

The effects of childhood work on migration decision during adulthood in rural Ethiopia

Mussa, E.C.*, Admassie, A.†, Mirzabaev, A. and Rukundo, E.N.*

*Center for Development Research (ZEF), University of Bonn, Germany

†Ethiopian Economics Association (EEA), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Key Messages

1. Village proximity to thriving urban areas and highways associated with youth rural out-migration in Ethiopia.
2. Childhood work and schooling circumstances could also affect individuals' migration decision later in life.
3. While village out-migration in general was female-dominated, economic migration was mostly male oriented.
4. Marriage has been the main reasons of migration, multi-task children dominated the economic migration.

Background

- Ethiopia has been experiencing an overwhelming migration of the youth out of the rural areas since 2000s.
- However, spatial and sectoral wage-gaps fail to provide important insights regarding the youth out-migrations witnessed.
- We examined the effects of childhood work among 4-14-year-old children in 1999/2000 on migration decisions as adults in 2015/2016.
- We found that childhood work could affect migration decisions later in life.

Research Questions

1. Who migrated and who left behind?
2. Does childhood work affect migration decisions in the long-term?

Econometric modeling

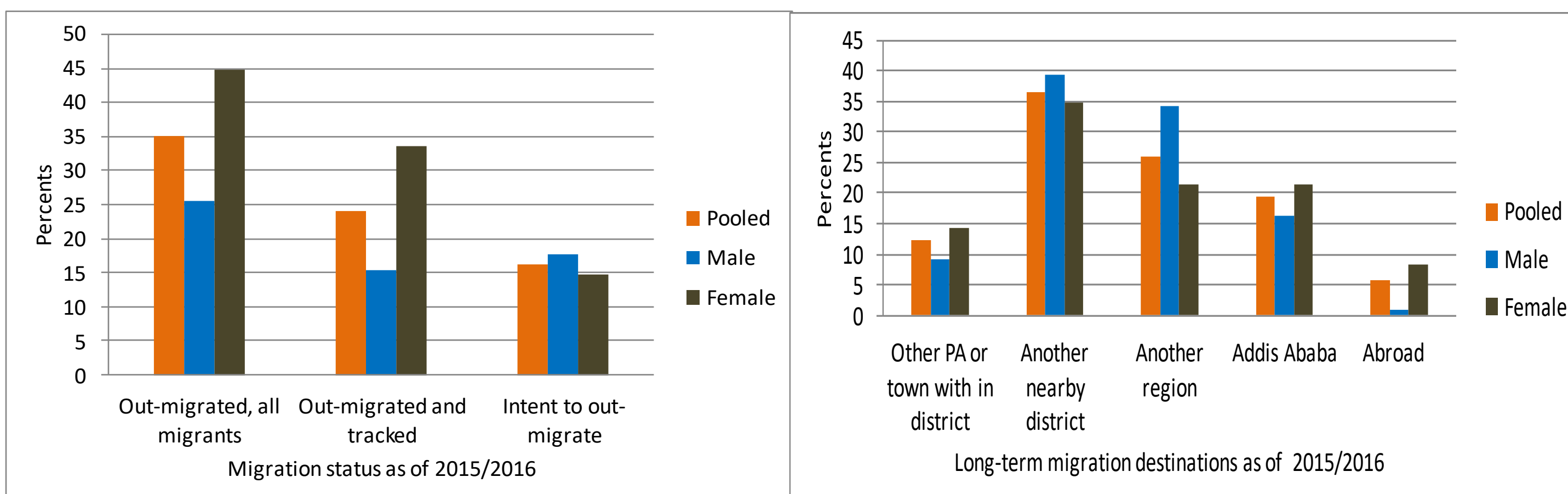
1. **Logistic regression:** to identify the correlations between childhood work and migration decisions during adulthood, controlling for other factors.
2. **Inverse Probability Weighting with Propensity Scores (IPW-PSM)**
 - **Treated group:** Children who combined work with schooling
 - **Control 1:** Work-only children, treatment is "Schooling participation".
 - **Control 2:** School-only children, treatment is "Work participation".

Type of Data: Individual level panel from five rural districts in Ethiopia. Baseline survey: 1999/2000 (N=789), Follow-up survey: 2015/16 (N=652).

Results and discussion

(1) Characterizing long-term migrants and non-migrants

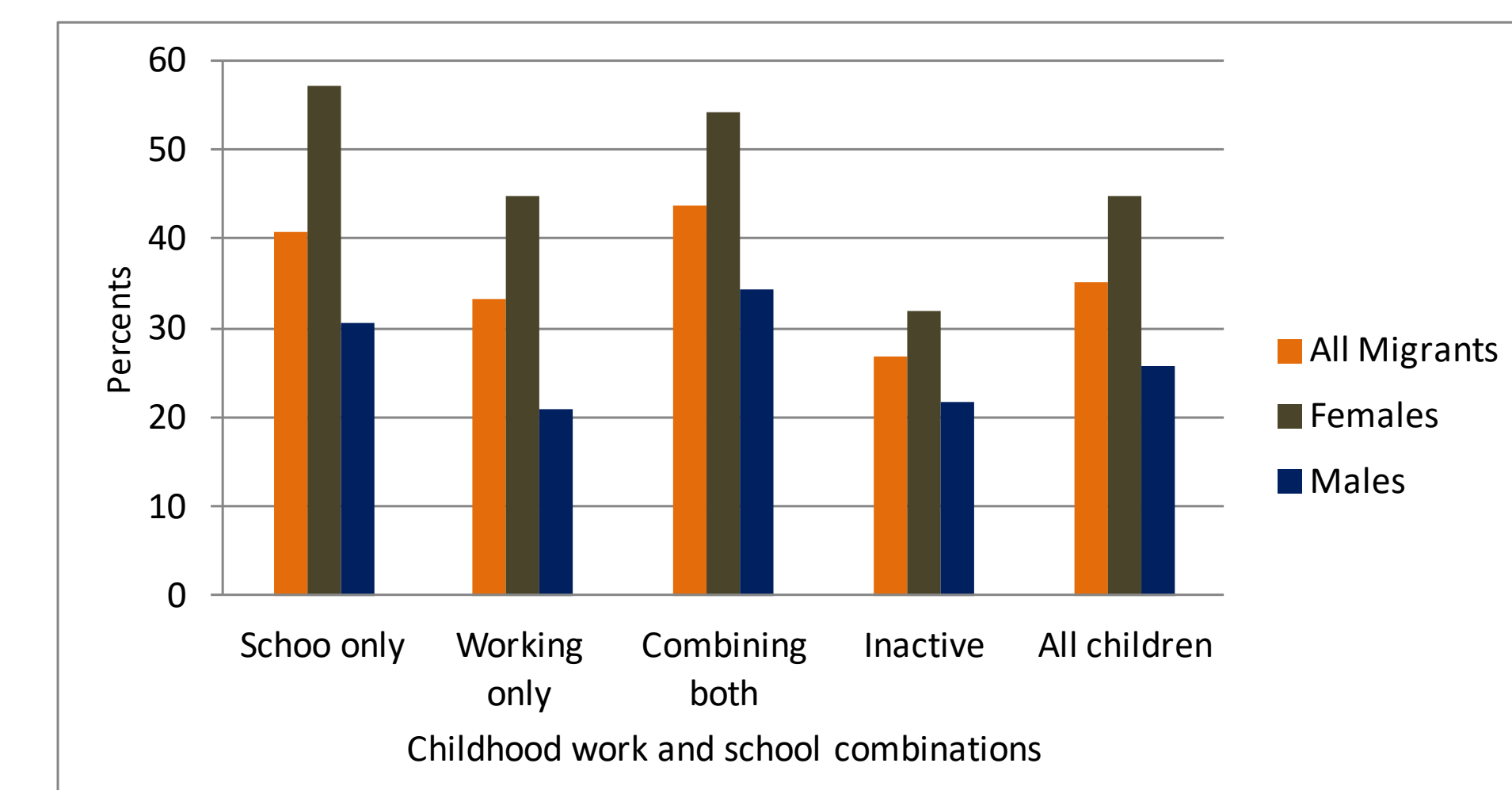
Figure 1: Migration characteristics after the baseline survey (1999/2000)



- Females are more likely to migrate (about 45%) than males (25%).
- About 15% of non-migrants intent to migrate, slightly more among males.
- Other districts within regions, mainly urban areas, were main destinations.
- Gender differentials in migration destinations mainly when out-of region.

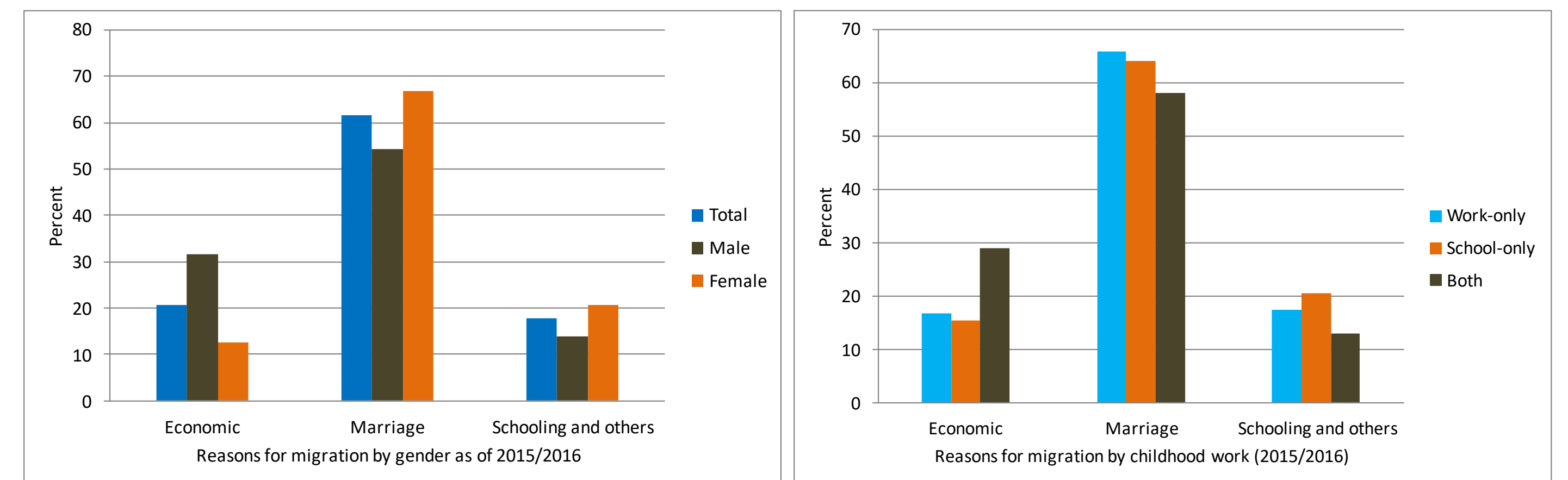
(2) Childhood work, migration status, and migration reasons

Figure 2: Migration status by gender on childhood work conditions



- Migration among school only and multi-task females is above 50%.
- Less migration among Inactive children.
- Working-only male children tend to stay in the villages when grown-up.

Figure 3: Reasons for migration by gender and childhood work



- Migration due to marriage was dominant, mainly among females (2/3).
- Males are more likely to be economic migrants (>30%) than females (~12%).
- In addition to marriage, many multi-task children tend to migrate due to economic reasons (~30%).

(3) Childhood work and Migration: Logit regression

Table 1: The association between childhood work and migration in later life

Childhood work	Full sample	Chores	Farming	Females	Males
Schooling only	1.68 (0.48)*	1.98 (0.70)*	1.00 (0.7)	1.33 (0.54)	2.58 (1.17)**
Combining both	1.60 (0.37)**	1.74 (0.50)*	0.47 (0.15)**	1.60 (0.55)	2.18 (0.79)**
Observations	529	376	246	254	275

Note: Work-only is the base outcome; Inactive children were excluded; Values are OR; Values in the parentheses are Standard errors; */**/***, are significant at 10%, 5% and 1%, respectively

- The odds of migration for School-only children relative to work only: 1.68
- The odds of migration for multi-task children relative to work only: 1.60
- Mostly consistent effects among multi-task across disaggregated groups.

(4) Childhood work and Migration: Schooling as treatment

Table 2: The effects of childhood work on migration later in life (Control 1).

Effects	Full sample	Chores	Farming	Females	Males
ATE	0.122 (0.05)**	0.137 (0.07)**	0.138 (0.08)*	0.122 (0.08)	0.182 (0.09)**
ATET	0.121 (0.06)**	0.128 (0.08)	0.086 (0.08)	0.154 (0.08)*	0.078 (0.09)
Observations	357	246	189	180	177

Note: Work-only is the base outcome; Inactive children were excluded; Values are OR; values in the parentheses are standard errors; */**/***, are significant at 10%, 5% and 1%, respectively.

- **Control 1:** Work-only children, treatment is "Schooling participation"
- Combining work with schooling raises the probability of migration by 12%.

(5) Childhood work and Migration: Working as treatment

Table 3: The effects of childhood work on migration later in life (Control 1).

Effects	Full sample
ATE	0.005 (0.08)
ATET	0.002 (0.09)
Observations	189

Values in parentheses are standard errors.

- **Control 2:** School-only children, treatment is "Work participation"
- No effect of working while schooling on migration compared to school only children.

Concluding remarks

- Children's working participation while schooling could facilitate the long-term changes in rural social landscape.
- However, lack of access to schooling among rural children may lead to less mobility, leaving behind in rural areas and working in agriculture
- On the other hand, access to schooling seems to promote youth leaving rural areas and working in non-farm activities.
- The child work and schooling dynamics coupled with village accessibility may contribute to youth-led rural socio-economic transitions.