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## Young Ethiopians' Embeddedness in Migration Networks, the Role of Social Media and Their Perceptions of Western Migration Destinations

Master's Thesis

by

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# Young Ethiopians' Embeddedness in Migration Networks, the Role of Social Media and Their Perceptions of Western Migration Destinations

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## Abstract

Ethiopia is considered to be one of the biggest migration hubs for both inward and outward migration, and it is also considered to be one of the major labour sending countries in Africa. The purpose of this study was to identify how the perceptions that young Ethiopians have of Western migration destinations are influenced by their migration network and their social media use. This study sought to examine this relationship by answering the following research question: *“To what extent does the embeddedness in migration networks and the use of social media influence the perceptions that young Ethiopians have of Western migration destinations?”*. In total, 302 students took part in the quantitative element of the study. All these participants were bachelor students at the College of Social Science at the Addis Ababa University. A Multiple Regression Analysis was used to understand the influence of social media and migration networks on the perceptions that young Ethiopians have of Western migration destinations whilst controlling for gender, social status, household composition, age, growing up in a rural or urban environment, and religion. Additionally, four experts and five students from the Addis Ababa University were interviewed to gain more insight in this matter. Overall, discrepancy was found between the quantitative and qualitative results. The quantitative results showed that migration networks and social media do not influence the perceptions that young Ethiopians have of Western migration destinations. The qualitative results, on the other hand, indicated otherwise. These results showed that both independent variables do influence the perceptions of Western migration destinations which might lead to an image of Western countries that might be too positive. This research showed that, even though the results are contradicting each other, both the migration networks and social media do not seem to influence the perceptions that these young Ethiopians have of Western migration destinations. This might be due to the fact that these students are highly educated and therefore might be more critical towards the information that they receive about Western migration destinations. More research will be needed in order to reach consensus regarding these outcomes.

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## Table of Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| <b>Abstract</b> .....   | 3  |
| <b>Acknowledgements</b> .....                                 | 4  |
| <b>List of Tables and Figures</b> .....                       | 8  |
| <b>List of Abbreviations</b> .....                            | 9  |
| <br>  |    |
| <b>1. Introduction</b> .....                                  | 10 |
| <br>  |    |
| <b>2. Theoretical Framework</b> .....                         | 12 |
| 2.1. Migration Theories.....                                  | 12 |
| 2.1.1. <i>Afro-Centric vs. Euro-Centric Perspective</i> ..... | 13 |
| 2.2. Migration Networks and Social Capital.....               | 13 |
| 2.3. Influence of Social Media.....                           | 15 |
| 2.4. Influence of Institutions.....                           | 17 |
| 2.5. Factors that Influence Network Embedding.....            | 18 |
| 2.5.1. <i>Gender</i> .....                                    | 18 |
| 2.5.2. <i>Social Status</i> .....                             | 19 |
| 2.5.3. <i>Household Composition</i> .....                     | 19 |
| 2.6. Aim of the Study.....                                    | 20 |
| 2.6.1. <i>Research Questions</i> .....                        | 20 |
| <br>  |    |
| <b>3. Regional Thematic Review</b> .....                      | 22 |
| 3.1. Regional Context.....                                    | 22 |
| 3.2. Economic Situation in Ethiopia.....                      | 23 |
| 3.3. Ethiopia and Migration.....                              | 23 |
| 3.4. Status of Women.....                                     | 25 |
| <br>  |    |
| <b>4. Methods</b> .....                                       | 26 |
| 4.1. Participants and Procedures.....                         | 26 |
| 4.2. Measurement Tools.....                                   | 27 |
| 4.2.1. <i>Survey</i> .....                                    | 27 |
| 4.2.2. <i>Interviews</i> .....                                | 28 |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| 4.3. Operationalization of the Variables.....   | 28 |
| 4.3.1. <i>Social Media</i> .....  | 28 |
| 4.3.2. <i>Embeddedness in Migration Networks</i> .....  | 29 |
| 4.3.3. <i>Perceptions of Western Migration Destinations</i> .....                                 | 30 |
| 4.3.4. <i>Control Variables</i> .....   | 31 |
| 4.4. Hypotheses and Expectations.....   | 32 |
| 4.5. Research Methods and Analysis.....   | 33 |
| <b>5. Results</b> .....   | 34 |
| 5.1. General Perceptions of Western Migration Destinations.....                                   | 34 |
| 5.2. Assumptions for the Multiple Regression Analysis.....  | 35 |
| 5.3. Analysis of Migration Networks and the Perceptions of Western Migration<br>Destinations..... | 36 |
| 5.3.1. <i>Migration Networks</i> .....  | 36 |
| 5.3.2. <i>Qualitative Data</i> .....  | 36 |
| 5.3.2.1. Expert Interviews.....   | 37 |
| 5.3.2.2. Interviews with Students from the Addis Ababa University...                              | 37 |
| 5.3.3. <i>Qualitative Data</i> .....  | 38 |
| 5.3.3.1. Weak vs. Strong Network Ties.....  | 41 |
| 5.4. Analysis of Social Media and the Perceptions of Western Migration<br>Destinations.....       | 43 |
| 5.4.1. <i>General Use of Social Media</i> .....   | 43 |
| 5.4.2. <i>Qualitative Data</i> .....  | 43 |
| 5.4.2.1. Expert Interviews.....   | 43 |
| 5.4.2.2. Interviews with Students from the Addis Ababa University...                              | 44 |
| 5.4.3. <i>Quantitative Data</i> .....   | 45 |
| <b>6. Discussion</b> .....  | 48 |
| 6.1. Perceptions of Western Migration Destinations.....   | 48 |
| 6.2. Embeddedness in Migration Networks.....  | 48 |
| 6.3. Influence of Social Media.....   | 50 |
| 6.4. Limitations.....   | 51 |
| 6.5. Implications for Further Research.....   | 52 |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| <b>7. Conclusion</b> .....  | 54 |
| <b>References</b> .....   | 56 |
| <b>Appendices</b> .....   | 59 |
| Appendix 1: General Characteristics of the Participants.....                    | 59 |
| Appendix 2: Survey.....   | 61 |
| Appendix 3: Interview Guide for the Expert Interviews.....                      | 68 |
| Appendix 4: Interview Guide for the Students of the Addis Ababa University..... | 69 |
| Appendix 5: Perceptions of Western Migration Destinations.....                  | 70 |

## List of Tables and Figures

### Tables

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Table 1: Bilateral Estimates of Migrant Stock in 2013.....  | 24 |
| Table 2: ANOVA Table Showing the Significance of Both Predictor Models in the Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis.....  | 39 |
| Table 3: Unstandardized (B) and Standardized ( $\beta$ ) Regression Coefficients for Both the Predictor Variables as the Control Variables on Each Step of a Hierarchical Multiple Regression Predicting the Perceptions of Western Migration Destinations..... | 40 |
| Table 4: Unstandardized (B) and Standardized ( $\beta$ ) Regression Coefficients for Each Predictor Variables on Each Step of a Standard Multiple Regression Predicting the Perceptions of Western Migration Destinations Analyzed by Tie Strength.....         | 42 |
| Table 5: ANOVA Table Showing the Significance of Both Predictor Models in the Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis.....  | 46 |
| Table 6: Unstandardized (B) and Standardized ( $\beta$ ) Regression Coefficients for Both the Predictor Variables as the Control Variables on Each Step of a Hierarchical Multiple Regression Predicting the Perceptions of Western Migration Destinations..... | 47 |

### Figures

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Figure 1: Factors that Influence Network Embedding..... | 20 |
| Figure 2: Conceptual Framework.....                     | 21 |
| Figure 3: Map of Addis Ababa.....                       | 22 |
| Figure 4: Stated Hypotheses for the Research.....       | 32 |



## **List of Abbreviations**

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| AAU    | Addis Ababa University  |
| FDRE   | Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia                                 |
| GII    | Gender Inequality Index   |
| HDI    | Human Development Index   |
| HESPI  | The Horn Economic and Social Policy Institute                           |
| ILO    | International Labour Organization                                       |
| IOM    | International Organization for Migration                                |
| MPI    | Multidimensional Poverty Index  |
| MRA    | Multiple Regression Analysis  |
| NELM   | New Economics of Labour Migration                                       |
| OSSREA | Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa |
| PSIR   | Political Science and International Relations                           |
| UNDP   | United Nations Development Program                                      |
| UNHCR  | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees                           |

## 1. Introduction

Nation states all over the world have taken action to secure their borders in order to prevent immigration from happening. These types of strategies are used to block the movement of people and are also used to weaken the claim that globalization has led to the end of the nation state (Bal & Willems, 2014). However, more and more people cross borders in their search for a better life. One of the causes of this increasing flow of people that cross international borders is the increasing global inter-connectedness. Globalization has contributed to the mass movement of people across the globe and they are, now more than ever, crossing international borders. Because of globalization, migration nowadays is more common, which largely has been caused by an increase in modern means of communication. For instance, it is now easier for migrants to gather information about certain migration destinations and opportunities in those countries. This increased level of information has reduced the fear of the unknown, has built the migrant's confidence, and has provided them with a sense of empowerment (Bariagaber, 2014).

Data from the World Bank (2017) showed that in 2013, over 247 million people were residing outside their country of origin and more than 750 million people migrated within their country of origin. When looking at the whole migrant population it becomes clear that young migrants make up a considerable proportion of this group. According to the United Nations (2013), about 35 million international migrants were under the age of 20, and 40 million international migrants were between 20 and 29 years old. Thus, it is safe to say that there is a contradictory process occurring where more people are seeking opportunities outside of their country of origin whilst other countries try to keep the migrants out.

The United Nations (2013) defines a long-term international migrant as a person who leaves his or her country of usual residence for a period of at least one year. This way the destination country becomes the country of usual residence for this person. On the other hand, internal migration can also take place. In this case migrants move but they remain within the country of origin. An example of internal migration can be rural to urban migration. Both international migration as internal migration can be either permanent or temporary. When we look at the decision of a young person to migrate it becomes clear that this can be influenced by several factors. These reasons can be personal considerations, but can also stem from a desire to escape poverty, family pressure, environmental threats, or simply desiring a better life. According to the United Nations (2013), the main drivers of youth migration are the inequalities in labour market opportunities, human rights, and income in the country of origin.

Research by Bariagaber (2014) shows that there are three actors in international migration, namely: (1) migrants, (2) migrant countries of origin, and (3) migrant countries of destination. These countries of origin are mainly developing countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa. The destination countries, on the other hand, are mainly more developed and wealthy countries such as European countries, Canada, the United States of America, and Arab Gulf countries. All actors described above experience and face opportunities and challenges that come with international migration. On the other hand, Flahoux and De Haas (2016) explain that, even though there are many people who argue that poverty and wage gaps between poor and rich countries are the main reasons people migrate, these assumptions are not really based on empirical evidence. They further argue that several studies have shown that most African migrants are not directed towards Europe, but are rather migrating to other African countries, the Gulf States or the United States of America.

Furthermore, Flahoux and De Haas (2016) claim that the focus of research, policies, and media on irregular migration further reinforce the impression that migrants in Africa are mainly directed towards Europe and are driven by desperation. According to data presented by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR] (2011) (as cited in Flahoux & De Haas, 2016:3), refugees only represent 14% of the international migrants in Africa, which are approximately 2.4 million people. This therefore means that 86% of the international African migrants are not migrating because of conflict. Additionally, research has shown that most Africans migrate for reasons such as their family, study, or their work.

Migration is thus increasing, and a lot of literature research has shown that migration networks can be key for encouraging migration as these networks are able to provide information, jobs, and accommodation as will be explained more thoroughly later on. Migration networks are defined as interpersonal ties that link family members, friends, classmates, colleagues, and community members in the place of origin with those in the place of destination (Massey, Arango, Hugo, Kouaouci, Pellegrino & Taylor, 1988). However, there has been a lot of research focussing on migration networks from the perspectives of the migrants themselves. Not a lot of literature has focussed on the position from the people who have not (yet) migrated. Also, there currently is not a lot of literature available on how these people perceive Western migration destinations, how they acquire this information, if migration networks are able to influence this, and what the role of social media is in this scheme. The main aim of the study is to identify how migration networks and social media usage are able to influence the perceptions that young Ethiopians have of Western migration destinations.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

### 2.1. Migration Theories

There are several theories that try to explain why people make the decision to migrate. The classical migration theories stem from a neoclassical way of thinking and mainly focus on the economic aspects of migration decisions. These theories argue that there would be no migration if the employment opportunities and wages were the same between different countries. An example of these theories is the Rational Choice Theory, which claims that an individual will always make certain decisions in order to maximize his or her benefits (Haug, 2008). Another example is the Push-Pull Theory, which claims that migration is driven by several push factors coming from the country of origin, such as poverty, unemployment, the political situation, or landlessness, and pull factors coming from the destination country, such as better employment opportunities, higher wages, or living conditions. (De Haas, 2010). However, it is important to note that these theories do not explicitly explain why some people migrate whilst others do not. The critiques on these theories are twofold. First, Castles (2000) argues that if economic inequality, employment possibilities, and wage differences were the only reasons why people migrate, then more people would be expected to migrate. Second, these theories also do not explain why some countries have high rates of out-migration whilst other countries, with the same economic conditions, have low rates of out-migration (Castles, 2000). Also, the theories do not offer any insight in the impact that migration has on development in sending countries (De Haas, 2010). Additionally, what these theories fail to take into account are family, personal, or socio-cultural factors that are also able to influence people's decisions on whether or not to migrate.

This is where New Economics of Labour Migration [NELM] theory comes in, this theory can be seen as a critical response to the neoclassical migration theories described above. The NELM theory places the behaviour and agency of individual migrants in a wider societal context by making the family or the household the most influential unit (De Haas, 2010). Thus, maximizing the benefits of the individual is not the most influential factor anymore that affects the migration decision making process. The NELM theory views the migration decision as a risk sharing strategy of families and households, this way they can minimize and spread income risks. Another element that the NELM theory accounts for are remittances, as they are seen as one of the most important reasons for a person to migrate. In sum, the NELM theory argues that people do not individually organize their livelihoods, but rather organize it in a wider social context, such as communities, households, or ethnic groups

(De Haas, 2010). Agency especially plays an important role when it comes to migration networks. They place more emphasis on the role of social phenomena instead of economic factors.

### ***2.1.1. Afro-Centric vs. Euro-Centric Perspective***

When discussing the theories described above, it is important to note that they are written from a predominantly Euro-centric perspective. These theories are being criticised by the Afro-centric perspective for mainly three reasons. First of all, Ngunyi and Oucho (2013) question whether or not an equilibrium exists between push and pull forces. In the East and Southern African regions, this equilibrium is not proven. They (2013) even argue that there are more push factors than pull factors, which is the reason why there are different types of migration. Secondly, Afro-centric theorists argue that the Euro-centric school is not treating communities as dynamic social systems, while they should be viewed as living social organisms (Ngunyi & Oucho, 2013). Lastly, Ngunyi and Oucho (2013) argue that there is a contextual disconnect between theory and empirical reality in the Eastern and Southern African regions. Euro-centric theorists place a lot of emphasis on economic drivers of migration, while Afro-centric theorists argue that socio-political drivers, such as poverty and conflict, are more important.

## **2.2. Migration Networks and Social Capital**

The decision on whether or not to migrate also depends on people's transnationality and the networks they have. Nowadays, it is relatively easy for migrants abroad to stay in touch with people in their country of origin. Mediums such as the internet, (mobile) phones, and social media enable people to stay in contact with their friends and relatives abroad, and therefore they are able to live transnational lives (De Haas, 2010).

Haug (2008) defines migration networks as a foundation of interpersonal relations in which migrants are able to interact with family and friends who are living abroad. These migration networks can promote the circulation of information, support, and assistance to (aspiring) migrants. They can also reduce the costs and the risks of migration, can help migrants finance their travel, or help them find accommodation or jobs (Liu, 2013; Dekker & Engbersen, 2014). Migrants are able to obtain this information by accessing the social capital provided by their network. Also, being embedded in a migration network can have a significant influence on the decision to migrate. Migration networks are able to establish ties between people, and therefore make it easier for them to yield social capital that they can

draw upon in order make their migration decision and process easier (Palloni, Massey, Ceballos, Espinoza & Spittel, 2001). According to Curran and Rivero-Fuentes (2003), migration networks are able to facilitate migration in several ways: (1) contacts with migrants abroad can show people in the country of origin that they might be better off in different places, (2) migration networks are able to reduce the costs of migration, (3) migration networks can lessen assimilation shocks when people arrive in the destination country, (4) migration networks can help people find jobs in the destination country, and (5) migration networks can reduce living expenses in the country of destination and provide financial assistance.

Literature shows that bridging capital versus bonding capital are important elements to consider when looking at migration networks as these two terms are related to social capital. According to Coleman (1988:S98) “social capital constitutes a particular kind of resource available to an actor [...] it inheres in the structure of relations between actors and among actors”. However, Coleman does not elaborate much on bonding and bridging capital. That is where Putnam comes in. Putnam argues that bonding capital are ties to people who are similar to you in an important way, whilst bridging capital can be seen as ties to people who are unlike you in an important way (Putnam, as cited in Ryan, 2011). Bonding networks can thus be seen as tight knit and inward-looking networks which can be important for getting by. On the other hand, bridging capital can be seen as outward looking networks that are important for getting ahead. It is important to note, however, that bonding and bridging capital are not mutually exclusive (Ryan, 2011). For instance, people might bond along several social dimensions, such as ethnicity, but may bridge across other dimensions like class.

Another important aspect to consider when looking at migration networks are the strengths or weaknesses of these network ties. Network ties are not always equal, therefore we can differentiate between strong and weak network ties. Strong network ties are on a more personal level, such as the household, family, and close friends, while weak network ties are non-personal networks, such as village networks (Liu, 2013). According to Granovetter (1983), weak network ties are able to provide people with information and resources that would normally not be available in their own social circle, but strong network ties, on the other hand, are easier to access and can therefore sometimes be of more assistance. There are many different views when it comes to the importance of strong and weak network ties in migration networks. Ryan (2011) argues that not all weak network ties are always equally valuable. For instance, establishing new casual relationships might not always lead to greater resources or advantageous contacts. On the other hand, research by Dolfin and Genicot (2010)

shows that a large family and a large communication network increases the migration likelihood and provides these people with more information about migration destinations. Furthermore, De Haas (2010:237) notes that “the exposure of rural youth to the relative wealth and success of migrants, combined with changing ‘urban’ tastes and material aspirations, make the rural way of life less appealing, discourage local people from working in traditional sectors, and encourage even more out-migration”. This demonstrates that migration aspirations might be inspired or triggered by successful migration stories of others in their network.

Migration networks do not only increase the probability of migrating as described above, they also are able to guide potential migrants to specific migration destinations. Research by Liang, Li and Morooka (2017) shows that the heterogeneity of migration networks can affect migration destination choices, especially when taking characteristics such as education level, gender, and household status into account. Their research also shows that migration networks can have stronger effects for women than men when choosing their migration destination. This was also the case when looking at education level, where more educated migrants are less likely to depend on their migration network when choosing their migration destination.

### **2.3. Influence of Social Media**

As mentioned earlier, communication media such as internet, (mobile) phones, internet, and social media influence people’s transnationality. Through these communication tools transnational links between receiving and sending countries can be established. The focus has shifted from place of departure or place of settlement to transnational arenas, social spaces, or social fields (Bal & Willems, 2014). There now is a more complex interconnectedness between the sending countries and the receiving countries. Because of these forms of communication, people are able to stay in touch with their country of origin despite the fact that they do not live there anymore.

There is quite a sufficient body of literature that focuses on the importance of social media in migration networks. Social media allows people in different geographical places to be in contact with one another. Through certain internet applications, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram, or Twitter, social spaces are created that facilitate communication and allow for networking purposes (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014). According to the research by Dekker and Engbersen (2014) there are three ways in which social media is able to facilitate international migration. First, social media is able to alter the ways in which

migrants with strong network ties stay in touch with their family and friends. Social media makes it easier to stay in touch with family, and as a consequence it is easier for the migrants being away from them. Second, social media allows for weak network ties to strengthen or to even activate latent network ties that might deliver new information. Lastly, social media sometimes is able to create sources of information that are low-key and easy to access, and can therefore be chosen over institutional information. Research by Dekker, Engbersen and Faber (2016) shows that migrants use social media next to the traditional communication channels, so social media is not substituting traditional media, but they are rather complementing each other.

As noted earlier, social media can allow for weak network ties to further establish and become more important. This way, migrants can use these network ties for assistance when it comes to the migration process. Social media can intensify the weak network ties, and therefore they can transform into strong network ties. Komito (2011) shows in his research that social media can make sure that migrants abroad still feel connected to the people and their life back home. Therefore, social media is able to facilitate strong network ties, and it is doing this in a more effective way than Internet applications before that. The first wave of Internet applications helped people to extend their personal networks and build bridging capital, the second wave is contributing to bonding capital by enhancing and supporting communities that exchange information. Komito (2011:1085) defines this as the “new virtual community 2.0”, where “new social media helps these individuals maintain a sense of continuity with each other and identification with the group as a well, regardless of where the members of the group live”.

A term that has been regularly used to describe online and offline interactions where the members of the networks may not know each other is “networked individualism”. With this term, the researchers tried to describe patterns of sociability through which individuals, who may or may not know each other, make contacts, provide help, and seek help (Komito, 2011). At the same time, other people argue that the term “networked individualism” should be replaced with the term “networked sociability”, as they feel that the individual is not necessarily central, but it can also form online groups and communities. However, people argue that “online community” is also a term that doesn’t quite capture it. This argument can be seen as contradictory because of the groups that emerge are not meeting the traditional standards of a community as they operate digitally (Komito, 2011). So even though there are critiques on whether or not social media has a place in migration networks, as online groups are not meeting the traditional standards, there are people who argue that it does. This is



where the Actor-Network Theory comes in. This theory takes the agency of non-human influences in networks into account and is interested in how networks are able to overcome resistance and are able to strengthen internally (Crawford, 2004). The so-called ‘principle of generalized symmetry’ is central in this theory, which means that both humans as non-humans should be assigned the same amount of agency. In the Actor-Network Theory, actors are considered to be combinations of symbolically invested identities, things, inscriptions, and relations that are capable of nesting within a network. So even though social media is not a living and breathing organism, it is still able to influence and provide information in one’s migration network. People are, as Komito (2011) argues, able to form groups or communities online that are able to affect other elements in the migration network.

#### **2.4. Influence of Institutions**

Institutions are also of importance in people’s migration networks. According to North (1991), institutions are constraints invented by humans that are able to structure economic, social, and political interaction. They also create order and, therefore, they have the means to reduce uncertainty. Institutions can consist of formal constraints, such as traditions, sanctions, codes of conducts, and customs, as well as of formal rules, such as laws, constitutions, and property rights. As mentioned earlier, migration networks can reduce the costs of migration. This is also something that institutions are able to do; if they function well, they are able to reduce transaction costs and production costs, so that the gains from trade are realizable (North, 1991).

Due to this capability, there are some similarities between how institutions function and how migration networks function. However, it is also important to note that institutions also can be part of one’s migration network. There are several institutions in Ethiopia that deal with migration management and, thus, are of importance in one’s migration network (ILO, 2017a). The first one is the *Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs*. This ministry mainly is responsible for making sure that the labour conditions are checked and that the employment contract conditions are fair when people want to work abroad. They also assist people with pre-departure orientation and educate them about their legal rights and the terms and content of their employment contract. The second one is the *International Organization for Migration* [IOM], which aims to protect migrant workers and tries to boost the benefits of labour migration for the migrant workers as well as for the country of origin and the country of destination. The third one is the *International Labour Organization* [ILO]. This organization in Ethiopia works closely with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. They aim at

promoting social justice and they want to make sure that human rights and labour rights are internationally recognized.

## **2.5. Factors that Influence Network Embedding**

As mentioned above there are several elements a migration network consists of, however, another important element of migration networks are the factors that influence one's network embedding. There are several factors that are able to influence one's embedding in these migration networks, or, in other words, factors that make it easier for a person to have access to migration networks. These elements are mainly consisting of the characteristics of the person itself. The elements that will be taken into account in this research are gender, social status, and household composition, which will be explained in more detail below. A visual representation is also shown in Figure 1 below.

### **2.5.1. Gender**

When going through literature on migration networks it becomes clear that gender plays an important role in network embedding. Literature shows that men and women experience migration in different ways (Liu, 2013). Notably, the processes, and social norms that govern men and women's movements, and the ways in which they settle in destination countries, are inherently gender specific (Curran & Rivero-Fuentes, 2003). Therefore, migration networks might also be of different importance to men and women as risks, benefits, and costs of migration can differ by gender. In their research, Curran and Rivero-Fuentes (2003) researched migration flows from Mexico to the United States of America. The results of their study show that it is important for Mexican females to have access to female migration networks as these play an important role in facilitating international migration.

Even though strong network ties are important for both men and women (Curran & Rivero-Fuentes, 2003), weak and strong network ties can still be experienced differently by men and women. As it turns out that strong network ties are more important for females, whilst weak network ties are more important for males (Liu, 2013). Strong network ties are important for women especially when there are high social barriers for female migration, especially spouses, nieces, and nephews are important. On the other hand, weak network ties are essential for male migration, especially when they have to depend on scarce information about the migration process.

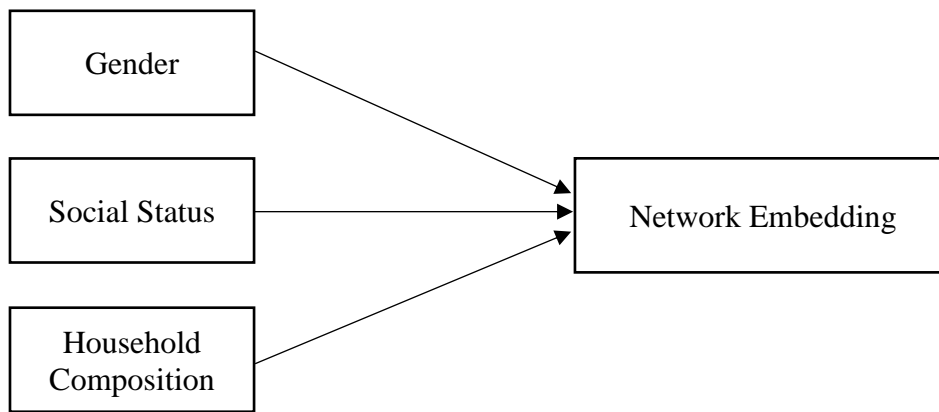
### **2.5.2. *Social Status***

One's social status is also able to influence network embedding. The concept social status is heavily influenced by its ability to reproduce inequality (Pichler & Wallace, 2009). Pichler and Wallace (2009) conducted a research in Europe to see what the role of social networks are when it comes to social stratification. Their research showed that almost everywhere in Europe social capital is socially stratified, meaning that one's access to networks and social capital thus depends on the person's social status. Pichler and Wallace (2009) also found that people with a higher social status are more embedded in broader ranged networks because they tend to meet more diverse groups of people and have larger circles of social connections. As these people have broader ranges of activities, they are also more likely to get in contact with more people or groups that have different resources, connections, and skills. The last finding from Pichler and Wallace (2009) was that even though people in the working class overall have more intensive informal contacts, this intensity of the relationship also depends on their participation in the workforce. People who were not that active in the workforce often were cut off from these networks, something that did not happen for the people with a higher social status. Thus, this means that people with a higher social class have more access and a higher quality of access to networks.

When applying this notion to migration networks it will thus be beneficial to know more people as this will lead to a broader network, whereas knowing similar people might have a limiting effect when it comes to migration networks. However, it is important to note that that this research by Pichler and Wallace (2009) was conducted in Europe and this relationship between social status and network embedding therefore might not be the same in Ethiopia.

### **2.5.3. *Household Composition***

Another factor that might influence network embedding is household composition. Migration sometimes can be considered as a household or as a family strategy where one or more members of the household migrate abroad in order to find employment. Due to this strategy, the income of the household, rather than the income of the individual, will be maximized (Haug, 2008). Furthermore, household composition might influence network embedding because the bigger the household is, the more people of this household might migrate abroad. Therefore, the access to migration networks will be better and embedding in the migration network will be easier. This also means that the ties in this migration network will be strong.



*Figure 1: Factors that Influence Network Embedding.*

## **2.6. Aim of the Study**

As mentioned earlier, this research will focus on the embeddedness of young Ethiopians in migration networks, their use of social media, and how this influences their perceptions of Western migration destinations. Surprisingly, there is hardly any literature that describes this relationship. Also, the views of these young people on Western migration destinations, where this information comes from, and how this is influenced by social media is a topic that has not been explored yet. This research will also investigate where young people get their information about Western migration destinations from and how they view these Western migration destinations. As noted earlier, there is already quite an extensive body of literature on how social media is able to affect migration, but there is hardly any literature on how this might influence the perceptions of Western migration destinations for young people in their country of origin.

### **2.6.1. Research Questions**

This study will focus on the perceptions that young Ethiopians have of Western migration destinations and how these views are influenced by their migration networks and their social media use. To examine this relationship several research questions were formed. Figure 2 below shows the conceptual framework central to these research questions. The main research question of this research is:

*To what extent does the embeddedness in migration networks and the use of social media influence the perceptions that young Ethiopians have of Western migration destinations?*

Three sub-questions were formed in order to answer the main research question, namely:

1. How do young Ethiopians perceive Western migration destinations and how do they gain this knowledge?
2. How embedded are young Ethiopians in migration networks and how does this influence their perceptions of Western migration destinations?
3. What is the role of social media when it comes to the perceptions of Western migration destinations?

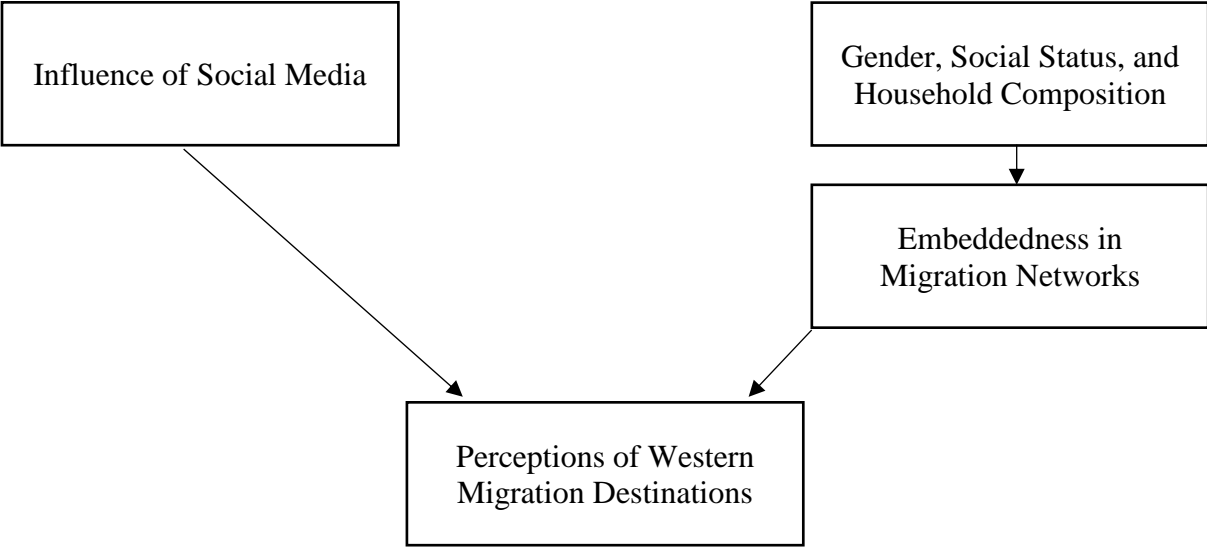


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework.

### 3. Regional Thematic Review

#### 3.1. Regional Context

Ethiopia, officially known as the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia [FDRE], is a landlocked country in the Eastern part of sub-Saharan Africa (Central Intelligence Agency, 2017). The country is bordered by Djibouti, Somalia, Eritrea, South Sudan, Sudan, and Kenya. Ethiopia forms, together with Djibouti, Somalia, and Eritrea, the Horn of Africa. The capital of Ethiopia is Addis Ababa, which is located in the centre of Ethiopia as can be seen in Figure 3 below. Addis Ababa is also the location where this research was conducted.

In total there are over 80 different ethnic groups in Ethiopia, and most of them have their own language. The largest ethnic group in Ethiopia are the Oromo, as they account for about 34.4% of the total Ethiopian population. This is then followed by the Amhara, the Somali, and the Tigrinya. Even though the Oromo are the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia, the national language of the country is Amharic. Furthermore, religion plays an important role in the daily life of many Ethiopians. Of the total population, about 43.5% are Ethiopian Orthodox, followed by 33.9% who are Muslim, and 18.5% who are Protestant (Central Intelligence Agency, 2017).



Figure 3: Map of Ethiopia. Reprinted from Central Intelligence Agency website, by the Central Intelligence Agency, 2017, retrieved from: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/et.html>.

### **3.2. Economic Situation in Ethiopia**

Ethiopia is the most populous landlocked country in Africa with 105,350,020 inhabitants, and after Nigeria it is the second-most populous country of Africa. Ethiopia ranks as the 12<sup>th</sup> most populous country in the world (Central Intelligence Agency, 2017), and is also one of the least urbanized countries in the world. In 2006, 16.3% of the Ethiopian population was living in urban areas, whilst 83.7% of them lived in rural areas. Nonetheless, this is changing rather quickly. One of the reasons for this change is the increase in rural-urban migration and the urban population growth.

According to the United Nations Development Program [UNDP] (2016), Ethiopia is also one of the world's poorest countries, ranking 175 out of 188 countries on the Human Development Index [HDI]. In 2010 the Multidimensional Poverty Index [MPI] was developed. The MPI identifies overlapping deprivation suffered by households in three dimensions: health, living standards, and education. The most recent MPI data available on Ethiopia stems from 2011. During this time, 88.2% of the Ethiopian population were considered to be multidimensionally poor (UNDP, 2016). The life expectancy at birth of Ethiopian inhabitants was 64.4 in 2015. There are also high unemployment rates among the urban communities, where about 48% of the men between the age of 15 and 30 are unemployed. Because of this there has been a massive increase of the informal economy, which accounts for about 70% to 80% of the workforce.

### **3.3. Ethiopia and Migration**

Ethiopia is considered to be one of the biggest migration hubs both for inward and outward migration, as it is one of the largest refugee hosting countries and one of the major labour sending countries in Africa according to the ILO (2017b). Historic patterns of migration in Ethiopia were shaped by a mix of political, economic, and environmental factors. After the 1974 revolution, political uprisings and following instability, international out-migration started to take place (Alem & Andersson, 2015). The people who then migrated were mainly well educated young people. Later, the wish to migrate also spread to other parts of the Ethiopian population, and mainly the Middle East became a popular migration destination around the 1980s and today still is very popular, especially amongst women. As mentioned earlier, several studies argue that most African migrants are not directed towards Europe, but are rather migrating to other African countries, the Gulf States, or the United States of America. Data from the World Bank (2013) supports this statement when we look at the case of Ethiopia. As is shown in Table 1 below, the most popular countries among international

Ethiopian migrants in 2013 were the United States of America, followed by Saudi Arabia, Israel, Sudan, and Italy.

When we look at migration in Africa, the data shows that international migration has significantly increased over the past years. In 2010, 15.813.000 Africans migrated internationally, and this number increased to 17.228.000 in 2013 (Bariagaber, 2014). In 2014, approximately one fifth of the global total labour migrants were Africans. The people who are leaving their countries of origin are mainly highly skilled professionals, such as doctors, nurses, engineers, teachers, scientists, and technologists (Adepoju, 2008). They migrate because there are better opportunities, higher wages, and better living conditions in other countries. When we look at Ethiopia, data from ILO (2017b) shows that the international migration stock in Ethiopia was 662.4446 people in 2000, compared to 1.072.949 in 2015. The people who are leaving Ethiopia, which is one of Africa’s sending countries, are mainly physicians, nurses, engineers, and scientists. Thus, Ethiopia is facing brain drain challenges. Brain drain means that highly skilled and trained people move away from their country of origin in order to work in different countries where they have better opportunities.

Table 1

*Bilateral Estimates of Migrant Stocks in 2013.*

| <b>Top 5 countries of destination</b>                   | <b>Total</b>   |
|---|----------------|
| United States of America                                | 179.979        |
| Saudi Arabia  | 150.000        |
| Israel  | 81.880         |
| Sudan   | 62.431         |
| Italy   | 31.547         |
| <b>Total number of international Ethiopian migrants</b> | <b>749.139</b> |

*Note.* Adapted from “*Bilateral Migration Matrix 2013*”, by World Bank (2013). Retrieved from: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/migrationremittancesdiasporaissues/brief/migration-remittances-data>.



### **3.4. Status of Women**

Ethiopia, generally speaking, is traditional, patriarchal, and there is a clear division of gender roles. Especially in the rural areas women take care of the household and domestic tasks.

Marriages in Ethiopia can traditionally be arranged to maintain or increase the family's social status or to extend the community ties. According to Alemu (2007) (as cited in Fransen & Kuschminder, 2009), the general age of Ethiopian women to get married is 14 years old, and sometimes they marry into polygamous marriages. This still happens even though women must at least be 18 years old to get married according to Ethiopian laws. Additionally, child marriages generally lead to lower education and an increase in health risks for girls.

Furthermore, the Gender Inequality Index [GII] reflects gender-based inequalities in 3 dimensions, namely: empowerment, reproductive health, and economic activity. Ethiopia had a GII score of 0.499, and therefore it ranked 116 out of 159 countries (UNDP, 2016). When looking at the parliamentary seats that are held by women the numbers show that 37.3% of the seats are held by women. Additionally, only 10.8% of adult Ethiopian women have reached at least a secondary level of education compared to 20.7% of all adult men. Currently in Ethiopia, 77% of the women participate in the labour market, compared to 89.1% of men.

## **4. Methods**

### **4.1. Participants and Procedures**

The participants that took part in this study are young Ethiopians between 18 and 24 years old, both male and female. All the participants were studying at the Addis Ababa University [AAU], which is located at the Siddist Kilo Campus in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The participants were recruited through the dean of the College of Social Science at the Addis Ababa University. To fit the criteria concerning age, only bachelor students were included in this study as the general age of master students in Ethiopia tends to be 24 years and older. A list of all the bachelor students that were enrolled in the College of Social Science was provided by the dean, which contained 950 students in total. In order to select the participants for the quantitative part of this study, a systematic sampling method was used. Of this list with all the students every other participant was selected, of these remaining 475 students every seventh participant was deleted. The sample size of this study therefore consists of 407 participants that were asked to take part in this study. Additionally, the College of Social Science consists of seven departments, namely (1) the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, (2) the Department of History, (3), the Department of Philosophy, (4) the Department of Political Science and International Relations, (5) the Department of Social Anthropology, (6) the Department of Sociology, and (7) the School of Social Work. As the list of all the bachelor students in the College of Social Science was listed by department and by year of study, students of all these departments and study years were included. A purposeful sampling strategy, and specifically an expert sampling method, was used for the expert interviews in the qualitative part of the study. The interviewees had to have certain expert knowledge about migration in Ethiopia. The interviewees were selected based on this criterion. For the students, a snowball sampling method was used. In this sampling method, the students referred to others they knew and who were willing to participate in this research. For an overview of the general characteristics of the participants, please see Appendix 1 below.

Unfortunately, there was no time to test the survey among students before officially distributing them due to a state of emergency being declared across Ethiopia. However, the average time it would take for students to complete the survey was calculated by letting three Ethiopians, who were not students anymore, fill out the survey. Additionally, because of the emergency state that was imposed by the Ethiopian government, the quantitative research couldn't be carried out by the researcher herself due to various safety reasons. The surveys

were therefore administered to teachers and class representatives who then again distributed them among the selected students.

## **4.2. Measurement Tools**

As explained above, several tools were used in order to measure the results and obtain the outcomes of this research. A survey was used for the quantitative part of this study and interviews were used for the qualitative part. The tools that were used for measurement will be explained in more depth below.

### **4.2.1. Survey**

As this study used a quantitative research method, surveys were conducted. As all students at the Addis Ababa University are taught in English, this was also the language this survey was conducted in. The survey consists of several elements, as can be seen in Appendix 2 below. The survey tested all the elements that are central to this research. First, the participants were asked to disclose some general information about themselves, such as their gender, age, religion, etcetera. Second, the participants were asked about their migration network. They had to indicate how many of their relatives, classmates, close friends, colleagues, or community members live abroad and in which continents they live. Third, several questions were asked about the participants' social media use. For instance, they had to indicate how often they use social media, and which types of social media they prefer using. Fourth, the participants were given several statements about Western migration destinations and they had to indicate how they agreed with these statements. Lastly, the participants were asked who provides them with knowledge about migration opportunities in Western countries. All these particular elements were based on the theoretical framework presented above.

In total, 302 participants filled out the survey of which 133 were female and 169 were male with a mean age of 20.8 years old. Of the seven departments described above, 44 were in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, 35 were in the Department of History, 37 were in the Department of Philosophy, 36 were in the Department of Political Science and International Relations, 35 were in the Department of Social Anthropology, 65 were in the Department of Sociology, and 33 were in the School of Social Work.

#### **4.2.2. Interviews**

A qualitative component was also integrated into this research as the surveys were complemented with some expert interviews and interviews with the students themselves. These interviews shed a different light on how migration networks function and how they are able to provide information to others. The answers to the qualitative component also provided more insight in the current migration situation in Ethiopia. For both groups different interview guides were developed, as can be seen in Appendix 3 and Appendix 4 below. These interview guides mainly ask the participants about the most important elements that were identified in the theoretical framework, such as migration networks, social media, and the perceptions of Western migration destinations.

In total, four experts and five students were interviewed. The first expert was working for the International Organization for Migration, the second one was a lecturer at the Social Science Department at the AAU, the third was Associate Professor of Population Studies and Anthropology at the AAU, and the last one was a scholar from the Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa [OSSREA]. Furthermore, the first student was a 23-year-old male 3<sup>rd</sup> year Political Science and International Relations [PSIR] student, the second student was a 21-year-old male 2<sup>nd</sup> year Sociology student, the third student was an 18-year-old male 1<sup>st</sup> year PSIR student, the fourth student was an 18-year-old female 1<sup>st</sup> year PSIR student, and the last student was a 22-year-old female 2<sup>nd</sup> year History student.

### **4.3. Operationalization of the Variables**

There are several variables that were measured in this research. The dependent variable in this equation is the “perceptions of Western migration destinations”, the two independent variables are “social media”, and “embeddedness in migration networks”. All these variables and how they were measured shall be explained in more depth below.

#### **4.3.1. Social Media**

Social media usage of the participants, which is the first independent variable, was measured by five questions in the survey. The scale measuring social media consists of questions 27, 29, 30, 31 and 32. The participants have nine answers to choose from for the first question in this scale, which inquires how often the participants stay in contact with their network abroad. The next three questions cover the topics of the importance of social media to stay in contact with their network, whether or not it provides the participants with important information about Western migration destinations, and whether or not social media has an influence on how the

participants view Western migration destinations. These three questions all have the same answering options, namely (1) yes, (2) no, or (3) don't know. The last question in this scale, which has six answers to choose from, focuses on the importance of social media when it comes to the perceptions of the participants about Western migration destinations.

In order to measure the reliability of the social media scale described above, a reliability analysis was performed and the Cronbach's alpha of the social media scale was determined. The Cronbach's alpha of the five questions turned out to be inadequate as the alpha level was .118. Removing items from this scale also proved to be insufficient, as the level of the alpha would still be too low. In order to investigate the underlying structure of the scale, the data was subjected to an oblique rotation factor analysis. Firstly, the normality of all the items in this scale were tested. Even though not all the items were normally distributed, this was not considered to be problematic due to the robustness of the factor analysis. Five factors were identified, however, only the first three factors with Eigenvalues exceeding 1 were taken into account. These three factors combined explain 73.2% of the variance. Factor 1 contains questions number 29, 30 and 31. The Cronbach's alpha of these three items is .517, which still is relatively low, meaning that the reliability of this scale is questionable and therefore the validity of the results might also be debatable. Question 27 loads on Factor 2, and question 32 loads on Factor 3. However, the Cronbach's alpha of these two Factors could not be determined as the reliability of a single-item scale cannot be measured, again possibly influencing the reliability and the validity of the results.

Furthermore, a qualitative component was also used in order to measure the influence of social media. This was done by interviewing both experts as students from the Addis Ababa University. The experts were asked several questions concerning social media, such as: "What do you think is the role of social media when it comes to the perceptions of Western migration destinations?". The students were asked similar questions regarding social media, they were asked about their own experiences, for example: "How often do you use social media to stay in contact with your friends/family/acquaintances abroad?", and "In what way does social media influence/form the perceptions that you have of Western migration destinations?".

#### ***4.3.2. Embeddedness in Migration Networks***

The second independent variable, namely the embeddedness in migration networks, was measured by asking the participants how many people they know live abroad. They were asked to fill out whether or not their father, mother, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, cousins, close friends, colleagues, classmates, or community members live abroad, to note how many

of them live abroad and to indicate in which continent they live. The participants were later on divided into two groups, namely (1) participants who do know people who live in Western countries, and (2) participants who don't know people in Western countries. Later on, a distinction was also made to assess the influence of strong and or weak network ties. In order to measure this, the participants were divided into four groups, namely (1) participants who don't have any network ties, (2) participants with only weak network ties, (3) participants with only strong network ties, and (4) participants with both weak and strong network ties. Based on the literature by Liu (2013) as described above, strong network ties are the members in the household, family, and close friends. Thus, the fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, cousins, and close friends are considered to be strong network ties. Weak network ties are described by Liu (2013) as non-personal networks, therefore colleagues, classmates, and community members are considered to be part of the weak network ties.

When measuring the reliability of both items, it turns out that the Cronbach's alpha of this scale is .792, which is considered to be sufficient for research purposes. This therefore implies that this scale is reliable and that the results therefore should be valid. No items were deleted from the migration network scale, as this wouldn't contribute to a higher Cronbach's alpha and the Cronbach's alpha of single-item scales cannot be determined.

Qualitative data was also gathered by conducting interviews with both experts as with students from the Addis Ababa University. The experts were asked several questions concerning the embeddedness in migration networks, such as "What do you think is the influence of migration networks on young Ethiopians?", and "Who in the migration network do you think is most influential when it comes to the perceptions of Western migration destinations?". The students were asked questions such as: "How many of your family members/friends/acquaintances live in Western countries?", and "What kind of picture of what life is like do the people that you know in Western countries present to you?".

#### ***4.3.3. Perceptions of Western Migration Destinations***

The dependent variable, namely the perceptions of Western migration destinations, was measured by using 21 statements focussing on the participant's perception of Western migration destinations. All these statements were measured by using a 5-point Likert scale, where the answers of the participants ranged from, (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) agree, to (5) strongly agree. Examples of these statements are "It is difficult to find a job in Western countries", and "Migrating to a Western country means that I will be successful in life".

The Cronbach's alpha of this scale was .734, which is considered to be sufficient for research purposes. This again implies that this scale is considered to be reliable and that the results therefore should be valid. No items were deleted from the scale measuring the perceptions of Western migration destinations, as this wouldn't lead to a higher Cronbach's alpha and therefore the reliability of the scale wouldn't be increased.

During the interviews, the experts and the students were asked several questions about their perceptions of Western migration destinations. The experts were asked questions such as: "What are the general perceptions of young people of Western migration destinations?", and "Do you think these perceptions are realistic?". The students were asked similar questions about this topic as well, such as: "What kind of images pop up in your mind when you think of life in Western countries?", and "What do you think daily life is like for young Ethiopians who have migrated to Western countries?".

#### ***4.3.4. Control Variables***

As mentioned in the theoretical framework above, there are several variables that influence network embedding. These variables therefore might also influence the perceptions that Ethiopians have of migration destinations. Therefore, it is crucial that these control variables will be taken into account. The variables that will be controlled for based on the theoretical framework are (1) gender, (2) social status, and (3) household composition. When filling out the variable concerning gender the participants had two options, namely (1) female, or (2) male. In order to determine the participant's social status, they were asked to fill out both their mother's as their father's occupation. When looking at the mother's occupation it became clear that there were roughly nine categories, namely: (1) farmer, (2) housewife, (3) domestic worker, (4) banker, (5) merchant, (6) government, (7) teacher, (8) unemployed, and (9) other. The same was the case for the father's occupation, which could be categorized in eight categories, namely: (1) farmer, (2) banker, (3) merchant, (4) teacher, (5) government, (6) ICT, (7) unemployed, and (8) other. These categories were then further grouped into (1) higher occupation, (2) intermediate occupation, and (3) lower occupation based on the general income of these groups, in order to determine the overall social status of the participant. The last control variable, namely household composition, was measured by asking the number of siblings the participant has. Furthermore, there are also three additional general variables that will be controlled for, namely (4) age, (5) whether the participant grew up in an urban or rural environment, and (6) the participant's religion.

#### 4.4. Hypotheses and Expectations

Two hypotheses were stated for this research in order to help answer the above stated research question. The first hypothesis involves the first independent variable, namely migration networks. The literature presented above argues that migration networks can show people that they might be better off in different places (Curran & Rivero-Fuentes, 2003). Additionally, migration networks can present people with information about migration destinations, help them find jobs, and help them find accommodation (Curran & Rivero-Fuentes, 2003; Dolphin & Genicot, 2010; Liu, 2013; Dekker & Engbersen, 2014). The first hypothesis that was stated for this research is: *“Migration networks provide young Ethiopians with positive images of Western migration destinations”*. Because migration networks thus are able to show people that they might be better off in different places, it is expected that the images the migration network provides the (aspiring) migrants with will be positive.

The second hypothesis involves the other independent variable, namely social media. The literature showed that social media is able to create sources of information that are low-key, easy to access, and therefore might be preferred over institutional information (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014). Additionally, social media is used by individuals, who may or may not know each other, to make contacts, provide help, and seek help (Komito, 2011). Therefore, the following hypothesis was stated: *“Social media provides young Ethiopians with positive images of Western migration destinations”*. This was expected because social media is able to provide people with information that is easy to access and is often preferred over institutional information. However, this information might sometimes be portrayed too positive. Furthermore, people are often connected with the people they already know through social media. Therefore, it was expected that the information provided by social media about Western migration destinations would also be positive.

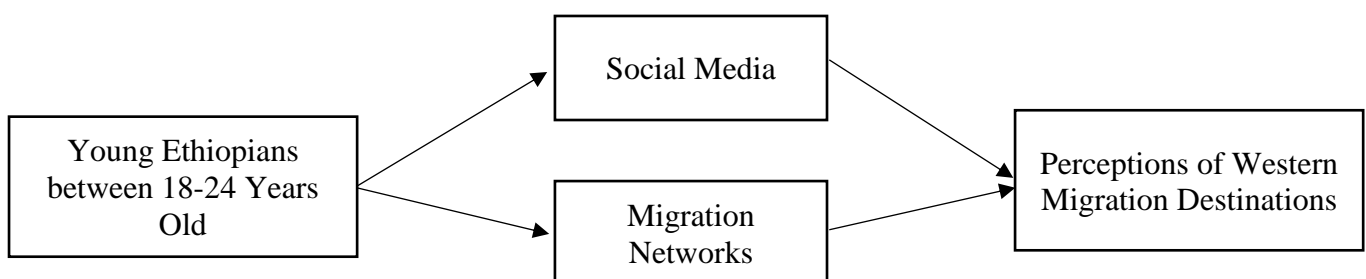


Figure 4: Stated Hypotheses for the Research.



#### **4.5. Research Methods and Analysis**

In order to test the hypotheses and answer the research question stated above, a quantitative research method was used, complemented with some qualitative data provided by experts and students from the Addis Ababa University. Because the research aim was to investigate the influence of migration networks and social media on the perceptions of Western migration destinations, a Multiple Regression Analysis [MRA] was used. The aim of MRA is to predict the dependent variable, which in this case is the perceptions of Western migration destinations, by using several independent variables, which are the embeddedness in migration networks and social media. This type of analysis helps to understand the relative contribution of each independent variable and it shows how much of the variance is explained by each independent variable (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2009). Thus, it shows how the perceptions of Western migration destinations can be explained by the embeddedness in migration networks and social media.

The influence of the control variables that are described above were also examined by adding them into the model as independent variables. By doing this the control variables that might also explain some of the variance, such as gender, social class, household composition, age, rural/urban environment, and religion will be accounted for and possibly excluded. These control variables were added into the model ENTERWISE, which mean that these control variables were forced into the model even though they might not be significant. Doing this shows the influence of these control variables and allows to see how much variance is explained by them.

For the qualitative part of the study the data analysis program NVivo was used. First, all the interviews were transcribed and afterwards uploaded in NVivo. Here, the interviews were analyzed and different types of coding were used to cluster the answers and see different patterns within these answers.

## 5. Results

### 5.1. General Perceptions of Western Migration Destinations

Prior to starting several analyses to answer the research question, it is important to gain more insight in what the general perceptions of Western migration destinations of the participants are and how they gain this knowledge. As mentioned earlier, 21 statements were used in order to measure these perceptions of Western migration destinations, which were later on computed into one scale that measures their general perceptions. The mean of this general scale, which was measured on a 5-point Likert scale, was 3.07. This means that the perceptions that the participants have of Western migration destinations are average. However, there were four statements that stood out. These four statements shall be explained in more depth in this section, and the answers of the participants to the remaining 16 statements are shown schematically in Appendix 5 below.

One of the statements that was used to measure the perceptions of Western migration destinations and the statement that the participants agreed with most was “Payment for jobs in Western countries are high”. This research had 302 participants in total, however, for this statement there were twelve missing values, meaning that  $N = 290$  for this statement. Of all 290 participants that answered this statement, 15 answered that they strongly disagreed, 29 said that they disagreed, 63 of the participants neither agreed nor disagreed, 150 of them agreed, and 33 strongly agreed with the statement. Another statement the participants were asked to answer was “There is a good educational system in Western countries” ( $N = 299$ ). 16 participants strongly disagreed with this statement, 20 disagreed, 37 neither agreed nor disagreed, 155 agreed, and 71 participants strongly agreed. Furthermore, one of the statements which many participants agreed with was: “Knowing people who already live in the West will make it easier for me to find employment” ( $N = 302$ ). 15 participants strongly disagreed with this statement, 36 disagreed, 86 neither agreed nor disagreed, 138 agreed, and 27 participants strongly agreed. The last statement was “When I find a job in a Western country my salary will be high” ( $N = 299$ ). 24 of the participants answered that they strongly disagreed with this statement, 31 disagreed, 93 neither agreed nor disagreed, 113 agreed, and 38 participants strongly agreed.

In addition to the surveys, several students were also interviewed in order to gain more insight in what their general perceptions of Western migration destinations are. According to all the students who were interviewed, they believed that there are better opportunities in Western countries than in Ethiopia. When asked how easy it is to find employment in the

West, the 3<sup>rd</sup> year male PSIR student said: *“When you compare finding jobs between countries, I think it is relatively easy in Western countries. Also, the payment over there is much higher”*. Furthermore, the 2<sup>nd</sup> year female Sociology student answered: *“I don’t think it is that easy, because sometimes the news that we hear here is not true over there. They tell us exaggerated stories, and a lot of Ethiopians believe it.”*. Also, the same student does believe that *“Life in Ethiopia and Western countries are almost incomparable. There are better standards there than here in Ethiopia, mainly because there is a lot of advancement in technology, transportation, and the like. They are also richer, and even when there are social inequalities people still have a decent standard of living”*. Furthermore, this student makes an important comment about employment opportunities regarding whether or not the migrants migrated in a regular or irregular way: *“But I think that people who travel legally have better job opportunities, educational opportunities, and legal protection of their rights than people who migrated illegally”*. But even though they all agree that there are better opportunities in the West, some students also remain critical about the stories that they hear regarding Western migration destinations. The 1<sup>st</sup> year female PSIR student mentioned that: *“They usually don’t find employment. Or they usually end up as dishwashers or things like that, they end up with work they don’t value that much. So I don’t think that job opportunities are as much available as we think of them from here”*. Furthermore, the 1<sup>st</sup> year male PSIR student said that: *“People naturally assume that life is better in the West than in any non-Western country. But also, I think daily life is easier over there and there are better opportunities there. But I am a cynical person, and I would expect some xenophobia there”*. Thus, it seems that even though all students do have a positive attitude towards Western countries one way or another, some students still remain critical about what they hear and don’t take that information for granted.

The participants were also asked in the survey how they gain their knowledge about opportunities in Western countries. In order to measure this, the participants were presented with 22 types of sources through which they could gain knowledge about these opportunities. The top five sources through which young Ethiopians receive their information about opportunities in the West are as follows: (1) social media, (2) the Internet, (3) friends abroad, (4) people they know through family and/or friends abroad, (5) family abroad.

## **5.2. Assumptions for the Multiple Regression Analysis**

In order to test whether or not the perceptions of Western migration destinations differ between young Ethiopians who already have a migration network in Western countries and those Ethiopians who do not, and to see the influence of social media on the perceptions of

Western migration destinations, standard multiple regression analyses and hierarchical multiple regression analyses were performed. Several assumptions were tested prior to using these MRAs. First, the assumption of normality was tested. This test showed that all the variables are normally distributed when looking at their skewness. Second, the scatterplots indicate that the assumptions of homoscedasticity and linearity were met for all variables. Third, Mahalanobis distance did not exceed the critical  $\chi^2$  for  $df = 4$  (at  $\alpha = 0.01$ ) of 18.47 for any cases in the data file, meaning that multivariate outliers in this analysis were not of concern. Lastly, the assumption of multicollinearity was tested. This showed that all the predictors in the regression model have a relatively high tolerance, namely  $> 0.2$ , and a *VIF* score of  $< 5$ , indicating that multicollinearity will not interfere with the interpretations of the MRA outcomes.

### **5.3. Analysis of Migration Networks and the Perceptions of Western Migration Destinations**

Before starting with the MRA, some general information about migration networks will be presented, followed by the qualitative and the quantitative results. In this section, the influence of migration networks on the perceptions that young Ethiopians have of Western migration destinations will be assessed.

#### **5.3.1. Migration Networks**

The embeddedness of the participants in migration networks was assessed first, prior to starting the analyses. The survey data showed that 142 out of 302 participants are not part of a migration network at all, whilst 160 are. Therefore, this shows that a majority of the participants already know somebody who lives in a Western country. When looking at the strength of these network ties it becomes clear that 11 participants only have weak network ties abroad, that 96 participants only have strong network ties abroad, and 53 participants have both weak and strong network ties in Western countries.

#### **5.3.2. Qualitative Data**

A qualitative component was used in order to get more background data as to what the perceptions of Western migration destinations are and how they are influenced by one's migration network. As mentioned earlier, interviews were conducted with both experts as with students from the Addis Ababa University.

#### 5.3.2.1. *Expert Interviews*

Migration networks can be very influential according to the experts who were interviewed. They emphasized that, especially when young Ethiopians see that their relatives, friends, or community members abroad are doing well, they might be more inclined to leave themselves. According to one of the scholars from the AAU, migration networks can also serve as a push factor for migration: *“The push factors are not only the poverty that is pushing them, but also the desire to improve their living conditions. Especially after watching their neighbours or others going to other countries, that they came back and now are supporting their families. They have renovated their parent’s houses, they set up, you know, coffee shops, restaurants, and the like”*. Especially when people are aspiring to migrate they will use their migration networks to gain more information about and more insight in the migration destinations. Not only the people in their migration network who are currently abroad are important, but also the people who have been abroad and who have returned to Ethiopia play a significant role. The people who have returned are also able to provide them with important information and connections.

According to the employee of the IOM, peer pressure is also an aspect that plays a role in migration networks: *“An important factor is peer pressure, because sometimes the friends of the young people are abroad, and a lot of their other friends are migrating. Then the young people here ask themselves the question about why they are still living here, and they will want to go themselves”*. Not only does this pressure come from their peers, but sometimes also from their family members who are abroad. They will encourage the people in Ethiopia to migrate, tell them that they will be able to make the journey safely, and offer them job prospects. However, this paints a false picture according to the employee of the IOM: *“The family will say that they’ve made it fine and that the others can too. So the people who leave Ethiopia will think that they can make but, but they might get stranded somewhere ending up having to spend more money”*. Also, the people in the migration network abroad will not always truthfully tell the youngsters in Ethiopia what kind of jobs they have abroad. According to this information, migration networks don’t always provide the people in Ethiopia with realistic images of the Western migration destinations and the journey there. They often paint pictures that are too positive.

#### 5.3.2.2. *Interviews with Students from the Addis Ababa University*

The information gathered from the interviews with the students show that this data is mainly in line with the information given by the experts above. Most of the students who were

interviewed do believe that migration networks are able to provide people with misinformation about Western migration destinations. The 2<sup>nd</sup> year male Sociology student notes that: *“People are told by their parents, friends, or others who live abroad that there are a lot of job opportunities and that there is a good situation by which they can change their lives. But when they arrive in the West, their expectations and the trust are not in balance. Also, most people in Ethiopia are uneducated and many are illiterate, so they will accept everything that they hear from others as true”*. Furthermore, a 2<sup>nd</sup> year female History student recalls that: *“People often don’t share the real stories because of the social value I think. They want the outlook that people have towards them to be very positive, they want to maintain a good image of themselves and pretend it is all good”*. This thus shows that the information presented by the migration network is not always trustworthy, and people therefore often end up being misinformed.

However, there are also some students who do trust the information that they get from their own migration network. The 1<sup>st</sup> year female PSIR student mentions that: *“Most of my views of Western migration destinations come from my relatives who live abroad. They do talk to me about the challenges that they face over there. They don’t only tell me the positive things. I trust the assessment of my family and friends over social media. I prefer the information that comes from people that I know, I am a realistic person. When they write to me or when they visit me they will tell me what has been going on”*. This is also the case for the other 1<sup>st</sup> year male PSIR student: *“The people in my migration networks did share both the positives as the negative sides of what life is like in the West. They show me a realistic image, but my opinion about the West hasn’t changed that much. I still have a positive outlook towards it”*. Another student, namely the 2<sup>nd</sup> year male Sociology student, also mentions that he remains critical of the information that he hears from his own migration network: *“I have my own outlooks and my own directions. I don’t accept somebody else’s advice. I am not saying that I wouldn’t be influenced by the people in my migration network, but the influence that they have will not be that much”*.

### **5.3.3. Quantitative Data**

Furthermore, a quantitative component was used in order to assess the influence of migration networks on the perceptions that young Ethiopians have of Western migration destinations. The influence of the migration network of young Ethiopians on their perceptions of Western migration destinations was assessed by using a standard MRA. When looking at the model it becomes clear that the migration network only accounts for 0.6% of the explained variance

when it comes to the perceptions of Western migration destinations, with  $R^2 = 0.010$ , adjusted  $R^2 = 0.006$ ,  $F(1, 236) = 2.324$ ,  $p = 0.129$ . This thus implies that the migration network does not have a significant influence on the perceptions of Western migration destinations.

However, it is also important to control for the influence of several other variables, namely Gender, Social status, Household composition, Age, Rural/Urban environment, and Religion as explained above.

Secondly, in order to assess the influence of each separate control variable, plus the influence of the independent variable, a hierarchical MRA was used. Two models were produced in order to measure this influence. The first model contains the independent variable, namely the migration networks of young Ethiopians. The second model contains the six control variables as explained above. What is interesting is that the first model appears to be non-significant, which is in line with the findings presented above ( $p = 0.182$ ). However, when the control variables are entered into the equation, the second model remains to be non-significant ( $p = 0.076$ ), as can be seen in Table 2 below.

Table 2

*ANOVA Table Showing the Significance of Both Predictor Models in the Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis (N = 302).*

| ANOVA <sup>a</sup> |            |                |     |             |       |                   |
|--------------------|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|-------------------|
| Model              |            | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F     | Sig.              |
| 1                  | Regression | ,304           | 1   | ,304        | 1,793 | ,182 <sup>b</sup> |
|                    | Residual   | 38,447         | 227 | ,169        |       |                   |
|                    | Total      | 38,751         | 228 |             |       |                   |
| 2                  | Regression | 2,165          | 7   | ,309        | 1,868 | ,076 <sup>c</sup> |
|                    | Residual   | 36,586         | 221 | ,166        |       |                   |
|                    | Total      | 38,751         | 228 |             |       |                   |

a. Dependent Variable: Perceptions of Western migration destinations

b. Predictors: (Constant), Migration network in Western countries

c. Predictors: (Constant), Migration network in Western countries, The religion of the respondent, Age of respondent, Household composition, Gender, Rural/Urban environment, Social Status

When looking at the first model it becomes clear that this model accounts for 0.8% of the explained variance, with  $R^2 = 0.008$ , adjusted  $R^2 = 0.003$ ,  $F(1, 227) = 1.793$ ,  $p = 0.182$ . The six control variables were added in the second model by using the ENTER-wise method. This model was, as noted earlier, found to be non-significant with  $p = 0.076$ . The second model explained an additional 5.6% of the variance, with  $\Delta R^2 = 0.056$ ,  $\Delta$ adjusted  $R^2 = 0.026$ ,  $\Delta F(6,$

221) = 1.868,  $p = 0.076$ . The second model produced by the MRA also remains non-significant. The second model shows that the variable Migration network becomes even less significant than before, as can be seen in Table 3 below. Furthermore, Table 3 also shows that none of the control variables are of significant influence. Furthermore, the unstandardized (B) and standardized ( $\beta$ ) regression coefficients of each predictor on each of the hierarchical MRA model are also reported in this table.

Table 3

*Unstandardized (B) and Standardized ( $\beta$ ) Regression Coefficients for Both the Predictor Variables as the Control Variables on Each Step of a Hierarchical Multiple Regression Predicting the Perceptions of Western Migration Destinations (N = 302).*

| Model |                            | Coefficients <sup>a</sup>   |            |                           |        |      |
|-------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|
|       |                            | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | t      | Sig. |
|       |                            | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |        |      |
| 1     | (Constant)                 | 3,120                       | ,041       |                           | 76,195 | ,000 |
|       | Migration Network          | -,073                       | ,055       | -,089                     | -1,339 | ,182 |
| 2     | (Constant)                 | 2,677                       | ,452       |                           | 5,923  | ,000 |
|       | Migration network          | -,022                       | ,057       | -,027                     | -,394  | ,694 |
|       | Gender                     | ,092                        | ,056       | ,112                      | 1,639  | ,103 |
|       | Social Status              | ,057                        | ,054       | ,097                      | 1,046  | ,297 |
|       | Household Composition      | ,007                        | ,013       | ,038                      | ,541   | ,589 |
|       | Age                        | ,012                        | ,018       | ,046                      | ,676   | ,500 |
|       | Rural or Urban Environment | -,053                       | ,079       | -,062                     | -,673  | ,502 |
|       | Religion                   | -,016                       | ,017       | -,065                     | -,982  | ,327 |

a. Dependent Variable: Perceptions of Western migration destinations

The results of this hierarchical MRA indicate that the variables in both models do not have an influence on the perceptions of Western migration destinations of young Ethiopians. This thus implies that it does not matter whether or not you already know people who live in Western countries, as this does not seem to influence the perceptions that they have of Western migration destinations. It also does not seem to matter if the participants are male or female, what their age is, what their religion is, what their social status is, what their household composition is, or whether or not they grew up in a rural or an urban environment.



### 5.3.3.1. *Weak vs. Strong Network Ties*

Additionally, it is possible to differentiate between whether the participants have strong network ties, weak network ties, both network ties, or no network ties in Western countries. How these different forms of network ties influence the perceptions of Western migration destinations can be determined by using the Split File option in SPSS. First, another hierarchical MRA was used to determine this influence of first the independent variable and later the influence of the control variables. However, this turned out to be impossible as not all models were produced for all variables with this type of analysis. Therefore, another standard MRA was used next, as can be seen in Table 4 below. The results of this analysis show that all the models produced were found to be non-significant. When looking at the group of people who have no network ties it becomes clear that 3.4% of the variance is explained by this model, with  $R^2 = 0.034$ , adjusted  $R^2 = -0.039$ ,  $F(7, 93) = 0.468$ ,  $p = 0.855$ . The model for the second group, namely the people who only have weak network ties, explains 90.3% of the variance, with  $R^2 = 0.903$ , adjusted  $R^2 = 0.324$ ,  $F(6, 1) = 1.559$ ,  $p = 0.546$ . However, it is important to note that only 11 respondents in total have weak network ties, which clarifies why the variance explained by this model is so high. Keep in mind that the results produced by this specific model are therefore most probably not reliable. The third model produced by the standard MRA, namely the model for the participants who only have strong network ties, accounted for 9.4% of the explained variance, with  $R^2 = 0.094$ , adjusted  $R^2 = 0.004$ ,  $F(7, 71) = 1.047$ ,  $p = 0.407$ . The last model, which includes the participants who have both weak as strong network ties, explained 18.8% of the variance, with  $R^2 = 0.188$ , adjusted  $R^2 = 0.044$ ,  $F(6, 34) = 1.310$ ,  $p = 0.279$ . What is interesting about this is that, in the last group, the control variable gender is significant, namely  $p = 0.034$ . This indicates that gender might influence the perceptions that young Ethiopians who have both strong as weak network ties have of Western migration destinations. Furthermore, these results indicate that the tie strength of the migration network probably does not influence the perceptions that young Ethiopians have of Western migration destinations as none of the results were found to be of significant influence.

Table 4

*Unstandardized (B) and Standardized ( $\beta$ ) Regression Coefficients for Each Predictor Variables on Each Step of a Standard Multiple Regression Predicting the Perceptions of Western Migration Destinations Analyzed by Tie Strength (N = 302).*

|                                    |             | Coefficients <sup>a</sup>   |            |                           |       |        |       |
|------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|--------|-------|
| Strong, Weak, No ties or Both ties | Model       | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | t     | Sig.   |       |
|                                    |             | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |       |        |       |
| No ties                            | 1           | (Constant)                  | 2,991      | ,852                      |       | 3,511  | ,001  |
|                                    |             | Migration Network           | ,218       | ,460                      | ,050  | ,474   | ,637  |
|                                    |             | Gender                      | ,093       | ,093                      | ,105  | ,996   | ,322  |
|                                    |             | Age                         | ,006       | ,036                      | ,017  | ,162   | ,872  |
|                                    |             | Rural or Urban Environment  | -,097      | ,128                      | -,112 | -,759  | ,450  |
|                                    |             | Household Composition       | -,003      | ,020                      | -,014 | -,133  | ,894  |
|                                    |             | Religion                    | -,010      | ,027                      | -,038 | -,366  | ,715  |
|                                    |             | Social Status               | ,016       | ,114                      | ,022  | ,143   | ,887  |
| Weak ties                          | 1           | (Constant)                  | -12,308    | 12,011                    |       | -1,025 | ,492  |
|                                    |             | Gender                      | ,275       | ,411                      | ,301  | ,669   | ,625  |
|                                    |             | Age                         | ,541       | ,454                      | 1,443 | 1,191  | ,445  |
|                                    |             | Rural or Urban Environment  | 1,243      | 1,135                     | 1,362 | 1,095  | ,471  |
|                                    |             | Household Composition       | ,081       | ,106                      | ,385  | ,768   | ,583  |
|                                    |             | Religion                    | ,083       | ,182                      | ,175  | ,454   | ,729  |
|                                    |             | Social Status               | ,398       | ,270                      | ,747  | 1,477  | ,379  |
|                                    | Strong ties | 1                           | (Constant) | 2,795                     | ,794  |        | 3,521 |
|                                    |             | Migration Network           | -,383      | ,411                      | -,112 | -,932  | ,354  |
|                                    |             | Gender                      | -,008      | ,093                      | -,010 | -,085  | ,932  |
|                                    |             | Age                         | ,019       | ,027                      | ,088  | ,715   | ,477  |
|                                    |             | Rural or Urban Environment  | ,094       | ,135                      | ,105  | ,697   | ,488  |
|                                    |             | Household Composition       | ,036       | ,021                      | ,215  | 1,695  | ,094  |
|                                    |             | Religion                    | -,033      | ,027                      | -,146 | -1,230 | ,223  |
|                                    |             | Social Status               | ,042       | ,073                      | ,085  | ,569   | ,571  |
| Both ties                          | 1           | (Constant)                  | 2,832      | 1,147                     |       | 2,469  | ,019  |
|                                    |             | Gender                      | ,327       | ,148                      | ,412  | 2,215  | ,034  |
|                                    |             | Age                         | -,013      | ,039                      | -,057 | -,340  | ,736  |
|                                    |             | Rural or Urban Environment  | -,063      | ,236                      | -,061 | -,265  | ,793  |
|                                    |             | Household Composition       | -,002      | ,033                      | -,009 | -,053  | ,958  |
|                                    |             | Religion                    | -,040      | ,043                      | -,167 | -,922  | ,363  |
|                                    |             | Social Status               | ,080       | ,136                      | ,129  | ,587   | ,561  |

a. Dependent Variable: Perceptions of Western migration destinations

#### **5.4. Analysis of Social Media and the Perceptions of Western Migration Destinations**

In this section, the influence of social media on the perceptions that young Ethiopians have of Western migration destinations will be assessed. Again, general information about the social media use of the participants will be described first, followed by the qualitative results, and lastly by the quantitative results.

##### ***5.4.1. General Use of Social Media***

The survey data shows that social media is an important tool for the participants to stay in contact with their friends and family members abroad. When asked the question “Is social media important for you in order to stay in contact with your friends/family abroad?”, 250 respondents answered yes, followed by 29 who answered no, and 22 participants didn’t know. Furthermore, when asked if social media provides them with important information about Western migration destinations, 188 participants answered that social media does provide them with important information about Western migration destinations, 75 participants answered that it doesn’t, and 38 participants don’t know. Thus, it can be assumed that, for the majority of the participants, social media is an important source of information when it comes to their perceptions of Western migration destinations. Lastly, the participants were asked to answer seven statements about how they prefer staying in contact with their friends/family abroad. Overall, they ranked these statements in order of importance as follows: (1) social media, (2) telephone calls, (3) emails, (4) Skype/Facettime, (5) SMS, (6) writing letters, and (7) blogs/vlogs. The data thus shows that the participants prefer using social media to stay in contact with their friends and/or family members abroad.

##### ***5.4.2. Qualitative Data***

A qualitative component was used in order to get more background data as to what the perceptions of Western migration destinations are and how they are influenced by one’s social media use. As mentioned earlier, interviews were conducted with both experts as with students from the Addis Ababa University.

###### ***5.4.2.1. Expert Interviews***

In Ethiopia, about 50% of the population has access to cell phones and internet. One of the scholars of the AAU mentioned that: “*People are communicating on their phones and they are finding out what life in China, the USA, or Europe looks like. Because of this, the youth here wants to discover a new world*”. All scholars agreed that social media often gives wrong

impressions of Western migration destinations, both with strong as with weak network ties. People often post the best pictures on social media and therefore present the wrong image. According to the scholar of OSSREA: “*Social media kind of creates a migration hype wherever you go. But I don’t think that the people communicate disappointment back. They don’t communicate the joblessness or the disappointing parts of their lives. They only want to show success, and that is a major problem*”. Social media thus often depicts a wrong image of what life is like in Western countries. People might therefore expect that it will be easy to find a job in the Western countries and that life will be easy. However, the employee of the IOM remarked that: “*The picture that the young Ethiopian people have and the reality they find are sometimes totally different*”. Furthermore, the scholar of OSSREA mentioned that: “*Social media is reinforcing young people and not only in creating good images of the destinations, but also in mobilizing support from friends because this communication is very important. Not only social media, but technology in general has very much favoured migration*”. However, Social media in Ethiopia can sometimes be difficult to access since the Ethiopian government sometimes shuts down all mobile internet in the country and Wi-Fi is often unreliable. At the moment of this research, the mobile internet outside Addis Ababa was also shut down by the Ethiopian government for a while. This affected people outside of Addis Ababa, and mainly people on the countryside since they often don’t have access to Wi-Fi.

One of the scholars of the AAU mentioned that not only social media play a role when it comes to the perceptions of Western migration destinations, but so does television. This is because television is broadcasting everywhere, and almost everybody in Ethiopia has access to television. So this medium is especially capable of reaching a broad group of people and almost everybody is able to access this from home. Therefore, this might also play a role when it comes to the perceptions that young people have of Western migration destinations and it might also be able to fuel their migration aspirations.

#### 5.4.2.2. *Interviews with Students from the Addis Ababa University*

In line with the information presented by the experts above, the students who were interviewed also expressed that social media can present misleading images about Western migration destinations. The 3<sup>rd</sup> year male PSIR student mentions that: “*Social media does not paint a truthful picture of what life is like in the West. It only highlights one dimension, it shows the good and not the bad. The information that it provides is limited and often exaggerated. It would be better to make boundaries for the real information and the information on social media*”. This statement is supported by all the students who were

interviewed. All of them agreed that social media can be misleading and paints untruthful pictures of the reality in Western countries. The 2<sup>nd</sup> year female History student explained it in the following way: *“Social media plays a crucial role in contacting those who are already living abroad. It is also much easier to access and exchange information. But either directly or indirectly we are influenced by those who are living abroad and who are members of the same social media. For instance, I might learn about job opportunities through social media and see that certain companies are looking for 1000 employees. But in reality, this company might not need a single worker. But now people might be migrating because they read this information online”*. People might thus be informed about job opportunities in Western countries while these opportunities might actually not exist. But people may still take what they read online for granted, and therefore social media might serve as a push factor for migration. Furthermore, the 1<sup>st</sup> year male PSIR students also thought that these untruths might lead to shocks and/or depressions when they arrive in the country of destination: *“Social media can cause disappointment among migrants. Most of them are hopeful for a better life, or better opportunities. Mostly I hear sometimes that they were influenced by a positive tweets or posts on Twitter or Facebook. But when they get there, and they don’t experience what they heard or read, they will get very disappointed which then again might lead to depression or culture shocks”*.

Several students also emphasised the fact that many Ethiopians are not being critical towards the information they find online. The 2<sup>nd</sup> year female History student mentions that: *“People don’t differentiate whether or not the information on social media is truthful and by whom it was posted. They also don’t check when it was posted and from where, but we must ask these kinds of questions”*. However, the 1<sup>st</sup> year female PSIR student did not completely agree with this. She thinks that young Ethiopians are more vigilant about the information they encounter online: *“Social media could be a trigger for people to migrate, but I don’t think that it is much of a strong force, because I don’t think that people will fall for it that easily. There are many anti-migration campaigns going on in Ethiopia, so I don’t think people will fully trust what they see on social media”*.

### **5.4.3. Quantitative Data**

Another standard MRA was used in order to measure what the influence of the independent variable social media is on the perceptions that young Ethiopians have of Western migration destinations. This analysis shows that the variables measuring social media only accounts for 0.4% of the explained variance, with  $R^2 = 0.004$ , adjusted  $R^2 = -0.009$ ,  $F(3, 229) = 2.324$ ,  $p =$

0.819. This means that the variables measuring social media do not have a significant influence on the perceptions that young Ethiopians have of Western migration destinations. Furthermore, the influence of other variables again need to be taken into account and they thus need to be controlled for. Again, the variables Gender, Social status, Household composition, Age, Rural/Urban, and Religion were added in the analysis.

After this another hierarchical MRA was performed in order to test the influence of these control variables on the outcomes of the regression model. Furthermore, two models were produced in order to measure the influence of social media and the control variables on the perceptions that young Ethiopians have of Western migration destinations. The first model only includes the independent variable, namely social media, whilst the second model also includes the control variables. Table 5 below shows that the first model is not significant, namely  $p = 0.665$ . Furthermore, the second model that was produced also turned out to be non-significant with  $p = 0.094$ .

Table 5

*ANOVA Table Showing the Significance of Both Predictor Models in the Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis (N = 302).*

| ANOVA <sup>a</sup> |            |                |     |             |       |                   |
|--------------------|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|-------------------|
| Model              |            | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F     | Sig.              |
| 1                  | Regression | ,255           | 3   | ,085        | ,526  | ,665 <sup>b</sup> |
|                    | Residual   | 35,527         | 220 | ,161        |       |                   |
|                    | Total      | 35,782         | 223 |             |       |                   |
| 2                  | Regression | 2,366          | 9   | ,263        | 1,683 | ,094 <sup>c</sup> |
|                    | Residual   | 33,416         | 214 | ,156        |       |                   |
|                    | Total      | 35,782         | 223 |             |       |                   |

a. Dependent Variable: Perceptions of Western migration destinations

b. Predictors: (Constant), Q32, Q27, Social Media scale

c. Predictors: (Constant), Q32, Q27, Social Media scale, Gender, Religion, Household composition, Age, Rural/Urban Environment, Social Status

The first model produced by the hierarchical MRA shows that this model accounts for 0.7% of the variance explained, with  $R^2 = 0.007$ , adjusted  $R^2 = -0.006$ ,  $F(3, 220) = 0.526$ ,  $p = 0.665$ . This means that this model, as in line with the standard MRA as explained above, is not significant. Next, the six control variables were added to the second model by using the ENTER-wise method. The second model was also found to be non-significant. This second model explained an additional 6.6% of the variance, with  $\Delta R^2 = 0.066$ ,  $\Delta$ adjusted  $R^2 = 0.027$ ,

$\Delta F(6, 214) = 1.683, p = 0.094$ . Furthermore, this type of MRA allows us to see the influence of all individual variables, which shows that both the independent variables, namely the Social Media scale ( $p = 0.824$ ), Question 27 ( $p = 0.228$ ), and Question 32 ( $p = 0.799$ ). Additionally, none of the control variables turned out to be significant. Moreover, the unstandardized (B) and standardized ( $\beta$ ) regression coefficients of each predictor on each of the hierarchical MRA model are also reported in Table 6 below. The results of this hierarchical MRA thus indicate that the variables that were shown in the models do not have a significant influence on how young Ethiopians perceive Western migration destinations.

Table 6

*Unstandardized (B) and Standardized ( $\beta$ ) Regression Coefficients for Both the Predictor Variables as the Control Variables on Each Step of a Hierarchical Multiple Regression Predicting the Perceptions of Western Migration Destinations (N = 302).*

|       |                            | Coefficients <sup>a</sup>   |            |                           |        |      |
|-------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|
|       |                            | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients |        |      |
| Model |                            | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      | t      | Sig. |
| 1     | (Constant)                 | 3,030                       | ,118       |                           | 25,622 | ,000 |
|       | Social Media Scale         | ,013                        | ,057       | ,015                      | ,223   | ,824 |
|       | Q27                        | ,013                        | ,011       | ,081                      | 1,209  | ,228 |
|       | Q32                        | -,005                       | ,021       | -,017                     | -,255  | ,799 |
| 2     | (Constant)                 | 2,784                       | ,482       |                           | 5,781  | ,000 |
|       | Social Media Scale         | ,014                        | ,058       | ,016                      | ,242   | ,809 |
|       | Q27                        | ,007                        | ,011       | ,044                      | ,647   | ,518 |
|       | Q32                        | -,001                       | ,021       | -,004                     | -,058  | ,954 |
|       | Gender                     | ,056                        | ,055       | ,070                      | 1,007  | ,315 |
|       | Age                        | ,015                        | ,018       | ,055                      | ,805   | ,422 |
|       | Rural or Urban Environment | -,103                       | ,078       | -,122                     | -1,317 | ,189 |
|       | Household Composition      | ,012                        | ,013       | ,070                      | ,966   | ,335 |
|       | Religion                   | -,021                       | ,017       | -,089                     | -1,300 | ,195 |
|       | Social Status              | ,027                        | ,053       | ,048                      | ,510   | ,611 |

a. Dependent Variable: Perceptions of Western migration destinations

## 6. Discussion

The aim of this study was to investigate the influence of migration networks and social media on the perceptions that young Ethiopians have of Western migration destinations by answering the following research question: “*To what extent does the embeddedness in migration networks and the use of social media influence the perceptions that young Ethiopians have of Western migration destinations?*”. In order to answer this research question, several sub questions and hypotheses were stated. These sub questions and hypotheses will be answered below.

### 6.1. Perceptions of Western Migration Destinations

The first sub question was concerned with the perceptions that young Ethiopians have of Western migration destinations and how they gain this knowledge. This question reads as follows: “*How do young Ethiopians perceive Western migration destinations and how do they gain this knowledge?*”. As mentioned in the beginning of the results section, the participants had an average view when it came to their general perceptions of Western migration destinations. However, four statements stood out, namely statements concerning (1) high payments for jobs, (2) that the West has a good educational system, (3) that already knowing someone in the West will make finding employment easier, and (4) that their own salary will be high once they find a job. The main types of sources through which young Ethiopians received information about opportunities in Western countries were as follows: (1) social media, (2) the Internet, (3) friends abroad, (4) people they know through family/friends abroad, and (5) family abroad.

### 6.2. Embeddedness in Migration Networks

Next, an answer was sought to the following sub question: “*How embedded are young Ethiopians in migration networks and how does this influence their perceptions of Western migration destinations?*”. The literature presented above showed that migration networks can promote the circulation of information, can support (aspiring) migrants, and are also able to assist them (Haug, 2008). Furthermore, migration networks can also help people find accommodation or jobs in the country of destination (Curran & Rivero-Fuentes, 2003; Liu, 2013; Dekker & Engbersen, 2014). Research by Curran and Rivero-Fuentes (2003) also presented that migration networks can show people that they might be better off in different places. Additionally, Dolfin and Genicot (2010) showed that a large family and a large communication network are able to provide people with more information about migration



destinations. The following hypothesis was therefore stated: “*Migration networks provide young Ethiopians with positive images of Western migration destinations*”. This was expected because people in the migration network not only help people finding jobs, accommodation, and other types of assistance, but also provide them with information about migration destinations. Due to the fact that migration networks can show people that they might be better off in different places, it was expected that these images would be positive.

However, the quantitative data obtained from the surveys, which is presented above, did not support this hypothesis. The first standard MRA that was used showed that migration networks did not have a significant influence on the perceptions of Western migration destinations. The hierarchical MRA that followed also turned out to be non-significant, thus implying that migration networks do not influence the perceptions that young Ethiopians have of Western migration destinations and therefore do not contribute to a positive view of Western migration destinations. Even when the degree of embeddedness in migration networks was taken into account by dividing the respondents into four sub-groups categorized by the strength of network ties, namely (1) no ties, (2) weak ties, (3) strong ties, and (4) both ties, the results remained non-significant. Thus, this implies that the degree of embeddedness in a migration network do not influence the perceptions that young Ethiopians have of Western migration destinations and therefore also do not contribute to a more positive view of Western migration destinations.

The qualitative data, on the other hand, did not completely seem to be in agreement with the outcomes of the quantitative study, and thus was contradicting those outcomes. Interviews with migration experts and students from the AAU showed that migration networks are able to misinform people and provide them with false and/or exaggerated information about Western migration destinations. The qualitative data seemed to support the hypothesis and implied that migration networks sometimes paints pictures that are too positive, which can result in disappointment, cultural shock, and depression among migrants. However, the students that were interviewed mentioned that they do trust the information they receive from their migration network, but they also remain vigilant and critical towards this information. Based on the results presented above and the absence of consensus, the following hypothesis “*Migration networks provide young Ethiopians with positive images of Western migration destinations*” therefore must be partly rejected.

### **6.3. Influence of Social Media**

This research also aimed to answer the following sub question: “*What is the role of social media when it comes to the perceptions of Western migration destinations?*”. The theoretical framework presented above explained that social media ensures that people in different geographical places can stay in contact with one another though certain internet applications such as Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram, or Twitter (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014). Research also showed that social media can allow for weak network ties to strengthen or to even activate latent network ties that might deliver new information. Consequently, social media is able to create sources of information that are low-key, easy to access, and, therefore, can be chosen over institutional information (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014). Additionally, social media is used by individuals who may or may not know each other to make contacts, provide help, and seek help (Komito, 2011). Based on the literature the following hypothesis was stated: “*Social media provides young Ethiopians with positive images of Western migration destinations*”. This outcome was expected because social media provides people with information that is easy to access and is often preferred over institutional information. Furthermore, people are often connected with the people they already know through social media. It was therefore expected that the information provided by social media would be positive.

The results that were obtained through the surveys again did not support the stated hypothesis. The first standard MRA that was performed showed that social media did not have a significant influence on the perceptions that young Ethiopians have of Western migration destinations. When the control variables were entered into the model by using a hierarchical MRA, the model still remained non-significant. This therefore suggests that social media does not influence the perceptions that young Ethiopians have of Western migration destinations and social media therefore does not contribute to a more positive view of Western migration destinations.

Again, the qualitative data did not seem to be in line with these conclusions. Interviews with migration experts and students from the AAU showed that social media often misinforms people and thus is able to create a migration hype. People often want to show their success in life and therefore, most of the time, only show the positive sides of migration and their life in the West. Some people are therefore painting pictures that sometimes seem to be too positive. Social media often only highlights one dimension by showing mainly the good sides and not the bad. This can also cause the migrants to become depressed and disappointed when they reach their country of destination. People often don't differentiate between what is real on

social media and what is not, which might be due to the fact that many Ethiopians are uneducated or illiterate. All the students who were interviewed mentioned that they didn't trust the information that they read on social media and that they remained very critical towards it. This might be because these students are highly educated, which might explain the outcome of the quantitative data. Social media might not influence their perceptions of Western migration destinations because they are highly educated and therefore remain critical towards the information they encounter online. Based on the results presented above and the discrepancy between the qualitative and quantitative results, the following hypothesis "*Social media provides young Ethiopians with positive images of Western migration destinations*" therefore must be partly rejected.

#### **6.4. Limitations**

It is important to point out that this research had some limitations. First, all the participants in this study were students who were currently studying at the AAU and therefore were highly educated. This might have caused the results to not be representative for the whole group of 18 to 24-year-old Ethiopians, as many of them are also uneducated, have a lower education, or are illiterate. Because these people did not take part in this study, the results might have been skewed. Second, all the students in this study were part of the College of Social Science, meaning that they also had similar background in their studies. Again, this might have led to an outcome that is not representative and the results might have been different if students from other colleges were taken into account. Third, the language the questionnaire was conducted in was English, and even though the participants have to take mandatory English classes at the university, some questions might have been interpreted in a different way from how they were intended. This again might have affected the validity of the results, and the generalizability of the results of this study therefore can be questioned. Fourth, another crucial factor to take into account is the reliability and the validity of the scale that was used to measure the independent variable social media, as the Cronbach's alpha of this scale was considered to be relatively low. This means that the validity and the reliability of this scale, and therefore also the results, should be questioned. Fifth, only five interviews were held with students from the AAU due to the constraints of the emergency state. As the sample size of the interviews thus are relatively low, the results obtained by these interviews might not be representative for the whole group as the point of saturation wasn't reached yet. Lastly, it is important to point out that the group with people who only have weak network ties was very low as this group consisted of only 11 people. Even though this group was still used in the

analyses, this might have affected the validity and the reliability of the results as more people would be needed to make solid conclusions.

Reflecting on the process of data collection, it is important to point out that this process turned out to be quite troublesome due to the emergency state that was imposed by the Ethiopian government. Due to safety concerns during the fieldwork, survey data had to be collected by teachers and class representatives. However, if the research didn't have to be carried out this way, more participants might have been willing to participate in the study and therefore more of them might have filled out the survey and have agreed to be interviewed. Additionally, the participants would have been able to ask questions whilst filling out the survey, which might have led to a better understanding of how the questions were intended. This might have contributed to a higher reliability of the results.

### **6.5. Implications for Further Research**

Based on the limitations as describe above, it is advised for further research to include more participants in this study, both in the quantitative as the qualitative part of the research, in order to make sure that the whole 18 to 24-year-old group is well represented. Further research should thus include participants from all social classes and all types of education. Also, it would be favourable if the research would not only take place in Addis Ababa, but also in other provinces including the rural areas. This way a representative group will be created, which will enhance the reliability of the results. Furthermore, it is also advised to translate the survey from English to Amharic. This way it is ensured that all the participants fully understand the questions and that nothing will get lost in translation, again leading to a higher reliability of the results that will be obtained. This is certainly crucial when participants other than university students will be included in the study, as their command of English will most probably be low. Lastly, it is recommended to use another scale to measure social media, one that has a higher Cronbach's alpha as this will lead to a more reliable and valid scale and therefore will also lead to an outcome that is more reliable.

This research made use of two types of research methods, namely quantitative and qualitative research methods. As mentioned earlier, both research methods presented different outcomes. The quantitative research produced results that were not in line with the stated hypotheses, whilst the outcomes of the qualitative results did support both hypotheses. However, this might be due to the fact that the questions in the survey might have been misread by the participants which might be because the survey was conducted in English. Also, with a survey, it is relatively easy to miss out on important information if some

questions aren't included, and later on it is difficult to correct this. On the other hand, the sample size of the qualitative part of the study was relatively low as only four experts and five students were interviewed. This might not have led to the point of saturation in the research results. Furthermore, objectivity in the qualitative study might sometimes be missing, leading to biased results. This is often not the case when it comes to quantitative research. All in all, reflecting on using both types of research methods it can be concluded that both research methods have their pro's and con's. Both research methods do complement each other well, and, in this case, it allowed to show discrepancy between the results of this research. For further research it is therefore recommended to again use both types of research methods, but it is crucial to expand the sample size of both methods.

## 7. Conclusion

The aim of this research was to determine what the influence of migration networks and social media use is on the perceptions that young Ethiopians have of Western migration destinations. Extensive literature research contributed to the theoretical embedding of this research. Based on the surveys and the interviews that were held with the students, the general perceptions of Western migration destinations of the participants were identified. The interviews with the experts also contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of these perceptions and where they come from. Furthermore, the embeddedness of the participants in migration networks and patterns in their social media use were identified. The research question central to this research was: *“To what extent does the embeddedness in migration networks and the use of social media influence the perceptions that young Ethiopians have of Western migration destinations?”*. Two hypotheses were stated in order to help answer this research question, namely: *“Social media provides young Ethiopians with positive images of Western migration destinations”* and *“Migration networks provide young Ethiopians with positive images of Western migration destinations”*.

The concepts migration networks, social media, and the perceptions of Western migration destinations were used as guiding principles throughout the survey and the interviews. The interviews were able to shed light on the personal stories of the participants and were able to provide more in-depth information regarding these three main concepts. The surveys, on the other hand, provided this research with more quantifiable data on the research topic. These research methods provided information about social media, migration networks, and the general perceptions that young Ethiopians have of Western migration destinations. When looking at the concept social media, the data showed that social media is considered to be an important tool for the participants to stay in contact with their friends and family members abroad. Social media also provided the participants with important information about Western migration destinations and it provided them with knowledge about migration opportunities in Western countries. The data furthermore showed that quite a lot of participants have a migration network abroad, namely 160 out of 302 participants already know somebody who lives in a Western country. Lastly, the survey data showed that the participants had average perceptions of Western migration destinations. This means that the perceptions that they had were neither very positive nor very negative. The qualitative data, on the other hand, seemed to be more positive than the survey data suggested, even though the participants emphasized that they remained vigilant towards the information they received about Western migration destinations.

The outcomes of both these research methods turned out to be contradictory. On the one hand, the quantitative data did not support both stated hypotheses and implied that both social media and the embeddedness in migration networks did not contribute to a more positive view regarding the perceptions of Western migration destinations. The qualitative data, on the other hand, implied the opposite. The data gathered through the interviews suggested that social media and migration networks often portrays pictures that are too positive. However, the participants that were interviewed did mention that they remain critical towards the information that they received through these channels, especially towards the information that they received through social media.

In conclusion, based on the quantitative results it would appear that social media and the migration network that young Ethiopians already have abroad do not influence the perceptions that they have of Western migration destinations, thereby contradicting the literature and the stated hypotheses. However, the qualitative results seem to imply otherwise. An explanation for the discrepancy in these results might be due to the education level of the participants. All the participants who took part in this research studied at the AAU and are therefore highly educated. Even though the migration network and social media might present them with pictures that are sometimes too positive, the participants in this study kept a critical attitude towards the information that they received through these channels according to the interviews. Possibly when other groups of people, such as uneducated, lower educated, or illiterate people, are taken into account, the results might be in line with the literature and the stated hypotheses for this research.

All in all, despite the limitations described earlier, this research provided important insight into how migration networks and social media are able to affect the perceptions that young Ethiopians have of Western migration destinations. This research showed that both the migration networks and social media do not seem to influence the perceptions that they have of Western migration destinations, which might be due to the fact that these students are highly educated and therefore might be more critical towards the information that they receive about these Western migration destinations. More research will be needed in order to reach consensus regarding these outcomes.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: General Characteristics of the Participants (N = 302)

| Characteristics | Categories                                    | Frequencies |
|-----------------|---|-------------|
| Gender          | Male  | 169         |
|                 | Female  | 133         |
|                 | Total   | 302         |
| Age             | 18 years old                                  | 11          |
|                 | 19 years old                                  | 45          |
|                 | 20 years old                                  | 94          |
|                 | 21 years old                                  | 62          |
|                 | 22 years old                                  | 45          |
|                 | 23 years old                                  | 25          |
|                 | 24 years old                                  | 19          |
|                 | Total   | 301         |
| Education       | Geography and Environmental Studies           | 44          |
|                 | History                                       | 35          |
|                 | Philosophy                                    | 37          |
|                 | Political Science and International Relations | 36          |
|                 | Social Anthropology                           | 35          |
|                 | Sociology                                     | 65          |
|                 | Social Work                                   | 33          |
|                 | Total   | 285         |
|                 | Religion                                      | Christian   |
| Orthodox        |   | 106         |
| Muslim          |   | 49          |
| Jewish          |   | 1           |
| Protestant      |   | 46          |
| Not religious   |   | 11          |
| Other           |   | 4           |
| Total           |   | 301         |

|                                |  |     |
|--------------------------------|--|-----|
| Rural/Urban Environment        | Rural  | 107 |
|                                | Urban  | 192 |
|                                | Total  | 299 |
| Migration Network              | No migration network                                   | 142 |
|                                | Migration network                                      | 160 |
|                                | Total  | 302 |
| Weak or Strong Ties            | No ties  | 142 |
|                                | Weak ties  | 11  |
|                                | Strong ties  | 96  |
|                                | Both ties  | 53  |
|                                | Total  | 302 |
| Where the Participants Grew Up | Somali region  | 4   |
|                                | Oromia region  | 52  |
|                                | Harari region  | 1   |
|                                | Gambela region   | 2   |
|                                | Amhara region  | 85  |
|                                | Afar region  | 2   |
|                                | Tigray region  | 16  |
|                                | Benishangul-Gumuz region                               | 0   |
|                                | Southern Nations, Nationalities and<br>people's region | 64  |
|                                | Addis Ababa  | 72  |
|                                | Other  | 2   |
|                                | Total  | 300 |

## Appendix 2: Survey



**Utrecht University**

Dear students,

Thank you for helping me with this survey that I am currently conducting for my master thesis. My research will be about the migration networks of young Ethiopians, the use of social media and the perceptions of Western migration destinations.

This survey should only take about 7 minutes to complete. Please be assured that all the answers in this survey are anonymous and will be kept in the strictest confidentiality.

If you have any questions about this survey or my research, please feel free to contact me via [l.m.j.vanderheijden@students.uu.nl](mailto:l.m.j.vanderheijden@students.uu.nl).

Many thanks for your help.

With kind regards,

Lotte van der Heijden

Master's student International Development Studies at Utrecht University, The Netherlands

**General information:**

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| What is your gender?                                | <input type="radio"/> Male   | <input type="radio"/> Female   |
| What is your age?                                   | _____ years old  |  |
| What are you currently studying?                    | _____  |  |
| Which year are you currently in?                    | <input type="radio"/> Year 1<br><input type="radio"/> Year 2   | <input type="radio"/> Year 3<br><input type="radio"/> Other _____  |
| What is your marital status?                        | <input type="radio"/> Single<br><input type="radio"/> In a relationship<br><input type="radio"/> Married   | <input type="radio"/> Widowed<br><input type="radio"/> Divorced<br><input type="radio"/> Separated<br><input type="radio"/> Other _____                          |
| Where did you grow up?                              | <input type="radio"/> Somali region<br><input type="radio"/> Oromia region<br><input type="radio"/> Harari region<br><input type="radio"/> Gambela region<br><input type="radio"/> Amhara region<br><input type="radio"/> Afar region<br><input type="radio"/> Tigray region | <input type="radio"/> Benishangul-Gumuz region<br><input type="radio"/> Southern nations, nationalities and people's region<br><input type="radio"/> Other _____ |
| Did you grow up in a rural or an urban environment? | <input type="radio"/> Rural  | <input type="radio"/> Urban  |
| How many siblings do you have?                      | _____ (please state number)  |  |
| What is your mother's occupation?                   | _____  |  |
| What is your father's occupation?                   | _____  |  |
| What is your religion?                              | <input type="radio"/> Christian<br><input type="radio"/> Orthodox<br><input type="radio"/> Not religious<br><input type="radio"/> Muslim   | <input type="radio"/> Jewish<br><input type="radio"/> Protestant<br><input type="radio"/> Other _____  |
| Which continents in the world have you visited?     | <input type="radio"/> Europe<br><input type="radio"/> Oceania<br><input type="radio"/> Asia  | <input type="radio"/> North America<br><input type="radio"/> South America<br><input type="radio"/> Africa   |

**The following section is about the people in your network who live abroad. Please state how many of them live abroad, in which continent they live and how many live per continent:**

| <b>Who?</b>     |   | <b>Where do they live? If applicable, multiple answers are possible</b>   |
|-----------------|---|---|
| <b>Father</b>   | Does your father live outside of Ethiopia?<br><input type="radio"/> Yes<br><input type="radio"/> No | (please state in which continent he lives)<br><input type="radio"/> South America<br><input type="radio"/> Middle East<br><input type="radio"/> Africa<br><input type="radio"/> North America<br><input type="radio"/> Europe<br><input type="radio"/> Oceania<br><input type="radio"/> Asia<br><input type="radio"/> Don't know  |
| <b>Mother</b>   | Does your mother live outside of Ethiopia?<br><input type="radio"/> Yes<br><input type="radio"/> No | (please state in which continent she lives)<br><input type="radio"/> South America<br><input type="radio"/> Middle East<br><input type="radio"/> Africa<br><input type="radio"/> North America<br><input type="radio"/> Europe<br><input type="radio"/> Oceania<br><input type="radio"/> Asia<br><input type="radio"/> Don't know   |
| <b>Brothers</b> | How many of your brothers live outside of Ethiopia?<br>_____  | (please state the number of people per continent)<br><input type="radio"/> South America _____<br><input type="radio"/> Middle East _____<br><input type="radio"/> Africa _____<br><input type="radio"/> North America _____<br><input type="radio"/> Europe _____<br><input type="radio"/> Oceania _____<br><input type="radio"/> Asia _____<br><input type="radio"/> Don't know |
| <b>Sisters</b>  | How many of your sisters live outside of Ethiopia?<br>_____   | (please state the number of people per continent)<br><input type="radio"/> South America _____<br><input type="radio"/> Middle East _____<br><input type="radio"/> Africa _____<br><input type="radio"/> North America _____<br><input type="radio"/> Europe _____<br><input type="radio"/> Oceania _____<br><input type="radio"/> Asia _____<br><input type="radio"/> Don't know |
| <b>Uncles</b>   | How many of your uncles live outside of Ethiopia?<br>_____  | (please state the number of people per continent)<br><input type="radio"/> South America _____<br><input type="radio"/> Middle East _____<br><input type="radio"/> Africa _____<br><input type="radio"/> North America _____<br><input type="radio"/> Europe _____<br><input type="radio"/> Oceania _____<br><input type="radio"/> Asia _____<br><input type="radio"/> Don't know |
| <b>Aunts</b>    | How many of your aunts live outside of Ethiopia?<br>_____   | (please state the number of people per continent)<br><input type="radio"/> South America _____<br><input type="radio"/> Middle East _____<br><input type="radio"/> Africa _____<br><input type="radio"/> North America _____<br><input type="radio"/> Europe _____<br><input type="radio"/> Oceania _____<br><input type="radio"/> Asia _____<br><input type="radio"/> Don't know |

|                          |   |   |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Cousins</b>           | How many of your cousins live outside of Ethiopia?<br>_____           | (please state the number of people per continent)<br><input type="radio"/> South America _____<br><input type="radio"/> Middle East _____<br><input type="radio"/> Africa _____<br><input type="radio"/> North America _____<br><input type="radio"/> Europe _____<br><input type="radio"/> Oceania _____<br><input type="radio"/> Asia _____<br><input type="radio"/> Don't know |
| <b>Close Friends</b>     | How many of your close friends live outside of Ethiopia?<br>_____     | (please state the number of people per continent)<br><input type="radio"/> South America _____<br><input type="radio"/> Middle East _____<br><input type="radio"/> Africa _____<br><input type="radio"/> North America _____<br><input type="radio"/> Europe _____<br><input type="radio"/> Oceania _____<br><input type="radio"/> Asia _____<br><input type="radio"/> Don't know |
| <b>Colleagues</b>        | How many of your colleagues live outside of Ethiopia?<br>_____        | (please state the number of people per continent)<br><input type="radio"/> South America _____<br><input type="radio"/> Middle East _____<br><input type="radio"/> Africa _____<br><input type="radio"/> North America _____<br><input type="radio"/> Europe _____<br><input type="radio"/> Oceania _____<br><input type="radio"/> Asia _____<br><input type="radio"/> Don't know |
| <b>Classmates</b>        | How many of your classmates live outside of Ethiopia?<br>_____        | (please state the number of people per continent)<br><input type="radio"/> South America _____<br><input type="radio"/> Middle East _____<br><input type="radio"/> Africa _____<br><input type="radio"/> North America _____<br><input type="radio"/> Europe _____<br><input type="radio"/> Oceania _____<br><input type="radio"/> Asia _____<br><input type="radio"/> Don't know |
| <b>Community members</b> | How many of your community members live outside of Ethiopia?<br>_____ | (please state the number of people per continent)<br><input type="radio"/> South America _____<br><input type="radio"/> Middle East _____<br><input type="radio"/> Africa _____<br><input type="radio"/> North America _____<br><input type="radio"/> Europe _____<br><input type="radio"/> Oceania _____<br><input type="radio"/> Asia _____<br><input type="radio"/> Don't know |

**What do you think is the most popular continent for young Ethiopians to migrate to?**

**Please choose one.**

- Europe                       South America                       Oceania                       Middle East  
 North America                       Asia                       Africa

**What do you think are the most popular countries for young Ethiopians to migrate to?**

**Please state your top 3 countries.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



**Why do you think young Ethiopians migrate? Please state your top 3 reasons.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**How often are you in contact with your friends/family who live abroad and who you stay in contact with most?**

- |  |   |                                   |
|--|---|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Every day        | <input type="radio"/> Every other week      | <input type="radio"/> Once a year |
| <input type="radio"/> 4-6 times a week | <input type="radio"/> Once a month          | <input type="radio"/> Never       |
| <input type="radio"/> 1-3 times a week | <input type="radio"/> Once every six months | <input type="radio"/> Other _____ |

**Did you ever get into contact with someone you didn't know before because of social media? (such as Facebook/Twitter/Instagram/YouTube/ Snapchat/WhatsApp/Telegram etc.)**

- Yes (please state how many times this has happened \_\_\_\_\_ )
- No
- Don't know

**Is social media important for you in order to stay in contact with friends/family abroad?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**Does social media provide you with important information about Western migration destinations?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**Does social media have an influence on how you view Western migration destinations?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**How important is the role of social media when it comes to your views of Western migration destinations?**

- |  |  |                                      |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Very unimportant   | <input type="radio"/> Important        | <input type="radio"/> Very important |
| <input type="radio"/> Slightly important | <input type="radio"/> Fairly important | <input type="radio"/> No opinion     |

**Please answer how you agree with the following statements:**

| <b>To stay in contact with my friends/family abroad I prefer using:</b>            | <b>Strongly disagree</b> | <b>Disagree</b>       | <b>Neither agree nor disagree</b> | <b>Agree</b>          | <b>Strongly agree</b> |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Telephone calls  | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Email  | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Skype/Facetime   | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Writing letters  | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Social media (Facebook/Twitter/Instagram/YouTube/ Snapchat/WhatsApp/Telegram etc.) | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| SMS  | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Blogs/Vlogs  | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Please answer how you agree with the following statements:

| Statements   | Strongly disagree     | Disagree              | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree                 | Strongly agree        |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| It is difficult to find a job in Western countries   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| There are no downsides to migrating to a Western country                                   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Western countries are unsafe   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Payment for jobs in Western countries are high   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| It is difficult to migrate to Western countries  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| The political situations in Western countries are stable                                   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| There are no food shortages in Western countries   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| There is no violence in Western countries  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| It is difficult to integrate into the Western culture                                      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| When someone moves to a Western country they never have to worry about money               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| There is a good education system in Western countries                                      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Already knowing someone in a Western country does not make it easier for others to migrate | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Migrating to a Western country means that I will be successful in life                     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Social media makes it easier to migrate to a Western country                               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| All people who live in Western countries are rich  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Friends and family in Ethiopia think I am successful because I live in a Western country   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| It is difficult to find housing in Western countries                                       | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I will be able to benefit from social services when I live in a Western country            | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| When I migrate to a Western country I will easily find a job                               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Knowing people who already live in the West will make it easier for me to find employment  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| When I find a job in a Western country my salary will be high                              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

**Please answer who provides you with knowledge about migration opportunities in Western countries:**

| <b>Who provides you with knowledge about migration opportunities in Western countries?</b> | <b>Strongly disagree</b> | <b>Disagree</b>       | <b>Neither agree nor disagree</b> | <b>Agree</b>          | <b>Strongly agree</b> |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| The Ethiopian government   | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Ethiopian Universities   | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Family in Ethiopia   | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Family abroad  | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Friends in Ethiopia  | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Friends abroad   | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Social media (Facebook/Twitter/Instagram/YouTube/Snapchat/WhatsApp/Telegram etc.)          | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Television   | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| The Internet   | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Advertisements   | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Books  | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Movies   | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| People I know through friends/family abroad  | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Colleagues in Ethiopia   | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Colleagues abroad  | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Classmates in Ethiopia   | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Classmates abroad  | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Community members in Ethiopia  | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Community members abroad   | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| The International Organization for Migration (IOM)   | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs  | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| The International Labour Organization (ILO)  | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

### **Appendix 3: Interview Guide for the Expert Interviews**

#### **General questions:**

- Could you tell me a bit more about your professional experience when it comes to migration?

#### **Youth migration from Ethiopia to Western countries:**

- What can you tell me about youth migration from Ethiopia to Western countries?
  - o Who are they?
    - Gender/Age/Education/Social class
  - o Why do they migrate?
  - o How do they migrate?
    - Legal/illegal?

#### **Perceptions of Western migration destinations:**

- What do you think the most popular migration destinations are for young Ethiopians?
  - o Why these countries?
  - o What do you think their perceptions of these Western countries are?
    - Where do you think these perceptions come from? Government? Social media? Migration network? TV?

#### **Migration network:**

- What do you think is the role of the migration network when it comes to youth migration?
  - o How do you think this migration network is able to influence migration aspirations?
  - o In what way do you think that migration networks have an influence on how young people perceive Western migration destinations?

#### **Social media:**

- How do you think young Ethiopians stay in touch with the people in their migration network that are abroad?
  - o What types of media do they use?
  - o What is the role of social media?
- What do you think the role of social media is when it comes to the perceptions of young Ethiopians of Western migration destinations?
- Who in the migration network do you think is most influential when it comes to the perceptions of Western migration destinations?
  - o Parents/siblings/uncles/aunts? (strong ties)
  - o Friends/communities/neighbours/classmates? (weak ties)

#### **Other:**

- What is the role of the Ethiopian government when it comes to youth migration in Ethiopia?

## **Appendix 4: Interview Guide for the Students from the Addis Ababa University**

### **General questions:**

- Why do you think young Ethiopians migrate?
  - o Youth unemployment? Political situation? Other factors?
- Which countries do you think they migrate to? Why to these countries?
- Why do you think young people migrate specifically to Western countries instead of other countries?

### **Western migration destinations:**

- What are your perceptions of Western migration destinations?
  - o What kind of images pop up in your mind when you think of Western countries?
  - o Where do you think these perceptions come from?
    - Social media? Friends/family abroad? Television? Advertisements? Others?
  - o How easy or difficult do you think it is for young Ethiopian migrants to find jobs/housing/high wages etc in the West?
- What do you think daily life is like for young Ethiopians that have migrated to Western countries?
  - o Wages? Housing? Social life? Jobs?
- Do you think that young Ethiopians who have migrated to the West always find what they were looking for?

### **Migration network:**

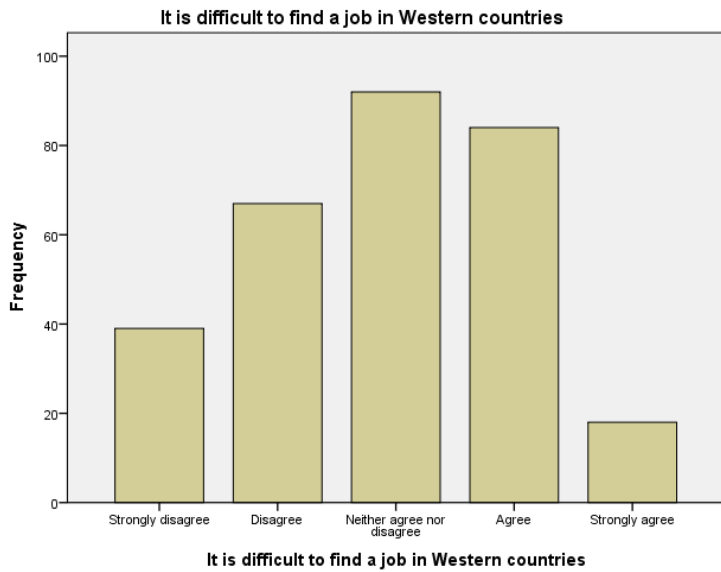
- Family abroad
  - o How many family members live abroad? Where do they live?
  - o How many friends live abroad? Where do they live?
  - o How many other people that you know live abroad? (community members, classmates, colleagues)? Where do they live?
- What kind of picture do the people that you know who live abroad present to you?
  - o Positive? Negative?
- Do you think that the people you know abroad present a truthful picture of what life in the West is like?
  - o How realistic or not do you think it is?
- In what way do the family members/friends that you have abroad influence the perceptions that you have of Western migration destinations?

### **Social media:**

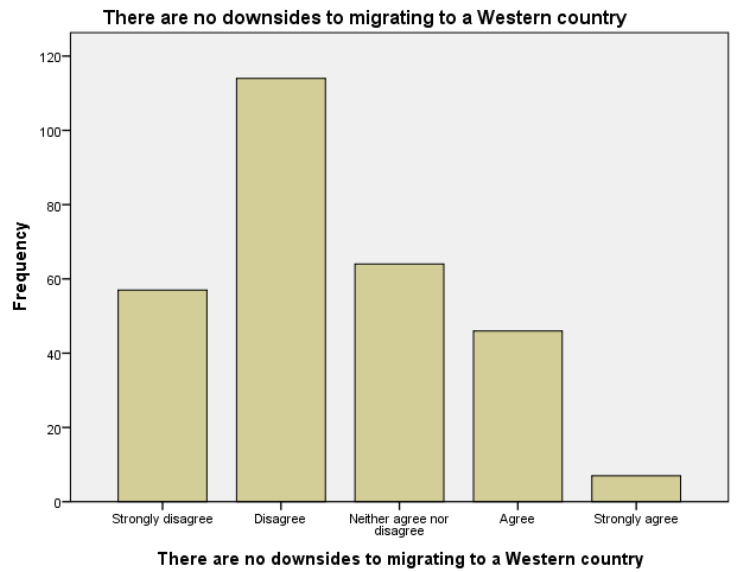
- How do you stay in contact with your friends/family abroad?
  - o Which types of media do you use? (Facebook/Snapchat/WhatsApp/Skype?)
  - o Why through these types of media? How often do you use it?
- How often do you use social media to stay in contact with friends/family abroad?
- How important is social media for you to stay in touch with your friends/relatives abroad?
- Do you think that social media presents a truthful picture of what life in the West is like?
  - o How realistic or not do you think it is?
- In what way does social media influence/form the perceptions that you have of Western migration destinations?

## Appendix 5: Perceptions of Western Migration Destinations (N = 302)

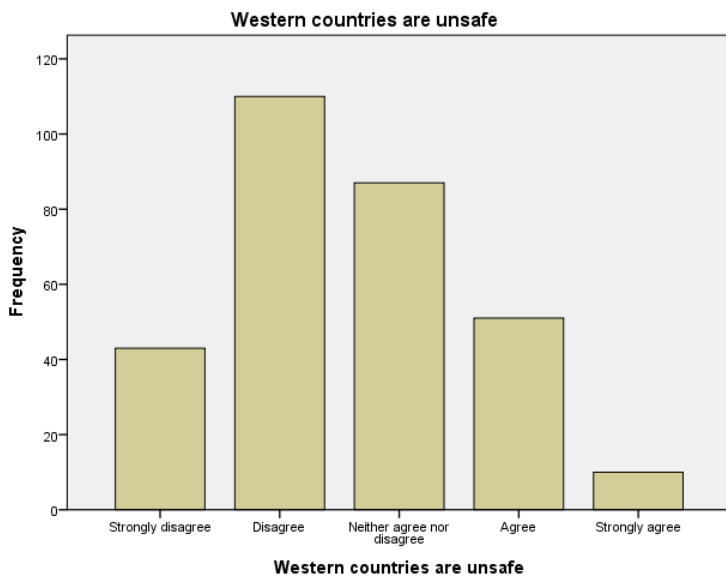
Statement 1 (N = 300):



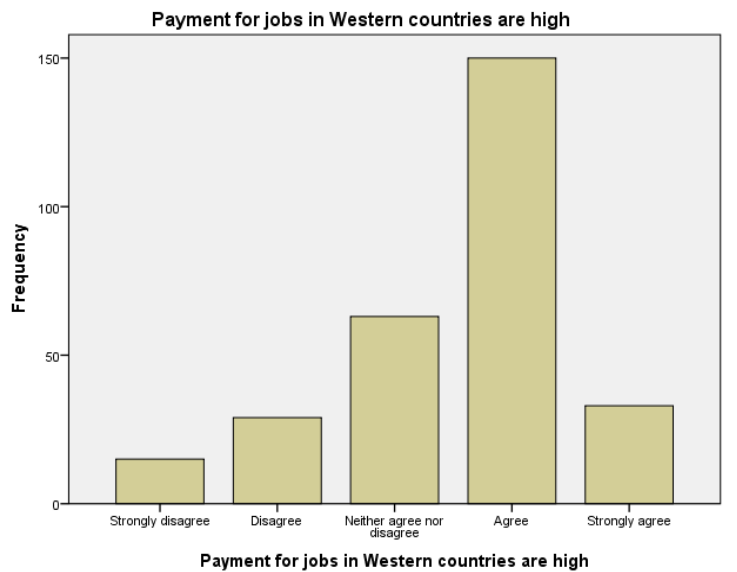
Statement 2 (N = 288):



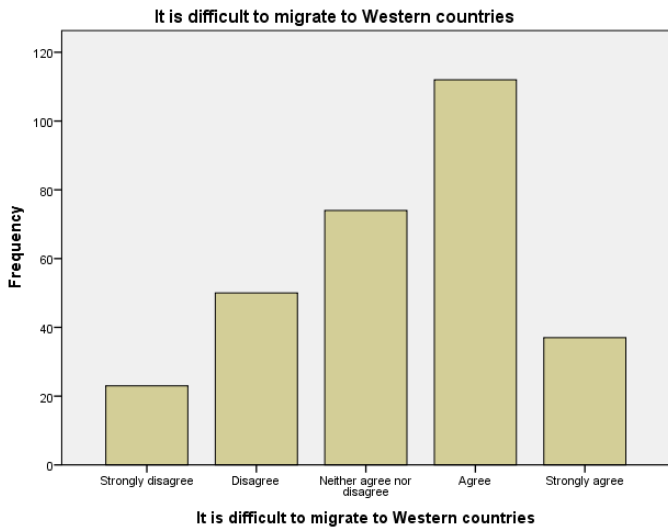
Statement 3 (N = 301):



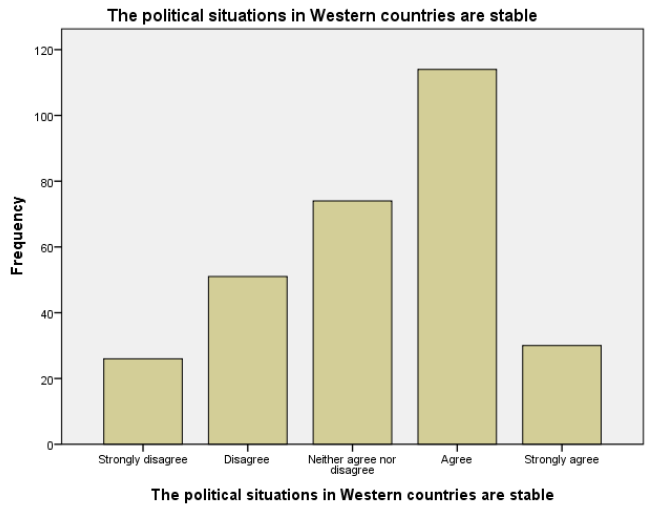
Statement 4 (N = 290):



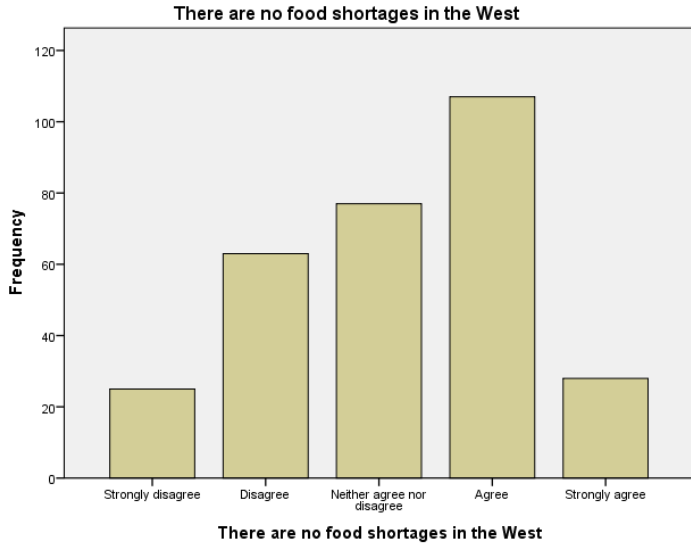
Statement 5 (N = 296):



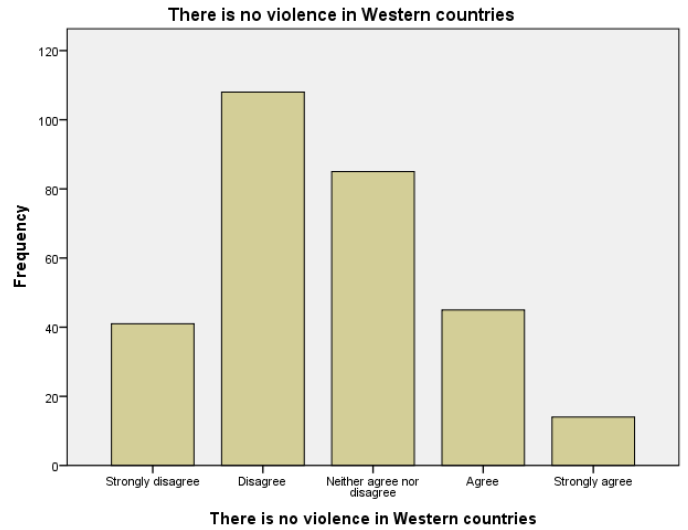
Statement 6 (N = 295):



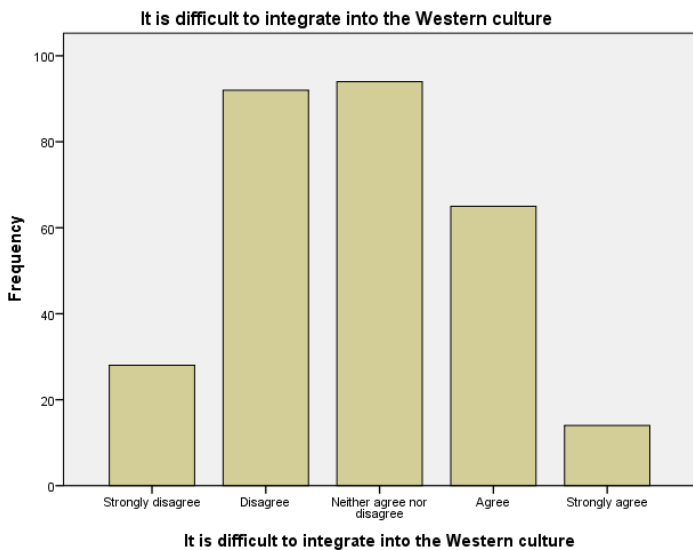
Statement 7 (N = 300):



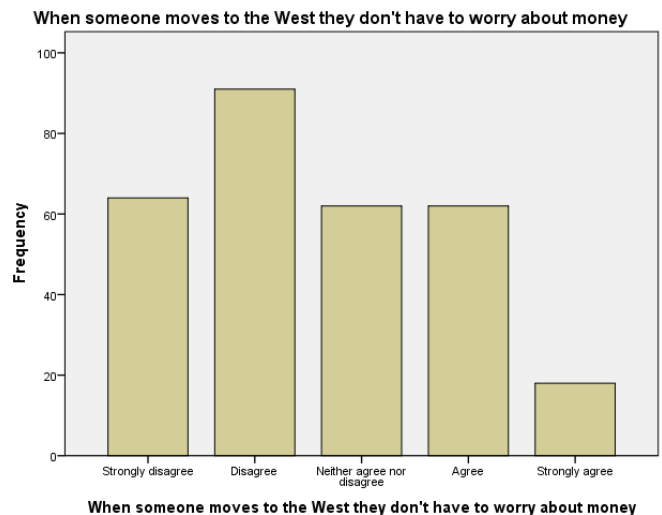
Statement 8 (N = 293):



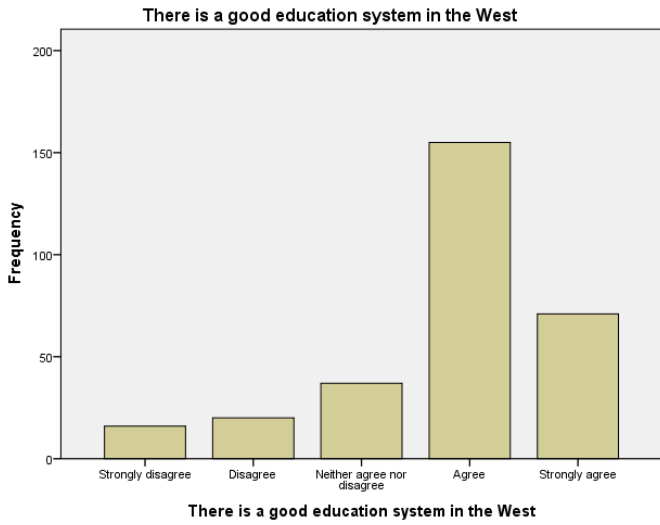
Statement 9 (N = 293):



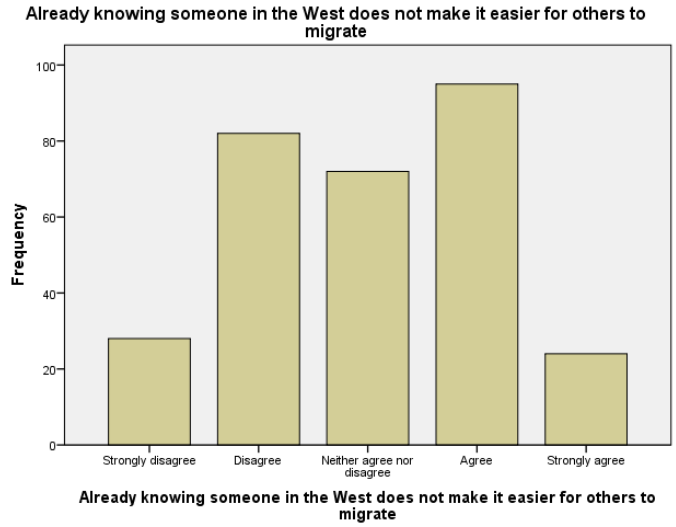
Statement 10 (N = 297):



Statement 11 (N = 299):



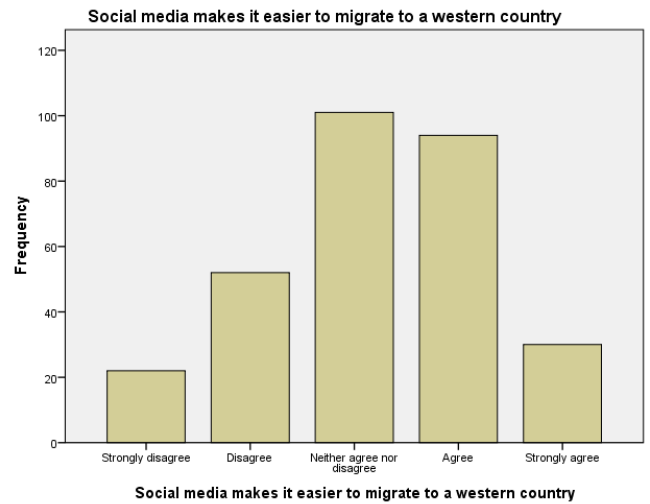
Statement 12 (N = 301):



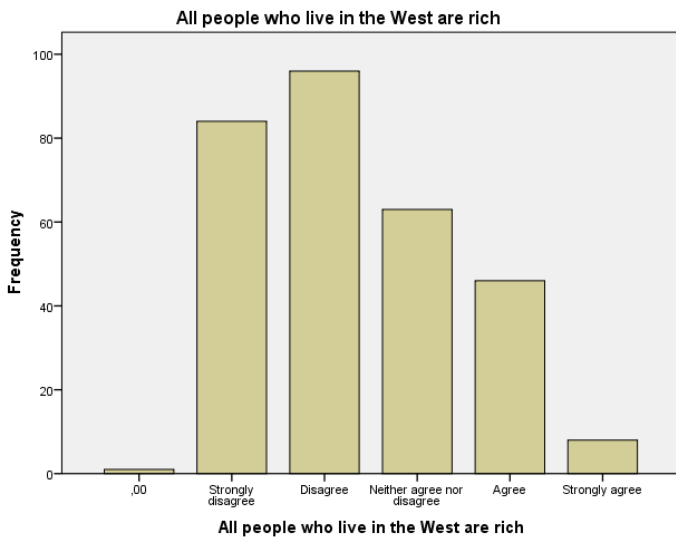
Statement 13 (N = 300):



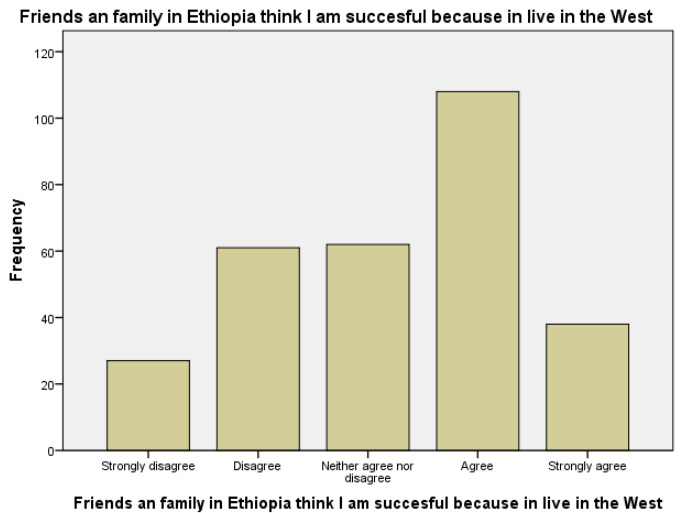
Statement 14 (N = 299):



Statement 15 (N = 298):

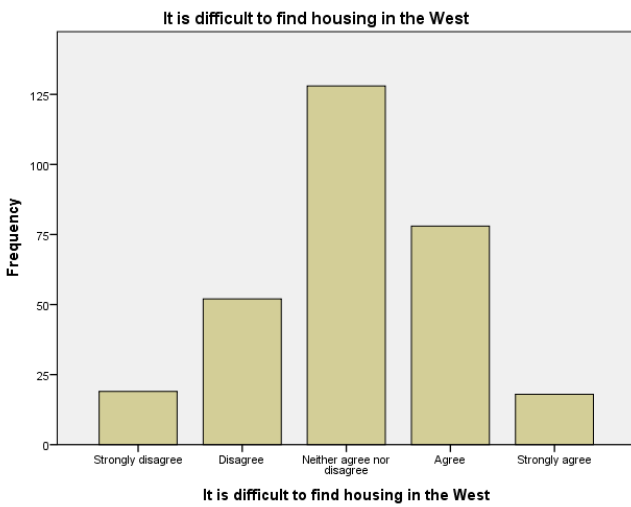


Statement 16 (N = 296):

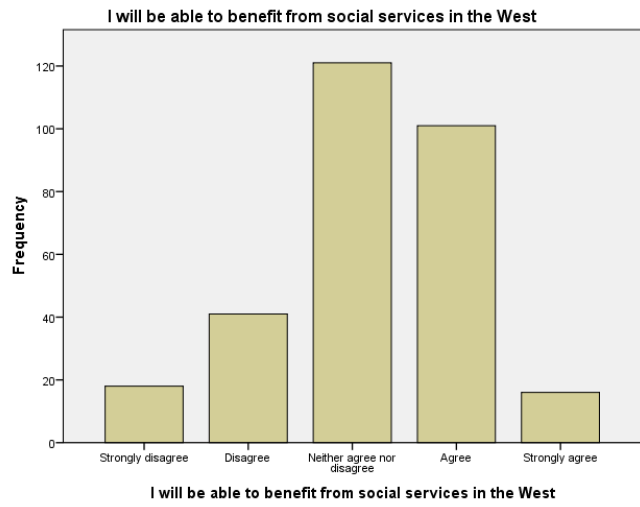




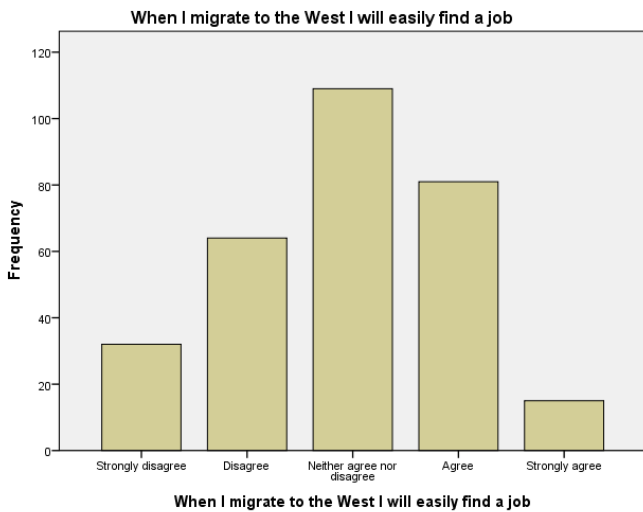
Statement 17 (N = 295):



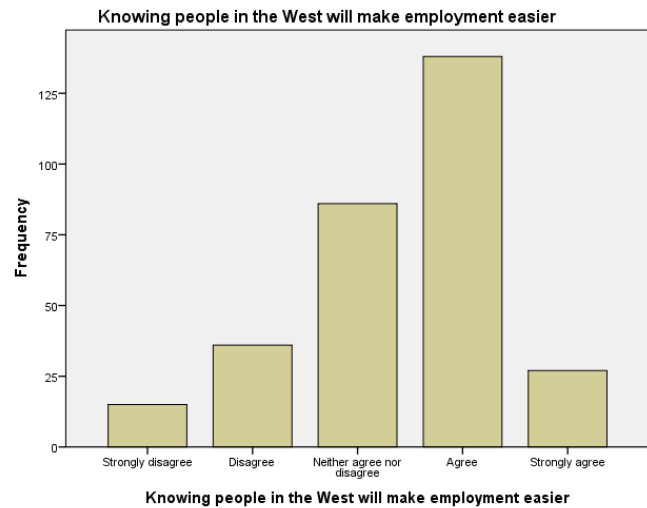
Statement 18 (N = 297):



Statement 19 (N = 301):



Statement 20 (N = 302):



Statement 21 (N = 299):

