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South–South Migration and Children's Education: Expanded Challenges and Increased Opportunities

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Introduction

Children are affected by South–South migration[1] in different ways. Some children migrate themselves while other children do not move but live in households or communities impacted by migration. Such diverse ways to participate in migration—moving or remaining—have different impacts which vary depending on the child, their household, and their community, as well. These differences in turn generate inequalities between children, which may leave some more, less, or differently able to benefit from migration.

This chapter draws on research conducted in Ethiopia and South Africa as part of the work package on childhood inequalities which is part of the

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[1] We understand migration to encompass the entire spectrum from forced through voluntary migration.

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Migration for Development and Equality (MIDEQ) Hub.[2] The research examined the needs and experiences of Ethiopian children, including both those who stay back and those in South Africa, and how migration affects childhood inequalities, with a focus on education. The research thus aimed to address a knowledge gap on South–South migration as in such migration contexts, children's experiences have been researched less extensively than in the Global North (Bartlett, 2011).

While existing evidence demonstrates that education affects South–South child migration—such as regarding who migrates (Boyden, 2013)—this chapter focuses specifically on the reverse relationship: how migration affects children in unequal ways in regard to education. Importantly, these inequalities in education have spill-over effects in other areas, which continue over time, and ultimately result in varying degrees of inclusion or exclusion for children in the societies in which they live. Reflecting this, the chapter examines how migration and education interact in complex ways to produce inequalities and impact the social mobility of the children and their households via two case studies on migration: children who stay back in Ethiopia, and the children of Ethiopian migrants in South Africa.

Note on Terminology

This article chooses to use the term "children who stay back" instead of the more common "left-behind children" or "children left behind." Albeit imperfect, rejecting the term "left-behind children" restores some agency to these children, as this term does not necessarily preclude them from the migration decision-making process as "left behind" does. Specifically using the "left behind" terminology removes the agency from children (Mondain & Diagne, 2013) who can participate in the decision to migrate with their parents and who can also influence their parents' migration decision-making (Lam & Yeoh, 2019a). Indeed, even when children are not involved in the decision

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[2] The Migration for Development and Equality (MIDEQ) Hub unpacks the complex and multi-dimensional relationships between migration and inequality in the context of the Global South. MIDEQ aims to transform the understanding of the relationship between migration, inequality, and development by decentring the production of knowledge about migration and its consequences away from the Global North towards the Global South. MIDEQ mobilises resources for partners in the Global South to define their own research questions and generate their own knowledge, producing robust, comparative, widely accessible evidence on South–South migration, inequality, and development; and engaging national and regional partners on key policy issues. More at www.mideq.org

of remaining or migrating, they remain agents[3] shaping their own lives and do not remain in stasis (Lam & Yeoh, 2019b)—as the left behind terminology indicates. Children exhibit this agency in varying degrees and in various ways according to the specific context in which they live (Deng et al., 2022). For example, in a systematic review of children's agency in migration contexts, children who stayed back were identified to have expressed agency in four distinct ways: (1) in terms of care provision, (2) how they cope with the absence of their caregivers, (3) initiating communication with their parents, and (4) disclosure or withholding of information (Deng et al., 2022).

Further problematising the term, the lack of agency with which the term "left behind" confers on children, and which in turn impacts how migration actors perceive and treat this group of children, is deeply interconnected with Global North notions of childhood that conceptualise such children as having been deserted. This complicates the term's applicability in South–South migration contexts; The ideal childhood from the Global North undergirding this term often fails to find resonance in Global South contexts where children are embedded in wider households rather than nuclear families (Guo, 2022). As Guo writes:

> Quite often researchers and public media use the category "left-behind children" to describe children whose parents have migrated while overlooking that this presumably universal category reflects an ontological view about an ideal childhood from the Global North… [where] parental migration means that they are "deserted." (Guo, 2022)

For the reasons described above, we choose not to not use the term "left-behind children" in this chapter whilst being cognisant of not wanting to replicate binaries between Global South and North.

Methods

The data presented in this chapter comes from two qualitative studies conducted in Ethiopia and South Africa. The studies focused on understanding the nexus between migration and inequality among children. The qualitative studies focused on how inequalities in education develop in childhood in migration contexts. The two studies took a corridor approach,

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[3] Agents are "individuals as actors with the ability to make sense of their environment, initiate change, and make choices" (Kuczynski, 2002, 9).

examining migration from Ethiopia to South Africa—a common South–South migration movement in the region (Crawley, 2023; Estifanos and Zack, 2019).

In Ethiopia, the research took place in the Hadiya zone, one of the administrative zones in Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State in Ethiopia, and is a hot spot for migration to South Africa (Kefale & Gebresenbet, 2022). Relevant data was collected through semi-structured interviews (SSIs), key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), and field observations. SSIs were conducted with 25 children at different locations in the Hadiya zone and in the capital, Addis Ababa. Three FGDs were also held with 15 children from migrant households in Bonosha town and the zonal capital, Hosana.

In South Africa, data was collected in the Western and Eastern Cape—provinces with vibrant Ethiopian communities and which had comparatively lower COVID-19 infection rates at the time of data collection. This chapter specifically draws on 12 SSIs with Ethiopian children from primary school to university levels, two FGDs with secondary school Ethiopian children, and two additional FGDs with the mothers of these children from these areas.

Review of the Evidence: Children's Education in Migration Contexts

Much of the literature on inequalities in children's education in migration contexts has focused on the Global North, and further, has examined educational inequalities through the lens of integration barriers (see Bohon et al., 2005; Koehler & Schneider, 2019; McIntyre & Hall, 2020; Mestheneos & Ioannidi, 2002) and how such barriers produce inequalities between non-migrant children and child migrants.[4] Common barriers identified in systematic reviews on child migrants' education trajectories in the Global North include: language barriers; a lack of knowledge of the local school system by parents; disadvantaged socioeconomic background of parents; discriminatory individual, policy, and legal treatment; and economic constraints, among others. There have been additional efforts to take an intersectional approach to such educational inequalities, examining how children's education is affected not just by migration, but by other factors such as gender (see Qin, 2006; Ray, 2022) and intergenerational dynamics (see Wallace et al., 2022).

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[4] This paper uses the term child migrants to describe children who migrate or children who are descended from migrants themselves.

Educational inequalities among children effected by migration,[5] and between such children and those not effected by migration, are deeply connected with migration's influence on social mobility. This is because of education's potentially positive impact on upward social mobility. Given integration barriers for children affected by migration in the Global North can produce severe educational inequalities among children, the potential of education to promote children and their households' upward social mobility can be consequently constricted in migration contexts. Indeed, research has examined education's specific role in social mobility in the context of child migration, such as how migration constricts education's ability to facilitate upward social mobility (see Papademetriou & Terrazas, 2009) and how migration for children's educational purposes is driven by a desire for upward social mobility (see Browne, 2017). The negative impacts of education barriers on children's upward social mobility can expand to familial outcomes, as well (Wallace et al., 2022). The childhood inequalities in education seen in migration contexts thus have both short-term and long-term consequences on the upward social mobility of entire networks—potentially constraining individuals', households', and communities' ability to reap the full benefits of migration.

Given that much of the focus has been on education of child migrants in the Global North, there are two significant gaps within the research. First, existing research has often failed to examine the impact that migration has on the larger educational inequalities of all children affected by migration, namely those who do not reside in the Global North, like children who stay back. This centring of the research in the Global North has thus the additional consequence that children who are affected by South–South migration, as well as those who remain in the Global South while household members migrate to the Global North, are often ignored. Secondly, the focus of the research in the Global North means that much of the studies have focused on an "us" versus "them" approach to childhood inequalities in migration contexts. The research has thus far focused predominantly on how migration, education, and childhood intersect to develop inequalities between child migrants and non-migrant children in Global North communities of destination (see Borgna, 2015; Entorf & Tatsi, 2009; Hillmert, 2013). Thus, while there exists a relatively robust understanding of how migration generates inequalities between migrant communities and non-migrant communities in the Global North, there is very little understanding of how South–South migration generates educational inequalities transnationally among children

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[5] Children who are affected by migration refers to both child migrants and those who stay back.

of the same communities within the Global South, such as between children who migrate and children who stay back (Bartlett, 2011), and the implications this has on social mobility.

With the current academic discussion on social mobility and migration calling for an incorporation of transnational, as well as intergenerational perspectives to childhood and migration, space, as well as time are thus emerging as critical lens of analyses for understanding inequalities in migration contexts and their impact on social mobility. Indeed, such analyses better reflect how those effected by migration in the Global South achieve and view their own social mobility, as well. For example, Zeleke (2019) found that even in those circumstances when migrants might have experienced a downward social mobility in communities of destination, these migrants' outlook towards upward social mobility is framed in reference to the result that their migration bears for those who stay back—i.e. transnationally and intergenerationally. This chapter thus aims to expand the evidence base on migration, children's education, and inequalities in the Global South while also assuming a transnational and intergenerational analytical frame which better reflects South–South migration realities.

Examining Childhood, Education, and Inequalities in South–South Migration Contexts

The existing evidence indicates that for many families in the Global South, migration is seen as a way of improving the standard of living of the migrants, as well as the families that stay and contributing to upward social mobility (Nyamnjoh, 2020). Importantly, migration is an opportunity for parents to give their (future) children better education and by extension improved opportunities for sustainable livelihoods such as through remittances or through children migrating alongside them. Providing children improved educational opportunities can represent a compensation for the lack or shortfall of education in parents' own lives, whose educational aspirations at times were halted to pursue migration (see Crivello, 2010; Schewel & Fransen, 2018). Parents thus at times envision education in migration contexts as a way to foster intergenerational upward social mobility—in both communities of destination and origin insofar that education is considered to make the children "become somebody in life" (Crivello, 2010, 402). In South–South migration, education of children thus dovetails intergenerational dependencies transnationally and the roles that children play in mitigating family poverty. Despite these intentions, much like in the Global North, children who migrate are seen to be largely disadvantaged when it comes to

educational outcomes compared to non-migrant children in countries of destination (Caarls et al., 2021).

Within this limited evidence base, there have been additional efforts in the South–South child migration literature to take an intersectional approach and connect the educational experiences of child migrants to systemic disadvantage or advantage. A 2016 Human Rights Report which examined Syrian refugee children's access to education in Lebanon indicates that age may be an important factor in inequality production in education among child migrants. The report found that children aged 15 or older faced significant challenges when enrolling in secondary school which did not exist or were less impactful for younger children, such as the lack of availability of Arabic-language education (HRW, 2016). The report identified that this is partially due to the higher requirements of secondary school, as well as the increased social pressure on older children to work. Such educational experiences in South–South migration contexts may produce educational inequalities among children within the same migrant household, as well as between age groups of displaced communities, impacting migration's ability to facilitate upward social mobility. Studies on North–South migration have similarly documented the importance of age in determining educational trajectories (Corak, 2012; Lemmermann & Riphahn, 2018).

Other studies on South–South migration have also indicated how child migrants' experiences in education can diverge to generate larger inequalities—again restricting the ability of education to promote upward social mobility. For example, one study on migration from Haiti to the Dominican Republic found that race played an important role in child migrants' experiences in education—with those children with darker skin colours more targeted for bullying (Bartlett, 2011). Another report on out-of-school migrants in Ghana found that migration did little to mitigate gender norms from children's countries of origin which discouraged girls' school enrolment (Kyereko, 2020). Migration thus not only refracted the gendered inequalities existing among children, but continued to produce them in countries of destination. These nuances emphasise that education's impact on social mobility in migration contexts is mitigated by additional social categories, such as gender, age, and race.

However, in contrast to the literature on the Global North, which extensively focuses on child migrants—namely children who migrate or are descendants of migrants—there have been efforts in the literature on South–South migration to examine how migration produces childhood inequalities transnationally by examining the educational experiences of those who stay back (see Robles & Oropesa, 2011). Specifically, there is an ongoing academic

debate on the impact of parental migration on the well-being of such children. Hanson and Woodruff (2003) argue that the migration of a parent positively impacts the schooling of children who stay back and improves their academic performance, which other studies support (see Boyden, 2013; Cebotari et al., 2017; Crivello, 2010). Studies with these arguments approach migration as a household strategy for improving the household's economic standing (Semyonov & Gorodzeisky, 2008; Stark & Bloom, 1985) and focus on remittances as a way to facilitate educational opportunities and attainment among children who stay back (Caarls et al., 2021). Other studies nevertheless highlight how parental migration might negatively affect children's educational motivation such as via remittances reducing children's interest in education because of heightened desires and aspirations to migrate (see Kandel & Kao, 2001; Carling, 2001, 2002). Additionally, emerging evidence suggests that the gender of the parent or caregiver who migrates impacts children's education differently. For example, a study by Dunusinghe (2021) found that educational performance of children in Sri Lanka whose mothers had migrated was lower than those whose fathers had migrated. Conversely, Sun et al. (2020) found that in Mexico, the educational aspirations of girls who stay back are more negatively influenced by their mother's migrating than those for boys.

Thus, like child migrants in South–South migration contexts, the literature on children who stay back in the Global South has at times benefitted from a nuanced approach. A review of the evidence on education, migration, and displacement by UNESCO (2019) identified that gender impacts children who stay back in unique ways—contributing to childhood inequalities and thus migration's ability to facilitate upward social mobility. The report found that in South Africa, migrant families may not benefit from an exemption from school fees, which can negatively impact girls more (UNESCO, 2019). Further, the same review found that in Cambodia, girls who stayed back were significantly more likely to drop out of school than boys who stayed back—as well as more likely to drop out compared to children overall from non-migrant households. This may be associated with an increased care burden girls suffer after a care provider has migrated, a finding evidenced in this review, as well (UNESCO, 2019). Such inequalities spurred on by migration can exacerbate the educational inequalities facing girls in the Global South more generally, expanding the gap between girls' and boys' educational opportunities as well as between girls not impacted by migration and those who stay back. Critically, unable to reap the full benefits of education, girls who stay back may thus find their upward social mobility constrained.

Reflecting the bias in the literature in the Global North, the evidence on children who stay back in the Global South, while incorporating an intergenerational perspective, often compares these children belonging to migrant households to those children belonging to non-migrant households (see Caarls et al., 2021; for a notable exception see Zuccotti et al., 2017). Thus, while the more limited literature in the Global South on educational experiences among children in migration contexts examines educational inequalities more holistically by looking at children affected by migration—rather than just child migrants—it fails to provide a compelling intergenerational *and* transnational understanding of how childhood inequalities are generated depending on how children participate in migration.

A nuanced transnational and intergenerational examination of childhood inequalities in migration contexts, and its impact on social mobility, is thus required to better understand how migration impacts children and their entire ecosystem differently depending on their role in migration process. Importantly, such examinations better reflect the realities of migration where migrants often situate themselves not just in relation to the host communities, but also to those in places of origin (Zuccotti et al., 2017) and to their larger family networks (Eresso, 2019).

Educational Inequalities Among Children Who Stay Back

This section presents the lived experiences of children coming from migrant households in Ethiopia and who stay back. It expands on how migration shapes and impacts children's access to education and educational trajectories of children born in migrant households and how the produced inequalities impact social mobility.

Remittance affects children's access to education in migrant households in Ethiopia. The data from Ethiopia shows that migration via remittances simultaneously leads to a devaluing and valuing of education. In terms of valuing education, KIIs conducted with school principals and teachers in Bonosha town and Hosanna in the Hadiya zone described how the parents who migrate actively invest in the education of their children who stay back in Ethiopia through remittances. During one FGD conducted with school principal and teachers at Hosanna town, a participant expressed the comparative advantage of students coming from migrant households and how such transnational investments produced educational inequalities:

> If one thinks of getting a quality education in Ethiopia, it is clear that one would go for private schools. Hadiya is not an exception in this regard…The ones who can afford the high prices are mostly the diaspora…It is rare to find a migrant in the diaspora sending their children to public schools as that is considered a failure.

Data collected from the private schools in Hosanna and Bonosha towns demonstrate how migrant parents tend to prefer private schools, representing a clear monetary investment in their children's education. Indeed, there is a boom of private schools in the area catering to the high demand from migrant households for such schools.

In response to such investments over time, KIIs recount that following the mass migration of Hadiya migrants to South Africa in the aftermath of the 1990s, there has been a growing inequality regarding children's access to education—children from migrant households more often attend private schools in the zonal capital Hosanna and the district town Bonosha. Unlike the public schools, these private schools offer additional extra-curricular activities, skills training, and have relatively well-equipped libraries and resource centres. Further, returnees and migrants are investors and owners of such private schools in the zone. With its roots in transnational and intergenerational remittance flows, children who stay back thus benefit from the produced inequalities, reaping greater educational opportunities and thus opportunities for upward social mobility.

Importantly, the heightened value of education, particularly private education by migrant parents from Hadiya or return migrants—indicated by their investment in their children's education—is seen as a compensatory investment. While Global North perspectives on such children being deserted (Guo, 2022) would indicate such acts are a way to compensate for parents' absence, the data indicates that parents in Ethiopia rather see remittances as a way to compensate for their own lack of educational attainment intergenerationally. A returnee parent from South Africa who owns an international hotel in Addis Ababa and sends his children to one of the most expensive international schools in Ethiopia voiced this reasoning for investing in his children's education:

> It is not only about the money that I brought from South Africa which I used to invest in the hospitality business I am running. It is also about being able to send five of my children to an international school…I dropped out of school in 11th grade to generate some income so that I could migrate to South Africa. Now that I have invested in my children's education, I feel compensated.

Children born in South Africa or born to a parent owning South African citizenship provide such children of migrant households special access to international schools in Ethiopia.

In addition to getting access to better education at private schools, remittances allow children from migrant households to get additional educational support through paid tutoring and having access to educational support materials. During FGDs with children coming from non-migrant households, the participants of the FGDs emphasised how such differential access to additional educational support sets the boundaries for their own educational achievements:

> One of the key things that sets us [children from non-migrant households] apart is the differential access we both have to different educational support such as paid tutoring. Our parents can hardly afford the essential school goods such as notebooks and stationery let alone paying for a tutor. Most of the kids coming from migrant households have private tutors.

Thus, migration not only impacts on the educational quality children receive, but also access to educational support. Importantly, the data indicate that this inequality is produced by migrant parents and is visible to children themselves—producing a recognised and known inequality among children in Ethiopia.

However, migration also at times led to a devaluing of education specifically by children who stay back. In the data, some children, often whose fathers had migrated, devalued education more than children belonging to non-migrant families. Examining children's educational aspirations via their life dreams indicates how the perceived success stemming from migration to South Africa discredited previous avenues for social mobility, such as education. Among rural communities of high migration in the Hadiya zone, there was, in particular, a growing disinterest in education among the younger generation in favour of migration. A key informant described this phenomenon:

> In my time [in the 1990s], it was education which was sought... [When I passed the national exam], families and neighbours brought to my family 20 coffee pots... Years after, I was no longer the socially attractive person. Less intelligent people who made it to South Africa became the new hero. People now mock me: "What do you have to show for your education?" They would say "Your father has lived in a mud house with a thorn fence before and after university, but look at migrant families who live in fancy houses!"

Indeed, despite benefitting from increased educational opportunities provided by remittances, for most children who stay back, migration was the dream. For most children who stay back, migration was viewed as a more viable livelihood pursuit than pursuing education. Hence, in contrast to investing in their own education, children viewed investing in migration as wiser and more attractive in terms of "value for money." This favouring of migration over education is situated within the broader crisis in the education system—there is a growing belief that one cannot change their life through education and employment within Ethiopia.

Further, data collected from community members, law enforcement, school principals, teachers and students highlight that children coming from migrant households have major issues with discipline. While referring to the difference between the non-migrant and migrant families, the teachers and principals emphasised the lack of discipline of students from migrant households and the challenge of managing such students. A principal of a private school in Bonosha described this challenge:

> They often do not attend school properly, their performance is poor, they view education as valueless. On the contrary, children from the civil servant families or other poor households see education as the way out of poverty, and because of continuous follow-up they get from their parents they perform better in class.

Biniyam,[6] a 14-year-old informant whose parents are in Durban, shared the challenges he was facing due to the strong societal bias and stereotype towards children coming from migrant households:

> I do not get where all these biases towards us come from! Our teachers and the local society consider us to be undisciplined and as if we are all disinterested in education. There is a prejudice that we all want to end up in South Africa, where our parents are. We are not treated well by our teachers and the school community.

Preferring migration over education—despite remittances at times providing greater educational opportunities—thus may flow from both children's own perception that migration is the better investment, but also from a discouraging school environment.

In Ethiopia, migrant parents produce greater opportunities for their children's education via remittances and through foreign documentation. This

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[6] All names are pseudonyms.

produces an inequality of opportunity, whereby children who stay back benefit from greater access to higher quality education and educational support. Importantly, such investment by parents is seen as a compensatory act for migrant parents' at times own lack of education opportunities and attainment. However, this contrasts with children's own educational experience and desires in the Hadiya zone. The data indicates that these children at times devalue education—having seen the benefits of migration. Further, the absence of these parents produces perceived challenges for educational achievement regarding discipline, and a discouraging school environment. This threatens to produce an inequality in educational attainment—rather than opportunity—between children who stay back and children of non-migrant households.

Children of Those who Left and Educational Inequalities

This section turns to the experiences of second-generation children born of Ethiopian migrants in South Africa and the first-generation—those that joined families through family reunion. It examines how lack of documentation keeps children in a permanent state of uncertainty, and thus inequality. In terms of education, lack of documentation forecloses education as the tool which can facilitate upward social mobility.

Like children who stay back in Ethiopia, in South Africa, Ethiopian parents viewed their children's education as a way to achieve upward social mobility. Such parents believe their children's expanded educational opportunities in South Africa will open up the opportunities for their children to have a better life away from their own "tuck shop mentality"[7], as well as that these children will eventually be the ones to lift them out of poverty (Boyden, 2013; Crivello, 2010). Additionally, parents at times saw their children's education as facilitating "better" migration, such as to Canada. Migrant parents' desire for better educational opportunities and attainment for the next generation should be contextualised against their own lack, where migrant parents' aspiration to migrate had often outweighed that of education (Kuschminder & Siegel, 2014; Kuschminder et al., 2012; Mains, 2012).

Despite the intentions of Ethiopian migrant parents in South Africa, education for their children has been incomplete—not adequately providing access to the labour market and greater educational opportunities. Indeed,

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[7] Almost all Ethiopians in South Africa operate a grocery corner store in the townships popularly referred to as tuck shops.

despite the improved quality of education that Ethiopian children have received in South Africa, such access has yet to have a substantial and meaningful impact on their lives. This clearly deviates from the intended goals of education unlocking their potential and facilitating upward social mobility across generations. As a result, migration produces pronounced inequalities among children in South Africa, as well as between Ethiopian children in South Africa and those in Ethiopia.

It is predominantly a lack of documentation and the failure to move Ethiopian children from refugee status to either a permanent or temporary resident permit holder that produces their marginal and unequal position in education and keeps them in permanent temporality (Tize, 2021). Keeping Ethiopian children permanently on short-term extended refugee status limits their access to education, as well as ability of education to produce further opportunities that could contribute to their well-being and productivity. For example, even with qualifications obtained, the lack of documentation becomes the grounds to deny such adult children access to employment. This causes anxiety and keeps the families stuck in the stagnant realities of their insecure status (see Tize, 2021).

Maya, a 16-year-old girl, highlights the challenges of having a refugee document and the difficulty of navigating the system to procure documentation that will give her access to study:

> My father took me to Pretoria [from Cape Town] to get a document from Home Affairs. It was a document asked for by my school. And it wasn't a great experience, you can feel a great amount of tension and you can feel that you are unwelcome.

Such documentation challenges are further exemplified by Grace. Grace has studied from primary to tertiary education and is currently a third-year chartered accounting student. In order to complete her degree, she has to enrol for an internship that will assist her to write three articles as part of the requirements to obtain her undergraduate degree. She narrates her ordeals and how the lack of document prohibits her mobility from one stage to the other at the university:

> It was so difficult applying for university. Because I don't have a passport, I am on a refugee's permit.… So it's very difficult to apply to a lot of places…And then I have to apply for an internship and to write an article and for that article as well, everywhere I try to apply, everyone is telling me that I need to have a permanent residency.

Without completing the internship Grace will not graduate and cannot enrol for the honour's programme. It is important to note that Grace arrived in South Africa at the age of 8 in 2009, and as an adult she is still struggling with the issue of documentation. The psychological toll was clear during the interview. Grace's demeanour during the interview immediately changed when she began narrating her ordeals at school. It was evident that she was emotionally drained by this process. The restrictions of refugee status keep Ethiopian students in a constant state of uncertainty, as Grace concludes:

> But now they got back to me and I have one [refugee status] until 2025 I think…But even with that, I can't continue into the next phase of my life. I can't apply for the internship that I need.

Second-generation children born of Ethiopian parents and first-generation children who joined their parents for family reunion like Grace are confronted with ongoing documentation issues even as they enter adulthood. Such educational stagnation potentially constrains opportunities throughout their lives and contributes to further inequalities, such as in the labour market.

Grace and Maya's stories were emblematic of the data. For example, since completing her Matric (high school leaving certificate) in 2020, another 21-year-old girl, Helen, had not yet received her result given her lack of documentation and was consequently unable to enrol in university. Others interviewed were also unable to complete their studies in a timely manner because they were kicked out of the system until the right documentation was provided. This is the situation for 25-year-old Faith; Faith's registration was voided, and she lost a year because not even her asylum documentation was accepted by the school as it was considered to be forged document, of which it was not. Although Faith had finally graduated from university, lack of documentation made it difficult to apply for further studies, as well. Such structural barriers engendered by migration policies limit migrants' ability to contribute to intergenerational upward social mobility via education, as well as produce and expand educational inequalities among children.

Discussion

The experiences of the parents and children presented above produce a complex web of inequalities transnationally (i.e. between children in Ethiopia and first and second-generation children born of Ethiopian migrants in South

Africa and those who came for family reunion respectively) and nationally (among children in South Africa and among children in Ethiopia), with such inequalities being perceived differently across generations. Examining the educational experiences and aspirations of children affected by migration in Ethiopia and South Africa demonstrates that migration is producing childhood inequalities in education transnationally, but its impact intergenerationally is less clear.

In the data, educational inequalities were apparent when comparing children's educational aspirations across the two contexts. For example, the eagerness of first-generation Ethiopian students in South Africa to graduate contrasts with children who stayed back in the Hadiya zone. Children of Ethiopian migrants in South Africa acknowledged the growing value of education to "become somebody" (Crivello, 2010, p. 402), implicitly and explicitly acknowledging the positive impact that education can have on their future livelihoods and that education is an "agency of socialisation" through which, in addition to learning knowledge and skills, children are taught particular norms and attitudes (Boyden, 2013; Schewel & Fransen, 2018, p. 556). In contrast, partly given the crisis in the Ethiopian education system, as well as the physical manifestation of the benefits of migration, children in Hadiya at times rather aspired to migrate than achieve educational success. For these Ethiopian children, the notion that a higher formal qualification is always associated with a reduced unemployment risk (Eggert et al., 2010) is an illusion. Thus, depending on how children participated in migration process—i.e. remained in Ethiopia, reunited with parents in South Africa or born into migration households in South Africa—Ethiopian children valued education differently. However, this devaluation or valuation of education was rooted in both groups' desire for, and perception of what generated, upward social mobility. Those in South Africa aspired to achieve educational success because they perceived it allowed them to achieve upward social mobility—something their parents similarly reflected. In contrast, those in Ethiopia at times devalued education because they did not view it as a way to achieve upward social mobility—for them migration was rather the vehicle—which, conversely, contrasted with their parents' own perceptions. In the data, inequalities in educational attainment, insofar that it is influenced by children's aspirations, thus flowed partially from children's different experience with, and thus perception of, migration and its benefits.

Not only were aspirations, and by extension attainment, impacted by migration, but educational opportunities were additionally unequal between the two groups. For example, those children who stayed back in the Hadiya zone benefited from increased educational opportunities which

transnational and intergenerational remittances facilitated. Children who stay back appeared to have better access to education and educational support structures than Ethiopian children of non-migrant households, children who united with family in South Africa, first-generation children born to Ethiopian migrants in South Africa, and their parents. Thus, if they desired, children who stay back could reap the benefits of such greater opportunities and attain a higher level and quality of education. In contrast, that Ethiopian migrant children in South Africa remain on refugee status produced a stymied access to education in comparison to those children who stayed back in Ethiopia. These children in South Africa were unable to securely access education. Despite valuing schooling more consistently, in the South African context such restrictions made the opportunities for an improved standard of living and thus upward social mobility via education unlikely. In the data, migration thus produced clear inequalities in terms of education access, and by consequence also attainment, which privileged children who stayed back over those who were born to Ethiopian parents in South Africa.

As indicated, the educational inequalities and upward social mobility of children were contextualised not just across the transnational community, but intergenerationally within the family, as well. For example, data from both Ethiopia and South Africa demonstrates the esteem that parents place on education, as in both contexts children's education was seen as a way for parents to compensate for their own lack of educational attainment and the elevation of the children as the hope and future to improve the families' livelihood. In this way, parents saw migration as facilitating upward social mobility intergenerationally by allowing for greater quality of educational opportunities—regardless of whether children held similar beliefs. Many in the data viewed migration as a way to provide greater opportunities to the next generation—which at times succeeded and thus produced inequalities between Ethiopian migrant and non-migrant households.

Further, in Ethiopia and South Africa, upward social mobility was measured in similar ways vis-à-vis the ability to speak English. Speaking English thus served as a key demarcation of inequalities. In South Africa, despite the challenges posed by access to documentation, parents still appreciated the standard of education that their children received with their children's ability to speak English better than their counterparts in Ethiopia attesting to a perceived better education. Likewise, one of the key variables used to measure the positive impact of migration on educational attainment of children at the place of origin, Ethiopia, is the access children who stay back have in learning English at an earlier age. In public schools in Ethiopia English language is taught as a single subject starting from Grade 1 where

all other subjects are taught in local languages. Private schools often offer additional English lessons starting from preschool at kindergartens through extra-curricular activities such as reading clubs. Thus, across the two contexts, parents saw children as achieving upward social mobility intergenerationally via education, with migration opening up such educational avenues.

However, nuancing the intergenerational social mobility is the lived experiences of the children themselves where the perceptions of the inequalities varied. For example, speaking English was a point of pride for respondents in South Africa—and perhaps a way to compensate for migration-produced educational inequalities between children in Ethiopia and Ethiopian migrant children in South Africa. Thus, despite suffering from more restricted education access, particularly after primary education, which is compulsory for all children in South Africa, the children in South Africa themselves experienced this inequality less overtly and instead used their English language ability as a way to position themselves as better than those who stayed back in Ethiopia. Children, similar to parents, thus often viewed their educational experience as better because of migration. While these perceptions at times contradicted the documented experiences of such children—particularly in South Africa, it is important to recognise that for these children migration was a source of opportunity, rather than inequality. Such a finding emphasises the importance of grounding inequalities in the perceptions of children themselves.

Conclusion

The two case studies presented above demonstrate that migration produces inequalities which have intergenerational roots and impacts, and which also vary across space—depending on the reference frame used for discussing the educational inequalities. The inequalities also influence what is seen as facilitating upward social mobility over time, as well as migration's ability to contribute to the upward social mobility of children affected by migration and their larger networks.

That migration produces inequalities in generationally and geographic-specific ways highlights the need to incorporate for incorporating such time and space analyses to future examinations on children, migration, and inequalities. The corridor approach taken in these case studies specifically allows for such analyses by contextualising the experiences of children impacted by migration transnationally. Such a fluid approach to migrant communities is more reflective of the experiences of children affected by

migration and their wider network which perceives inequalities and social mobility within communities and across generations.

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