

Issues of migration under Sudan’s laws are mainly dealt with by the 1994 Passports and Immigration Act which also has a few provisions for dealing with the phenomenon of ‘irregular migration’. This Act repealed the 1960 Passports and Immigration Act and came into force on 17 May 1994. It regulates admission, stay and deportation of foreign nationals. It also regulates both foreign and Sudanese nationals as well as imposing criminal sanctions for violating the Act. Article 9 states that ‘no person shall enter or depart from Sudan, except through the points of entry and exit to be prescribed from time to time by the Minister of Interior’. Article 10 focuses in particular on non-Sudanese nationals. It states ‘no aliens shall enter the Sudan unless they are in possession of a valid passport and entry visa which shall be granted by a competent authority, and shall where practicable, be endorsed on the alien’s passport’.

Legal residence in Sudan is regulated by Article 4 which provides that an alien may not reside in the Sudan unless in possession of valid residence permit. As most of the Ethiopian and Eritrean migrants and refugees do not have legal entry into Sudan, their residence is rather precarious as will be shown in the following sections.

Access to employment for non-Sudanese nationals is governed by the 2000 Regulation of Employment of Non-Sudanese Act. Although non-Sudanese citizens cannot work without a work permit (Article 6), the Act exempts certain categories of persons from getting work permits (diplomats, non-Sudanese nationals in diplomatic missions or international organisations, individuals exempted according to international agreements to which Sudan is a party, non-Sudanese businessmen and professionals). Chapter II of the Act also provides some preferential treatment for Arab and African nationals over other nationalities with regards to work permits.

In order to control irregular or illegal migration, the 1994 Passports and Immigration Act stipulates a number of sanctions including the deportation of aliens, and other criminal punishments for breach of immigration rules. This includes punishments by imprisonment of a term not exceeding two years or with a fine or both.

Most Ethiopians and Eritreans having entered ‘irregularly’ and without necessary residence documents live in constant fear of imprisonment and deportation and are forced to manoeuvre their ‘illegality’ through a variety of strategies (see next section).

The Act further penalises aliens who enter Sudan ‘without permission’ (Article 31). Police have the power to arrest without a warrant any alien who enters or remains in the Sudan without permission, and detain him/her in police custody or punish him/her according to the Criminal Procedures Act, 1991 pending trial. The Act also stipulates penalties for those who abet or aid others in entering the country illegally.

Sudanese immigration and nationality laws do not provide specific protection for immigrants in terms of legal regulations and immigration policies. There is no general principle of law not to expel migrants when they infringe immigration rules. Repeated expulsions of Eritreans have also taken place, despite the fact that they entered as refugees. These expulsions had to be negotiated with the UNHCR. Under Chapter VII of the 1994 Act the Minister of Interior has wide discretionary powers to expel or deport any foreign national from Sudan on several grounds (Babiker 2012: 5) and access to rights for aliens who have entered illegally is highly circumvented in the Sudan (for further discussion see Babiker 2012).

Refugees and asylum laws

Sudan has a long history in hosting refugees. Asylum has been predominantly granted en masse, as with mass influxes, as it is practically impossible to screen each case individually (Babiker 2010).

The 1974 Law on Refugees was written to comply with the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1969 African Unity Convention, and this is most apparent in Section 4 of the law. This section defines refugees not only as those fleeing from fear on a personal basis, but also those fleeing because of more collective phenomena. Additionally, the definition was further expanded to include orphans of war. The law also defines ‘people of concern’, whose status is different from those of refugees. The Asylum Act was renewed in 2014. The renewal defines a refugee as someone who has registered within 30 days. Otherwise, asylum seekers are perceived as illegal migrants. The law also criminalises illegal entry and provides for deportation.

Among the rights and duties of refugees and asylum seekers in Sudan, they are officially granted the right to work, as per Article 14 of the 1974 refugee law, so long as they are not working in a field tied to security or defence of the country. They must officially be recognised as asylum seekers prior to employment, and their paperwork must be filed with the Ministry of Interior. Experts and refugees commented that while the possibility to work is included in the law, refugees are often unable to obtain employment, except in the informal sector.

Human trafficking, kidnapping, and smuggling

Much of the discourse and policies at the national, regional and international level in Sudan relating to migration issues focus on combatting trafficking and smuggling in the region. Since the shift in smuggling routes from 2011 from via Sudan and Egypt to Israel towards routes leading via Libya to Europe (and via Djibouti to Yemen and Saudi Arabia) there has been an increasing number of asylum seekers and refugees being kidnapped, whether while in camps or when seeking to be smuggled to other countries. These people are often subjected to torture and sexual assault and risk being killed and sold by organ traffickers should their families fail to pay ransoms that range from 5,000 to 40,000 USD (UNHCR-IOM 2014: 3-4; HRW 2014; Van Rejsen 2013). Of these asylum seekers, a significant number are children. On average, 34 children a month arrived in Sudan unaccompanied in 2012, and these children are at particular risk of abduction, trafficking, and violence in general. According to Sudanese laws, children under 15 years of age are unable to access asylum processes, and thus, are left to UNHCR to handle. There is a particular challenge in providing protection for the under-18s, as most children are highly mobile and move on to other areas from the camps quite quickly, either to seek their families elsewhere or to find greater opportunity (UNHCR-IOM 2014: 6).

To address this situation, in 2013-2014, UNHCR and IOM created a strategy with five major goals: enhancing security and mitigating risks, strengthening protection responses, identifying solutions and alternatives, building national capacity, and enhancing cooperation. To this end, most of the work on these goals happens in close collaboration with the government on both the national and the state level, educating and training

those in regular contact with migrants, creating structures more responsive to asylum seekers, and fostering communication between different sectors and agencies. In 2014, Sudan ratified the Anti-trafficking Protocol and created a national law to combat human trafficking and smuggling. Sudan has also taken on the leadership of the regional strategy to combat trafficking and smuggling under the initiative ‘the Khartoum Process’. In 2015, the Attorney General Mawlana Omer Ahmed Muhammad, in a statement to the Sudanese Media Centre, said that the Ministry of Justice has made great efforts in countering the phenomenon of human trafficking, noting that that ministry issued an order to establish special prosecution offices countering human trafficking in the states of Khartoum and Kassala. He further stated that he had commissioned a deputy prosecutor in Kassala to undertake prosecutorial tasks, in addition to commissioning deputy prosecutors for the border states. Mawlana Omer announced that they had taken up 45 cases on human trafficking under the Human Trafficking Law of 2014, of which there had been rulings on 9 cases, 16 were still continuing in court, and 6 others were under investigation (Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons 2014).

The major shortcoming of the legislation is that much of it focuses on punishing the traffickers, with little or no recourse to protection for the victims. As the ‘victims’ enter the country without proper documentation, they can subsequently be tried under the 1994 Immigration Law for illegal entry. Interviewed respondents, policy experts and academics have confirmed that most young Ethiopian and Eritrean women (and men) are smuggled into Sudan. They arrive illegally, although recently there has been some relaxation of the rules on the border, and there seem to be more people arriving legally. In most cases, smuggling cases turn into trafficking cases. Some people are being taken by other groups, including Rashaida or other trafficking circles once they cross the border into Sudan. In the past, Rashaida and other trafficking rings (many of them are Eritreans) were involved in kidnapping people directly from the Shegarab refugee camps. Between 2011 and 2014, the camps were very dangerous and thus many people attempted to move on to Khartoum. Yet, more recently, the kidnappings have changed and moved more towards Khartoum. There were apparently 28 cases that were taken to court in East Sudan in 2013. In Khartoum, no case of kidnapping has been taken to court (victims’ families usually do not want to report cases as they are afraid for their lives and for those of their loved ones; thus, they prefer to pay the money to release their family members). According to local news reports, in 2013 there were 124 cases of Eritrean children being trafficked for organs.

Most experts are sceptical about the court system for these cases. The weak rule of law – constant struggle with a judge – makes it difficult to make progress. Judges have a lot of independence in their judgements, and thus it is mostly in their hands. Even if they have been trained in anti-trafficking and refugee law, as judges often change, the new judges make their own decisions. Victims and witnesses of kidnapping and trafficking are regularly incarcerated together with the perpetrators and then usually charged with illegal entry or adultery. They are prosecuted together with the perpetrators in the same room. UNHCR has tried to secure separate rooms for them, but this continues to be difficult. It has been reported that there is much intimidation during the trials and thus witnesses or victims are scared to report the incidents and testify.

Sudan is leader of the ‘EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative’ termed the Khartoum Process. This happened as the result of a conference that took place in November 2014 in Rome and brought together ministers of the 28 EU Member States and of several African states (Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Tunisia), as well as representatives of the African Union. The goal is of this initiative is to give new impetus to regional cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination, particularly regarding the route between the Horn of Africa and the EU.¹¹ The Khartoum

¹¹ The initiative includes:

- Developing a cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination in order to fight against irregular migration and criminal networks, especially through initiatives concerning technical assistance, training and exchange of information and of best practices.
- Upon request, cooperating with countries in the region to strengthen their capacities in the field of migration management.
- Assisting countries in implementing prevention measures such as information campaigns aiming at raising awareness on the risks of irregular migration (trafficking of human beings, smuggling).
- Strengthening the coordination between all services involved in order to tackle human trafficking and smuggling of migrants.
- Identifying and prosecuting criminal networks.

Process is intended to limit the number of people travelling to Europe via the Horn of Africa migration route. The initiative has been criticised by the human rights organisation AEDH (the European Association for the Defence of Human Rights) as attempting 'to arrange the material conditions to avoid that they [migrants and refugees] come to Europe, especially by establishing asylum processing centres within African countries'. The process foresees, amongst other things, the enhancement of law enforcement powers and border controls in East African states.

2.5 Specific regulations affecting adolescent girl migrants

The Child Act

The *Child Act* of 2008 was enacted in 2010. It is a well-developed legislation supported by UNICEF. It is not clear, however, how much local ownership there is of this law in reality. The Act calls for the establishment of family and child units in the police force and for training on child law. While the Child Act treats girls and boys equally, they are perceived differently in criminal law. Much of the implementation of the criminal law and the treatment that the children receive depends on the moral standard of those receiving the claims and prosecuting. TDH commented that the Child Act laws implementation mechanisms are not in place. For example, the Act prohibits, but does not prescribe punishments for, forced child labour, child prostitution, sex trafficking, and the recruitment of children under the age of 18 into the armed forces; although the Act includes provisions for the rehabilitation and reintegration of child victims, no government entity has been assigned responsibility for their implementation. Some states, such as South Kordofan, have enacted their own child acts based on the national law.

The Public Order Act

Much of the harassment that Ethiopian and Eritrean girls and women experience comes not only from their irregular status in Sudan, but from the Public Order Act of 1991. The Act prohibits mixed social gatherings and has been the basis for the almost complete exclusion of women from public life. Women have been subjected to official harassment in the enforcement of dress codes and public association. The arrest, imprisonment and torture of women for contravening even the more trivial provisions of the Public Order Act demonstrates how women, both foreigners and citizens, are assigned a lower status in society and under the Shari'a law. The Act focuses on 'indecent behaviours' which can lead to prosecution. Indecent behaviour is interpreted in a variety of ways. Not wearing a hijab, or wearing trousers in some cases can be considered as 'indecent' and thus, risk arrest and prosecution. Nasreen Malik pointed out succinctly after the flogging of a well-known Sudanese female activist in 2010:

.... in Sudan, the sexes intermingle and women roam hijab-free and trouser-clad, yet may fall foul of the law for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. The 'indecent' rules have been applied arbitrarily and have never really taken root among the Sudanese. The victims, more often than not, are the dispossessed and disenfranchised.

Article 152 of Sudan's 1991 Criminal Act, which allows for the flogging of women, hands a disproportionate amount of power to the enforcer, rendering him judge, jury and executioner. Anyone from policemen to

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- Setting up criminal law frameworks or strengthening the existing frameworks and fostering the ratification and the implementation of two additional protocols to the 'United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime': the 'Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Air and Sea' and the 'Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children'.
 - Supporting the victims of human trafficking and protecting the human rights of smuggled migrants.
 - Fostering sustainable development in transit and origin countries in order to tackle the causes of irregular migration.
 - Upon request, assisting countries in setting up and managing reception centres, in ensuring access to asylum procedures and in counselling migrants.
 - Developing a regional framework to facilitate the return of migrants – including voluntary return - and their reintegration in the country of origin.

plainclothes security officers can take matters into their own hands by invoking the vague and generous allowance in the law, which states:

Whoever commits, in a public place, an act, or conducts himself in an indecent manner, or a manner contrary to public morality, or wears an indecent, or immoral dress, which causes annoyance to public feelings, shall be punished, with whipping, not exceeding 40 lashes, or with a fine, or both. The act shall be deemed contrary to public morality, if it is so considered in the religion of the doer, or the custom of the country where the act occurs.

Amnesty International's report (2014) on the phenomenon says:

The power given to the public order police to evaluate what is immoral and indecent has resulted in widespread breaches and abuses over the years. There have been many cases where officers have taken advantage of their position to blackmail women or men and to abuse them verbally and even physically. Women are left at the mercy of these decisions without guidelines on what can trigger their arrest in a public or private space.

Eritrean and Ethiopian girls are widely seen as 'loose' and easy, interested in sex, and easy to have sex with. As the head of one of the local NGOs reported, during a gender equality awareness raising discussion with university students, the young (Sudanese) men commented that it is inappropriate and wrong to harass (sexually and verbally) girls and women, unless they are Ethiopians and Eritreans. 'The *Habash* girls', are perceived as not being 'human' in the same ways as Sudanese girls and women are. Gender discrimination intersects here with ethnic, racial and at times religious discrimination.

In 2013, an 18-year-old Ethiopian girl was raped by seven Sudanese men who filmed it on their mobiles and then posted it on the internet. She was married at the time and three months' pregnant. She reported the case to the police, and while her perpetrators were arrested, she was also put in jail for 'indecent behaviour' and adultery. During the trial, she sat on the same bench next to the men who raped her. A local women's rights NGO represented her and got her a lawyer. She spent six months in jail, where she gave birth. She was finally released after 40 lashes and a fine. She was then kept in a women's shelter run by the Ethiopian Association in Khartoum. Her perpetrators got some lashes and were finally released.

The review of some of the laws affecting migrant Ethiopian and Eritrean adolescent girls and women gives a sense of their positionality in Khartoum and underlines their limited access to legal remedies, protection and assistance, as foreigners, often residing illegally, and as girls and women.

3 Methods and Fieldwork

A common methodology was adopted across the different country case studies. Data was collected using a mixed multi-methods approach and privileging a qualitative approach to ensure the participation and involvement of migrant and refugee girls. Prior to the fieldwork the research teams in each country were trained on methodology and research gathering techniques.

The fieldwork in Sudan took place between March 2014 and September 2015 with the support of the Ahfad University for Women in Omdurman. It was carried out jointly with a research team composed of four research assistants who were recruited among the Eritrean and Ethiopian migrant and refugee adolescent girls and young women. They were involved in administering the qualitative questionnaires, and translating and transcribing interviews. In Sudan, 48 survey questionnaires and 25 life stories with migrants and refugees, 5 focus group discussions (FGDs) with groups of refugees, and 15 expert interviews with representatives of local and international NGOs working on issues related to asylum and migration were conducted. The research focused on girls who had moved from Ethiopia and Eritrea when they were under 22 years of age (and mainly under 20). Relevant policy documents and literature were also collected. In addition, several researchers who had carried out studies among Ethiopian and Eritrean migrants in Sudan were interviewed. Given the particularly sensitive situation of young migrants and refugees in Sudan, most migrants, and especially adolescent girls and young women, often have no legal basis for their residence in the country. They face high security risks, often being subjected to random arrests, imprisonment and deportation. Thus, researchers needed to be particularly careful while working with this group in order not to endanger their situation further. Through different networks, the researchers hired three Eritrean young women migrants: aged 22, 25 and 26. One arrived in Sudan as a child, and the other two had spent five years in the country. They became first respondents, and later research assistants in the project. The research tools were translated with the help of another Eritrean refugee girl (a student from Ahfad University) into Tigrinya. The migrant girls have also carried out data collection for questionnaires themselves. For the Ethiopian part of the research in Sudan, it took much longer to assemble a team. Finally, the team consisted of a Sudanese MA student and a Tigrinya and Amharic young woman migrant. The latter has also been involved in transcription and data analysis.

Instead of interviewing families in the countries of origin (it is impossible to do this in Eritrea due to the security situation and there was not enough funds to cover this research in Ethiopia), I interviewed the migrant girls' family members who reside in Khartoum. I also gathered data among for example Eritrean refugee girls and young women who were born in Sudan and who have a different perspective on migration from those who came more recently.

Based on the already available knowledge about adolescent migrant girls in Dhaka, Khartoum and Addis Ababa, each researcher decided to focus on a different group of migrant girls: in Bangladesh the focus was mainly on garment factory workers and girls employed in beauty parlours; in Ethiopia on domestic workers and sex workers; and in Khartoum – rather than profession, the determining factor was the girls' place of origin. Due to the large number of migrants from Ethiopia and Eritrea, the research focused on the girls and young women from these two countries. In Sudan, due to the sensitivity of the topic, and the difficulties of foreign researchers conducting fieldwork in Sudan, fieldwork among internal migrants was not possible. The focus on Ethiopian migrants also allows us to draw a link with the Ethiopia country study where large numbers of migrant girls move initially internally only to move abroad as a second step.

3.1 Research methods

Survey questionnaires

Thirty-two questionnaires were carried out with Eritrean adolescent migrant girls who had come to Khartoum within the past six years. Another 16 questionnaires were conducted with Ethiopian adolescent girls. The questionnaires were translated into Tigrinya and Amharic and administered partially by research assistants and partially by the principle researcher.

Life stories

Fifteen life stories of Eritrean and ten life stories of Ethiopian girls and young women were collected, recorded in Tigrinya or Amharic, and transcribed and translated into English. This group includes Eritrean adolescent girls and young women (up to 25 years old) who migrated to Khartoum in the last five years.

Focus group discussions

Five FGDs were conducted with Eritrean migrant girls. Two FGDs were with migrant/refugee girls in an Eritrean refugee school. The FGDs included both girls who arrived more recently (in the last five years) and those who were either born in Sudan or came as small children to Sudan. Two of the FGDs included groups of girls who had arrived in the last five years, and one included girls who had arrived more than five years ago. The FGDs were recorded and transcribed into English.

Expert interviews

I carried out a total of 15 interviews with representatives of international and local NGOs involved in migration policies and programmes. I also interviewed a donor government representative working on migration issues in Sudan and the region. In addition, I interviewed five researchers working on similar issues in Khartoum. All interviews took place in Khartoum, and hand-written notes were taken. A number of interviews with government representatives are planned for May 2016.

Informal conversations, other in-depth discussions, observations and field diaries

Much of the insights were gained via informal conversations that I had with the research assistants, interviewees, family members and friends of the interviewees, other migrants and refugees, people working on migration related issues and others. I also carried out observation in churches, community gatherings, schools, markets, in places of work, at home, and attending ceremonies. I recorded the information by writing a daily field diary. I also carried out five in-depth discussions with family members of the migrant girls from Eritrea. Two included mothers, two were with siblings and one with a husband.

Collection of secondary data

Secondary data, such as research and policy reports, was collected and reviewed by myself and a research assistant. It was, however, difficult to obtain statistical data or policy reports from government institutions. While the importance of the phenomenon of adolescent girl migration is acknowledged by many stakeholders, there are no specific policies or interventions nor reliable figures available.

3.2 Constraints and limitations

There are large numbers of adolescent migrant girls in Khartoum. In our research, we have experienced various constraints in terms of accessing the different groups. Thus, we had to design strategies that would allow us to gather the desired data. For example, domestic workers and sex workers in general are difficult to access for researchers. While almost every family in Khartoum has a domestic worker, approaching and interviewing them is almost impossible. Most of them live and work in the house of their employers and have hardly any time off. Access to them had to be negotiated through mostly Sudanese employers who were not always willing to cooperate. They also insisted on being present during the interviews, and thus, the trust and openness of the respondents was very difficult to attain. In addition, building up a relationship of trust and confidence and getting more insight into their lives by sharing it, such as anthropologists would like to do, is very difficult if not impossible. This was one of the reasons why there were fewer Ethiopians interviewed for the research. Moreover, in Khartoum, migrants live in different parts of the city which makes the fieldwork time consuming.

One of the main challenges was the high mobility of migrants. Eritrean migrants move due to security reasons but also because they want to migrate further outside of Sudan for better life opportunities. Therefore, it has been challenging to find both Eritrean and Ethiopian respondents who migrated as adolescent girls and who have spent more than 7-8 years in Sudan.

To overcome the constraints of the fieldwork, interviews took place in public (safe) spaces, including churches, at migrants' and refugees' residences and at times at work. Migrant girls' research assistants administered some of the questionnaires. The approach to directly involve migrant girls in the fieldwork was part of our initial intention to carry out research in cooperation with the participants. We were of the opinion that this would greatly improve the quality of the research results. In Sudan, as mentioned, girls have been involved in data gathering, identifying respondents, transcribing data and doing the initial analysis.

We paid particular attention to the confidentiality of the respondents. The information provided by research participants was often very sensitive, especially given their irregular status in the country. All interviews were coded, files were safeguarded, and pseudonyms were used in order to protect respondents. The names of the respondents were also changed in this report, and the stories slightly altered in order not to endanger the situation of the girls and young women.

One of the major ethical considerations that I had was the impact of the research on the young women who worked in the project as research assistants. As they went through often traumatic experiences themselves, I was very cautious and aware of the fact that listening to traumatic stories of others was a tremendous emotional strain on them. We often debriefed them after each visit, making sure that the research assistants were able to process the information. We also had to take breaks in the fieldwork, as at times, the stories were too dramatic and we all needed space to reflect and disconnect. We also assisted several girls and young women in accessing potential protection and assistance services, whenever needed. Some of the research assistants attended trainings related to gender-based violence, rights of refugees, and services available for those who had suffered abuse in Khartoum. Two of the research assistants became very active in helping their own communities and identifying those who needed urgent assistance.

4 Social Profile of Respondents

This section of the report presents a general overview of the social characteristics of migrants and refugee girls interviewed for the project. To follow the local meanings of adolescence and youth, adolescent Ethiopian and Eritrean girls are defined on the basis of social age. Eritrean and Ethiopian young women and girls who participated in the research left their places of origin before having attained social adulthood (womanhood: being a woman: *sabeyti* in Tigrinya), which is locally understood as being married (ideally followed by attaining motherhood – *ade qolu* - and establishing one's own household). The vast majority of young refugees interviewed for this research were considered and considered themselves as girls (*qual* – which also denotes being a virgin) and youth (*meneseyat*). Only very few were referred to and self-identified themselves as children (*qol'n*) despite the fact that some were younger than 18 years of age. The term *gorzo* refers to female adolescents who are not married (girls). *Gorziako* means that a girl has achieved a status of being ready for marriage (in the past associated with the moment she started menstruating). A process of transition from adolescence to adulthood for Ethiopians is linked specifically to losing virginity. Only virgins are considered girls, and even an unmarried girl who has lost her virginity is considered a woman. Sexual relations are taboo, and a girl who has had sex is seen as no longer clean (sperm is considered a sin).

Table 4.1 Age of respondents

	Total	Eritrean	Ethiopian
Up to 13		0	0
13 to 17	3	2	1
18-24	29	20	9
above 24	16	10	6

Table 4.1 presents the age of the 48 respondents at the time of interview, 32 Eritreans and 16 Ethiopians. The majority of the respondents both Ethiopians and Eritreans were between 18 and 24 years old, with only 3 below the age of 18. The respondents' ages may not be completely accurate. A majority of the girls were unsure of their age, and they usually estimated it, without being able to provide precise dates of birth. This was especially so for the Ethiopian respondents.

Table 4.2 Age at first migration

	Total	Eritrean	Ethiopian
Up to 13	1	0	2
13-17	13	7	6
18-20	26	17	8
above 20	8	8	0

Table 4.2 provides more valuable information related to the age when the girls left their places of origin for the first time. Fourteen girls left before reaching 18 years old, while only one respondent was 12 years old when she first left her village to work in a nearby town, and later at the age of 18 arrived in Sudan. The vast majority of the girls were between 18 and 20 when they arrived in Sudan. Among the Eritrean respondents, there were 8 girls who were above 20 (but below 22) when they left Eritrea. In general, one observation that can be made based on the available data, as well as other available statistics, is that Ethiopian girls tend to arrive at a younger age than the Eritreans. This can be linked to the fact that the majority of Eritrean girls arrive either towards the end of their secondary schooling when they are at risk of being taken into national service. Also, the independent migration of Ethiopian girls, either internally or internationally, seems to be more prevalent than those of Eritreans. However, in the past years, UNHCR and COR (Commission on Refugees in Sudan) statistics have been showing increasing numbers of younger Eritrean girls arriving in Sudan by themselves. Another explanation for the greater mobility of younger Ethiopian girls may be the fact that Ethiopian girl children and adolescent girls have historically migrated internally, either from rural areas to towns, or from smaller urban areas to bigger towns (Erulkar 2006; Erulkar and Mekbib 2007; Van Blerk 2008; Jones et al. 2014). They have usually worked as domestic workers in exchange for food and shelter, or for a

small amount of money to help their families back home. The mobility of younger Eritrean girls until recently has been much more controlled. These findings are also corroborated by statistics provided in a report from the Ministry of Development in Sudan regarding tea makers on the streets of Khartoum (2012). Some 11,964 Sudanese and 1768 Ethiopians were interviewed for the study. The report states that some 31.8 per cent of Ethiopian tea makers are less than 15 years old, with 53 per cent being in the age bracket between 15-20 years old. Only 6.6 per cent are older than 25. The report also points to the fact that Ethiopian tea makers tend to be younger than Sudanese ones.

Table 4.3 Years at destination

	Total	Eritrean	Ethiopian
Up to 2	16	12	4
3-5	15	11	4
6-10	11	8	3
More than 10	6	1	5

Table 4.3 reveals that the majority of the girls (31) have been in Sudan for up to 5 years, with the largest number (16) having spent up to 2 years in Sudan at the time of interview. The Eritrean community tends to be much more mobile than the Ethiopian, which is demonstrated by the fact that almost one-third of Ethiopian respondents have spent more than 10 years, with some almost 30 years in the country. It was however much more difficult to find Eritrean women who had arrived in Sudan in their adolescence and have remained in Sudan. The majority of them moved or attempted to move further, either joining their relatives through official resettlement and family reunification programmes, or migrating to Europe or elsewhere irregularly through the Libyan Desert and the Mediterranean (Belloni 2015, Treiber 2014).

Table 4.4 Education

	Total	Eritrean	Ethiopian
Never gone to school	0	0	2
Years 1 to 5	11	1	10
6 to 10	18	14	4
11 to 12	11	11	0
University but not graduated	6	6	0
Graduated	2	2	0
Stopped schooling before migration	48	32	16
Continued studying after migration	0	0	0
Currently studying	0	0	0

As the survey revealed, but also as the in-depth interviews and life stories confirmed, Eritrean girls and young women tend to be better educated than Ethiopians. The majority of Eritreans finished class 6, with 19 out of 32 finishing secondary school, 8 getting to university or college level, and 2 graduating from university. Among the Ethiopians, the vast majority did not continue education further than class 5, with 2 girls out of 16 never having gone to school (these were the older respondents who had lived in Sudan for over 20 years). All respondents stopped education before their migration to Sudan. Some girls stopped because they knew that their families were in dire circumstances and needed financial support. Tsirite stopped school when she was 13 years old,

I knew my parents needed money. I was the oldest in the family. We were very poor and the situation was getting worse because of the economic crisis in Ethiopia. My father wanted me to continue studying. But I quit the school in secret and went to work in a ceramic shop in Axum.

Others, like Salama from Gondar, stopped school at the age of 12,

I was not good at school, and I did not like it. My mother passed away and my father married another woman. She was really mistreating me. I knew my father needed more money, so I stopped the school and told him that I wanted to go to Sudan. He did not agree at first.

Salam, for example, was brilliant at school in Ethiopia. She was one of the top girls in her classes. But her mother's second husband was very abusive,

I could not focus on education because I knew that my mother is being beaten at home by this man. The school was not too far, and every time I heard screams, I thought about my mom. My mind was not focused on studying anymore. I then stopped the school when I was 13, because my grandparents wanted to marry me off.

Some girls tried to continue education in Sudan, attending specialised courses in computers or languages, but usually had to stop them due to lack of finances. This general trend was also confirmed in the qualitative interviews. None of the Ethiopian migrant girls continued their education after arrival in Sudan, although it was often their intention before migrating. Among the Eritrean respondents, there were two younger girls (16 and 17) who were interviewed for life stories who continued education upon arrival in the country. They attended the Eritrean Refugee School in Deim. Lack of sufficient financial means, long-working hours, prevailing insecurity in travelling through the city in the evenings, and lack of evening classes made it impossible for many of the migrant and refugee girls to continue their education in Khartoum.

The higher number of better educated girls from Eritrea than Ethiopia was confirmed by the qualitative interviews. With a strong emphasis on providing free primary and secondary education, Eritrea has achieved general literacy.

Table 4.5 Marital status

	Total	Eritrean	Ethiopian
Never married	34	26	8
Married before migration and still married	3	3	0
Married after migration	10	3	7
Divorced before migration	1	0	1
Divorced after migration	0	0	0
Divorced and remarried	0	0	0

Among the 48 migrant and refugee girls and young women interviewed for the survey, 34 had never been married. Only three married before migrating and ten married after migration, including seven Ethiopians and three Eritreans. However, since the time of the survey, another two Eritreans and one Ethiopian girl got married. One girl was divorced before leaving her place of origin in Ethiopia. Among girls and women whose life stories had been collected, this was a similar trend. For the Eritrean girls and young women marriage to Eritrean men who were either abroad in Europe or in North America was one of the strategies to continue their migratory project. All women except two older Ethiopian women were married to men of their own nationalities. Two older Ethiopian women were married to Sudanese men, as their second wives. The elder migrants from Ethiopia and Eritrea were married but much later, in their 30s, often either without children or with one child only.

Table 4.6 Children

	Total	Eritrean	Ethiopian
No children	35	24	11
Children living with respondent	11	7	4
Children living at origin	2	1 – some children with respondent, some with family behind	1
Children living with father	0	0	0

The majority of the respondents both in the survey as well as in the life stories did not have any children. This is partially due to the fact that most of the respondents were young, and they delayed both getting married and having children as they felt that they had not achieved their migratory goal. This was in sharp contrast to the age of marriage and child bearing in their places of origin. Both Ethiopians and Eritreans often expressed their frustrations with these delays, yet at the same time, they found it an important way of prolonging their stage of adolescence and youth, and negotiating marriage and child bearing at a later age. Those Eritrean respondents who had children had them either as a result of rape that they had suffered at the hands of their captors (either Rashaida, or Sudanese border guards or police) during the crossing into Sudan. Others came from Eritrea with their children to follow the fathers (either husbands or boyfriends) who were pursuing their plan to migrate to Europe. Often, the husbands went missing either on the border with Sudan, or during their journey through Libya and the young women ended up alone with children in Khartoum. There were also some girls who followed their boyfriends to Sudan or met their boyfriends in Sudan and became pregnant. The men often left them to continue their journey to Europe through Libya. There was one young woman who was divorced and came with her children alone to Khartoum.

For the Ethiopians, most of them had children with their Ethiopian or Sudanese husbands in Khartoum. One 18-year old girl declared that she had had a child when she was 15 years old from an arranged marriage but left the child with her family in Ethiopia before coming to Khartoum. In the qualitative interviews, especially with Ethiopian respondents, we found out over the period of time that a few were married at early ages (between 13 and 15 years old) and some had either miscarried or gave birth to children who were later left with the girls' families. Thus, the data generated from the survey is just an approximation, as often sensitive issues around marriage, child birth and sexual relations were not easily revealed in questionnaires.

5 Becoming a Migrant

5.1 Migration motives

As the results of the survey, life stories and FGDs revealed, each girl had specific, often very personal, reasons for leaving their places of origin. Yet, they all came in what could be described as a ‘search for a better life’. Here are some of the responses to the two main questions posed: Why did you decide to migrate to Sudan? Why not another place?

Helen, from Karen in Eritrea, was 21 years old when she arrived in Sudan. By the time of the interview, she had been in Sudan for five years,

Everyone is coming to Sudan. I think of it as a transit country because I want to go farther. I don’t want to stay here. I want to go somewhere else. [...] My plan was to change the life of my family and mine. Life is changing. I struggle for that. [...] I wanted to go to Sudan, then a foreign country to help my studies, then get a good job and then get married. That’s my dream.

Almass had been in Khartoum for two years. She came from Axum in Ethiopia directly to Sudan in 2012, when she was 20. She mentioned that she started working when she was 13 years old. She needed to help her family to improve their living conditions.

My parents have a small plot of land that they own and they cultivate it but it is not enough. There are four children in the family, and I am the oldest one. I have been working to help my parents. But in Ethiopia, it is difficult to earn good money. I decided to come to Sudan because there were many other people coming and I heard that one can make a lot of money here. There was a man in our village who was telling us girls, and convincing us to come here. We had to pay him 8,000 Birr [400 USD], in order to bring us here to Sudan. But when we arrived here I realised that the life was very difficult.

Table 5.1 below illustrates the summary of responses to the question regarding the reasons for leaving their place of origin. The respondents were given a free choice to this question and they could also give more than one answer.

Table 5.1 Reasons for migration (er- Eritreans; eth- Ethiopians)

Poverty	5 (er) 7 (eth)
Failed marriage	1 (er) 2 (eth)
Avoid getting married	1 (er) 3(eth)
Continue education	3 (er)
Wanting to help the family	7 (er) 12 (eth)
Death of one or both parents or sibling	9 (er) 2 (eth)
Desire for more freedom, including religious persecution	1 (er)
Political situation: national service	8 (all Eritreans)
Conflict with parents/relatives/ due to boyfriend, pregnancy	7 (er)
Following boyfriend-husband	6 (er)
Abused by parents/ relatives/husband	5 (er) 1(eth)
Other	2 (er), 3 (eth - war)
Parents’ divorce	1 (eth)
Supporting education of siblings	2 (eth)
Supporting a relative	1 (eth)
Following others who left to Sudan	2 (eth)

Most of the respondents in the survey as well as in the FGDs and life story interviews identified several reasons and key turning points that led them to take the decision to leave their places of origin. We were able to identify the complexity of circumstances in which the girls found themselves and under which they made their decisions to leave. While the questionnaires show more simplified answers that emerged in the first encounters with the girls, the life stories reveal more complex and multifaceted decision-making processes. There are both similarities, as well as differences in the reasons for migration between the Ethiopians and Eritreans.

A desire to help families who had stayed behind, and who often found themselves in dire economic or political circumstances, were prevalent among both Eritrean and Ethiopian respondents. Table 5.2 illustrates the economic conditions and security of the family of origin for both Ethiopians and Eritreans who were interviewed for the survey. Out of 48 respondents, 29 described their families in Eritrea and Ethiopia as very poor (*betekel*) or poor (*su'un/ dikha*). Those who described their families as very poor or poor referred mainly to them living in rural or semi-rural areas, without land or house ownership (those who described themselves as poor would at times own a house), lack of animals, working as farmers on the land of others, and usually with only one breadwinner in the family. It is noticeable, that comparatively, Ethiopian respondents were poorer than the Eritreans. Also, status was linked to family composition. Families that were described as poor or very poor had often experienced some type of crisis, with the death of one or both parents, severe health problems or a divorce. Those respondents who described the status of their families as 'they are fine' (*daban nabra alovom*) referred mainly to the family owning land, house and other properties, and at least one parent having a stable income. Usually these were families that came from urban areas. None of the Ethiopian migrant girls came from a well-off family. In comparison, some four Eritrean girls came from families that were described by them as 'well-off' (*rkhub* or *habtam*). This status implied ownership of land, animals, house, and better educated parents who had at least one stable income. There was also a substantial reliance among the better-off families on remittances from family members abroad.

Table 5.2 Economic conditions of family of origin

	Total	Eritrean	Ethiopian
Very poor	7	2	5
Poor	22	15	7
In the middle	15	11	4
Well-off	4	4	0

Gender and generational pressures from family played an important element in decision-making processes. A number of girls in Eritrea and also in Ethiopia left in order to avoid arranged marriages. Despite laws in both countries prohibiting under-age marriage (under 18 years old) and changing social norms about marriage, in rural areas of Ethiopia (for example Amhara region famous for the abduction of girls for marriage)¹² and to a lesser extent in Eritrea girls as young as 12 still face the danger of arranged marriages often against their will. In the next section, the distinction between the two groups regarding the reasons for migration will be elaborated.

5.2 Beyond 'poverty and human rights discourse' as reasons for migration

Eritrea: no choice

For the last decade a continuous flow of people have left Eritrea, unable to bear life in what they describe as a 'prison state'. On a visit to the house of a young Eritrean woman, her cousin, a 26 year old who arrived in

¹² The Amhara Region in Ethiopia has the lowest median age at marriage in the country at 14.7 years – significantly below the national figure of 16.5 years – according to the Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey 2011 (CSA and ICF International 2012). This Region has one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world though the Family Codes of the Region as well as the country provide that the minimum legal age of marriage is 18 for both girls and boys. Fifty-six per cent of Ethiopian girls marry before the legal age (see more at: <http://www.unfpa.org/news/award-winning-programme-gives-ethiopian-girls-safer-transition-adulthood#sthash.MozypSMH.dpuf>) accessed 29 March 2016.

Sudan two years earlier, asked me: 'Have you been to Eritrea?' 'No, not yet', I answered. He smiled and said, 'you are lucky!' 'Why?', I asked. 'That place is a hell. It is like living in a hell, where your life is not your life'. Eritrea has not held free elections since 1993 when Eritreans voted for independence from Ethiopia after a 30-year-long struggle. After a few years of peace, in 1998 a war broke out between Eritrea and Ethiopia that lasted two years. Ever since then the entire population has been fully militarised. National military service for anyone over 18 years old is mandatory, and although officially, marked at 18 months, it usually extends without time limit (HRW 2014). The politics of terror used by Isaias Afwerki, the current leader, has resulted in creating a great mistrust in the social fabric of Eritrean society. An extract from a discussion with an Eritrean woman (about 55 years old) whom I met at the airport while travelling to Ethiopia illustrates well these dynamics:

In the family (in Eritrea), we do not talk about the situation, we do not talk about how it is in our country. I love my country, but I have to be honest. The situation is very difficult. There is no freedom, there is no freedom of speech and even thought. If someone heard me telling you these things, this would be fatal for me. Talking in my country is fatal. So many people disappeared. We do not even know what happened to them. We do not even trust our friends or family. When we see each other, we just talk general: 'How are you? How is your family? Are you fine?' Just, blah blah blah... And then we go, and cry alone, in isolation. We do not share anything with anyone. This is what his system has created.

(...) How many people have died in the war of liberation? And for what? For this? How many people believed in him and sacrificed their lives for the idea of freedom? Whenever there were problems and disputes in the struggle, and whenever people had doubts about him (Isaias Afwerki), he would just use the word: 'Freedom, we have to fight for Freedom'. This blinded people. They just loved him for the idea of freedom. But what is freedom? We now have our own country, but we live in an open prison: the whole country lives in an open prison. Those who are in prison, they de facto live in a prison. Others live in an open prison: we are not allowed to leave the country, we are not allowed to talk openly, we are not allowed to pursue our dreams and have a life. And we live in isolation, even in isolation from each other, from our family members, we do not trust anyone.

This is the reason that young people do not see their future in that country. How can they even start to imagine their future? Realisation of their dreams? They see that their older brothers are either gone, or in the military, their fathers are in the military, there is no possibility of earning good money, and even education is useless. They say: 'For what? So that I spend my entire life in the military? Sacrifice for what?' This is the reason that they leave. Even small children, 12-13 they understand this. They know what is happening as they see their parents and their older siblings living this way. They do not want to have a life like this. Some journalists say, 'oh this is economic migration'. But I tell you, they do not understand the deep roots of these problems. Deep understanding of the society is necessary to understand the conditions in the country: even the young children know that because of the political situation in the country, they do not have a future there. There is no freedom to do what you want in your life, to live your dreams, to realise your dreams, to have a life. Your life is just military and serving him and his ideas. This is what he has done to the country and to the society. He has no humanity. Is this economic? If it were economic, would people really take the risks that they take by crossing illegally to Sudan and Libya and Europe? Going on these unsafe boats? People know the risks, but if they take them, this means that they cannot imagine that taking such risks is worse than living in their own country. The life in Eritrea is seen as worse than dying in the Mediterranean.

Bana, a 26-year-old who finished college in Asmara and has been in Khartoum for four years started crying while reflecting on the situation in her country:

Oh my God, what is happening to the people in my country? Look at this! They are being pushed by the government. Everyone is leaving now, the manpower of the country! The young 14-15 year olds, they are all being pushed out. People say we are in peace and we should prosper. But what type of prosperity is this, if they ask you to pay a rent for 1000 Nakfa (about

95 USD) and you cannot afford to pay this. So you have to go, and you have to try a life somewhere else. We are now becoming citizens of the world, we are now everywhere.

There is a famous street in Asmara, and in the evenings from 5 pm till 10 pm normally you see many people strolling on this street. But nowadays people who come from Asmara tell me that there is no one walking on the street. The people are elsewhere: they are in Uganda, in Kenya, in Ethiopia in Sudan, everywhere... We are becoming like Somalis, diaspora. But in Somalia there is a war. So it is clear why people are leaving. But for us, we are in peace. This should not be happening. The government is pushing everyone out, and one day, it will only be the government left. They do not want anyone to stay in the country.

This pressure is felt especially, as the result of the population outflow from Eritrea is very visible in the daily lives of those who stay behind. Diaspora scattered across Europe and the Americas is sending remittances that often contribute to improving living conditions for those who have stayed behind.

But why are adolescent girls in particular leaving Eritrea? Does the human rights discourse that permeates the explanation of the outflow from Eritrea fully explain the complexity of the situation of adolescents and young people? Adolescence, as has been argued, is a particular stage in life when major decisions take place, but also when young people imagine what lives they want to have. As most of the respondents explained, 'we have no choice but to leave Eritrea' (*mirchay aykonen*, which means 'I did not choose', 'it was not my choice'). Under the rhetoric of 'no choice', there are multiple scenarios, aspirations and hopes. Girls and young women (as well as young men) associate staying in Eritrea with a prolonged national service and badly paid jobs. The opportunity to be released from endless military service is extremely limited (based on health conditions, and at times due to personal connections and networks) (HRW 2013). Girls and young women have a chance of being discharged once they get married and have their first child. Yet work opportunities beyond mandatory military service and subsistence agriculture are limited. Those with a better education have to work for the government for \$15 a month after completing military training. Daily life is a survival struggle for families without relatives abroad sending remittances. Escaping from the country thus offers both the promise of a better life and the ability to support loved ones back home. While the liberation fighters' generation (*tegedelti*), to a certain extent, were more easily influenced into offering their unpaid efforts for building the state of Eritrea based on the national rhetoric of the ruling regime, the *warsay* (the new generation) is increasingly unwilling to sacrifice their lives for national ideals that no longer resonate with them. They see their parents, older brothers and sisters who gave up their lives for the ideas of freedom and national liberation, increasingly living in poverty, and enduring unending military service. At the same time, they see the new housing estates constructed in cities and towns across Eritrea by those whose family members successfully migrated abroad. In Asmara, as I was told, and also as other researchers who carried out fieldwork in Asmara reported (Belloni 2015; Treiber 2014), there are residential areas referred to as 'Germany', or 'America' making a reference to the source of Diasporic support.

The social media and television show different possibilities for the young. Although limited and often under surveillance (Bozzini 2011), young people in major cities in Eritrea have access to Facebook and viber where their friends, neighbours and family members who made it abroad post the success stories of their new selves. These images are personal and immediate, and create a sense of a possibility that is urgent and likely, as some of the Eritrean young women in Khartoum explained to me. Young people also realise that a different adolescence and adulthood or womanhood are possible elsewhere. Television and social media with globalised images of capitalist consumerism and youth pop-culture has also fundamentally altered the type of image of youth and the desired identity that young people aspire to (Belloni 2015). The idea of 'no choice' relates to the inability of being the type of adolescent girl or young woman in Eritrea that the girls aspire to or imagine to be. In this way, gender identities and gender order are being contested by younger generations.

Another reason for leaving Eritrea is rooted in religious beliefs. This also relates to the idea of how one wants to live her or his life, and what type of choices one is allowed to make as an individual. Among all the respondents, about one-third claimed to have moved due to religious prosecution. This was the case for members of the Pentecostal church which has been banned in Eritrea since 2002, and its members have been prosecuted and imprisoned.

In such situations, where what desired cannot be achieved, and what is on offer seems completely inadequate, young people, both girls and boys, take a decision to search for a 'choice' and 'chance' somewhere else. They make a deliberate choice to escape in search of a better future for themselves, and their families. As one of the research assistants, a refugee young woman, explained, 'In fact, when I decided to leave Eritrea, I made a choice. I rejected the current situation in which I was living and lack of opportunities in Eritrea. So, you can say, that when people are leaving Eritrea they are making a choice. They usually say, that they did not have a chance (*edit*) in Eritrea, that's why they left'.

The decision to flee is often justified in terms of an obligation to help family and the inability to 'have a (good) life' in Eritrea. Most of the young Eritrean women and girls whom we interviewed in Khartoum argued that they had to move in order to evade military service. Yet, during the life stories, they discussed more complex decision-making circumstances. Some left because they wanted to pursue further education. Others because they wanted to get married, and, argued, that increasingly there is less and less choice of (marriage) partners in Eritrea as increasing numbers of young men have left to evade military service. Some adolescent girls took the journey to Sudan to escape arranged or failed marriages (often with diaspora Eritrean men). Others followed their boyfriends or husbands who escaped to Sudan and further. Three respondents who came with their children argued that they had to leave their home villages because of the stigma of being divorced women with children. Belloni in her research among Eritreans in Asmara has found that some young women and adolescent girls were interested in migration in order to escape constraining gender norms and ideology present within their communities (Belloni 2015). For some, moving away from Eritrea was seen as both a way of prolonging adolescence on the one hand, and searching for an alternative experience of adolescence, and finding a new way of transitioning into womanhood and adulthood, on the other. It can be interpreted as a strategy for diversifying individual and collective strategies of survival, but more importantly of enlarging the repertoire of personal and communal choice in terms of what life one imagines and wants to pursue, including decisions about marriage, having children and work.

Ethiopia: underneath the 'poverty' discourse

The dominant discourse in the literature on migration within Ethiopia and outmigration from the country focuses on poverty as a major driving factor. Per capita income is 410 USD, and of 92 million people 50 per cent are under the age of 20 (World Bank 2014). Poverty as a driving factor of migration was confirmed in interviews with the employers of migrant Ethiopian girls in Khartoum, the international and national experts working on issues of migration and Ethiopian community representatives in Khartoum. Yet, under the layer of poverty and the need to assist families back home there is a myriad of other factors that influence adolescent girls' and young women's mobility. These have to be situated within the wider changes that have been taking place in Ethiopia in the past twenty or so years (Dom et al. 2015). WIDE research carried out in 20 communities in Ethiopia between 1995 and 2013 identified the following issues emerging in outmigration from these communities. In the early 2000s, male seasonal migration was an important element in livelihood strategies in some communities. Male outmigration was often triggered by crisis or hardship. In 2010/13, the WIDE research team noted a striking diversification in outmigration. First, there was a decrease in the importance of agricultural migration and an increase in the importance of urban and international migration. There was also an emergence of industrial migration, with a big increase in women's and young women's mobility. In general, the researchers observed a significant rise in female and male youth migration in comparison to 1995 (Dom et al. 2015). In some communities, migrating women outnumbered migrating men. Urban and industrial migration was observed in most communities, among those in twelve communities it was perceived as significant, yet most of the industrial migration was dominated by men. For women, international migration especially to the Gulf was more attractive. International migration included diverse directions, for example in 15 communities it was mainly to the Gulf, in 5 communities to Sudan, and in one to South Africa. A significant change observed was the increased outmigration of ever younger people. While this was seen as a concern for the local populations, at the same time, children and adolescents' work is perceived as 'normal' and practiced in both rural and urban areas in Ethiopia.

During fieldwork in Khartoum, I observed increasing numbers of Ethiopians arriving from South Sudan and not only directly from Ethiopia. This can be explained in terms of the lack of work opportunities for Ethiopians in civil-conflict driven South Sudan and increasing discriminatory practices against foreign workers there (see the 2014 announcement of the South Sudanese government to prohibit foreigners from

working in the country). In addition, the more restrictive practices of border control and lack of visas for Ethiopians to come to Sudan might have changed migration routes.

So is the poverty discourse fully explaining the migration of adolescent girls and young women? For Ethiopian adolescent girls, one of the main reasons for migrating to Sudan is the desire to help their parents, as they felt they were unable to find well-paid jobs in Ethiopia. While for some, this was linked to family survival strategies, for a number of others, there was a strong incentive to help their siblings in pursuing their education. Girls often felt that their education was not going to benefit them, but that their work could help their siblings, usually brothers, to pursue a better life. Education thus at times was seen as offering little progress for girls who stayed behind, with minimal prospects of well-paid jobs afterwards locally. Landlessness and the very poor or poor status of families was also a major factor driving girls out of the country. Girls were also often running away from the gendered pressures and norms operating in their local communities. A number of girls mentioned that their parents or grandparents arranged for them to be married at early ages. The pressure of the parents, the failure of an arranged marriage, the violence experienced by the girls from their much older husbands or their parents-in-law, often accompanied by miscarriages, or giving birth at a very early age were mentioned as reasons for girls' movement. Girls often referred to their situation in Ethiopia as 'no hope'. They often felt trapped between lack of viable economic options, lack of educational prospects, and constraining gender norms.

Salam is a 23-years-old tea seller working on the street in Amarat, a well-to-do quarter of Khartoum. She was born in Shire town, in Ethiopia. Her mum already had a child from another marriage. Her first husband died. Then she got married to another man, but as it turned out later, the man tricked her, as he was already married and had 9 children from the first marriage. Salam was born out of this marriage. Her father is an educated man and an administrator in local government. Her mother was not educated. When Salam was one-year-old, her mum got divorced from her second husband, and then, a year later, married another man. It turned out that the man was a drunkard and very oppressive. She had two more children with him. When Salam was 9-years-old, she moved to Humera to live with her grandparents. The grandparents had a lot of houses and lived off the rent. Salam went to school up to grade 6. She was very good at school, was considered as one of the strongest in her class. She even skipped a grade as her performance was very high. At the age of 13, the grandparents decided to marry her off. 'This was their culture. This is what they thought girls should do at that age. Girls who were 15 and not married, they were considered as old. Also, there were many girls who were raped at school and became pregnant. My grandparents most likely wanted to protect me in this way. They were afraid that I would get pregnant and then nobody would want to marry me'.

Salam explained that one of her uncles who was always protecting her and supporting her aspirations and ambitions to be educated, opposed her grandparents' idea. One of Salam's aunts came for a visit from Khartoum, and the 13-year-old Salam was given three choices by her grandparents: to stop school; to get married; or to go with her aunt to Khartoum. Salam decided to go to Khartoum with her aunt to avoid being pushed into a marriage. She spent two years working in her aunt's small restaurant, without being paid. She missed her family very much, and life was difficult for her, she told her aunt that she wanted to visit her mother. She returned to Ethiopia when she was 15, and stayed with her grandparents and her mother for one year. She opened a small tea stand and worked there for 6 months. 'But once you have been outside of your place, you cannot return there, sit and do nothing. After a year, I decided to go back to Khartoum, but this time to work for myself.'

This abstract illustrates that migration leads to further migration. Even though Salam opened up a small tea-business, she perceived the income to be so meagre that she felt she was doing nothing at home. 'Although you work (in Ethiopia), the pay is so little, that you cannot even eat. Here, in Khartoum, when you work, you can at least eat', she explained.

5.3 The gender order and gender norms

Salam's story points to some key gender ideologies operating in Ethiopian communities, especially in rural areas and in smaller towns. Ethiopian society is highly hierarchical with strong gender and generational inequalities. Gender norms regulate and influence the life of children from the very beginning, with girls given less value within the households as well as in the wider community. As in other patriarchal societies, male children are valued higher than female children because they will continue the patrilineal family line. Children get their father's names, and traditionally boys would continue to live with their parents after marrying while girls move out on marriage. Gender norms determine how girls are treated, their responsibilities and the type of domestic and farming work they have to do, their education, their freedom of movement, their relationships with friends, and their ambitions and aspirations for the future. Numerous studies have shown that girls are at a disadvantage when it comes to issues regarding education, health, and basic human rights (de Regt 2016). In 2013 Ethiopia was ranked 173rd out of 187 countries on the Gender Development Index (UNDP 2014).

Government campaigns have extended education opportunities countrywide, and strengthened girls' access to education, as well as criminalising under-age marriages. The sexuality of adolescent girls, however, is still strictly controlled and premarital relationships are not accepted (Tadele 2006). As a girl's virginity is valued highly for securing a good marriage and respectability, parents and guardians often resort to 'protecting' girls from engaging in sexual relations. Adolescence is a key moment when girls are both eager to experiment with sexuality, as well as at risk of being perceived as sexual objects by boys and men. Parents and guardians thus often stop girls from going to school, where they fear the negative consequences of co-ed education. They also are afraid of the potential abduction of girls into marriage, especially in Amhara region. Arranged marriages at a younger age are also seen by parents and guardians as a way of keeping control of girls' sexuality. A number of Ethiopian girls interviewed for the project confirmed these concerns. Several girls were married at the very early age of 13 or 15. Those who got pregnant from their boyfriends and were then rejected by them felt stigmatised in society. 'The people do not see value in girls who got raped or pregnant from other men. They just ignore you. There is no way you can marry. You just stay alone. Even your family might reject you', explained Genet, an 18-year-old tea seller in Sahafa neighbourhood in Khartoum. She was 14 when her parents married her off, and when she experienced abuse from her husband and his family, she miscarried a baby at the age of 15. Her husband was very jealous of her as she was a beautiful girl and there were many men interested in her. He wanted to control her through forced marriage and beating.

While the parents have to accept a child once it is born out of wedlock, it is an economic and social burden for them. Unmarried mothers usually drop out from school. According to the report *Girls Not Brides* (2015), in Ethiopia, two in every five girls are married before their 18th birthday and nearly one in five girls marry before the age of 15. Rates vary greatly by region, with some higher than national figures. The Amhara region has the highest rate of child marriage with nearly 45 per cent of girls married before 18. Early marriage is deeply rooted in many Ethiopian communities, perpetuated by poverty, a lack of education and economic opportunities, and social customs that limit the rights of women and girls.

The situation for Eritrean girls is slightly better. Gender norms are similar in Eritrea with male children given a higher value in the family, and girls marrying out. Yet, there has been some progress made in terms of achieving gender equality during the struggle for national liberation, where women were very active in combat and in the liberation movement. As a result, early marriages have been made illegal in Eritrea since the early 1990s. The Eritrean People's Liberation Front sought social transformation around women's issues and pushed for legislation that abolished forced marriages, child marriages and dowries. The Eritrean Civil Code (Articles 329 and 581) sets the minimum age of marriage at 18 years for both girls and boys. However, there is a lack of awareness about the legality of child marriage and its harmful impacts. A major difficulty in tackling child marriage is the conflicting nature of Eritrea's legal systems, as formal and customary laws are not harmonised. Customary law carries great weight in Eritrean society and provides for a minimum age of marriage which is 15 for females and 18 for males (www.girlsnotbrides.com).

According to 'UNFPA Child Marriage Profile: Eritrea' (2012), limited access to education is associated with a high prevalence of child marriage. Sixty-four per cent of women aged 20-24 with no education and 53 per cent with primary education were married by 18 years old, compared to just 12 per cent of women with secondary education or higher. While the Gender Equality Index has not been calculated for Eritrea, according to the 2014 Human Development Index, Eritrea was positioned at 186 out of 188 countries and

territories in the world. Women's participation in the labour market is estimated at 80 per cent, although this is not verifiable.

Among the research respondents, only two were married early (before 18-years-old). One girl was married at the age of 12 and had her first child at the age of 17. She eventually had two children and followed her husband to Sudan at the age of 21. Her husband however secretly left for Libya and she lost contact with him. Another girl married at 17 and came to Sudan with two children aged 2 and 4 to find her husband who had been missing for over a year. Generally, when asked about early marriages, girls pointed out they still happened in rural areas, and among uneducated families. Those from towns and cities and with access to education had greater potential to delay marriage. Yet, gender norms around purity and virginity were also strongly engrained in the Eritrean communities and the moral discourses about 'good girls'. Pre-marital relationships and sex without marriage were not acceptable among both Eritrean and Ethiopian communities, even in urban areas. Girls who had boyfriends were often referred to as 'loose girls' or 'bad girls'.

Another gender norm that has informed migration choice is the role of girls as oldest siblings and their responsibility for the well-being of their families. Those girls who were the first born in their families, both in Ethiopian and in Eritrean households, often felt responsible for supporting their kin. They often gave up their education and migrated in search of support for their siblings' education (usually boys – see the case of Salam above), or taking care of their aging or ill parents, or providing pathways for further migration for their younger siblings. In fact, over the course of my stay in Khartoum (two and a half years), most of the Eritrean girls and young women were joined by their siblings who came to Khartoum to follow them and then continue their journey towards Europe. The girls were responsible for sponsoring their siblings' migration, and saw it often as a huge burden. Helen, a 26-year-old from Keren, came to Khartoum in 2009. When I interviewed her for the research, during our conversation she received a phone call from her younger brother, an 18-year-old who had arrived in the Shegarab refugee camp in the east of Sudan. She started crying. When I asked her whether she was happy that she will finally see her brother and be with her family, she said through her tears:

No, I am not happy. This is a big burden. My life is very difficult here, I struggle to survive, and now I will have to pay the smugglers for my brother's journey. I do not even know where I get the money from. I work as a nanny, I do not have enough. I struggle to send some money to my family every month. And then I will have to also be responsible for my brother here. This is too much.

Six months later, her brother left using the desert road and smuggling networks through Libya to Europe. She had to pay over 5000 USD for his journey. A few months later, her younger sister arrived in Khartoum, again putting enormous pressure on Helen. 'My family puts too much pressure on me. I have been only taking care of them till now... And I am very tired. This is the problem. I am the oldest one in the family, and they think that this is my role'.

5.4 Family circumstances

Family circumstances had a decisive impact on the decision of girls to migrate. The economic situation of the families has been discussed above. Here, I focus on family personal circumstances. Among both Eritrean and Ethiopian girls, the majority of those who migrated experienced some type of rupture, family crisis or violence within their households. Most of the girls came from families where divorce or death of one or both parents was the main driving force of their difficult situation. Like the case of Salam described above, girls suffered from the volatile and violent relations between their parents or guardians, often with stepmothers or stepfathers mistreating them. Rahel (18) escaped her home in Eritrea when she was 15. She followed her older brother who was already in Khartoum. This was in the aftermath of her father's death and her mother marrying a violent man who abused her and her children. Rahel did not mention any direct sexual violence against her, but she often talked about the man's brutality and what he had done to her. Her older brother escaped first, and then he paid for his sister's journey to Khartoum. He was very worried about her and wanted to protect her.

Rahel said that she forgave her mother for what she had done to her, in that she allowed the man to mistreat her. But she said she could never go back to her home in Eritrea. These stories were very common among the respondents. The brutality of treatment that the young girls experienced in their families, from their

mothers, fathers, stepparents, often uncles or aunts, was shocking. This violence often happened in households that were impoverished, which experienced marginalisation due to a family crisis or economic circumstances. This also points to the general trend of increasing poverty, economic insecurity, and increased volatility in the lives of the poor and very poor families. This trend often results in increasing violence and a break-down of families.

The data analysis also revealed that the type of experiences and childhood that the girls went through in their homes had an impact on their migration experience. Those girls who grew up in nurturing and caring families and had good childhood memories of love and protection from their family were often more adaptable and had greater strength, resilience and resources to deal with adverse migration circumstances. Those who came from households that experienced rupture or abuse found it more challenging to develop more positive migration experiences.

To summarise, family circumstances, thus, were an important aspect in the girls' decision to migrate. The economic situation of the household was an important trigger, with girls from very poor or poor households migrating to ease the burden of poverty. At the same time, this was often combined with experiences of family rupture, divorce or death of one of a parent, tense relations with a stepfather or stepmother, and physical, emotional or sexual abuse. Girls from households with a history of difficult circumstances did not usually maintain close contact with those who stayed behind. They also found it problematic to recount memories of their childhood. Their silences were a reflection of a difficult past.

5.5 Decision to leave

The decision-making process is difficult to study. Decisions are never taken unilaterally and individually. They are rather taken in context-specific circumstances, usually with the direct or indirect influence of others, dialectic between agency and structural constraints and opportunities. Yet, the discourse associated with girls' and young women's migration which directly situates it in trafficking and exploitation is far too limiting leaving too little room for the girls' own agency (Whitehead et al. 2007; Huijsmans 2011). The diverse and complex contexts in which the girls take the decision to migrate presented above show how there is no linear, one dimensional-causal dynamic of migration. Brokers and traffickers seem to play a much less influential role in girls' decisions as has so far been emphasised in literature. Instead, the lack of opportunities and options, as well as constraining gender norms are carefully considered, as well as girls' own aspirations 'to change their lives and the lives of their families'. The desire to do 'something' about their situation points to the agency of the girls who by deciding to leave take control of their lives.

Each decision results from a mix of push/pull factors, survival versus aspiration desires, and agency versus pressure dynamics. There is also an increasing importance of the (imagined and at times realisable) potential to 'change one's life'. The growing influence of social media and the global consumerist images of the 'good life' circulating on TV, social media, and phones, create new images of possible lives. Also, the tangible 'success' of other migrants who have been supporting their families back home through remittances, constructing new homes and contributing to improved daily lives are attractive propositions. Most of the Ethiopian girls interviewed for the research mentioned that they were attracted to Sudan because they have heard that it is easy to make money there. Some pointed out that their neighbours who worked in Sudan were able to buy nice clothes, jewellery, and to build new houses.

There is a new 'culture of migration', as some of the Ethiopian girls described it. A peer and community pressure (e.g. 'migration has become a competition') that often stigmatises those who decide to stay behind. This was the same for many Eritrean families as well. Some of the family members who came to visit mentioned how proud they were of their daughters (and sons) who migrated outside of Eritrea. They usually referred to them as the 'successful ones', while the children who were still in Eritrea did not have as many chances, in their view. One 55-year-old widow from Asmara who came to visit one of her daughters in Khartoum told me how she accompanied all her children, one by one, to the border with Sudan, in order to make sure that they passed safely into Sudan. Most of her seven children were now living abroad: two in Sweden, one in Norway, one in Italy, one in Sudan, and one in the Netherlands. There was only one daughter who remained behind in Eritrea:

I was very worried about my children. I was so worried that I got sick. I sold my gold and took my children one by one to the border with Sudan. I was too worried about their situation and I did not want them to pay a lot of money to the guides and middlemen. I had to take care of my children myself most of the time, because I was married when I was very young, to a man who turned out to be a drunkard. It was the decision of my parents to marry me off. I was responsible for the children most of my life. But now my children, the ones in Europe, are safe. The daughter who is with me in Asmara, she graduated from engineering, but she is not doing much. She is just sitting at home. There is no work in Asmara, in Eritrea. She is just wasting her time. I also want her to go abroad and to join her siblings. I want her to marry and have a family. But she does not want to leave me. She feels that I will be lonely if I stay alone.

Social networks and long-standing home-destination ties all play a role in the decision to migrate and the migration destination. They enable migrants to have more positive migration experiences. However, a number of Ethiopian and Eritrean girls who decided to come to Sudan did not know anyone in the country. They were rather lured with the potential possibilities that the place was supposed to offer. These were usually the ones, particularly Ethiopians, that fell into the smugglers' trap. Thus, the attraction of other lifestyles and seeing migration as a worthy alternative, and the emergence of new role models, such as 'the migrant superhero' images studied by Nina Nyberg Sørensen (2011) among Nicaraguans who succeeded in the US, open up new ways of thinking about possibilities and life trajectories.

The decisions for Eritreans were taken in secret, without any family members or friends informed in order not to put them at risk of arrest and imprisonment. Due to the strict rules of the police state, evading national service and leaving without permission might lead to long-term imprisonment. For the Ethiopians, on the other hand, the decisions were taken both with the blessing of the family, individually, or often collectively. Almass, for example, did not tell her family:

I decided to come to Sudan because there were many other people coming and I heard that one can make a lot of money here. There was a man in our village who was telling us and convincing us to come here. We had to pay him 8,000 Birr (400 USD), in order to bring us here to Sudan. But when we arrived here I realised that the life was very difficult. I did not tell my parents that I was coming. I decided by myself. They wanted me to stay in Ethiopia, but I knew that I need to help them.

Often families were informed that the girls were planning to leave. In some cases, families were reluctant, but in others encouraging and supportive. Often, it was a joint family decision. Some girls ran away to escape difficult family situations. Girls often talked about planning the journey with some other friends or neighbours who were also interested in leaving. They would then find '*samsara*' (middlemen) agents who would help them to arrange travel. Thus, the political situation in the country, the particular family situation, men being often incentives and enablers of leaving (girls following boyfriends or escaping from arranged marriages) emerged from the research as the main influences on migratory decisions, rather than brokers. This contradicts the dominant political and public discourse that locates adolescent girls and young women's migration from Ethiopia and Eritrean to Sudan (IOM 2013).

5.6 The journey

Adolescent girls taking the journey from Eritrea and Ethiopia are faced with violence. This fundamentally influences the social status and position of the girls within their own society as well as the host community. Helen, for example, left Keren in a group of nine people. She was the only girl. The journey to the border with Sudan took her 13 days, mainly walking.

I did not sleep the entire journey. At some point, one of the boys from the group wanted to play with me [have sex]. I was so afraid, but I could not tell anyone in the group because I could not trust them. I did not know any of them. [...] At some point, my feet hurt a lot. They were bleeding from all the walking. The *samsari* (middleman) helped me; he even waited for me and shared with me his water. Thank God nothing happened to me. Most girls get into trouble.

[At the border] ... we were stopped by the Rashaida group and each of us had to pay ransom. I was afraid that the Rashaida would rape me. This is what they do to girls to force their families

to pay ransom. But somehow I was lucky. I contacted my English teacher who was already in the UK and he paid for me. I then spent 3 months in Shegerab, the UN refugee camp near Kassala town. Other girls took care of me.

Most of the Eritrean girls left with the support of *samsari*. At times, they left in a group of friends, at times, alone with strangers, as it was the case of Helen. They usually walked, or took some arranged transportation, if this was possible. Once having crossed the border into Sudan, and if lucky not falling into the hands of Rashaida or Sudanese security, they would contact either their parents in Eritrea or relatives or friends abroad to ask for money to pay the *samsari*. These were the phone calls dreaded by family members. Usually, they did not have enough financial resources to support their daughters. Most sell their valuables, or ask family members and friends in diaspora to help out with paying the ransom. Helen, for example, could not ask her parents as their financial situation was very difficult, with her father imprisoned for evading military service and her mother with a new born baby without work. She also did not have any family or close friends in the diaspora. Thus, she had to contact her literature teacher in the UK and then he paid for her journey (some 1,500 USD). Mona, on the other hand, was held by Rashaida for a few weeks until her neighbour in Asmara sold his car and sent the money for the ransom. The middlemen do not release the migrants until the money is paid.

The main problems arise if the girls are apprehended by Sudanese security or Rashaida groups. Latina for example was 18-years-old when she arrived from Halimete. She was travelling in a group of six young people. They fell into the hands of Rashaida on the border with Sudan. She was then put with the girls in one house whereas the boys were kept in a separate room. They were tied down, and the girls were regularly raped by their captors. Latina told me how she could hear the screams of the boys who were being tortured. The captors made them call their families and ask for ransom. At times, they asked as much as 40,000 USD, but usually when 3,000 or 4,000 USD were gathered and paid by the families, the Eritreans were released. Latina came from a very poor farming family. Her parents did not have enough money to pay for her. She was kept for six months and raped twice a day, as well as beaten. She was then sold to some other Bedouin groups in the Sinai and transported there together with three other Eritrean young men. They were however intercepted by the Egyptian police. The smugglers ran away and the police arrested all the Eritreans and Latina spent one year in an Egyptian prison. She was then deported to Ethiopia as she told the prison authorities that she was from Addis Ababa. She feared being deported to Eritrea. She stayed three months in Addis Ababa and then returned to Sudan. This time she travelled without problem and reached the Shegerab camp safely.

Sabah, a 17-year-old, came to Sudan when she was 16. She came over land with her cousin who was a bit older than her. Her parents were farmers living in a border village with Sudan. They were very old, and her mother fell ill. Sabah left to help her family. She was the oldest of nine children. Sabah and her cousin were kidnapped by the Rashaida and kept in separate rooms. Sabah, looking frail and young, was made to help the kidnappers' wives in taking care of their children. She had to braid their hair and play with them. Every evening, she could hear her cousin being tortured screaming her name. This was real mental torture for her. Every night she wanted to die. She tried to commit suicide, but the cord on which she hung herself broke. One day the screams of her cousin stopped. She could not take the situation any longer, and at night, she just escaped from the hut where she was being kept. She just ran: 'I thought to myself: if I die, this will be better. I was not afraid any longer, I just wanted to run away'. She eventually made it to Kassala and then to Shegerab camp. But she was deeply traumatised and some Eritrean women in the camp helped her to get to Khartoum. When I met Sabah, she had been in Khartoum for a year. She had no news about her cousin, and she was deeply traumatised. She was working as a domestic in a Sudanese family. She was thin, looking very nervous, and biting her fingers.

Most of the girls held by Rashaida or by Sudanese security forces experienced sexual violence together with beating and starvation. Once the ransom was paid to the smugglers or the kidnappers, the girls went to the refugee registration point in Kassala and then proceeded to Wadi Sheriff or Shegarab camps. These camps are administered and managed by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Some girls stayed a while in the camp, but were all advised that they should proceed to Khartoum. Life in the camps was very difficult. There was not enough food. Refugees experienced constant waiting and boredom. Through using smuggling routes again or with the help of other refugees, girls would make their way to Khartoum, again exposing themselves to the risk of illegal status.

The experiences of Ethiopians are slightly different. Some enter the country, with visas and passports. They usually use the services of middlemen as well to facilitate access. For example, Almass, a 26-year-old, travelled from Addis Ababa to Khartoum when she was 18. She paid 3,000 Birr to an agent who arranged a visa and a plane ticket for her. She arrived together with her friend. Upon arrival in the city, they were responsible for themselves. They had to find jobs and repay the loan to the middleman, a young Ethiopian agent. Tsirite was 18 and Mashou 17 went they came from Axum using the services of a middle woman whom they met in a market near Axum. She arranged their travel overland. The girls took a bus to Metema, a border crossing with Sudan. They were told not to talk much with others. Most of the travellers were young girls and women from Ethiopia. Once they reached the border crossing, the middle woman handed them over to an Ethiopian man and disappeared.



A checkpoint in Metema, next to the border with Sudan. The town is now the centre of a booming trade in migrants from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia and Sudan. Photograph: Mulugeta Ayene/AP

The girls took various modes of transport from Metema to Khartoum¹³. The middleman put them in a so-called ‘rest-house’ where other young Ethiopian women were held. He took away their passports and told them that they needed to pay their travel (8,000 Birr - 400 USD each) first before he would give the documents back. He arranged work for them as domestic workers with Sudanese families in Omdurman, a twin city of Khartoum, and collected their salaries for several months. The girls were allowed one day rest a week, when they would come to the ‘rest-house’ where they had to serve the Ethiopian men. Some girls experienced sexual violence from the Ethiopian middlemen. Some stayed in bonded labour conditions under the control of the middlemen for two years or more until they repaid their loans. With the ban on visas for young Ethiopians to travel to Sudan, young girls and women are put at greater risk of exploitation and abuse as they use more dangerous routes to get to Sudan.

The journey to Sudan, whether from Ethiopia or from Eritrea, is taken at great cost and personal risk to the migrating girls. They face high levels of insecurity and vulnerability due to their youth and gender. Often those who experience physical or psychological violence during their journeys or during their stay in the camps or in Khartoum, suffer from profound post-traumatic stress. When I inquired whether the girls share their stories of rape and violence with their communities, all said no. Mona, a 23-year-old from Asmara, explained:

¹³ *The Guardian*, 25 August 2015 (‘Despite crackdown on the borders, Ethiopian migrants risk lives’): ‘Almost 80 per cent of Metema’s businesses are run by smugglers and their affiliates, according to Sister Hamelmal Melaku of the Ethiopia Higher Clinic. They smuggle charcoal, oil, fruit and, of course, people. With the government sweep-out, migrants are no longer showing up at the clinic, and the temporary shelter built for migrants in the middle of the town sits idle. “I think it won’t be an exaggeration if I say that the town is totally out of the government’s control”, she said. With Metema under surveillance, the smugglers are now changing their tactics, according to Abraraw Abeje, police assistant inspector. He said they are now “dumping” the migrants in forests and mountainous areas, and then forcing them to resume their journey into Sudan on foot or in packed vehicles’.

You cannot do it. Once people (from your community) find out that you were held by Rashaida, you are finished. They will officially pity you, but no one will respect you. They will think that you are spoilt. No one will want to marry you. This is the reason why we do not tell our (real) stories to others, even our families

The Ethiopian girls never refer to personal stories of abuse and violence, but rather talk about ‘other girls’ who have experienced this and how this has also driven ‘the other girls’ into prostitution work in Sudan.

Important elements for the migration journey are access to social capital and social networks. Those who have better personal connections or can access financial support from their relatives or friends avoid some of the risks and dangers associated with the journey. The research analysis and findings underscore the importance of power in the study of gender, generation and migration. Power is related to wider issues of mobility, and more specifically, the ‘differential mobility’ as referred to by Doreen Massey in her book *Space, Place and Gender* (1994). She argues that it is not only important who moves and who doesn’t, or when they move and how, but also ‘how mobility and control over mobility, both reflects and reinforces power’ (1994: 150). The mobility and differentiated access to mobility can result in deepening the marginalisation of some groups (in this case adolescent girls with limited resources). Mobility in the context of adolescent girls and young women in Khartoum contributes to sharpening hierarchical relations of power, and gender and generational inequalities.

6 Being an Adolescent Migrant Girl in Khartoum

6.1 First impressions and first encounters

‘When I finally reached Khartoum, on the back of a pickup filled with other Eritreans, after weeks of travelling on foot, running and not eating, and being stressed, I felt relieved’, Bana, a 17-year-old who came to join her sister who had been in Khartoum for six years, told me. I saw Bana on the day she reached her sister’s house. She was one of the lucky ones who had a direct family connection in Khartoum and who had a place to stay, rest and get some food. Bana slept for three days because of her exhausting journey.

Others, who have no connections in the city, find it an overwhelming and threatening experience. Kibra was 17 when she arrived from an Eritrean refugee camp in Ethiopia brought in by a smuggler. As she had no money to pay the smuggler for the journey, she was made to work for him.

I was locked in some house in Omdurman, had to cook for the smuggler and his family, and also for all the Eritreans who were passing through the house. These were the ones who were going to be smuggled to Libya and then to Europe. The smuggler would gather them there, and then they would wait a few days before being transported on trucks through the desert to Libya. I was not allowed to go out, and only one day, when the smuggler did not show up, and there was no people in the house, I took the courage and escaped. I did not even know which part of the city I was in.

Kibra was already pregnant, possibly from a rape or prostitution work that she was doing in Ethiopia before coming to Khartoum. Some Eritreans tried to help her at first, but because she could not work and contribute to the household, they also threw her out. She ended up living on the street for many months, and then finally, a Sudanese man escorted her to an Eritrean Pentecostal church near the place where she slept. When I met her she was deeply traumatised and disturbed. The Pentecostal church helped her with accommodation, food and clothes for the new-born baby.

At first, I was happy. After so many months of being kept by Rashaida, and then getting pregnant as a result of the rapes, I arrived safely in the city. But then, I got off at the main bus stop, and I did not know what to do. There was nowhere to go, I did not have any friends or family in the city. I felt lost. And the people were so different. The women are all covered up and the men look at you in a hostile way. Finally, I just sat at the bus station and waited. And then, there was a woman passing by. She wore a long *tob* (a Sudanese long cloth worn over the clothes). She asked me something in Arabic, but I could not understand. I answered in Tigrinya and then she started talking to me. She was from Eritrea, and she offered that I stay with her. She was just a stranger but she helped me. We have been staying together since then.

Salam from Humera and others from Ethiopia who came to Sudan with their family members (usually aunts) found it easier to adjust. ‘Khartoum was very different from my town in Ethiopia. It was a big city, with women and girls having to cover up and dress very differently. But, I was with my auntie, so it was fine. I just went and stayed with her the first couple of years’.

Waini also came to stay with her aunt, one of the Ethiopian migrants who have been living in Khartoum for the past 30 years. The aunt was married to a Sudanese man so her family was well integrated in the city. Waini, 16 when she arrived in Khartoum, found it easy to adjust. For her, Khartoum offered a lot of opportunities. ‘You can go out, you can see things, there are people from different places, you learn a new language’. Salama, 17, who came to Khartoum when she was 15 on forged documents, stayed with her ‘auntie’. In fact, they were not related, but the older woman came from the same place, Gondar, and hosted Salama for a few months. She told her: ‘To survive, you need to learn Arabic. Then you need to learn how to clean houses to get a job’. Salama was instructed by her ‘auntie’ in basic Arabic expressions and then once she learned the cleaning job she got her first work as a domestic. Although she felt estranged in the city, her immediate community came from her own town. She felt safe with them, as she told me.

For those Ethiopians who come as newcomers without links to Ethiopian networks in Khartoum, the first months in Khartoum are usually challenging. A number of girls arrived through middlemen who arranged their journeys.¹⁴ As they knew nothing about the city and had no connections, they had to rely on the agents for basic survival. Tsirite who was 18 when she came from Axum explained:

We did not see much of the city at first. We arrived on a truck, late at night and were taken to some house in Omdurman. We did not even realise it was already part of Khartoum. Next day, we were put to work with a Sudanese family as domestic workers. Mashou, my friend, who was 16, was afraid and she was not that strong. She just accepted to work for 250 SDG (23 USD) per month, with one day off during the week. Me, I tried to argue, even though I did not speak the language. They paid me eventually 350 SDG (28 USD). But we did not see any of this money. The *samsari* would take it. We worked like this for almost 2 years. Once we knew the language, and a bit about the city, and met other Ethiopians, we escaped.

Bana, a 27-year-old research assistant and translator who has been in Khartoum for six years, commented: ‘This is always this way. You glorify the place where you are not there, you imagine something different. And when you get there, you realise that it is in fact much harder. That you have to work very hard for anything to get in your life. People do not expect this’. While arrival in the city is linked with much excitement and imagined good fortune, the first experiences can be quite traumatic. Access to social networks, support from family, friends, church groups, or at times strangers helps to ease the process of adjustment and survival in the city. A lack of these exposes girls to daily insecurity and, to what together with Cindy Horst I have described as protracted uncertainty (Horst and Grabska 2015). While before and during flight displaced people have to deal with changes and challenges that occur at rapid speed and in highly dramatic ways, in exile, uncertainty often takes on a much more protracted and slow form. The protractedness of many conflicts and – by extension – of displacement, creates liminal situations for refugees and IDPs (Agier 2011; Horst 2006a; Malkki 1995b; Turner 2004), in which hope and waiting play central roles (Horst and Grabska 2015: 2).

The usual answer that I heard to the question: ‘How do you like Sudan, Khartoum?’ was ‘Oh Sudan... a big problem. Khartoum is very dirty, dusty, and ugly. Not like Asmara. Asmara was built by the Italians. It is like Rome. Khartoum is a dump, all is broken’. Other researchers have compared such descriptions to the re-enactment of colonial racial stereotypes, used to designate the ‘indigenous’ (the dirty impure ones) against the pure and clean Italian colonisers in Eritrea (Marchetti 2011; Treiber 2010). As Treiber (2010) has observed, these categories are used not only by Eritreans in distinguishing themselves from the ‘other’, but also by the ruling government in its policies of urban renovation and maintenance. The notion of cleanliness is directly associated with the concepts of ‘modernity’ and progress. A move to Sudan is understood as not necessarily a move to a more ‘modern’ place. This confirms the observation of Abbink (1998) who stressed that due to industrialisation and development of infrastructure resulting from Italian colonisation and the subsequent nationalist propaganda of the Eritrean government, Eritreans imagined themselves more developed and modern than others in the Horn of Africa.

6.2 Settling in and living situation

Settling in is a process that takes time, time to get to know the city, establish new contacts and relations, and gain some social and financial capital. The living conditions of migrant and refugee communities vary depending on their financial situation, social status, access to social capital and networks of support. The majority of migrants, however, live in quite miserable conditions. This extract from field notes describes the living conditions of a group of young Eritrean girls:

Salha, a 23-year-old from Halimente, met us (me and a research assistant) on the main Jereif road. We took a small alley leading to enormous villas, many of them still under construction. We passed new colourful expensive villas with cars parked in front of them. We crossed a small square (*midan*) with garbage piled up everywhere, but not in front of the expensive homes. And then we turned to the left and entered a small gate leading to a... shack... a falling apart mud shack, with a zinc and grass roof.

¹⁴ See Reem Abbas Shawkat (2012) ‘Ethiopian servants in Sudan at the mercy of middle men’, *Society*, 22 August.

Everything looked dilapidated, dirty, and in the most precarious condition. In front of the gate, there were two young Eritrean men sitting on the ground and looking at their mobile phones. When we entered the compound, to the right, there was a sort of a hole in the ground called a toilet, and three separate rooms without doors. There were several groups of people living in this place. The room that we entered had two beds. It was very small without windows, and some basic amenities. There was no running water, no electricity, no proper toilet. There was a strong smell of sewage and urine everywhere. It was one of the poorest places, and dirtiest places I have seen in Khartoum, just next to the expensive villas with expensive and functioning amenities. The worlds apart, the worlds next to each other, adjacent and yet divided by the deep inequalities and injustices, as in some other neighbourhoods in Khartoum.

Most of the respondents told me that their living conditions in Eritrea were not as bad. While there are not many good amenities in Eritrea, it is clean and things are organised. They were in fact living worse than in their places of origin.

Most of the respondents lived in overcrowded accommodation, usually sharing either with family, or other girls or women from their places of origin. The nicknames that I gave some of the respondents are evocative of their living conditions: *Salma from the kitchen* (a young Ethiopian girl who lived in a place that used to be a kitchen and was adapted into a tiny room without ventilation and windows), *Richo from the bathroom* (a young 17-year-old Eritrean girl living in a shared house, in a room that was adapted from a bathroom, and sharing it with her elder brother; with no windows, only artificial light), *a Girl from a cupboard* (Tsirite lived in a room so small that it could only fit her bed). As the rents have been dramatically increasing in Khartoum due to the harsh economic situation, and also Sudanese landlords' perception that foreigners get better salaries, most respondents had to share their accommodation. Table 6.1 below shows the living situation of the 48 survey respondents, but it is also representative of others who participated in the research.

Table 6.1 Living situation

	Total	Eritrean	Ethiopian
Living alone	3	1	2
Living with friends	20	14	6
Living with family/relatives	16	11	5
Living with employer	3	1	2
Other	6	5	1

Most of the girls shared accommodation with their friends or relatives. Sharing is not only to minimise living costs. It is also a strategy, as the girls reported, to overcome loneliness and harassment from Sudanese neighbours and landlords for whom young girls and women living alone are seen as inappropriate. Young girls and women are also usually not allowed to share accommodation with (unrelated) men. In some cases, when brothers of some of the respondents arrived in the city, the girls had to look for different accommodation and landlords that would allow them to share with their male relatives. Most often sharing among relatives and friends is done according to their place of origin, religious beliefs or new social networks emerging during migration journeys. For example, people from the Bilen¹⁵ ethnic group in Eritrea tend to live close to each other mainly in the Jereif area. The Jereif neighbourhood is arranged by nationalities and ethnic origins. Next to 'Nigerian', 'Genubeen' (South Sudanese) houses, there are 'Ethiopians' and 'Eritreans'. The Eritrean households are also divided by places of origin, with groups of relatives or people of the same ethnic origin sharing the same spaces. Eritrean and Ethiopian housing arrangements are an attempt to accumulate their scarce social capital (Massey 1985; Logan et al. 2002). Such arrangements allow migrants and refugees to

¹⁵ It was explained to me that the Bilen group tends to be very supportive towards each other, as it is one of the smallest ethnic groups in Eritrea but with one of the highest percentages of members in the Diaspora. Thus, they keep close kin and ethnic relations.

cooperate, reciprocate moral and financial obligations, as well as for protection, and to jointly survive on scarce resources.

There is also great solidarity among the Eritrean members of the Catholic Church who tend to help each other. The Ethiopian and Eritrean Pentecostal churches also have strategies to support their members. For example in the Sahafa area a house is rented by the Eritrean Pentecostal Church and all the apartments in the building are rented out to the church members. This creates a space of safety and security for the migrants. Rahel who lives in one of the rooms told me: 'I did not know these people before. But when I arrived in Khartoum, I joined the Pentecostal Church. And then they gave me this room to rent. We are now all family here; we pray together'. These new living arrangements were also changing the sense of identity and community for the Eritrean and Ethiopian migrants. A number of Eritrean and Ethiopian migrants for example converted to Pentecostalism in Khartoum. Others developed networks based on religion and on their shared living arrangements or shared journeys to Sudan.

There were some exceptions to the kin, ethnic or religious-based sharing strategies. For example, Helen and Mona shared a room for three years together. They belonged to different churches (Catholic and Pentecostal) and had different friends, but they got along very well and decided to keep their sharing arrangements. Sharing a room with other nationalities was rather unusual, although Ethiopians and Eritreans would at times share the same compounds. The relations between Ethiopians and Eritreans were usually peaceful, without overt hostilities.

A few of the respondents, mostly Ethiopians, worked as live-in maids in Sudanese houses. They were usually allowed one day off a week or every two weeks, when they would go to a place rented jointly with some friends to socialise and rest.

Rents are very high given the salaries in Khartoum. Most girls spend anything between 250 SDG (34 USD) and 750 SDG (85 USD) per person for a shared room. During the two and a half years I spent in Khartoum, and with the devaluation of the Sudanese Pound, rents have steadily been increasing. This had led to volatility in living conditions, with girls having often to change their accommodation, and constantly moving from one place to another in search of cheaper and better living conditions. Moreover, mostly Sudanese landlords, but at times also Ethiopians, often harass tenants, by constantly increasing the rents and putting restrictions on (male) visitors.

6.3 Working and earning

Among the respondents interviewed for the research, the majority had some type of employment, at times, doing two or three different types of work at the same time. As the job market is extremely volatile, most of the respondents, even those who recently arrived in Khartoum, held more than 4-5 jobs. All the girls and young women commented on how hard it is to find a good job in Khartoum, and how exploitative most employment is. Those who had been in Sudan for longer commented on how the labour market in Khartoum used to be more open. For example, for the Ethiopians, the Birr/Sudanese Pound exchange rate used to be almost double what it is nowadays, thus permitting Ethiopians working in Sudan to save money and send remittances.

Table 6.2 Current employment (sector)

	Total	Eritrean	Ethiopian
Domestic work	20	12	8
Factory	0	0	0
Small trade	0	0	0
Sex work	0	0	0
Tea-selling	14	7	7
Other (restaurants, coiffures)	15	14	1

Ethiopian adolescent girls and young women are visible on the streets of Khartoum tea sellers. The Ministry of Social Development carried out a survey in 2012 among 1768 Ethiopian street tea sellers, with some 97 per cent being under 25 years of age. Among them, 62.7 per cent were single; some 31 per cent were married; with some 3.1 per cent divorced and 3.2 per cent widowed. Some 59 per cent declared that they had card licenses to work as tea sellers, although these numbers cannot be trusted given that the survey was carried out by the government and most respondents feared for their status in the country. Over half of the respondents declared that they work day and night.

As tea sellers, girls are subjected to verbal harassment, abuse, often physical and sexual, especially when they work at nights, and the constant threat of police raids, the so-called *kasha*. I have observed in several instances girls' stands being confiscated by the police and the girls being taken to prison. Only after a payment of anything between 100 and 500 SDG were their things released and the girls could continue working. Some girls sell drugs given to them through the drug merchants, who use them to distribute drugs; some work as sex workers, although none of the girls I talked to revealed this.

In different parts of the city, usually in the migrant neighbourhoods of Deim, Sahafa, Bahri, and Jereif, there are tea places or so-called cafeterias run by both Sudanese and Ethiopians, or Eritreans. Many young, usually Ethiopian but at times also Eritrean girls work in these places. Officially, they sell coffee and tea, but there are also water-pipes, music and TV rooms. These places are frequented exclusively by men, and thus, doing fieldwork as a woman, was almost impossible. There are also some backrooms where other services can be offered. In some instances, there is sexual intercourse. 'We pay to talk with a girl, to chat with her, to smoke a water-pipe, we listen to them. You know, this is just to pass time. Not all of these girls are prostitutes', a Sudanese man working for one of children's rights' organisations in Khartoum told me. 'Ethiopian women and girls are perceived as loose, as prostitutes, and they dress in a provocative way. This is not like our girls, Sudanese girls do not do things like that', he continued. He also explained the custom of Sudanese men travelling to Addis Ababa, or other Arab capitals and frequenting brothels where Ethiopians work. Thus, Ethiopian (and Eritrean as they are usually hardly distinguishable from Ethiopians) women are perceived as open for sexual relations.

Sitting on the corner of a street and drinking tea with Salam, I watched her prepare her delicious coffee with ginger and cardamom. Different clients (mainly men) kept ordering tea and coffee. Some of them kept abusing her, telling her that she made a bad tea or a bad coffee, that the sugar was not enough, or too much, or not enough ginger. Then they would request a second coffee and tea and of course did not pay for the first one. Salam commented that it is better just not to respond and stay quiet. Otherwise they make problems for you. The marginal status of girls as foreigners, often residing illegally in the country, belonging to different ethnic and racial backgrounds, often makes it impossible for them to respond. In order to survive, most have adopted the strategy of not responding, ignoring and not reacting. When I asked Salam why she was doing this work, she commented:

When I came to Khartoum for the second time, I was 17 and I came alone. That time, I decided to work for myself (she already knew Khartoum from her previous stay with her aunt). I first worked in different homes as a domestic, then as a waitress in coffee places, in different restaurants, I even was making tea in the Ibn Sina hospital in Amarat. Then I decided to set up my own business. Since 3 years, I am working here on this street. I had to move from in front of the other house (where the pavement is nice and even and closer to the main street) because the owner complained. Now, I work on the same street but on the pavement that is all broken and crocked. I put my chairs and my table in the *Jadge Kak* (fast-food place) restaurant for the night, and I do not have to pay for storage or for the place where I work. Since I started nothing has happened to me. God is taking care of me, because I am a good person, and I hope that He will protect me.

Salam also mentioned that she does not like the job.

It is a hard job, you have to sit all day long in the heat on a dusty street, men abuse you, some of them try to sleep with you. But nothing has happened to me so far. Also, I only do this job because of money. Until recently, I had to support my younger brother. Thanks to the money

I was sending he finished school and graduated from nursing college. He now works as a nurse and earns money. Now, I have to help my mom, but it is better now.

The need for money and a lack of other viable work opportunities makes girls accept harsh working conditions. As tea sellers on the street or in the cafeterias the girls would earn about 2000-2500 SDG (220 to 240 USD) per month, working 12 hours a day with just one day rest. Girls also explained that they preferred working as tea sellers despite the abuse and constant police harassment because they felt they had more freedom and control over their own lives. 'If you work in your own business, it is better. You can work when you need to, and when you are sick, you can just close down and go home. When you work for someone, you have no control over your life'.

Domestic work in Sudanese families is subject to very low pay (between 250 and 800 SDG per month), often sexual advances and abuse from male members of the family, and harassment and maltreatment from the women. Most of domestic workers interviewed worked on daily basis. Some were live-in (7 out of 20). Helen, a brilliant young Eritrean girl, who was a university student in Asmara, could not speak any Arabic when she first arrived and had limited networks. With a neighbour's help she finally got a job as a cleaner with a Sudanese family:

They treated me very badly. The woman would call me from another part of the house just because she wanted me to bring her a glass of water that was standing almost in front of her. They would give me leftovers from the fridge that stayed there for a long time. Once I got so sick, that until now I have problems with my stomach. I also had to sleep on the floor in the kitchen, and at night, the father of the family, and then one of his sons, tried to have sex with me. This is when I decided to leave without even taking my salary.

Working as domestic workers for Sudanese families is seen as the lowest in the hierarchy of employment options available for the migrant girls and young women in Khartoum. It was also usually the first work that the girls would find through the *samsari*, neighbours, and friends. The recently arrived girls and young women had limited language abilities, low skills, and a limited network of support and contacts. They had little power in negotiating employment, thus they resorted to such jobs. Once they learned some skills and Arabic, and acquired some small capital, they usually moved to other jobs, including setting up their own tea stalls. For Eritreans, however, it was rarer for them to work as tea sellers. They perceived this type of work as dangerous, dirty and subject to police and other harassment.

Some Eritreans, those who spoke good English and had extensive work experience, found employment as nannies with ex-pat families in Khartoum. The pay and the work conditions were usually better, with salaries in the range of 250 to 650 USD per month, and with at least one day off a week. Eritrean young women and adolescents were usually better educated, with more knowledge of English than Ethiopians and were able to secure jobs in restaurants, fast food places, or hotels. Well-established Eritreans who have been living in Khartoum for decades run some of these places. Well-trained Eritreans, able to speak English were also welcomed by Sudanese owners of restaurants and hotels, as having qualified staff increased the prestige and the quality of their establishments. Also, for Sudanese women of a certain class, it is very difficult to work in public places. Thus, these jobs are open to foreigners, mainly Eritreans and Filipinos. These jobs also tended to be better paid, with salaries around 800 to 2300 SDG per month (90 to 270 USD). Yet, some respondents complained that many restaurant owners wanted them to work night shifts. For the girls and young women it was very difficult to accept as they feared for their security at night. They spoke of problems that they had encountered when travelling alone on public transport at night, at times from their employers. Several of the young Eritrean women interviewed for the research preferred to stay at home without employment rather than expose themselves to these kinds of risks.

Yet, income from jobs, even if girls worked two or three jobs at the same time, was usually not enough to survive. Thus, some were also relying on help from others: their husbands, friends, or family abroad. Those who did not work were supported by husbands, family abroad (from the diaspora), some assistance from international organisations and churches, and from friends. They argued that to survive, to pay for rent, food, transport, and some basic necessities, they needed at least 600 SDG to 1000 SDG (70 to 120 USD) per month.

While labour market opportunities for girls and young women are normally limited to menial and low-skilled jobs, Ethiopian and Eritrean girls manage to manoeuvre and navigate these limitations in order to survive. They also carefully consider options and risks of different professions, and find ways to minimise their marginalisation. Yet, in most cases, they are not able to earn enough to support their families back home.

The presence of Ethiopian and Eritrean successful businesses and informal local integration highlights two main aspects. On the one hand urban refugees and migrants are resourceful and contribute to local economies despite challenging social and political environments (Jacobsen 2006; Landau 2007; Horst 2006b). On the other hand, due to the increasingly difficult economic situation in Khartoum, and on-going internal conflicts that generate displacements towards Khartoum, there are rather limited opportunities for informal local integration in comparison to other urban centres of the Global South.

6.4 Educational opportunities and aspirations

Almost all the Eritrean girls came to Khartoum with the hope of continuing education. They hoped that they could either earn enough money to pay for their schooling, or to be able to get resettlement to countries where they would be provided with education as refugees. Some started language or computer courses, but because of a lack of finances, they had to stop them. As the Ethiopian and Eritrean communities (see the section on context) are well established in Sudan in general, and in Khartoum more specifically, there are several community schools run for Eritrean refugees and Ethiopians. For example, the Eritrean Refugee School in Deim hosts some 1200 students, but most of them are those who were born in Sudan or those who arrived with their families. Among my respondents there was only one girl who arrived at the age of 15 to follow her mother. She was unable to join her mother in the UK and thus, stayed behind in Khartoum with relatives. Her mother, however, was sending some support for her so that the girl could attend school. She was the only one among the respondents who was not working and was studying full time. There is also an Eritrean Refugee school in Jereif, and the Eritrean school in Sahafa Zelet which was initially sponsored by the Pentecostal Church and set up mainly for the children of Pentecostal members. However, the school has now opened up to others as well.

For the Ethiopians, there are a number of Ethiopian community schools, including one at the Mehlem Alem Church in Khartoum. Some of them are supported by the Ethiopian embassy and the Ethiopian community. However, classes are only run during the day, and thus, the migrant girls do not have time to attend them as they have to work. The Ethiopian respondents did not stress the importance of education for themselves. Most of them mentioned that they have already left education and it was too late for them to return to it. They were however, very keen on supporting their siblings back home, and believed in the importance of them being educated.

6.5 Life in the city

The daily life of migrant and refugee girls and young women is dominated by work. As most of them work long hours and have to commute to work, they have very little time to themselves. Salam spends the whole day on the street selling tea from her little cart.

I wake up early in the morning around 8 o'clock, take a shower, then change my clothes and go to my work place at 9 o'clock and work until 7 o'clock evening. Then I walk on foot to my home, it is not too far, maybe 20 minutes. Sometimes, I go to the Deim market to buy something for my tea business. After that I arrive home around 9 o'clock. I wash my clothes once a week. When I come back, I take a shower, cook some food, then go to my friends and chat with them and I sleep around 11 o'clock. This is it. On my day off, Friday, I sometimes go to the Ethiopian church, and then I go and sit with my friends here in my compound. We drink coffee, watch TV and talk. This is all. This is my life.

Other girls had similar routines. Those who worked as live-in maids had usually only one day a week to spend with their friends or family members. Sometimes, like 17-year-old Feven, they would come up with different religious celebrations for which they would ask for time off. This was a strategy to get away from their employer's house and have some freedom.

On Fridays, most girls and young women went to their respective churches and afterwards would visit friends and relatives in the city. As their mobility within the city was limited, spending time with neighbours, relatives, and friends became major social events for the girls. Sharing food and preparing coffee with popcorn and biscuits were the favourite and the safest leisure time for the young migrants. Members of the Pentecostal church usually had very elaborated worships for which they would prepare themselves during the week. The Pentecostals are a very tight community, uniting around specific churches and chapels. The choir members had rehearsals twice a week in Amarat, in one of private homes. This is one of the favourite times for one of my research assistants, who belonged to the Church. She said: 'When I can go and meet my friends and sing with them, this is when I feel free, this is when I feel happy. This is what I always wanted to do, singing. And here in Khartoum I can do that'. The Pentecostal Church was banned in Eritrea in 2001 and since then its members have been prosecuted, imprisoned and tortured. Several of my respondents spent some years in prison as young girls in Eritrea for belonging to the Pentecostal Church.

Weddings are another popular way to socialise and visit friends. My research assistants who were Pentecostals were usually attending weddings on Thursdays and Fridays. These events were very elaborate, with big halls rented to host up to 500 or 800 people, with music, food, and traditional dance. This was also an opportunity for girls and unmarried young women to meet potential husbands and partners. Thus, they always looked impeccable, with beautifully braided hair, stunning jewellery, and shiny dresses, despite their difficult financial situations.

For very special occasions, the young women would save up money to have an evening out at one of the two malls in Khartoum, usually the Afra Mall. This bright, modern architectural structure with all its consumerist fast food places, Indian cinema, bowling alley, and expensive clothing and jewellery shops was a place where girls felt in a different world. They enjoyed the freedom of not having to have their heads covered with the hijab, and of eating greasy fast food served by Filipinos or other Eritreans. The place has little to do with the rest of Khartoum, with the rest of Sudan. It is reminiscent of 'Dubai', or 'the West'. Girls usually dress up for such adventures, and then post their photos from the mall straightaway on Facebook or update their profile pictures on other social media, including viber and skype.

6.6 Risks, threats and set-backs

Violence and death: If the desert could speak...

Violence and death are omnipresent in the lives of migrants and refugees in Sudan. Most of the conversations in Eritrean and at times Ethiopian homes were about migration: either about people coming to Sudan, or those crossing to Libya, or those who had already made it to Europe. The walls of people's places were filled with pictures of those who migrated, or died crossing the desert and the sea. The violence and death were intertwined with people's desire and experiences of mobility. I often met single young women who came with their small children in search of husbands who had disappeared. Others were mothers, who came to either find their children or to stop the remaining children from migrating further. The story of a 45-year-old woman from Eritrea is particularly evocative. She came to Sudan in 2014, because all her children were already here. One of the sons, a 20-year-old man had gone to Libya to cross to Italy. He had drowned in the sea. This is when she decided to come to control her children. She said that she did not allow them to leave because she did not want to lose them. She told me: 'I came here to control them. They all wanted to go to Libya and then to Europe. But I came to stop them. I do not want to lose any more children. It is hard for a mother to see her children die'. The picture of the dead son was hanging in the corner of the room, visible to anyone who entered the room, a reminder of the tragedies facing the Eritrean community. The deaths of those passing to Libya and Europe became a daily reality for the Eritreans and Ethiopians in Sudan, and elsewhere. One young Ethiopian girl told me, referring to the experiences of Ethiopians and Eritreans crossing the deserts: 'If the desert could only speak... it would tell a lot of stories of lost lives...'

Every day during my fieldwork there was news of deaths, abduction, rapes and violence, and yet, the desire to leave, take the risk and go for an uncertain and insecure route was as strong or even stronger among the Eritrean and Ethiopian communities.

A discussion with a group of seven girls in Jereif: Most of the girls looked very tired and sick. They were very thin, and some looked scared. Yet, they were still smiling in a shy way. While we were talking I realised that I was surrounded by girls and young women who have gone already through so much in their lives. They all experienced violence, in different forms, bodily, emotional and psychological. Among the seven girls in the room only two were not raped... Daily they experienced abuse and harassment on the streets of Khartoum and from their employers, just because they were girls and young women, and just because they were not Sudanese, not Arab.

Navigating the everyday harassment and insecurity

Another type of violence experienced by the girls once they reach Khartoum is their permanent impermanent status. While Sudan has been hosting refugees and migrants for decades, according to official policy, refugees are supposed to stay in refugee camps, not in the cities. Those who move to Khartoum are often subjected to arbitrary arrests, harassment from the police, detention or even deportation. While most migrants and refugees are subject to such treatment, young girls and women are at a greater risk of sexual violence. Several girls shared their stories of random pick-ups by police or by other Sudanese men who then raped them. One story was particularly dramatic. A young 22-year-old mother of a 3-year-old boy was lured by a group of three Sudanese men who then held her hostage for three days raping her in turns. Afterwards, they left her naked in the middle of a square in one of the popular neighbourhoods. She managed to find her way home, with strangers lending her clothes. She was greeted by a large group of Eritrean rickshaw drivers who were searching for her.

Stories of harassment, both verbal and physical, had a prominent place in the young women's narratives. I was a witness of several round-ups around the Ethiopian church in Khartoum just after Sunday prayers. A 21-year-old Hannan told me: 'You know, these security people come in civil clothes, they sit with us, drink tea and chat, and then, they start rounding up people and put them in jail. They pretend they are our brothers, but they cheat us'. Helen commented: 'I wish I could tell Sudanese that we, *Habash*, are also human beings. They treat us like rubbish. But we have our humanity, we have our culture, we deserve respect'.

Girls adopted a variety of strategies to remain invisible in the city, by often wearing black *abayas* (black robes worn in Islamic states) and headscarves, an outfit seen as the appropriate attire of a Muslim girl in Sudan. They also preferred to share accommodation with other girls or families, in order not to stay alone or with men and be exposed to additional harassment from police and Sudanese neighbours. When seeing police and security pick-up trucks on the streets of migrant neighbourhoods, girls would instinctively hide inside the shops, behind houses, and at times, me. Even those who had legal residency documents (which had to be renewed every six months and paid for to the police) were constantly vigilant. 'If they catch you, they do not care around your document. Even if you have a valid residence, they will tear it and tell you to go to jail', young Eritrean women often told me. It was better to stay invisible, even if you were legal.

These strategies of blending in were aimed at hiding the 'otherness' through altering the external appearance and (national) as well as appropriate (gender) identity. Eritrean and Ethiopian adolescent girls and young women complained about the restrictions on dress code and on the interactions with men that they were subjected to in Sudan. This, in turn, affected their conceptions of the type of adolescent girls and young women they could or should be in Sudan as opposed to who they wanted to be.

Health

One of the other negative consequences of migration was the adverse impact on the girls' and young women's health. The traumatic, often violent experiences of the journey to Sudan, combined with mental stress, hard physical work, the hot and dusty climate, poor diet and bad living conditions resulted in girls and young women becoming ill. Salam, a 23-year-old, explained: 'Look at me, I used to be fat in Ethiopia. But now, I have been here nine years, I have become thin, and with pimples on my skin. Sudan is bad for you'. Girls would often tell me how they had developed different health problems since arrival in Sudan. Helen, from Eritrea, for example, often complained about the pain in her feet. She had to walk for nine days before she reached the border with Sudan. Her feet were so swollen that she still has problems walking. Others got

pregnant from rapes either by smugglers, traffickers, or Sudanese security forces and police. Some were raped by random Sudanese men in Khartoum, either at work, or on their way home from work. Their mental and physical health deteriorated, and some were afraid of checking whether they had contracted HIV.

SEEMA, a Sudanese NGO, providing services for women and children who experience violence, including Ethiopians and Eritreans, commented that their main clients are migrant and refugee girls and women who have faced sexual violence, some in their country of origin, but most of them on the way to Sudan or in Sudan. Although they also offer them legal aid, almost 90 per cent of migrants and refugees refuse to resort to legal action. 'They do not feel safe, they are not confident in the legal protection. They do not know about their rights. And of course, they face a lot of violations of law from the law enforcement people, from the police and security people. They are frightened by them'.

Yet, most of those who experience sexual, physical or emotional violence do not have access to any support system. They are also not able to share these experiences with their communities, and families, due to the fear of stigmatisation. As a result, they keep quiet. Lack of access to doctors and lack of trust in Sudanese doctors as well as the poor quality of medical services provided in the city mean girls and young women leave their health problems untreated. A feeling of isolation and missing their families leads also to 'feeling sick'. As Helen explained: 'Loneliness is the biggest illness. It hurts a lot. But there is no cure for it here'.

The girls and young women in their daily struggles evaluate the hostile and volatile environment they are faced with. They are managing in Khartoum; even though they struggle, the adverse conditions are manageable. There are, albeit limited, opportunities to survive.

7 Vulnerability, Volatility and Protection

7.1 Sources of vulnerabilities

In this section, I follow the definition of vulnerability offered by Robert Chambers. As he argues:

Vulnerability refers to exposure to contingencies and stress, and difficulty in coping with them. Vulnerability has thus two sides: an external side of risks, shocks, and stress to which an individual or household is subject; and an internal side which is defencelessness, meaning a lack of means to cope without damaging loss. Loss can take many forms – becoming or being physically weaker, economically impoverished, socially dependent, humiliated or psychologically harmed (1989: 1).

The sources of vulnerabilities for migrant and refugee girls and young women are multiple: their position as women, as girls, of a specific ethnic and national background, their legal situation as foreigners, absence of their parents, guardians or relatives who could provide support, nature of their work, level of education, and almost none existing support from international, national and community organisations. They are related both to the external side of risks, shocks and stress that girls as well as their households experience; and to the internal defencelessness. This approach to vulnerability exposes also the social element of vulnerability, as Moser and Holland argue, “the insecurity of the wellbeing of individuals, households, or communities in the face of a changing environment” (1997:5). Some of these traits make migrant girls more vulnerable than their local peers, who were born and grew up in the places of destination. The journey for example can be a moment of acute vulnerability for some migrants. Those from who travelled with complete strangers from Eritrea or Ethiopia to Sudan for example, and relied on unknown networks of agents were in greater danger of experiencing deceit and violence. For others, it was a ‘pure luck’, as the stories of Eritreans show. Some were caught by Rashaida smugglers, abused and demanded ransom, and others managed to escape. Those whose families were able to pay usually did not experience sexual abuse. The context of migration is major source of vulnerability, with some girls being more vulnerable than others depending on their situation, as it will be shown subsequently.

Migrant girls are more vulnerable than their local (Sudanese, Ethiopians and Eritreans) peers, who were born and grew up in Khartoum. Sudan is a patriarchal society where the status and living conditions of women and girls largely depend on men. Migrant girls are often referred to by Sudanese as ‘loose’ or ‘bad girls’ because they transgress the moral codes of *adab* (morality and proper behaviour) by living independently.

The absence of their parents, or other close relatives, who can provide for adolescent girls is very deeply felt. Family relations are extremely important in Eritrean and Ethiopian societies and form the main source of support, emotionally, socially and financially. The absence of close relatives, and especially male relatives, exposes girls and young women to abuse and exploitation. Young girls without connections in the city often fall prey to (Ethiopian) middlemen. Yet, families and male relatives can often be sources of vulnerability, as many girls, especially the Ethiopian ones, experienced abuse at home and migration was seen as an escape.

Another source of vulnerability is the national and ethnic origin of the girls. Ethiopians and Eritreans are generally stigmatised in Sudanese society, and referred to as *Habesh*. They are seen as racially and ethnically subordinate. These discriminatory attitudes justify abuse and exploitation, as the *Habesh* are not perceived as equally human.

A lack of legal status further contributes to their vulnerability. Ethiopian girls who arrive illegally into the country or whose passports and documents are confiscated by middlemen fear going to the police to report cases of abuse and exploitation as they might be arrested for illegal entry (see the Migration and Asylum Act described previously). For Eritreans, as refugees, in theory they should have legal residence in the country. However, the Asylum Act requires all refugees to reside in the camps. Residence in urban areas is given in exceptional circumstances. Some Eritreans have registration cards that they received from the UNHCR office and the Sudanese Commission of Refugees (COR). Residence cards are then issued based on these documents. The residence cards are valid for six months and for each renewal one has to pay 150 SDG. Yet,

at times the issuing of residency cards is randomly suspended, as a result, during these periods, most of the respondents did not have any documents proving their legal status.

The uncertain and unstable legal status in the country is also further undermined by the weak rule of law and corruption deeply rooted in the police and security forces. Regular police roundups of migrants, and especially young Ethiopian women and girls who work as tea sellers are a daily reminder of the injustices faced by them. Genet, an 18-year-old from Gondar had to stop working for a week at her tea stand. ‘They came every evening to arrest all of us. They come, they take your stuff and if you are lucky you just have to pay. It does not matter if you have documents or not. Last week, I had to pay every time and then decided to stop working for a while because I could not cover the bribes’. Bisrat, an Eritrean waiter, told me how she was on the street with her girlfriends when a police truck arrived and the police officers asked for their documents. Bisrat had her residency card, but her friend had forgotten hers. She was dragged into the truck. Bisrat started arguing with the policemen, but they just abused her telling her to keep her mouth closed or her residency card would not save her. She then went to the main officer who was sitting in a separate car and explained to him the situation. He looked at her, and finally told the other policemen to release the girl. I often heard from my respondents and research assistants that they had to visit their girlfriends in prison on weekends and take them food and money for release.

Low levels of education and lack of knowledge of Arabic are other sources of vulnerabilities for Ethiopian and Eritrean girls and young women. Those who are newly arrived in the country find it especially difficult to navigate the dangerous and unsafe terrain of the city. They usually feel bullied and keep a low profile in order not to endanger themselves.

Limited institutional support from their community organisations, international and national organisations, the Sudanese government, and in the case of Ethiopians, the embassy, further marginalises the adolescent girls and young women. Also the nature of their work, especially as domestic workers, waitresses in bars working night-shifts, or tea sellers makes them vulnerable to physical, sexual and emotional abuse. These uncontrolled terrains and spaces leave the girls at the mercy of their employers and customers.

The perceived lack of options and the impossibility of return to their places of origin, further increase the girls’ vulnerability. For Eritreans, return to Eritrea was not possible due to the potential repercussions from the government. For Ethiopians, the meagre income and lack of money for a return trip made it difficult to return. And moving further was marked by even greater risks and uncertainties. Thus, many girls and young women felt trapped and isolated. Even those who had been in the city for longer (6-8 years), saw their lives as unstable and unsecured.

7.2 Volatility

A longer perspective on the lives of adolescent girls migrants and refugees demonstrates that their lives are overwhelming volatile. We follow the metaphor and approach developed by Room (2000) in particular, who emphasises one key dimension of vulnerability. ‘‘Snakes and ladders’’ refers to expected and unexpected variability that can lead to advance (ladder) or decline (snake) in wellbeing. In the following, we present how due to extreme volatility that determines the everyday experiences of migrant adolescent girls, they find it difficult to plan for longer-term perspective. Instead, their lives are marked by protracted uncertainty and precariousness (see Horst and Grabska 2015).

As our data for the three case studies illustrate, volatility is part of everyday experience. In Khartoum, for example, throughout the fieldwork, girls’ and young women’s circumstances were changing very fast; losing and changing jobs and housing was something of common almost daily experience; ruptures and crisis in the families who stayed behind; and unpredicted arrivals of siblings from places of origins in Khartoum that put pressure on the young women. On repeated visits to the houses of the girls and the young women I was often surprised how quickly their circumstances were changing. For example, I interviewed two young women, 21-year-old Sanayit and 25-year-old Saba, from Eritrea, in October 2014. They were both born in Sudan to Eritrean parents who were at that time refugees. They returned to Eritrea when they were 6 and 7 years old respectively. Their lives in Eritrea were fine, but all of a sudden, the sister and a brother of Saba died, and her parents became very depressed. Saba’s life became very difficult, and at the age of 15, she decided to return to Sudan. Sanayit’s father died when she was 16, and she also decided to move to Sudan. ‘This is where I had

good memories from as a child, and I thought that my life will be better here. I also knew Arabic and knew Sudan'. When I saw the girls for the first time, they were both doing very well. They were working as cleaners and coffee makers in one of the companies in Khartoum. Sanayit got married and her Eritrean husband went to Switzerland through Libya. She was waiting for him to apply for family reunification, and was already imagining herself living in Europe. A month later, I went to visit the girls again. They both looked very depressed. Sanayit had had a car accident and was in a lot of pain. She had to have an operation. They both lost their jobs, as the company closed.

Saba's brother came from Gadaref in Eastern Sudan and was very depressed. The process of asylum in Switzerland was taking a long time. In the meantime, Sanayit already gave up her room, because she thought she would be moving to Switzerland soon. Throughout my fieldwork, girls' and young women's circumstances were changing very fast; losing jobs and housing was a common experience; ruptures and crises in the families who stayed behind; and unpredicted arrivals of siblings from places of origins in Khartoum that put pressure on the young women. This extreme volatility in migrant girls' lives affected their ability to plan longer-term. This also undermined their ability to respond to sudden changes in their situation and withstand the shocks. This was particularly so because of the difficult situation of adolescent and young women migrants as being out of their protective environment which reinforced the fragility and precarity of their lives.

7.3 Sources of support and protection

Faced with radical and protracted uncertainty, migrant and refugee girls and young women develop a sense of resilience. They remain flexible while faced with unpredictable events, in a world of deep uncertainty.

Human and social capital

'No one protects you here, you are on your own. You have to learn how to protect yourself'. This was the usual response of the interviewed girls and young women. The learning to protect oneself was also often seen as a positive consequence of migration. 'If I go home now, even if I have not made a lot of money, I have seen many things in my life, I have faced many hardships. I learned how to take care of myself', said Tsiriti, a 22-year-old from Axum. She described how she learned to rely on herself:

When I arrived in Khartoum, the agent made me work as a cleaner for a Sudanese woman for 200 SDG. After one month she did not pay my salary. I argued with the woman and told her that if she wanted me to work there, she has to pay me. She threatened me with the police, but I said to her, although I could not communicate well in Arabic, that I did not care. The police would do nothing to me, or nothing worse than I was already experiencing. I took some salt and put it in the water and told her: 'I am not like salt, I will not melt and dissolve in water'. I called some friends and told them to come and take me. I told the woman, 'If you want me to work for you, you have to pay my salary'. And then I left. I told her that I was going to a house in Bahri, but I went to another place so that she could not find me. After some time, the woman came and begged me to come back to work. She agreed to pay her 340 SDG.

Tsiriti was laughing when she was telling the story. She was so confident and so proud of her inner strength and the fact that she does not allow anyone to abuse her.

I worked since I was 13-years-old. I know how to survive and take care of myself. I am not afraid of anybody, nobody can scare me. I was good at work and the woman liked me. The Sudanese do not care if you are very tired. You are working, and they are sitting, dressing up, putting on make-up. Even if you are in the other corner of the house, and they want a glass of water that is next to them, they will call you to make you come and get it for them. Sudanese, just sit and watch us work. And we, Habesha, we like to work. I worked for nine months for this woman, and then I told her that I will go back to my country. I did not tell her where I live (the house of the broker) and I gave her a wrong address. This is how I finished working for her.

Some girls are more resilient and strong in responding to abuse than others. Those who are very submissive usually experience greater exploitation. Girls who had worked since they were very small, came from harmonious and protective households, and were better educated, found it easier to deal with adverse circumstances.

The other major support network is the social capital that the girls have access to and enlarge in Khartoum. Connecting with other migrants, those who have been in the city for a long time, relatives or friends, serve as a major support system. The examples of strangers helping each other described in previous sections point to the ability to recast social and kin relations in the place of migration. 'We did not know each before coming here. But these girls saw me suffering in Shegerab camp and then they helped me to come here. Since then we have been staying together and sharing together. We help each other', said Almas, a 21-year-old.

At times, girls would meet by chance their neighbours or distant relatives from back home. This happened often when I was visiting Eritrean respondents in Jereif together with Helen, the research assistant. Others would try to create good relations with their neighbours. Mashou, an 18-year-old, explained about the atmosphere at their compound, where she shares a place with her Ethiopian girlfriends: 'All the neighbours who live here love each other. If they make coffee we all drink together. I don't drink coffee normally but if they offer me I drink it out of respect. We build relations with everyone. They (the neighbours to the right) are from Eritrea. Two girls work for a Sudanese family with me. They are from Ethiopia'. The vulnerability of the girls and women is thus minimised due to their capacity to create a safe environment, or the capacity for the environment to be safe.

Places where Ethiopians and Eritreans would gather such as internet cafes, shops, restaurants and coffee places were also sources of support and information. For example, internet cafes served as major advertisement places for marriage offers to diaspora members. Cafes and restaurants were also places where Eritreans and Ethiopians could socialise, spend time together, share food, exchange the news, meet potential smugglers and minimise their isolation. Most of these places, however, are inaccessible to the girls and young women, due to strict gender norms and the gendered division of space. Unless they work in these places, otherwise, they are mainly frequented by men who, as a result, have better access to information. The differentiated access to jobs and public spaces for girls and young women influences their access to information and their ability to create social capital. In consequence, those who work in more isolated jobs (live-in domestic workers) have less possibility of enlarging their repertoire of opportunities.

Religious networks and churches in particular are major sources of support, as already mentioned. Pentecostal links are particularly strong. When I asked one of the girl members of the Pentecostal Church about the importance of church and religion in the lives of refugees, and whether the church has become more important in her life since she came here, she said:

Of course it has. Most of us here in Sudan, in Khartoum, we are alone. We spend our days worrying, and struggling. When we come to the church, we are close to Jesus, we are happy. We can share with others, and we hear from the pastor that we are not alone, that Jesus is with us, even if our lives are difficult, we are not alone. This makes me happy. When I leave the church, I feel happy, I feel uplifted.

This field note from a visit to an Eritrean Pentecostal church explains the power of the institution:

The singing went on for about half an hour, getting more and more powerful with every new song. More and more people got up, raised their hands up and started singing even louder. I felt I was part of a ritual, or a sect meeting, with powerful voices around me. Even my 6-year-old son who accompanied me to the church got into the music, started singing and dancing, imitating the movements of other people. Then the preaching started, and the pastor started preaching with a powerful voice, putting a lot of emphasis on Jesus, and explaining the meaning of Jesus in people's lives. I somehow also felt reassured and started to understand how these people gathered in this space were so attracted to it: every single person in that room had some terrible story either personal or family that they needed to deal with. Most of the people were hoping to go further to change their lives and to be able to enjoy them in the

most meaningful way. But with all the deaths in the Mediterranean, and the hardship of lives in Eritrea and in Sudan, their choices were limited, if not impossible.

Churches are not only a place where people can gather. They also offer financial support, accommodation, food and, at times, facilitate further migration (through arranged resettlement or marriages). For example, one of the Pentecostal chapels rents a guesthouse and accommodates people recently arrived in the country. ‘This is so that they can sort their lives out in the first months in Khartoum. To find a job, to find accommodation. After a few months, they have to move out’, explained a young Eritrean pastor. The help was usually for the members of the Church, but I also witnessed the Church helping non-members.



Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Khartoum

Ethiopian Orthodox churches also have a strong support network. Especially the main Meham Alem Church in Khartoum, which is host to a large Ethiopian community. On Friday mornings, the place is especially busy, with thousands of Ethiopians dressed in their traditional white clothes coming to join the prayer, to meet friends, to sit and share in the courtyard of the Church. Outside the gates of the Church, the street is lined with Ethiopian food and tea sellers, traders selling Ethiopian clothes, and rickshaw drivers, again mainly Ethiopians waiting for customers. The Church also supports the needy families and young girls, especially those who run into problems. They also support the nearby Ethiopian school.

Family and friends in the diaspora are usually a major source of support especially for Eritreans, but often migrants get rather disillusioned with the lack of assistance. In a conversation between an Ethiopian tea maker and the Eritrean research assistant, the Ethiopian girl asked whether the Eritrean had family members abroad and why they were not helping her to get somewhere else. She commented that Ethiopians are not very good at helping each other, but Eritreans they usually do. The research assistant responded that not all Eritreans are the same. Although she has family members abroad, they had not helped her for the six years she had been in Khartoum. ‘I have to find ways of helping myself’. As in other diaspora cases, there is great pressure from those in countries of origin or of transit on their family members in the Global North to send remittances or to sponsor resettlement (Ruaik 2005; Al Sharmani 2006). A young Eritrean woman, Salha, who was resettled to Canada after spending five years in Khartoum and came back to Sudan to marry her boyfriend commented:

The people here do not understand that it is very difficult to be a migrant or refugee also in Canada. In Canada, nobody helps you. And you die, if you do not help yourself. You have to

work a lot. Since I had been there, for one year now, I have been working two jobs. I do not sleep. I had to make enough money to be able to sponsor my boyfriend and marry. But many of my friends did not understand that I did not have money to help them. They are now upset with me. I can tell you this because you know how it is (she said referring to me). But they think we are just sitting on our beds and the government gives us money. My plan was to study, but instead, I just have to work to be able to help all these people in Eritrea and in Sudan. It is very exhausting.

Most of the Ethiopian respondents did not have family members outside of Africa. They came from families where they were usually the first migrants, or with some connections to migrants in Ethiopia. Thus, they did not receive the same type of support and assistance from their community members in Diaspora.

Organisational and institutional support

While there are a large number of international organisations, including UN agencies such as UNICEF, UNHCR, and UNDP, as well the IOM (International Organisation for Migration), Save the Children, and TDH, none of them focuses specifically on adolescent migrant girls. UNHCR offers financial, legal, and psychosocial referrals for those who are registered as refugees. With their commitment to gender and generational issues, UNHCR has a special focus on dealing with children, trafficked persons, and those who have suffered from gender-based and sexual violence. However, none of the Eritrean girls who participated in the research was even aware of the presence of UNHCR in Khartoum. Some, as a result of the research, were referred to UNHCR, and were given limited financial assistance (350 SDG per month), psychosocial and medical assistance (for those who had suffered sexual and psychological violence during their journeys to Sudan), and in two cases, resettlement to third countries (USA and Germany).

The institutional environment and the reception at UNHCR were, however, very problematic. The girls often felt tired and humiliated having to wait for a long time in the reception area for their interviews, sometimes being sent back without seeing anyone, having to skip work in order to attend numerous interviews, and at the end being made to wait for a long time to hear the results. Some were so disillusioned that they decided to leave for Libya without waiting for the UNHCR response (including two girls, one with a small child). This was unfortunate, as one girl was eventually referred for resettlement to the US and another to Germany. The UNHCR reception area was particularly unpleasant with posters alerting to the kidnappings by Rashaida, showing torture and rapes, and with a loud TV playing, together with the long wait to which the refugees are subjected, the atmosphere adversely affects girls' willingness and ability to approach the office.

Programmes from other organisations, such as UNICEF and Save the Children, did not include the participation of migrant girls from Ethiopia and Eritrea. IOM's office in Khartoum gives very limited assistance to migrant communities. They have a rather limited interaction with migrants. When asked how many migrants pass through their office on a monthly basis, the IOM officer responded about five. She also explained that during her two-year long stay in Khartoum she had never dealt with a migrant adolescent girl or a young woman. In fact, IOM asked our research team to provide information on the lives of the young migrants in the city. In terms of services offered, the IOM office has a resource centre that was opened in December 2015 that provides information mainly on possibility for voluntary return.

None of the Sudanese government institutions have any specific programmes or projects addressing young migrants or refugees. Apart from COR that provides ID cards to registered refugees, and the police stations where migrants renew their residency cards, migrants and refugee girls had no interactions with government institutions.

In terms of local NGOs, most of them focus their programmes on women and girls in general, without being especially open to migrants. The Women's Resource Centre, the Institute of Child Rights, Al Mannar, Ruwaida, and a few others interviewed for this project did not mention any specific programmes for migrants.

The Institute of Child Rights, however, organises courses in children rights for the Eritrean Refugee Schools in Khartoum in collaboration with UNHCR. The SEEMA centre for training and protection of women and children was established in 2008 focusing on gender-based violence. This is one of the few organisations

specifically assisting migrant and refugee girls and women. They work in three areas: service delivery (including psychosocial and legal aid assistance) for women and children victims of violence; capacity building of service providers and actors in the field of gender-based violence; and expanding the network of other NGOs working with IDPs and refugees. A few of the girls who were referred to UNHCR received psychosocial assistance and medical help from SEEMA. Another partner organisation of UNHCR is *Al Fanar* offering psychosocial assistance to refugees, including adolescent girls. However, only those girls who were referred through UNHCR were aware of these services.

SIHA, a regional network working on the rights of women, has had a few projects involving migrant communities, mainly focusing on awareness raising and advocacy. One consisted of documenting the abuses experienced by migrant and refugee women and girls in Sudan. Another was a collaboration between a group of young Eritrean women who wrote about their experiences and published a booklet entitled 'Letters from Eritrea'. SIHA also represented an 18-year old Ethiopian girl who was raped and then charged with adultery and a breach of the Public Order Act.

The Ethiopian Association based at the Ethiopian Embassy offer a more specialised service for young women and girls. They run the only shelter open for migrant women and girls. At the time of the interview, there were some seven women staying in the shelter, most of them with small children. The majority faced sexual violence, abandonment by their families, or had children out of wedlock. The Ethiopian Association also provide financial and legal assistance to those who want to return to Ethiopia but do not have the necessary papers or sufficient funds. In some cases, they offer legal assistance to those Ethiopians, including women and girls, who experienced rape. They were also involved in the most publicised case of an 18-year old girl being gang-raped and then imprisoned. Although the Ethiopian Association is one of the oldest and most active community organisations operating in Khartoum, none of the Ethiopian girls and women interviewed for the research ever used its services or knew about what type of assistance it offered.

8 Transitions and Intersections

In this section, I discuss how migration, combined with other factors, affects transitions in the lives of adolescent girls. The transition into adulthood in the context of migration implies a double challenge. As Meenakshi Gigi Durham argues ‘the psychological transition of adolescence, already charged in terms of gender and sexuality, is then imbricated with the conundrums of the other transition — the diaspora identity that demands delicate negotiations of race/ethnicity, nation, class, language, culture and history’ (2004: 141). In this section, I analyse how girls evaluate their own lives and changes overtime, as well as the impact of migration on their lives and the lives of their family.

8.1 Waiting in an ‘inbetween place’: mobility and immobility

‘My plan was to come to Sudan, stay a bit, earn some money, and then move somewhere else’, explains Elsa from Asmara who has spent some six years in Sudan. This plan of ‘moving somewhere else’ is a narrative common for most of the Eritreans, and some Ethiopians. They see Sudan and Khartoum as a transit point to a better life that can only be attained beyond Africa. Susan Ossman (2013) uses the term ‘serial migration’ to refer to multiple international migrations over the course of a person’s life. Eritreans are a good example of a group that hopes, plans and engages in serial migration. Yet, the opportunities of moving further are few and far between, and thus, most Eritreans become stranded for years in Sudan. In this transit and protracted uncertainty (Horst and Grabska 2015), Eritrean refugee adolescent girls in Khartoum are negotiating time, waiting and identity while hoping to move elsewhere. Ethiopian girls, on the other hand, initially move to Sudan to make money, improve their families’ situation, escape from an oppressive gender order, and eventually hope to return to Ethiopia. However, once in Khartoum, the planned return scenario becomes more of a distant option, and girls and women also feel ‘stuck’, or change their plans to engage in further migration.

Eritrean girls who were not married and had no children often talked about ‘wasting time’. Helen’s narrative is evocative of this prolonged and frustrated state of the inability to achieve life goals and being stuck:

Look at us? We are here, we came here to change our lives, and nothing has happened. There is no change here. Me, for example, I am already 26, if I was in Eritrea, I would be married by now, and would have a child. But here, how can I get married and have a child here? Even my mother who is in Eritrea, every time when I call she talks to me about marriage, but how can I get married here? I am still a girl (*guol*), people still call me *menesay* [youth]. I should be a *sabeyti* by now [married woman]. We are missing our time here.

The issue of time passing and being wasted was a major concern for most of the Eritrean girls and young women. As a number of family members told me, this was a concern for them, as they saw their daughters wasting time and being stuck in adolescence rather than establishing own families and having children. The idea of time was also related to social status within the girls’ wider community and their transition to adulthood, which could be attained through marriage and childbirth, as well as their ability to take independent decisions as adult women (within the limits of their household gender and generational relations).

On the other hand, the issue of waiting and being stuck also resonated with the inability to attain their aspirations of helping families, of moving further. With limited work opportunities (most girls who work as domestic workers, cleaners, tea makers, or waitresses earn between 50-100 USD per month), Sudan does not provide a viable option for a better life beyond survival. Most girls and young women expressed their desire of moving somewhere else, what they referred to ‘another country beyond Africa’. These desires correspond to what Magnus Treiber has described as ‘becoming by moving’: ‘Another world is outlined, in which a worthy existence and the hope – for life could be possible – “somewhere” and “somehow”’. The achievement of an imagined better life thus is intrinsically tied to a progressive movement’ (Treiber 2014: 186).

Thus, for Eritrean girls wasting time pertains to a specific situation. Their options are visibly constrained: no possibility of returning to Eritrea (a risky option of potential life imprisonment or even death), lack of

opportunities to pursue a (desired) life in Sudan, and the risky and often deadly journey to another place. This exemplifies the enormity of the absence of choice and sense of accomplishment in the lives of Eritrean youth.

For Ethiopian adolescent girls and young women, the experience of wasting time was very different in Khartoum. When asked about their experiences in Khartoum, most of the girls and young women talked about 'no change'. They usually referred to the little impact that migration has had on their lives. 'We came here to change our lives, but look at us, not much has happened. We are still the same', said Salam, 23, who has been in Khartoum for 9 years. While they did not talk much about wasting time, some of them did refer to the fact that they were 'losing their age and time'. Salam explained it clearly:

I do not want to lose my age and time too, and as you know the age of a girl short, so I do not want to count age with nothing. If I stay more here, there will be no change. What I mean is I could not change the life of my family or I did not get married and have children. So what is the use to stay more than these years in Khartoum? I do not want to lose my time without being successful. I spent my time like this what is the use? Then it is better to go back to Ethiopia, even if it is not comfortable for me in Ethiopia. Then, I can also go to Saudi Arabia.

Me: Have you heard that the Arab states are bad for young women at this time?

Salam: Yes I know, but what if you have no choice. Even the life here is bad, in Libya is bad, Ethiopia is worse. So what is the solution?

Ethiopian girls and young women were very clear about the fact that if all things fall through, they could return to Ethiopia, even if they had to pay fines for leaving their country illegally. They were in greater control of their own destinies despite their more precarious economic condition than those from Eritrea. They did not express the same feeling of being stuck in Khartoum, as the Eritreans did, even though their potential for social and financial upward mobility was limited. They rather saw their lives as temporarily here, but with the potential for moving somewhere else.

8.2 Alternative youth identities and transitions

Yet, during the waiting for somewhere else, everyday life happens. Some girls married, some get new and better work opportunities, some are joined by their sisters or brothers (especially from Eritrea), others get pregnant, some move on, return or migrate further. Frances Pine describes such moments in an elegant way when she says quoting Guyer that the near future '...becomes reinhabited by forms of punctuated time' (Guyer 2007: 210), while the more distant future is place of hope, dreams, or intimations on some possible utopia (Pine 2014). To further elaborate on Guyer's nuanced perceptions of past, present and near and far future, the process of migration generates a 'time that is punctuated rather than enduring: of fateful moments and turning points, the date as event rather than as a position in a sequence or a cycle, dates as qualitatively different rather than quantitatively cumulative' (Guyer 2007: 410).

Being an adolescent girl and young woman in Khartoum is punctuated with social restrictions, felt immobility, and lack of opportunities, but also with openings and hopes. Young Eritrean and Ethiopian girls are in fact actively 'doing things' while waiting. They are actively acting upon their state of perceived immobility. For example, they contribute to changing gender relations and identities, by challenging established trajectories into adulthood for girls. Other ways of becoming an adult and a woman become possible: through gaining independence such as living away from family, making one's own decisions, controlling one's own earnings. Thus the idea of being stuck does not reflect their actual experiences: Brun (2015) refers to this as agency in waiting.

For Eritreans and Ethiopians, marriage and fertility remain strongholds of womanhood. As a female fighter from the war of independence in Eritrea explained to Victoria Bernal in her study entitled 'From Warriors to Wives', 'Eritrean women are valued according to their degree of fertility' and *tegadelti* (female fighters) could not compete with civilians (Bernal 2001). Many were infertile because of the wounds or the hardships they suffered in the bush; others had sacrificed many of their childbearing years for the struggle. As Dore observes (2002: 80) *tegadelti* are easily distinguishable from civil women for their independent spirit, for the body

postures, brusque gestures and firm voice. Their behaviour is perceived as more similar to that of men. They can go to bars and drink; and speak back to men. They consider themselves outspoken and more opinionated than other women (see Belloni 2015: 42).

Migrant adolescent girls and young women bring another dimension to the changing norms around gender identities and womanhood. While the socially accepted ways of becoming a *sabeyti* (a woman) might not be easily attainable in Sudan, Eritrean youth are slowly carving out alternative ways. Most of the girls talked about the fact that the experience of escaping Eritrea brought changes to their lives. They referred to the fact that they have become responsible and independent. Helen for example explained that:

Even though my mother wants me to get married because I am 26, I cannot and do not want to do it here. I want to study first, I want to get a good job. [...] Although I am still single, here I had to grow up very fast. Now, I am responsible for my family in Eritrea. I am the oldest one. I have a responsibility here for them and for myself. I earn money, and I pay for my expenses. I am somehow grown up now. No one else is responsible for me here. I can also decide what I want and how I want to live my life.

Migration and the related events such as living alone far from family, being financially independent and earning money, as well as at times being able to help family at home financially or to assist younger siblings in accessing education (for Ethiopians) and in migrating to Khartoum and beyond (for Eritreans), were often perceived by girls and their family members as a way to becoming an adult. Gaining responsibility through the act of independent migration, and thus gaining some level of independence, growing up, and making decisions gave the young women and girls a sense of an alternative adulthood.

Another element of migrant girls' individual development is the space that they have in Khartoum to build social capital. This was a key element in most of the girls' narratives. They often talked about the help that they received from strangers, other young migrants, or church groups. They developed new networks of friendships, were able to pursue their religious beliefs. The girls had the capacity to create a safe environment through navigating the constraining political and social environment in Khartoum and their own lack of financial and family resources. In this context of protracted and radical uncertainty (Horst and Grabska 2015), adolescent girls and young women's actions are evidence of their agency and a desire for a different (gender) identity as girls and as women. While constantly being confronted with adversity, they remain flexible in a world of deep uncertainty and unpredictability. Their circumstances also tend to change rapidly, and this great volatility contributes to limited chances of planning for the future. These observations should not take away from the gravity of the girls' and young women's suffering that migration and the situations in which they find themselves causes them. Yet to focus exclusively on the negative, would be to deny the capacities and the abilities of the young women to make sense of the tensions.

8.3 Marriage and migration

Migration has had a fundamental impact on marriage, not only in terms of delaying marriages as other research has demonstrated (Hertrich and Lesclingand 2012), but also in changing the prospects, decision-making, circumstances and purpose of marriages. Marriage and having children was a much more important topic for Eritreans than Ethiopians. While most Eritreans argued that they wanted to get married and have children in order to be fully women in their society, Ethiopians often saw marriage as something not of immediate importance. They were often willing to forgo the whole experience of marriage for the benefit of their families. In fact, among the elder Ethiopian women who had spent 20-30 years in Sudan, they had all got married much later in their 30s, some had only one or two children, and some no children at all.

Women and men, girls and boys talked about a lack of future for the girls and young women who experienced violence during migration. Once they lose their virginity, or even worse, become mothers as a result of rape, they are ostracised by the community, including their families. A 15-year-old girl was travelling from Karen with her male cousin. They were kidnapped by Rashaida, and the girl was raped in front of the boy, who is one year older than her. When they finally arrived in Khartoum after her brother, who is in Israel, paid a ransom of 3,000 USD, the boy rejected his cousin and did not want to share the same house with her. The girl was very disturbed, and depressed. She would talk to herself, or stay very quiet. Other women and girls would not want their families to know about their experiences in order not to be ostracised. Some girls

and women would manage to go back to their places of origin, especially those from Ethiopia, and get married there.

Some of the Ethiopian girls felt that they had to serve their families first, which meant sacrificing their own lives and dreams of having a family. When asked about her plans to marry, Tsirite, told me that she only thinks about helping her brothers and sisters:

I want them to get a high education. If I get married now, my family will not get a good education or support. My family grew up in a village so they don't know much about education and the impact of education. I just want my siblings to get education.

I'm almost old (she is 22) so if my siblings get a good education then I will go back to my country, get my own house at that time I will be old and I'm thinking I will not get married. I have a will but because of my family, I cannot do it. I'm searching for a nice guy who can understand me but I can't do it because of my family. If I find someone who can help me working, with a nice family, but I don't want someone sneaky. I like a serious guy.

K: Can't you find nice guys here?

T: No. There is no nice guy who thinks in a good way. They all have sneaky ways. If they ask you to marry them, this is just because they want to use you. They lie to us, they say they love us, but in fact, they want someone to work for them, and then take care of them. The girls here work more and for better money than the men. They just want our money, take care of them, feed them. The men are comfortable and use women. We don't want the men to use our money. Once the girl gets pregnant then the guy leaves.

There was a sense among Ethiopian girls especially that the men (both Sudanese and Ethiopians) in Khartoum were 'no good', and that marriage could only happen back home. Some girls had relationships with their boyfriends in Ethiopia. Salam, for example, met her boyfriend when she was 16 before she moved to Khartoum for the second time. Her boyfriend was a teacher and they were planning to get married when she earns enough money and is able to return to Ethiopia. She wanted to first finish supporting the education of her brother, and then to build a house for her mother. She maintained the relationship through social media. When I asked her if he was still waiting for her, after all these years, she said: 'Yes he is. He might have girlfriends, but he wants to marry me'. But a few months later, the boyfriend got into a fight and went to jail. He called her and asked her to send money for his release. Salam was furious. She said: 'I am already supporting my brother; and now my boyfriend thinks I should support him? No, this relationship is over'. Many of the relationships were very fragile, due to distance, but also due to financial instability and the growing reliance on girls and women to be the bread-winners. These changes in the gender division of labour and responsibility towards the household were not necessarily reflected in the equal treatment of women in other areas of life.

Another major change in marriage arrangements was the emergence of transnational marriages. This was especially so among the Eritrean diaspora. As mentioned earlier, some girls and young women moved to Sudan to escape arranged marriages with both local men as well as men in the diaspora. Others came to escape the constraining gender norms facing divorcees or unmarried mothers. There were also some who followed their husbands. Yet, there were also those who came to Khartoum to look for husbands as the pool of viable candidates was diminishing in Eritrea due to male migration.

Some girls and young women hoped to marry diaspora men, and in this way, to be able to migrate further. Creating profiles on social media and posting photos was a way of finding boyfriends in the diaspora (Grabska forthcoming). Others used the strategy of fake marriages to migrate further. In internet cafes and in Eritrean and Ethiopian restaurants, announcements offering marriages with men (or women) in the diaspora were constant. The prices of such marriages were skyrocketing, with the most expensive ones to men or women in Canada, reaching some 25,000 USD. This type of opportunistic marriage often led to family and community tensions. Eritrean men in the diaspora preferred to marry 'clean' (virgins) and 'unspoilt' (not knowing their rights, and willing to serve men) girls in Sudan or in Eritrea. But some of the girls had other plans. While families, and usually mothers, saw a great future for their daughters in such marriages, some girls

would vehemently resist, and argue for their rights. Most Eritrean girls talked about their rights as women and girls to choose whom they wanted. They also wanted to pursue education instead of getting married. At the same time, some girls would use arranged marriages as a way of getting to Europe or Canada, and then would divorce the men. There was a widespread discussion about changing gender norms in the Eritrean diaspora communities.

In Khartoum, young women and girls were also able to experiment with having boyfriends, sexual relationships, and flirting, without the social control dominant in their places of origin. In fact, older Ethiopian and Eritrean migrants in Khartoum often referred to the girls being 'out of control' as they were defying gender norms and gender constraints. Ethiopian and Eritrean girls especially from smaller towns and rural areas commented that it was not allowed to have boyfriends in their communities. Mashou said: 'My family will keep me away from having a lover. It's not allowed. It's not good in our tradition'. While some girls were not interested in having boyfriends in Khartoum, others were interested in exploring cross-gender relationships. But they also were aware of the dangers of such experimentations. Mashou, 18-years-old, from Axum commented:

We are careful. We have friends who got pregnant then the guy left. The girls who really loved the guys, if he leaves then they really cry. We know three girls like that. Tsriti is a good person. She advises me to do. She says you have a plan to work not go other ways. I have friends who advise me to get a boyfriend he will take care of you and give you money but Tsriti advises me not to do that.

In the absence of their parents and guardians, watching over each other and keeping themselves 'clean' were important elements in the mutual support system among the girls and young women. The danger was usually associated with men and their lack of seriousness, commitment, and their interest in girls' body and money.

All interviewed unmarried girls and women mentioned that the decision to get married would be their own, without close involvement from their families. Girls and young women away from the close surveillance of their families were able to manipulate their marriage choices and withhold pressures better than those who stayed behind. At times, the decision to get married was taken very spontaneously, without the involvement of close family members. There was generally an emergent idea of 'love' marriages rather than arranged marriages for the continuation of the line.

Marriage was at times a protection strategy. Some Ethiopian girls and young women also married to avoid harassment from the local communities. Some would even have two husbands, one in Sudan and one in Ethiopia. The husbands would be unaware of their wives having a double life.

8.4 Girls' aspirations and evaluations of their lives

In this sub-section, I discuss how girls evaluate their lives, and their perceptions of the opportunities and constraints that the city offers. While most girls and young women would not point to a major change in their lives, when prompted they would talk about small specific personal changes that took place in their lives. They often referred to the fact that despite the social norms constraining their mobility as young foreign women and girls in Khartoum, they felt freer. While discussing their memories of childhood and becoming adolescent in their places of origin, both Ethiopians and Eritreans talked about the different treatment and the different rules that they were subjected to as girls. Parents would not allow them to move around freely without parental or male control and protection. Mothers would very often control the mobility of girls in order to protect their 'virginity' and control sexual relations. While interactions between boys and girls were allowed, pre-marital relationships were out of the question. In Khartoum, girls and young women would talk about a greater sense of freedom, of greater mobility, less social control, in the absence of parents and close (male) relatives. This also allowed girls to experiment with relationships.

Salam, 23, Ethiopia, in Sudan for 9 years:

Migration for me on one side it is good and on the other side it is bad. When I say it is good because I know many new things. Even if I do not have much money, I have learned how to manage alone with a small amount of money. I have seen many things since I left Ethiopia. I

have worked for many years, but no change (in terms of money). So if I go back to my country even if I have five Birr [0.25 USD], in my life I have passed many things because I was not like this and I have seen many things. In terms of health, I was fat but now as you see me I am thin. Migration has taught me many things. I know how to decide by myself now.

Although Salam was unable to continue her education after coming to Khartoum, migration has been a way of learning about the world, and learning skills. Thus, migration, separation from family, and having to rely on oneself is a form of education.

The narratives of girls and young women also reveal that migration and a geographical shift has been a way of developing themselves. They are developing a sense of self in the place of migration, and in the wider world. This is also illustrated by girls' awareness that there is really no option of going back now. While for Eritreans, becoming a person is linked to progression in the world, to moving (Treiber 2014), for Ethiopians, it is the sense of change in their own personalities as a result of migration. As Salam said commenting on her experience of returning home from Khartoum for one year when she was 15, 'once you left your home, once you have seen other places, you cannot just go back and sit at home'. Almass, a 26 year old, who migrated first from Addis Ababa to Khartoum when she was 18, and then went back twice (once for 18 months when she got married, and then to see her daughter whom she left in Addis Ababa), 'when you go back, you just sit. And you have to be able to move in your life to achieve something. There is no chance [*mircha*] in Ethiopia. So it is better to migrate'. The idea of not sitting still, constantly moving, is also linked to the findings of research by Marco Di Nunzio among Addis Ababa youth (2014). 'Constantly moving to stay alive' was a notion that permeated the lives of the young men hustlers and street vendors in Addis Ababa.

Unfortunately, the research does not provide an in-depth longer term view on how the situation for adolescent girls and young women changes over time. Due to limited data (difficulties in finding Eritrean respondents who have been in Khartoum for longer than ten years, and the limited number of interviews with Ethiopians), it is not possible to make a wider analysis of the long-term changes in the lifecycle of young migrants.

8.5 Supporting those left behind: remittances, investments, emotions

Another dimension of the lives of migrant and refugee girls and young women in Khartoum was keeping in touch with those left behind. Keeping in touch was a way to minimise the isolation and loneliness experienced in Khartoum. Most communicated over phone, at least once a week. Not all girls and women maintained contact with their families in their places of origin. Some severed the relationships due to abusive experiences in the households. Others did not have enough money to send remittances to their families, and preferred not to communicate with them. The shame of not being able to support their families was a strong pressure on them. Some, especially Eritreans, had relatives, husbands, or siblings in Europe, the US or Canada, and communicated with them over social media as well as skype and viber on a daily basis. Among the survey respondents only 17 out of 48 reported sending remittances to their families back home. Among them, there were 4 Eritreans and 13 Ethiopians. Ten had sent payments at least once, whereas some 21 reported never having sent financial support. Among those, there were 20 Eritreans. These results point to the diverse reasons of the girls' migration to Sudan. While for Ethiopians Khartoum is a destination from where they have to support their families, for Eritreans, Khartoum is a waiting point to somewhere else. The amounts sent varied, but usually were very small, about 100-150 SDG (8 to 12 USD) per month. Most of the respondents would collect money over a period of a few months and then send bigger amounts using a network of trusted agents, middlemen, smugglers, and friends. Tea makers were usually able to send higher amounts than those working as domestic workers.

Table 8.1 Sending remittances

	Total	Eritrean	Ethiopian
Currently sending	17	4	13
Not sending now but sent in the past	10	8	2

Never sent	21	20	1
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To give an example, Salam earns about 2000 SDG per month. She pays her rent (250 SDG), food, and some other necessities, spending 1000 SDG per month. She sends 500 SDG (about 42 USD) to her family in Ethiopia and the rest (500 SDG), she saves for herself. However, if there are police round-ups and she gets arrested, she uses the money for emergencies. Domestic workers usually earn between 250 and 800 SDG, and thus are not able to support their families regularly. Usually, women who have been in Khartoum for longer are able to send increasingly larger amounts of money. At the same time, due to the worsening economic situation in Sudan, and the increasing living costs, migrants are less and less able to support their families in Ethiopia. What they earn is spent on their own survival. Among the older women interviewed for the research, two returned to Ethiopia during the course of the fieldwork, as they were unable to maintain their families from Khartoum.

As the remittances are rather small, the impact on the families left behind is not usually very significant. Among those who have been able to send money or other support to their families in their places of origin 26 reported that their lives had improved, even if slightly.

Table 8.2 Conditions of family who stayed behind

	Total	Eritrean	Ethiopian
Improved	26	12	14
Not improved	16	14	2
No response	6	6	0

There were several ways that the respondents described the impact from the remittances but also other support provided to the families back home, including sponsoring family members to migrate. Some respondents did not provide answers, as they did not know how their families had spent the remittances. Most felt that the conditions of their families had improved economically, but most of the remittances were spent on daily expenses. Contributions towards siblings' education, usually boys (see below) were seen as an important investment for change in the household, especially among the Ethiopians. As migration has become a popular way of seeking an improvement in the household's economic condition both in Eritrea and Ethiopia, having a successful family member abroad also improves the social status of the family back home. One major contribution by the Eritrean girls and young women, as well as financial support, were the social networks they provided to enable their siblings to migrate to Khartoum and further on. This was, however, a huge burden and a responsibility, creating much stress for the young women. Helen, 26, from Keren, struggled for survival herself for five years in Khartoum. First her brother arrived without informing her and she had to provide ransom and pay his trip from Eritrea, which cost her about 3,500 USD. Then her brother left through Libya to Italy and then further to first Germany and then to Holland. This trip cost her another 4,500 USD. She was very stressed, as she incurred a lot of debt and was constantly thinking how to repay it. A few months later, her younger sister showed up from Eritrea and she had to pay for her trip as well. Then her mother eventually came in an attempt to join the little brother who had applied for asylum in Holland. Helen had to provide for all the family members, and was under a lot of pressure. Her cousin, Meriam, a single mother of a two-year-old who arrived in Khartoum in 2009 explained:

It is very hard to be here in Khartoum. It is hard for girls here. They have to support their siblings who come and want to go to Libya. Like Helen, look at her, she supported her brother first, and then her sister. The brother is now fine. I saw his photos on Facebook, he is in good condition. He is in Holland. Have you seen Helen's sister? She is also strong, not like Helen. Helen is suffering because of all of them. The same for me. Look at me, I am a single mom and have to support all the whole family who also came after me.

Table 8.3 Ways in which conditions of family improved

	Total	Eritrean	Ethiopian
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Economically	19	9	10
Education	11	3	8
Social status	7	4	3
Possibilities to respond to emergencies	4	2	2
Other			

Being able to support families back home, through sending remittances, supporting siblings' education, or migration, were seen by the girls as changing their position in the family and community at large. Almas talked about the feeling of her family towards her because of the support she has been sending them to Ethiopia:

My family in Ethiopia they say that they are proud of me that I am working and sending money to them. I am able to support them. This is what they say. The money that I am sending will not change their lives in big ways. It is only for clothes, food, and nursery of my daughter. They will have to continue working to survive. If they are sick, I will send all my money to help them.

Girls and young women were very proud of talking about their younger or older brothers graduating from college, for example, due to their support. They usually had pictures of their siblings from the graduation standing on tiny tables in their rooms, a proud manifestation of the girls' contributions. Tsiriti, 22-years-old from Axum, who has been supporting her family for nine years, and who has been in Khartoum for three years, said: 'I have my 6 brothers and sisters there in Ethiopia. I didn't get a chance to learn [she finished class 3] so I didn't want them to lose that [opportunity] even if our family is poor. I want them in a good class, I want them well educated. If they are ok then I will be ok. My parents are proud of me, because I am able to help now'. Her narrative, which was illustrative of other girls' evaluations of their own choices and lives, demonstrates how the sense of personal self-accomplishment for the girls is intertwined with the well-being of their families.

As with other migrant girls, Tsiriti was especially keen on her brothers finishing education. There was also a recognition that as educated men they would be able to get well paid jobs. For their sisters, they still saw their embeddedness in the gender norms, with supporting marriages of younger sisters who were being married while underage to men not of their choice. Tsiriti, for example, sent money to support the marriage of her 16-year-old sister. When I asked her why she was not supporting her sister's education, she mentioned: 'She is already big, she should be a woman now. And if her husband allows her, she can continue education later. Also, for girls it is difficult to get well paid jobs, even if they are educated'. Thus, the investment in education of boys seemed to be a better move rather than in the girls, reflecting both gendered structures of the labour market, but also permeating gender norms and identities.

But parents whom I spoke to in Ethiopia had at times a different view of the experiences of the girls. Almass' brother-in-law, whom I met on my visit to Addis Ababa, told me:

These girls migrate because they hope to earn money. It is very difficult to find jobs here (in Ethiopia). Look at me, I used to work for a ministry and I had to quit. Now I have my own business and it is a bit better. But we are all struggling. But these girls, they migrate, they pass their time and they don't get married. They don't have children. It is they are wasting their time. Their lives. Look at Almass, she has only one child, her husband is far away. She should have more children by now. These girls migrate but they earn very little and what they send to their families is very little. The parents worry about them, they have to be away from their own children because they cannot bring them with them. But if you see, this migration, there is no change in their lives. No change for better.

The wider impacts of migration on social development might be difficult to assess, given that this research project was limited in scope. A more longitudinal research study among families in the places of origin, and those in the wider diaspora as well as a longer-term follow up with the girls and young women in Khartoum would be necessary to answer these questions. However, the increasing participation of young girls in the

labour market, their increasing contributions to the household economies, even if minimal, change gender relations both within households and in the market. Yet, direct change in terms of improvement of the lives of the girls and their households is rather minimal.

One visible impact of such migration is the changing composition of households, across places, and the creation of transnational households and transnational families. This also results in the changing position of women (and men) within the household and without power relationships regulating household relations.

On a visit to Helen's house, I talked to her mother who came from Eritrea to join her three children. She commented on the impact of her children's migration on her life in Eritrea:

I feel so bad because I am a mother, so a mother wants all her kids to be around her. But in Eritrea the life is too bad. So all my children are leaving. First it was Helen, then her younger brother, now Bana, the younger sister. It is too difficult to be a mother, a parent in one place, and all your children are in another place. For us, it is good to be together in one house. But now we all are in different places. Scattered... Even when I eat food I do not feel it is good for me to eat. I was born and grew up in a big family and now I have a big family [seven children], so I want all my family to be around me. I came here to Khartoum because my children asked me to come. And I want to live with them. But now, I left some children and my husband in Eritrea. This is also not good.

Another negative aspect for the families was well summarised by a Pentecostal pastor:

You see this is a real problem what happens to Eritrean families. The young people just go, and then the smugglers give them phones, and tell them to call the families. The families then hear the horrible stories and run around to collect money, from everyone, even from strangers. This is very bad what happened to Eritrean family. It is very stressful for the parents. They just worry, and then they have terrible debts. The smugglers take even people from here for free, without money, because they know that once they reach Libya, the families will pay.

8.6 Long-term aspirations

The girls' and young women's experiences in Khartoum demonstrate that their migration leads to further migration. The migration of their siblings has already been discussed. Now, I turn to the long-term plans and aspirations of the girls themselves. For most Eritreans, Khartoum was never a destination in itself. Thus, when they were unable to move forward quickly, without making long-term plans and investing in making a 'home' as well as being faced with adverse circumstances in Khartoum, they usually got very frustrated and depressed. Without being able to move, and progress to life elsewhere, they didn't feel in control of their lives.

Listening to the stories of girls and young women who had been waiting for a long time to move on, of long-term suffering, family separation, loneliness, not being able to continue what they planned to do, not being able to support their families back home, feeling they were failing in their migratory project, and with very limited access to legal ways of migrating further, it became clear why young women take the dangerous journey through Libya. Being pushed against the impossibility, the permanent impermanence, the radical and protracted uncertainty in their lives and the precariousness of their existence they were left with nothing else but taking a risk. As there is no point of return for Eritreans, there can only be onward movement. 'You can die trying, or you can die here', one of the young girls who eventually made it to Germany told me. When asked about their long-term plans, all the Eritrean girls and young women, including those interviewed at refugee schools in FGDs, declared that they wanted to move to 'another country outside of Africa'. They all wanted to pursue further education, get a good job, and be able to help their families back home. Khartoum and Sudan were not the 'dreamed places of destination' and did not even offer additional services that was going to change this impression.

For Ethiopian girls, the range of future scenarios was more extensive. Almost all mentioned the option of eventually going back to Ethiopia, building a house and starting a business. Some wanted to have a trading company, some selling clothes, others thought about opening hairdressing salons. Although Ethiopians in

theory have the chance of visiting their places of origin, in reality most of the girls and young women were unable to do it. This was due to very low salaries and a lack legal papers, as well as migration restrictions for young people from Ethiopia to Sudan. Also, the girls realised that in Ethiopia they had limited work opportunities. Agareh, a 35-year-old, who came to Sudan for the first time when she was 19, decided to return for good and open a beauty salon in Addis Ababa. She took her three children and went back. When I visited her in Addis Abba she told me that she had been staying with her parents without a job. The cost of opening up a business in the capital was too high, and she lost some 1,500 USD on just trying to find a premises. After seven months, she decided to return to Khartoum. She was planning to join her husband who was going to be resettled to Australia. Salam also thought about going back to Ethiopia. She said:

I will go back, the life here is too hard. I want to get married, my time is passing. And then, if it is too hard there, I will go to Saudi Arabia. I know that Arab countries are no good, but what if you have any choice , even if the life here is bad, if in Libya is bad, even if in Ethiopia is worse then what the solution? I will work there as a cleaner that is the only job they have.

Me: would you ever go through Libya like your friends to Europe?

Salam: Never, through Libya never! Even my friends did tell me the truth about the way, but when they ask me whether I am coming or not, I just said ok but at the end I told them that I will not come. I said I would go back to Ethiopia. They said that 'it is better for you to go back because you cannot face the problems which we pass on the way, and we understand that you know the life we passed through, so your life is different from our life so it is better to go back to your country'.

Tsirite was not thinking of going back to Ethiopia.

I want my parents to be proud of me. I need to help them. They say that I should return, that we will manage. That I have already made a change. But I have been here for two years. I want to go to Libya. I want to go to London.

Me: It's far you have to cross two boats. Do you know someone in London?

Tsirite: No

Me: What do you want to do in London?

Tsirite: I want to go there to work and get money so I can get a house in my country. I've been wanting to go to London through Libya since I was small. I can have my money. We are scared to go; they say Libyan guys take girls like us. Sometimes we're scared but we want to go. In London, they are educated and they know how to take care of people. But in the Arab countries I don't want to go to Dubai because the people there are not nice. If you do one mistake then they say bad things to you. I'm willing to go to Europe but I can't go through the processes [official resettlement or migration process]. All Eritreans are going through the processes.

These two narratives show that girls are aware of the hazards of the journey, and also the dangers of different migratory destinations. They were considering carefully the different options, taking into account the experiences on the way versus the experiences in the places of destination. They realised that the simple return to Ethiopia was no longer possible, given their low position and financial instability.

All girls and young women interviewed for the research showed a great deal of resilience in their ability to confront the constraints, limitations, challenges and setbacks they have to face at home, during journey and at destination. A long term perspective on the a changing and relational nature of agency of young people reveal the important of analysing children and adolescents' agency in relation to generational issues. Our findings expand Punch's analysis, and show that in addition to exploring age relations across the life course as well as relationally between the generations, considering the role of siblings, birth order position, peers, friends and boyfriends/girlfriends (Punch 2015), it is vital to consider gender.

9 Key Implications for Policy and Interventions

As now widely recognised, migration is ‘not going away’ (International Migration 2012), and on the contrary, it is increasing, including increasing numbers of adolescent girls on the move within and across borders (Temin et al. 2013). It has also been widely documented that migration can contribute to or undermine development, depending on migration experiences. Yet policies have regularly failed to enable migrants to make the most of these experiences, and changing this would require challenging entrenched power relationships at many levels, including within countries, and internationally.

The importance of looking specifically at adolescent girls has also been recognised by policy makers and global development strategies. For example, the 2030 Millennium Development Agenda includes the unique needs and priorities of adolescent girls and examines the critical role girls have to play in the development of their communities worldwide. As the girls’ and young women’s narratives suggest, migration for them is an expression of agency and a complex choice, which may be motivated by a desire to improve one’s or one’s families’ lives and escape oppressive gender and political regimes.

The key question is how to ensure a safer and more positive migratory experience for adolescents and young women. This particular age group is of great importance in terms of when in the life course the spatial move takes place. In this context, the spatial move across the border is closely intertwined with other life transitions: into work, education, marriage and having children.

The existing policy interventions locate adolescent migrant and refugee girls as victims of trafficking, smuggling, abuse and exploitation. There is a need to recognise the complexity of each girl’s situation, her age, particular reasons for movement, her educational level, and the context of her host community. Policy makers must recognise the diverse potentials of migrating girls and young women, and move beyond the focus on their physical vulnerability and the need for reintegration and address directly their individual needs.

9.1 Addressing triggers of migration

Reintegration programmes view child and adolescent migration as a problem that needs fixing, based on the assumption that moving away from the family puts girls in greater jeopardy and increases their vulnerability (Reale 2008: 20). Yet, such programming overlooks the best interests of the girls and their initial reasons for movement. Family circumstances, family abuse, as well as the toll on the girls of family poverty, poor services and the absence of opportunities to earn and learn, as well as discriminatory treatment due to patriarchal gender norms have to be taken into account when designing new approaches to interventions.

First, *educational possibilities for girls* in each country and community, as well their links to job opportunities need to be examined closely. It is not enough to encourage girls into education if there are then no jobs or earning opportunities after they have qualified. Girls’ educational opportunities have been widely addressed in Ethiopia, at least at the primary level, but there are few links to jobs or work for them.

The second issue that needs attention and intervention is the existing *violence against girls* at both the household and family level and within communities. Awareness raising campaigns and training is needed on violence in families, and on gender-based and sexual violence in schools and in the community, which emphasises the specific social position of girls.

Third, the *political situation* as a trigger for migration of adolescent girls affects their lives in particular ways. A concentrate action and a political engagement at the international level and pressure from the international community are necessary elements in stimulating change. Without political change and greater opening up and democratisation in the country, and expanding life prospects for young people, the outflow of adolescent and young Eritreans will continue.

9.2 Protection and safer migration

Numerous interventions at different levels are needed given the international nature of migration for Ethiopians and Eritreans into Sudan.

First, at the national level in Sudan, specific interventions should be undertaken by the government. This includes *reviewing existing laws* that affect the status of migrant girls in the country, and *enacting laws and policies that are in accordance with the Convention of the Rights of the Child and the National Child Act* as well as gender-specific legislation regarding migrants and refugees.

Second, *specific trainings* are needed for police, border guards, and judges in order to reinforce their understanding and awareness of the specific challenges faced by girls and young women, with the emphasis on migrants, refugees and children's rights, or young people's circumstances.

Third, issues of *violence against girls and women should be raised at the national and migrant community levels* in Sudan. It is crucial to promote public discussion of rape as a crime and promoting procedures for prosecuting rapists. The public recognition of the criminal nature of forced sexual activity needs to be combined with working towards legal procedures that prosecute rapists and protect the survivors. Awareness raising among families, migrant and host communities, especially men and boys needs to emphasise rape as a shameful act. Campaigns against domestic violence should be organised with local organisations (such as SIHA and SEEMA) as well as migrant communities (through migrant groups, churches and other religious institutions). These campaigns should actively mobilise all men to act against sexual crimes. In addition to Khartoum based campaigns, such activities should be carried out in the peripheral areas of Sudan on the borders with Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Four, the governments of Ethiopia and Sudan need to ensure that *legal migration channels and access to visas and passports for those wishing to migrate legally to Sudan are available*. This should be combined with expediting migration processes in order to reduce the incentives for girls to use the faster, illegal migration channel. In Ethiopia, potential migrants and their families should have access to information on how the legal migration channel operates.

Five, within the Khartoum Process that focuses on the combating of trafficking in the region, greater stress should be put by donors, international agencies involved in the process as well as national governments, on *eliminating illegal migration and trafficking* by enforcing existing laws (including cracking down on false identification cards) and punishing brokers with imprisonment, and prosecuting traffickers, rather than punishing migrants for illegal entry. The existing anti-trafficking legislation in Sudan should be carefully reviewed in order to keep the best interests and protection of adolescent girls and young women migrants at the centre.

9.3 Provision of information for potential migrants in Ethiopia (and Eritrea)

Well-balanced and practical information campaigns and information points should be available for potential migrants in their communities of origin. Information about the particularities of the experience in Khartoum and in Sudan are needed in order for the girls to prepare themselves for the eventual journey if they decide to go. Connecting with former women migrants who returned and sharing experiences and providing potential contacts for prospective migrants would inform the decision-making process.

9.4 Safer migration experience in Sudan

First, *better information should be available* for adolescent girls and young women migrants upon their arrival in Sudan. Advantage should be taken of the newly created IOM Migrant Resource Centre to develop better information on specific issues, including access to services, health, accommodation, jobs, legal assistance, and education.

Second, IOM and UNHCR should improve their *outreach services* among migrant and refugee communities, specifically identifying younger migrants. These organisations should work more actively with church leaders, migrant groups and associations, women leaders in the churches or in the mosques, with women leaders in the Ethiopian Association, female teachers in schools, and female doctors.

Third, there is a need for local organisations, migrant and refugee community-organisations, churches, and international organisations to provide funding and facilities to increase adolescent girls' and young women's

access to services and make them 'migrant girl friendly'. This includes shelter provision for girls and women who have suffered sexual violence; safe spaces for socialising; and counselling services. Specific *education options* for working girls and young women could be established through evening classes at the existing school facilities (Ethiopian and Eritrean) in Khartoum. Both general and targeted specialised education should be provided for those girls and young women who would like to continue their studies.

Four, there is a need to *strengthen the existing networks* of information and support in migrant and refugee communities. Both UNHCR and IOM together with their local partners and organisations that specifically focus on women's rights should train women's and girls' groups about the existing services for migrants and refugees, but also about the legal remedies available. Neighbourhood groups, including women's groups and associations of the urban poor, can help migrant girls expand their social capital immediately on arrival before girls fall into harm's way. *Legal aid services* and referral points with specific information and awareness about circumstances and legal rights of adolescent girls and younger women should be available in churches, migrant organisations, the IOM Migrant Centre, the UNHCR office in Khartoum and in the camps.

Five, *access to health providers* should be improved through both outreach with existing health services as well as with improving access to local hospitals. The needs and particular circumstances of girls and young women, including their reproductive and sexual health should be stressed.

Six, there is an urgent need to create *safe spaces*: both in terms of time, and space, for migrant girls to meet friends and mentors. These spaces could be created in churches, schools, or attached to some of the local NGOs who work on women's and girls' rights.

Seven, existing migrant groups, churches and associations should provide *information about accommodation in Khartoum* for newly arrived migrants. This would also involve prioritising adolescent girls and young women in difficult circumstances in accessing temporary accommodation already provided by some of the church organisations and migrant groups.

9.5 Raising the profile of young female migrants in Sudan

There is an urgent need to increase the profile of young female migrants and refugees in Sudan. Close collaboration is needed between international organisations (IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP), donors, national government organisations (including the Council of Women, the Ministry of Social Development, COR), together with local organisations (Ahfad University for Women, SIHA, SEEMA, and Al Manar, the Institute of the Rights of the Child) as well as migrant groups to ensure systematic and widespread intervention. Migrant girls will benefit from policy engagement and advocacy to promote girls' education and economic empowerment, strengthen child protection, and combat gender-based violence and child marriage — benefits that are rarely found in current programmes for girls in general and for migrant girls more specifically. Local and international organisations advocating and working towards the rights of children and adolescents should include migrant and refugee girls in their policies and interventions. In addition, policy reforms for international migrants as a group, such as reducing barriers for international migration to Sudan (from Ethiopia and Eritrea), improving living conditions in migrant arrival areas, can also help migrant girls. These efforts need to be sensitive to age, sex, and migration status to make a sustained difference for migrant and refugee girls.

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