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Internal migration and household living conditions in Ethiopia

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Abstract

Using the 1998 Migration, Gender and Health Survey in Five Regions of Ethiopia, and multivariate regression techniques, this paper examines the relationship between internal migration and household living conditions. The analysis finds significant living condition advantage of permanent and temporary migrants over non-migrants. These advantages are primarily linked to migration selectivity by education and non-agricultural income. Once the independent effects of these variables are controlled, no statistical significant independent association exists between migration status and living conditions. Government policies of resettlement in the 1980s and ethnic federalism of the 1990s may have engendered stress migration and exacerbated poor living outcomes for return migrants. The resort to migration and/or resettlement as an individual or government policy response to periodic unfavorable conditions in places of origin is not strongly supported by this analysis as the key to improved living conditions. Promoting higher education and opportunities for employment outside the agricultural sector are more likely to yield improved living conditions in Ethiopia.

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