Refugee Integration between a Rock and a Hard Place: Challenges and Possibilities of Local Integration as a Durable Solution for Eritrean and Somali Refugees in Ethiopia

Wogene Berhanu Mena[∗]

Abstract

This study examines the challenges and possibilities of local integration for urban refugees by comparing two refugee groups (Eritreans and Somalis) in Addis Ababa. A qualitative research methodology was employed and semi-structured interviews with refugees and host communities as well as key informant interviews with the Administration of Refugees and Returnees Affairs (ARRA) and local authorities were conducted. In addition, focus group discussions (FGDs) with refugees and host communities of the study areas were held. The respondents for both interviews and FGDs were purposively selected. The historical and ongoing relations between Ethiopia and the refugee producing countries, a structural factor, impacted not only the country's policy direction towards the refugees' but also the refugees' and hosts' perceptions of local integration. The study revealed that Somali refugees are more integrated in the host communities than Eritrean refugees in the respective areas despite the cultural compatibility of the latter because of the interplay of structural, refugee and host community related factors. The prolonged settlement and engagement of Somali refugees in both the formal and informal economy in the area reduced prior mutual mistrust and misperceptions and resulted in the refugees' progressive integration in the host communities. However, the securitisation of Somali refugees in the area by interlinking them with the insecurity and terrorism in their country obstructs the intensive integration by creating fear among both refugees and host communities. On the other hand, the Eritrean refugees perceive the special treatment provided to them as politically motivated and temporary. Low levels of migrant integration are caused by the

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∗ Lecturer, Department of Political Science and International Relations, Wolkite University, Ethiopia. Email: bwogene@yahoo.com

perception of Ethiopia as country of transit and a lack of motivation on the side of host communities to facilitate integration.

Keywords: Refugees, local integration, securitisation, politicisation, Somalia, Eritrea, Ethiopia.

Introduction

Africa has been unrelenting in producing refugees since the 1960s. The Horn of Africa, one of the most conflict-ridden regions in the world, is known for its mass exodus of refugees. Currently, the region is the biggest source of refugees worldwide next to the Middle East. According to a 2017 United Nations Higher Commission for Refugee (UNHCR) report, three of the top ten refugee-producing countries in the world are from the Horn of Africa (Somalia, South Sudan and Eritrea). On the other hand, Ethiopia and Kenya are among the biggest refugee hosting countries in the region (Global Trends Forced Displacement, 2017)). As a result of producing and hosting refugees simultaneously, the sub-region has been referred to as the 'belt of refugee-producing and receiving'. For the last two and half decades, Ethiopia has been hosting refugees from the neighbouring countries of South Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea, Yemen and other countries from the Great Lake Region. The absence of a central government in Somalia since 1991, ongoing civil war in the youngest state of South Sudan and political oppression and human rights violations in Eritrea are the major push factors for refugees' flight to Ethiopia (Assefaw, 2006; International Crisis Group, 2014).

The UNHCR identified three durable solutions for the problem of refugees: voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement. With protracted conflict and political repressions in the refugee-producing countries, voluntary repatriation is a distant possibility. Similarly, because of perceived and real conditions of identifying refugees as a security threat and economic burden in developed countries (third countries of resettlement), the opportunity for resettlement is far from positive. In addition, immigration is becoming the major cause of rising populism in Western countries. Washington Post columnist and host of CNN's GPS, Fareed Zakaria (2018), identified immigration as the central issue feeding populism around the globe. Given the dwindling prospect of security in their homelands in the near future and the unlikelihood of smooth resettlement or secondary movement across the Mediterranean Sea, the remaining solution is the local integration of refugees in the host communities. However, local integration is a two-way

process impacted by both the refugees' and the host communities' perceptions towards local integration, in addition to the state's policy praxis.

Like other African countries, the structure of refugee settlement in Ethiopia is mainly confined to camps located in isolated rural areas due to the perceived economic burden and security concern of the state. Although camps are considered to be impermanent settlement for refugees in a temporary state of emergency, most of the refugees in the country have been in camps for prolonged periods of time. Few exceptions are made for refugees who desire urban settlement. However, self-settlement (significantly) and assisted settlement (insignificantly) of refugees in urban areas are increasing due to different pull and push factors. Hence, refugees are found in different urban areas of the country, such as Addis Ababa, Adama, Jijiga, Gambella, Shire, Mekelle, Assosa and Samara, among others. Somali and Eritrean refugees have settled in Addis Ababa for a long time (UNHCR Ethiopia, 2017). As per the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission (EOC-DICAC) report of March 2017, the numbers of assisted refugees from Eritrea and Somalia who have settled in Addis Ababa for the purpose of specialised protection or medical care are 594 and 853, respectively. However, the number of self-settled refugees in both countries is far greater than the number of officially recognised and assisted refugees in Addis Ababa. Jacobsen (2006) notes that "the government is incapable or chooses to turn a blind eye to the situation." According to the joint report of the ARRA and the EOC-DICAC, as of March 2017, approximately 192,000 refugees are settled in Addis Ababa on unpermitted and permitted grounds, as assisted urban refugees, Out-of-Camp Policy beneficiaries and unregistered asylum seekers. Despite this significant presence of urban refugees, few studies have been carried out on the issue of urban refugees in general and on the issue of local integration in particular. Therefore, this study compares the local integration of Eritrean and Somali refugees in Addis Ababa from the perspectives of both refugees and host communities, in order to analyse the challenges and possibilities for local integration.

Methodology

A qualitative research methodology was employed and data for the study was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with refugees and host communities (twenty semi-structured interviews), and eight key informant interviews with ARRA and local authorities were conducted. Additionally, four FGDs with

refugees and host communities of the study areas were held. The respondents for both interviews and FGDs were purposively selected. To substantiate the data incurred from primary sources and to develop a conceptual framework, secondary sources of data were consulted, such as books, journal articles, published and unpublished thesis, newspapers, governmental and non-governmental organisations' reports, newspapers and study reports. The data obtained from both primary and secondary sources were analysed using a qualitative method. Among many refugee groups settled in Addis Ababa, the Somali and Eritrean refugees were selected based on their large presence for a relatively prolonged period of time. Additionally, the historic attachment of Somalis and Eritreans with the host state and host community makes them comparable cases. Major differences between the two groups include the variation in the level of integration with the host community in respective areas and impacting factors from refugees, the host community and policy-related issues regarding local integration. The areas in Addis Ababa selected for study were Gofa Mebrat Hail for Eritrean refugees and Bole Michael for Somali refugees. The benchmarks for sampling the areas were the number of the refugees in the area and their settlement in the area for a relatively long period of time.

Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

Understanding the Concept of Local Integration

Local integration is one of three durable solutions for the refugee problem (repatriation and resettlement are the other two). Local integration is a multidimensional process that consists of economic, social, legal and political aspects. In the countries of resettlement, the level of refugee integration with the hosts is determined by the following variables: employment, education, health service and naturalisation (Ager & Strang, 2004). However, in developing countries in general, and Africa in particular, host governments' policy directions and practices discourage integration and prefer encampment and segregated rural settlements, with the exception of the Republic of South Africa and Egypt (Kibreab, 1989; Malkki, 1995; Karadawi, 1999).

The concept of integration is chaotic and understood differently by different scholars. However, it has basic indicators for assessing the local integration of refugees in their host communities. According to Crisp (2004), local integration is a process that consists of interrelated legal, economic and social dimensions. Legally speaking, "refugees are granted a progressively wider

range of rights and entitlements by host states." These rights and entitlements include the right to "seek employment, to engage in other income-generating activities, to own and dispose of property, to enjoy freedom of movement and to have access to public services such as education" (Crisp, 2004). The progressive realisation of these rights may lead to migrants being granted citizenship, but this does not guarantee local integration. Beyond this, refugees in the Global South receive the legal recognition of citizenship and its related benefits in the host states not only through formal state institutions and policy directions but also through different informal manners that resist state control. The major pull factor for refugees' migration to urban areas is the potential for invisibility that the environment provides. Refugees' invisibility and the fluidity of their status can prevent them from being captured by the state as illegal but also prevents them from participating in activities to which they are not legally entitled (Polzer, 2009; Landau, 2010; Frischkorn, 2013). The fluidity of refugee status in African countries is largely influenced by a situation of people with common history, culture, ethnic group, religion and way of life that are artificially separated by colonial boundaries (Mengisteab & Bereketeab, 2012). This enables refugees to defy state control by being invisible and changing their identity as citizens of the host country. This level of fluidity is amplified by the limitation of state capacity. This creates alternative means for integration in an informal manner, despite the obstructing policy environment. Negotiating with local authorities is another means by which urban refugees acquire the legal rights and entitlements to settle in urban areas and engage in different economic activities. Unlike in Western countries, refugees in African countries rarely have formal means to influence and negotiate state policy that negates their interests (Polzer, 2007; Polzer, 2009; Frischkorn, 2013). By using corruption as a negotiating mechanism, refugees defy their status and acquire legal status, though the process is not trouble-free. This trend has been seen with Mozambican refugees in South Africa (Polzer, 2007; Polzer, 2009) and different refugee groups in Lusaka (Frischkorn, 2013) and Kenya (Campbell, 2005; Campbell, 2006), among others.

Secondly, integration is a social and cultural process that enables "refugees to live among or alongside the host population, without fear of systematic discrimination, intimidation or exploitation by the authorities and peoples of the host population" (Crisp, 2004: 1). Jacobsen (2001) further defines socio-cultural integration the process by which refugees develop social networks in the host community with little distinction between the standard of living of

refugees and that of the host community, and when refugees feel at home in the host country. Finally, local integration as an economic process is mainly defined and measured in terms of achieving self-sufficiency and a standard of living for refugees that is comparable to the host community. In addition, the intensive economic engagement of refugees' results in meaningful interaction that primarily contributes toward sociocultural integration by lessening various barriers (Mekuria, 1998; Jacobsen, 2001). Refugees' ability to pursue improved livelihoods has impacted the status of refugees in the host country in general and in urban areas in particular (Jacobsen, 2001; Crisp, 2004). Thus, local integration is a multi-dimensional (legal, economic and socio-cultural) process that is fundamentally driven and impacted by both refugees and host communities, rather than stand-alone policy response.

Factors Impacting Refugee-Host Community Integration

Local integration is a complex and multi-dimensional process impacted by refugees, host communities and policy-related factors. However, these factors are not mutually exclusive. Rather, one factor can be an effect of or cause for another. Hence, incorporating and understanding the impacting factors from refugees' and host communities' perspectives provides a comprehensive view of the issue.

Refugees are active and primary decision makers in establishing their home within their host community (Jacobsen, 2001; Griffiths, 2003; Korac, 2009 as cited by Frischkorn, 2013). Firstly, the refugees' plan to stay in the host country affects their level of integration with the host community. When refugees consider their first country of asylum as a transit country to resettle in developed countries (legally or illegally-by using smugglers), or to go to their homeland, they see no reason to invest in their lives in the host country (Grabska, 2006). Hence, the refugees' intentions and aspirations for resettlement in the third country of asylum or repatriation impact their perceptions of local integration (Ager & Strang, 2010).

Secondly, the psychological compatibility or the social connections of refugees with the local community impact the refugees' integration with locals. The social connection can be reflected in terms of language, culture, ethnic background and/or historical ties (Fielden, 2008). Ager and Strang (2008) dubbed these elements as "facilitators" for integration. Thus, the existing similarities of language, culture and social values between the host communities and the refugees on the one hand, and the refugees' interest in

knowing and understanding the hosts on the other, are significant factors for local integration. The level of trust in the host state and its people based on past experience also impacts refugees' perceptions of local integration. For example, based on their past experience in Sudan with perceived and real Arab domination, the South Sudan refugees in Cairo were mistrusting and suspicious of host communities with Arab cultural roots (Grabska, 2006). Therefore, the plan of their stay, the level of shared identity and the trust towards local communities are refugee-related factors that impact local integration.

In addition to socio-cultural (in)compatibility (Campbell, 2006; Grabska, 2006; Fielden, 2008), the expectations of the host communities regarding the duration of migrants' settlement and the desirability of repatriation or resettlement have an impact on their perceptions towards integration. During the initial phase of refugees' arrival, host communities view refugees as guests and hosts' actions are mainly welcoming and assistance-based (Kibreab, 1989). However, this perception of temporariness obstructs hosts' interests in integrating with refugees. On the contrary, the protracted situation may facilitate local integration as the long history of refugee movement develops the hosts' perception of refugees as part of their community (Jacobsen, 2001). Similarly, extended stay has contribution for de facto integration by enabling linguistic and cultural adaptation (Fielden, 2008). This is reflected in the case of Angolan 'refugees' in Zambia who were highly integrated and difficult to differentiate from locals (Bakewell, 2000).

The host communities' perceptions of the economic implications of refugee settlement is another major factor that impacts local integration. Integration is hindered when host communities perceive refugees as a burden on social goods and services (health, education and housing) and as competitors in the labour market (especially the unskilled labour market). In addition, when host communities perceive refugees as more economically privileged than them, discrimination and resentment become common (Campbell, 2005; Betts, 2008). On the other hand, when the host communities view refugees as sources of labour, consumers of goods and services and creators of new business opportunities and cross-border trade, integration is bolstered (Campbell, 2006; Grabska, 2006; Codjoe et al. 2013). Thus, buy-in from host communities has a significant impact on local integration.

Policy related issues also impact the local integration of refugees in host communities. In most African states, as the first country of asylum, urban

refugees technically do not or should not exist, as their existence is unrecognised or their settlement is illegal. The perception of refugees as security threats or economic burdens is a commonly propagated justification for opposing the presence of refugees in urban areas in developing countries. As result, these states have never developed clearly defined policies towards urban refugees, which places refugees in a state of legal limbo (Campbell, 2006; Fábos & Kibreab, 2007). In addition to their liminal and marginalised position, the securitisation of refugee issues develops a sense of an "outsider" status among refugees and sense of "cultural othering" within the host communities (Kibreab, 2000). Securitisation also creates an unfavourable environment for the refugees by fostering xenophobia within the host communities (Fábos & Kibreab, 2007). Even for those assisted refugees that are legally settled in urban areas, states reservations to provide for some rights granted under the international refugee regimes limit refugees' access to education, employment and legal protection. Limits on these rights negatively impact refugees' perceptions towards local integration by making their livelihoods unstable (Grabska, 2006). Thus, policy inclusion or exclusion has a direct impact on the integration process as it creates the sense of marginalisation for refugees.

Literature Review

Local integration is one of the UNHCR's three stated durable solutions for the problem of refugees (Kobia & Cranfield, 2009). It is common to find differences in the literature about urban refugees and the issue of integration in urban areas of the West (Dryden-Peterson, 2006; Rai, 2015). In Africa, extensive research has been done on refugees in camps and rural settlements. Nevertheless, in developing countries in general, and in Africa in particular, the study of urban refugees received attention in the late 1980s. Thereafter, Kibreab (1996) identified the issue of urban refugees as "what the eye refuses to see". Most of the scholarly works on this topic focus on refugees in cities such as Cairo, Johannesburg, Nairobi, Kampala, and Khartoum (Dryden-Peterson, 2006).

In the case of Ethiopia, the issue of urban refugees in general, and their local integration with the hosts in particular, has received little scholarly attention. Webster (2011) assessed the protection challenges that Eritrean refugees encountered in Ethiopia and only considered the issue of refugees in Addis Ababa from the refugees' perspective. According to the researcher, the source of protection challenges emanates from Eritrean state officials and Ethiopian

administrators who act in pursuit of their political interests. Thus, the analysis ignores the multidimensional sources of protection challenges as well as the perception of the host communities towards the Eritrean refugees. Conversely, Kibrom (2016) assessed the socioeconomic impact of Somali refugees on the host community in Addis Ababa from host communities' perspective and recommended repatriation of refugees to their host country as a solution to minimise the burden on the host community, even though the Somali refugees would be returning to a difficult situation in Somalia.

On the other hand, Ali (2014) analysed the challenges of social integration for the refugee women of the Great Lake Region (Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda Tanzania, Democratic Republic of Congo) in Addis Ababa through the refugees' lens. In his work, Ali problematically referred to the refugees from those four countries as a homogenous group by understating their heterogeneity of language, culture and national identity. However, as a strength of the study, the researcher acknowledged refugees as active decision-makers and primary social actors in integrating with the host community. However, the study failed to include the perception of host communities of the refugees' integration, though the researcher recognised integration as an interactive, two-way process in his conceptual framing of the study. Therefore, the aforementioned studies about urban refugee integration with the host communities approach the issue of local integration as one-directional (only from refugees' or hosts' perspective). In reality, integration is multidirectional. Thus, it is fair to identify the issue of local integration of urban refugees with the host community in Addis Ababa as an under-researched subject. Moreover, the local integration of Eritrean and Somali refugees as the largest refugee groups in the city, has been neglected. This study examines the local integration of Eritrean and Somali refugees with local communities in Addis Ababa and compares the impacting factors from both refugees' and host communities' perspectives.

Research Findings and Presentations

The Fluidity of Refugees' Status

The Ethiopian Refuge Proclamation No. 409/2004 defines refugee in an inclusive manner by incorporating both the United Nations Refugee Convention of 1951 and the Organization for African Unity Convention of 1969 (the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problem in Africa) under Article 4. According to the ARRA Legal Protection Department,

refugees and asylum seekers can be categorised into four major groups: Assisted Urban Refugees, Unassisted Urban Refugees (Eritrean refugees who are beneficiaries of the Out-of-Camp Policy), Non-permit Holders (refugees from camps without permission to settle in urban areas), and Unregistered Asylum Seekers (mainly Somali refugees). The UNHCR report of March 2017 indicates that 594 Eritrean and 853 Somali Assisted Urban Refugees are settled in Addis Ababa to receive either special medical care or special security. These groups hold a legally authorised document from the ARRA that enables them to receive a monthly allowance from the DICAC. In addition, the Out-of-Camp Policy has provided the Eritrean refugees who are self-sufficient to live with relatives outside the camp in their area of choice since 2010. These groups of refugees have special identity cards (IDs) that identify them as Out-of-Camp beneficiaries.

Refugees of all nationalities outside of these four categories (both non-permit holders and unregistered asylum seekers) are considered illegal but are not subjected to arbitrary detention. Ethiopia has been praised for granting freedom from arbitrary detention for illegal entry or presence under Article 13(6) of the Refugee Proclamation (Webster, 2011). This legal and institutional commitment of the Ethiopian government cannot be underestimated. However, most states in Africa, and the Horn states in particular, share not only borders but people with a common history, culture, ethnic group, religion and way of life. This enables refugees to defy state control and limits the states' capacity to control their borders. The existence of this shared identity and limit in the state capacity paves the way for invisible and de jure integration of people across the border without regard for state policy directions (Mengisteab & Bereketeab, 2012: 102).

The status of both Eritrean and Somali refugees in Addis Ababa is highly fluid. Each refugee groups has strong commonalities with an ethnic group in Ethiopia (i.e., the Ethiopian Somali ethnic group for Somali refugees and the Tigrean ethnic group that exists in both Eritrea and Ethiopia). This enables refugees to have Ethiopian passports like Ethiopian citizens regardless of the restrictive government policy. One of the Somali refugee respondents revealed that he has three passports for three countries (Ethiopia, Somaliland, and Djibouti) while he is considered to have refugee status by the Ethiopian government. As means of resisting state authority, refugees negotiate the enforcement efforts through various mechanisms, including corruption. In explaining how the refugees get ID cards in Addis Ababa or in the Somali

Regional State, one respondent said, "money can ease the challenge." On the other hand, Eritrean refugees informally obtain Ethiopian ID cards to have access to work that refugees do not have, rather than to obtain access to legal residence like Somali refugees. In spite of Ethiopia's prohibition of refugees, by engaging in income generating activities and settling in urban areas with a few exceptions, the Ethiopian refugees have subverted the legal constraints of the state through local informality (i.e., by negotiating with corrupt local officials) and through their co-ethnic groups in Ethiopia. Similarly, Mozambican refugees in South Africa (Polzer, 2007; Polzer, 2009), various refugee groups in Lusaka (Frischkorn, 2013) and Somali refugees in Kenya (Campbell, 2005; Campbell, 2006), among others, defied state control by hiding themselves within the co-ethnic groups in the hosting countries. Thus, shared identity, lack of state capacity to control its border and right of residence with negotiating capacity of the refugees have facilitated the invisible integration of refugees in the host community and indicate the blurred boundary between refugees and citizens.

The Livelihood and Economic Integration of Eritrean and Somali Refugees in Addis Ababa

Like urban refugees in other countries, several strategies of livelihood are evident for Eritrean refugees in Gofa Mebrat Hail. These include: receiving income from remittances, financial assistance from the UNHCR, working as hired labour in informal and formal sectors and running small businesses. Refugees' participation in the local economy is the major indicator of local integration. Those Eritrean refugees that successfully negotiated and have Ethiopian ID cards or passports work in the formal economy as Ethiopian citizens without losing their refugee status. The major business areas in which they work include shops, barber shops, beauty salons, wood and metal work centres, coffee houses, cafés, grocers, restaurants and pool houses. Another means by which Eritrean refugees engage in the formal economy is through business partnerships with Ethiopians.

However, the vast majority of Eritrean refugees in Gofa Mebrat Hail heavily rely on remittances, as their engagement in income-generating business activities is limited. With regard to access to social utilities, they have access to public education, health services and basic consumable goods such as food, oil, sugar and bread flour. This access is granted from local authorities through the refugees' status card or OCP beneficiary special card. In terms of achieving self-sufficiency in comparison to their local counterparts, it is fair to say that

Eritrean refugees in Gofa-Mebrta Hail are not a burden to the local economy and are pursuing living standards that are equivalent to or better than locals. However, since active involvement in business (both formal and informal) is the major indicator of the integration of refugees in the host communities, it is fair to note that their economic integration as limited.

On the other hand, Somali refugees, like Eritreans and other urban refugees, have both productive and reproductive livelihood strategies. Productive livelihood strategies include using natural resources and financial and human capital to maintain and improve livelihoods. Reproductive livelihood strategies mainly involve using social capital to improve livelihoods. Somalis are among the most dispersed people in the world with 1–2 million people settled in more than 60 countries, comprising the diaspora (Knerr, 2012; Fagioli-Ndlovu, 2015). This enables the vast majority of Somali refugees in Bole Michael to pursue their livelihoods through overseas remittances as their major source of income. These remittances are transferred by an informal banking system called hawala or hawalaad. In addition to remittances, in Bole Michael, it is common to witness Somali refugees running different businesses in both the informal and formal economies.

Currently, guesthouses, cloth shops, cafés and restaurants, chat (it's a leaf that is a mild narcotic and its leaves are chewed for a stimulating effect), internet cafés, shops and mini-supermarkets are the major businesses in which Somali refugees are engaged. Most of the guesthouses in Bole Michael are owned by Somali refugees. They rent the whole compound from the local people and then sublet it as guesthouses for those refugees that come to Addis Ababa from refugee camps in the Somali regional state for medical reasons, to visit their family in the city or for business-related purposes. Somali refugees have a strong transnational trade network with co-ethnic ties in their country of origin, the host country (Ethiopia) and some countries in the Middle East, such as the United Arab Emirates (UAE). This can be seen from the type of materials that are sold in Bole Michael, such as Somali clothes, other cloth items, mobile telephones, tablet computers, laptops and packed foods and beverages from Dubai and the Gulf states. Most of this items are imported from those Middle East countries via the Ethiopia Somali Regional State. With frequent smuggling of goods from Somalia to Ethiopian Somali Regional State, Ethiopian Revenue and Customs Authority dubbed eastern part of the country particularly Ethiopia-Somalia border areas as a major contraband corridor that stretches to Addis Ababa with a significant damping-out share (Habtamu and Wubeshet,

2016). This transnational linkage as part of reproductive and productive livelihood strategy in combination facilitated Somali refugees' economic integration in Bole Michael. In addition, this study has revealed, in opposite to the official position and the popular local perception, that urban refugees are not an economic burden to the state or its citizens. On the contrary, Somali refugees' presence in Bole Michael positively contributes to the economy by creating job opportunities and new business prospects.

Thus, from the parameters of self-sufficiency, the majority of Somali refugees in Bole Michael are self-reliant, using remittances, clan-based social networks and informal and formal business activities to pursue equivalent or higher living standards compared to the host community. In addition, the Somali refugees' active engagement in income generating activities in the host area paved the way for their de facto integration in the host community.

Refugees' Socio-Cultural Integration with the Host Communities

Socio-cultural integration, as a process, mainly starts with the establishment of contact between refugees and host communities. This interaction begins with interpersonal communication or 'friendliness' between the refugees and the host communities that extends to intensive social interaction. This interaction gradually eases barriers to integration and enables the refugees to live alongside the host community. This further develops to forming social networks through marriage and participation in different social institutions (Mekuria, 1988; Jacobsen, 2001; Crisp, 2004). This aspect of integration as a process is impacted by different factors. Among them are communication (language), cultural (in-) compatibility, the settlement pattern of refugees, mutual perceptions of one another and the level of economic interaction between refugees and host communities (Mekuria, 1988; Jacobsen, 2001; Crisp, 2004). These factors are used as a prism to assess the socio-cultural integration of Eritrean and Somali refugees in their respective settlement areas. Historically, Ethiopians and Eritreans used to have a common culture and people, but also a common country – Ethiopia. Italian colonial control in 1890 created the state of Eritrea. After half a century under Italian colonial rule and a decade-old British Military Administration, Eritrea was federated with Ethiopia in 1952. For around four decades, until Eritrea got de facto statehood in 1991 and de jure in 1993, Ethiopia and Eritrea were the same country (Pool, 1980; Markakis, 1988; Woldemikael, 2013). This historical unity enabled people of the two states to share many traits, including culture and religion.

Ager and Strang (2008) identified language and cultural knowledge as facilitators of integration. In this regard, Eritrean refugees' knowledge of affinity with Ethiopian culture can be considered an essential factor in minimising barriers to integration. One of the respondents in an FGD noted the following:

> *It's not as such difficult for us (Eritrean refugees) to communicate with the host community; because we share a lot of cultural elements in common... the way we dress, the food we eat, the manner we celebrate different social events and other issues. All in all, the cultural similarity between Ethiopia and Eritrea made our stay in Addis Ababa easy.*

Interpersonal communication is a basis for integration. Eritrean refugees, mainly those who had been in Ethiopia before and deported to Eritrea during the Ethiopian-Eritrean war of 1998–2000, speak Amharic well with no discernible accent. This facilitated their probability of integration. Other refugees also speak Amharic, the main language of the host community, though they do so with an accent. However, understanding the host culture and language can facilitate the socio-cultural integration of refugees in the host community rather than spontaneously leading to it. Refugees' engagement in different economic activities, their settlement patterns and their interest in integration can impact to what extent their shared culture and language assists in socio-cultural integration.

Social integration starts with the establishment of contacts between refugees and their hosts. According to Mekuria (1988: 174), "it is through social interaction that barriers are removed and attitudes change [...] [C]ommon interests are recognised and accommodations made only if interactions take place." Economic integration is considered to be the first and the most important step toward this type of interaction between refugees and host communities (Mekuria, 1988; Ager & Strang, 2008). As assessed in the preceding section, Eritrean refugees' engagement in different economic activities in Gofa Mebrat Hail is limited, which has resulted in minimal social integration of Eritrean refugees in the host community. This low interaction is further limited by their settlement pattern, which is confined only to their fellow refugees and co-ethnic groups in the area. This, in turn, results in limited interaction with the host communities.

However, this does not refute the positive, supportive role of ethnic enclaves in preserving refugees' identities and social capital at the initial stage of

settlement. Heavy dependence on these enclaves, however, results in a fragile social bridge between the refugees and the host community that becomes a barrier for socio-cultural integration (Hale, 2000 as cited in Ager & Strang, 2008). Almost all of the interviews with both refugees and host communities reinforce that the refugees' interaction is largely limited to themselves and the co-ethnic Ethiopian Tigreans' in the area. This results in a weak social interaction between Eritrean refugees and the host communities except for those host people from the Tigrean ethnic group. In addition, some of the host community respondents have bad feelings toward the Eritreans due to their overwhelming vote for the cessation of Eritrea from Ethiopia through referendum in 1993 and the bloody Ethiopia-Eritrea war that followed from 1998–2000.

Eritrean refugees have a kind of social contact with their host community that can be understood as a lack of conflict and sense of acceptance, or what Ager and Strang (2008: 180) refer to as a "sense of safety and security." During a FGD, refugees expressed that the local people, including authorities, accepted them without systematic discrimination, with the exception of a few refugees who perceived of an unreasonably high house rental price. The refugees' involvement with local people is occasional. Thus, regardless of cultural compatibility and shared history between Eritrean refugees and the host community, the refugees' limited engagement in the local economy (formal or informal) and lack of interest in integration (refugee-related and policy-related factors that will be discussed later) resulted in weak socio-cultural integration.

On the other hand, the impact of the aforementioned factors works differently for Somali refugees in the study area. Historically, successive Ethiopian regimes (Imperial, Derg and the Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front) considered the irredentist claim of Somalian governments (since Somalia became a state in 1960) as a threat to the territorial integrity of the country. While from Adeb Adde (Aden Abdulle Osman Daar, the First President of the Somali Republic in 1960) to Siyad Barrre, the Somali government has considered Ethiopia to be a 'colonizer' of their 'lost territories', without any significant departure from the irredentist policy of 'Greater Somalia'. These contentious relations between the two countries resulted in two major wars in 1964 and 1977/78 (the Ogaaden War), with several skirmishes between their borderlands (Gebru, 2000; Lewis, 2002; Assefaw, 2006).

These disharmonious inter-state relations have impacted the people of the two respective countries. Assefaw (2006) described the Somali refugees' decision to settle in Ethiopia since 1988 (as a result of the acute condition in the country) as "unconsidered" because of the majority of Somali refugees' perception towards Ethiopia as an enemy state. Respondents expressed that their prior perception towards Ethiopia was that the country was an enemy state. This perception has also been reflected among the host communities as a threat to the state. The respondents from the host communities reflected on the historical wounds of Somalia's conflict-based relations with Ethiopia and on the Ogaaden war in particular, as factors that contributed to their initial lack of interest in interacting with the refugees. One of the respondents that has been settled in Bole Michael since 1996 explained the challenges that Somali refugees' encountered from the local people as follows:

> *In the first decade of our settlement, we (he and his family) faced a lot of challenges. The local people considered the Somali refugees as historical enemies, aggressors, and those who do not pause from destructing the country. As result, it had been very difficult to interact with the host communities that [was] further worsened by our inability to speak Amharic.*

This historical mistrust/misperception between refugees and host communities as a barrier to interaction has been widened by the language and cultural difference between the two. Culture as a set of typical spiritual and material features of a social group and consists of the way of living, values and beliefs (UNESCO, 2002). Irrespective of clan difference, culturally, Somalis are relatively homogenous, with the vast majority following Islam as their religion. As result, when Somali refugees came to Addis Ababa, they were exposed to a different way of living (the way they dress, the food they consume, social networks) and different values, beliefs and religious practices. They faced great challenges in interpersonal interactions with Ethiopians. In addition, they explained that interactions with the host communities had been discriminatory. In a FGD, one respondent noted that 'even in business interaction, the host communities that increase the price of any goods and services, has a double standard (high price for Somali refugees and normal price for Habesha)'. On the other hand, the host communities' respondents also confirmed the discrimination. One host community respondent stated that "when the business persons told us an exaggerated price for a given good,

we used to say them, 'I am not Somali; tell the price in Amharic', and they told us the revised price. But that trend has been changed."

As a coping mechanism for these challenges, Somali refugees preferred to restrict their interaction to co-ethnic Ethiopian Somalis in Bole Michael. The initial plan of many refugees was to resettle in Western countries or to repatriate to their homeland of Somalia. However, when the prospects for both solutions became far from reach in the near future, the refugees started to engage in different business activities, mainly in the informal economy and later in the formal economy, by using their fluid status. Jaji's (2009) found that the residential settlement of Somali refugees in Eastleigh has reduced the refugees' interaction with the host community. This is again reflected in this study of Eritrean refugees.

Nevertheless, with protracted settlement in the area and refugees' active involvement in different economic activities, the interaction between host people and Somali refugees in Bole Michael has become intensive. Many scholars in the area agree that economic interactions provide refugees and the host communities with the opportunity to build cultural understanding and develop language skills, thereby building trust through intensive social interaction (Mekuria, 1988; Jacobsen, 2001; Ager & Strang, 2008).

Somali refugees in Bole Michael explained the progressive betterment of their social interaction with the host communities. According to one of the respondents, "continuous interaction in business issues enabled us to understand the way of living, values, and beliefs of the host community and also to share our own. That is why many of us now can communicate in Amharic with some discernible accent." This sentiment was echoed by the majority of the respondents. Some of the host community members, especially those who work with the refugees in a different area, have developed their Somali language skills. Some even work as translators (locally called toorjuman) from the Somali language to Amharic for refugees who have recently come to the area. In this regard, Campbell's (2006) finding shows that prior tenuous relations between Somali refugees and host communities in Eastleigh (Nairobi) have become better in broader areas because of their constant economic exchange, though they are not perfect.

This progressive and strong economic interaction between Somali refugees and the host communities in Bole Michael resulted in what Bress (2009: 164) dubbed "meaningful contact and intensive social interaction." Social

interactions have also spurred the development of social networks, such as through marriage between refugees and the host communities. During FGDs, the respondents expressed that marriage between Ethiopians and refugees is becoming common and is no longer an exception. One of the respondents has an Ethiopian wife who follows Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity while he is Muslim.

However, these progressive conditions about the interaction of refugees and host communities are not undisputable, and misperceptions and mistrust between the two groups are still evident. Some refugees complain about the lingering host community's misperception and 'othering' of Somali refugees and culture. Host community respondents complained about the "diluting effect" of Somalis in Bole Michael because of their numerical advantage, communal lifestyle and capital to do business. These respondents expressed distaste for the demographic domination of Somalis and their flourishing cafés, restaurants, mills and cloth shops. Corresponding to this argument, Bress (2009) found that some of Thai hosts have feelings of being overwhelmed by the Burmese refugee culture. This is significant because, as discussed in chapter two, integration is a two-way process and does not entail "inserting of one group amidst another" (Ager & Strang, 2008: 177). Rather, it is the process of mutual accommodation.

Another issue in the process of socio-cultural integration is the treatment of refugees by the local authorities. In comparison to the host people, refugees complain about discriminatory treatment, especially by local authorities that request bribes. Considering all of these challenges, both refugees and the host communities underlined the progressive change in their socio-cultural integration as a result of constant economic interaction and long-term settlement in the area.

Structural Factors: Politicisation of Eritrean Refugee Protection vs. Securitisation of Somali Refugees

The policy response of the host state towards refugees can be positive, negative or non-existent (due to lack of capacity or willingness or the opinion that the issue of refugees is insignificant). According to Jacobsen (1996), the policy choice among the above three depends on different factors. Among them are interstate relations between the refugee-host state and refugee-sending state, political motivation and national security considerations. Policy response also varies for different refugee groups (Jacobsen, 1996). Local integration is a multidimensional and mutually inclusive process and these

policy structures have an impact on the perceptions of both refugees and host communities. To this end, it is important to analyse the structural factors that have impacted perceptions toward local integration in the respective areas.

Eritrean refugees are the only refugee group in Ethiopia who have the right to choose their place of settlement, in either an urban or rural area, by proving self-sufficiency or by relying on other sources of support in Ethiopia through the Out-of-Camp Policy (UN News Centre, 2010). They also get special treatment from local authorities, which refugees interviewed in this study confirmed. Furthermore, Abebe (2016) identified the Ethiopian government effort of treating Eritrean refugee as part of building amicable relations between the people of Eritrea and Ethiopia. In spite of these favourable structural grounds for integration, Eritrean refugees' aspirations to integrate with the host community in Gofa Mebrat Hail are low. This is mainly because the refugees' consider the treatment they receive from Ethiopia's government as politically driven and subject to change rather than mere humanitarian protection. The first rationale that they provide for their mistrust of Ethiopian protection commitment towards Eritrean refugees is the interstate relations between the two countries. Since the secession of the 1998–2000 war through the Algiers Agreement, the relations between the states have been defined by a 'no peace no war' stalemate.

International and regional refugee legal instruments, such as the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to Status of Refugees and the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problem in Africa, consider hosting refugees to be humanitarian and apolitical. But, when a country hosts refugees, tacitly or openly, it recognises and publicises the refugee-producing countries' inability or lack of willingness to protect its people. According to Alexander Betts and Gil Loescher (2011), the issue of refugees, from the cause of flight to policy response, is an integral part of international politics and international relations. And when the relationship between the refugee-sending and receiving state is contentious, the host state treats the refugees generously, mainly to delegitimise the sending state as a foreign policy tool. This trend was mainly reflected during the Cold-War period. In the USA, until the late 1980s, refugees from communist countries and the Middle East received special treatment as part of the state's foreign policy direction to delegitimise communist states as countries where people live in fear of persecution (Teitelbaum, 1984; Hathaway, 1990).

In line with this, the source of the Ethiopian government's generosity and commitment towards Eritrean refugees in a specific manner cannot simply emanate from the country's culture of hospitality. Rather, it is part of Ethiopian policy to delegitimise the government in Asmara to gain reputation from the international community. The Eritrean refugees' responses in Gofa Mebrat Hail show a similar perception. One respondent said, "we are grateful for a good treatment that we receive from the Ethiopian government, but I am not sure whether it's apolitical." Another respondent considers such treatment as more politically driven than merely humanitarian, though it does temporarily contribute to refugees' protection.

The prior experience of deportation from Ethiopia is another source of fear and mistrust towards the current policy. After the 1998–2000 Ethiopian-Eritrean war, both countries deported citizens of the other state from their territory as they were perceived as security threats. Since the start of the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea in May 1998, nationals of both countries had to return to their places of origin. Based on this experience and some of the Eritrean refugees in Gofa Mebrat Hail having living experience of deportation, they argue that there is no guarantee against this history repeating itself. It is the same government with similar officials to those who identified people of Eritrean origin in Ethiopia as aliens and a threat to national security during the war.

The cloud of uncertainty is not only because of the poor relations that the two states have since the outbreak of the war of 1998–2000. The change of relations for good might also have contributed to the uncertainty. Refugees may be treated poorly in order to maintain the positive relations with the refugee-producing country (Sexton, 1985: 804). In this regard, the Eritrean refugees' sense of insecurity is not only related to the inharmonious relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea for the last fifteen years; but, the ongoing amicable relations also hold an uncertain future for them. Their fear is based on prior occasions of Eritrean refugees' forceful return from friendly countries like Sudan, Gaddafi's Libya and Egypt (Human Rights Watch, 2006). Therefore, regardless of special treatment provided for Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia, the structure has failed to positively affect the perception of the agents (refugees) towards local integration because of their prior experience and mistrust of the Ethiopian government's treatment as politically driven, temporary and uncertain.

On the other hand, securitisation of Somali refugees in Bole Michael by associating them with national insecurity and terrorism in their homeland has negatively impacted the integration process. In relation to the securitisation measure, the Somali refugees complain about the disappearance and forceful detention of their fellow refugees in the area by government forces. The securitisation also created fear among the host community towards the refugees as a potential source of the threat. The local officials also confirmed that the security issue in their Woreda has taken special attention and they have been working on the issue with the Addis Ababa City Administration, Federal Government, and the refugees in collaboration that associated mainly with the presence of Somali refugees in their district at large. The Woreda's security officer specified the October 13, 2013 bomb blast in the district, that the Ethiopian government alleged al-Shabab for the action (al-Shabab also claimed responsibility on its Twitter account), as justification for high-security alertness. This created fear and mistrust on the side refugees that discouraged the refugees from building sustainable livelihoods in the area. Although the refugees have been engaged in different business activities in the area, they refrain from investing in big businesses like hotels and big market centers, like Eastleigh in Nairobi, and other immovable properties (Campbell, 2006). The securitisation also creates fear among the host community towards the refugees as a potential source of the threat. Thus, the securitisation of Somali refugees by the government is a structural factor among others that negatively affect both the Somali refugees' and the hosts' perceptions of local integration in the area.

Conclusion

Like other African countries, the Ethiopian government ruled-out local integration as a durable solution to the refugee issue. However, the refugees have a different level of interaction and integration. Local integration as a multidimensional process is impacted by different factors related to refugees, the host community and the policy direction of Ethiopia as the host state. Among other factors, the refugees' settlement time span, their plan to stay in Ethiopia and their engagement in either formal or informal economic sectors significantly impacts refugee-host community integration. Having a shared culture and history, the Eritrean refugees have the advantage of psychological compatibility, which facilitates socio-cultural integration. However, the similarity in sociocultural elements have not automatically and spontaneously resulted in social integration. The findings of this study indicate that Eritrean

refugees' social interaction is very limited. The major cause of this is that Eritrean refugees considered their stay in Ethiopia, in general, and in Addis Ababa, in particular, as a temporary place of transit. They see no reason to invest socially or economically in Gofa Mebrat Hail. Similarly, the host communities also consider the Eritrean refugees as guests in transit, which has contributed for their low level of interaction with refugees. Hence, the Eritrean refugees' engagement in different economic activities, either formally or informally, is minimal or resulted in limited interaction with the host communities. Furthermore, the Eritrean refugees perceive the special treatment provided for them as politically motivated and temporary, which has obstructed integration by making their futures uncertain.

On the other hand, variation in culture and historical accounts between Somali refugees and the host communities in Bole Michael have negatively affected the process of socio-cultural integration. In addition, the securitisation of Somali refugees that associates them with insecurity and terrorism in Somalia has obstructed substantial integration by creating fear among refugees and host communities. However, the active engagement of Somali refugees in different economic activities in Bole Michael resulted in intensive interaction with the host communities. This has progressively lessened barriers of mutual misperception and cultural disparity. Therefore, regardless of the refugees' fear to engage in economic activities intensively because of the securitization of their issue, it would be pedantic to suggest that Somali refugees are not integrated with the host communities in Bole Michael.

Thus, the findings of the study indicate that, among other impacting factors, the refugees' economic engagement formal and informal sectors has a tremendous impact on the integration process. The refugees' economic engagements have been affected by the host state policy directives, refugees' interests in integration and hosts' perceptions of local integrations.

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