

## Being Young in Times of Change: Transformative Aspects of Migration across Generations in South Wollo, Ethiopia

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**Abstract :** This paper aims to learn how children/siblings left behind due to parental migration experience care and the effects of the separation. It also aims to unpack the experiences of youth migrants in rural Ethiopia. It focuses specifically on how children and youth are affected in order to highlight in which areas intervention can enhance or inadvertently undermine the development impact of migration on young people. Based on a qualitative study in South Wollo, Ethiopia, which was undertaken in three stages in 2017-19 and involved 34 households and a number of key informants, the analysis offers insights into how migration contributes to household sustainability and, in the process, alters intergenerational relationships and dynamics. Contemporary migration in Ethiopia is complex and highly gendered. For young women, the migration corridor from Ethiopia to the Middle East is the most important, whereas young men mostly engage in local migration or travel to South Africa or Sudan. Arguing that children and youths' experience of migration must be understood in the context of the moral, affective, and material economies, the paper distinguishes between young people's experiences of migration as children of migrants, as siblings of a migrant, and as migrants. The material shows that children and youths demonstrate different experiences in parental migration depending on age, care arrangement, and the ability to communicate with an absent mother. Migration has a different implication for younger siblings depending on their gender. The division of work and future responsibilities post marriage combine to disadvantage female siblings while male siblings are either unaffected or reaped the benefits of investments made with remittances. Finally, migration is a mechanism to change generational power relationships. As remitters, young migrants yield better recognition in the family, though not always to the degree that they can control the use of remittances. The power to make decisions is not tied only to material resources and the household; migration facilitates social change that opens space for young women to have more influence over their own lives.

**Keywords :** migration, youth, Ethiopia, generations

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