

Education, Gender, and Mobility in Urban Ethiopia

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In 1973 Bjerén collected data on basic demographic characteristics and migration trajectories of a sample of heads of households and wives in the town of Shashemene in central southern Ethiopia. In 2008 we had the opportunity to return to Shashemene for a study of the changes that have taken place in the 35 years of revolution, socialist people's republic, and liberation that have passed. The new data set includes detailed life trajectories (mobility, livelihoods, marital and reproductive histories) for around 500 adult individuals, as well as basic demographic data for their entire households. Major differences can be detected in the level of education and literacy of the adult population; also in the migration fields of the town. There are contradictory trends: a trend towards "modernization" and globalization (measured in terms of literacy, forms of livelihood, and household connections with major cities and countries abroad) and at the same time a trend towards "ruralization" (measured as percentages born in rural areas and moving into town directly from a countryside). In this paper we want to analyze the complex relationship between education, gender and mobility in this specific context.