

RESEARCH ARTICLES

Forced Migration and Resilience in the EHAGL Region: Resource Caravans and Passageways of Urban Refugees in Addis Ababa ¹

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Abstract

The paper presents the plight of cross-border displacement in the East, Horn of Africa and Great Lakes (EHAGL) region by exploring the resilience experience of adult refugees living in Addis Ababa. The study is based on resource caravans and passageways principles of the COR theory and defining resilience as a process of harnessing resources to sustain well-being. The study followed a qualitative research approach and primary data were collected from in-depth interviews and focused group discussions (FGDs) with urban refugees, Key Information Interviews (KIs) with humanitarian professionals, participant observation of neighbourhoods and refugee organizations. Primary data were triangulated by review of relevant documents. The collected data were analysed thematically using the framework method. Results of the study indicate that refugees left their countries to escape state repression and conflict. While transiting, refugees cited insecurity, political instability, conflict, family separation and deportation as the reasons behind their move to Ethiopia. Forced military recruitment and repatriation, extortion, discrimination, fear of attack and cost of living are additional resource loss factors. Migration from refugee camps in different parts of Ethiopia to Addis Ababa was driven by intrastate conflict, inter-communal violence, poor living conditions in and around the camps and the perceived opportunities and resources of the city. Albeit the well-being of refugees in the city is influenced by a range of resources, diaspora support, particularly among Eritrean refugees, is the most consequential resource mobilized by the refugees to build their resilience. This has turned the city into a passageway of refugee resilience and emigration. Yet, efforts to build refugee resilience in the city are challenged by a number of barriers such as the difficulty of obtaining work licenses and permits, organizational constraints, language barriers, and refugee misconceptions. Addressing severe resource loss factors of resilience and well-being in origin, transit and destination countries of the EHAGL region is sine qua non to prevent and manage the scourge of forced migration in the region.

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Key Words:

Addis Ababa, EHAGL, forced migration, resource caravans and passageways, refugee resilience

1. Introduction

Refugees and asylum seekers flee their places seeking a place of safety and sanctuary from an imminent threat to their well-being (d'Orsi, 2015). They face persecution, violence, flight, and exile (Hien, 1993). Their life challenges unfold across different geographies encompassing their homeland and country of exile (Wessels, 2014). This long process represents a significant transition that has deleterious effect on their life (Shakespeare-Finch & Wickham, 2009). Moreover, the prolonged nature of cross-border displacement obliges them to be in a refugee like situation for the remainder of their life (Devictor & Do, 2017). In response, refugees in a Protracted Refugee Situation (PRS) endeavour to weather the pre-migration trauma and the post-migration difficulties they often face in their life through the mobilization of resources they have at their disposal (Schweitzer, et al., 2007; Khawaja et al., 2008; Renkens et al., 2022).

Despite the presence of enormous resource and resilience among the refugee population, the coverage of mental health problems such as post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety disorders, and depression within the refugee population have overshadowed the research on the well-being of refugees as the substantial chunk of the literature have been focusing mainly on the clinical and trauma based perspectives of the displaced (Thomas et al., 2011; Kiteki, 2016; Issari et al., 2021). In relative terms, there is a paucity of research that puts refugees at the center by emphasizing their experience of resilience, strength and active struggles (Lavie-Ajayi & Slonim-Nevo, 2017; Tippens, 2019). Despite the Global South hosting the overwhelming majority of the world's refugee population (Gorlic, 2022), available studies have not treated the issue of refugee resilience in both urban and developing world context from the perspective of resource caravans and passageways (e.g. see Sigamoney, 2018; Ikanda, 2018; Tippens, 2019; Yotebieng et al., 2019). In addition, a review of previous studies on refugees in Addis Ababa warrants a research on the topic of refugee resilience. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to address these gaps in the context of the developing world by giving weight to the refugees' experience of resource loss and gain in the course of the cross-border displacement process.

This study intends to use the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory principles of resource caravans and passageways to explore the phenomenon of refugee resilience. Resilience is a complex multidisciplinary construct that has been defined in various ways so what it means literally depends on how it is defined (Southwick et al., 2014; Wu & Ying, 2021). In the context of this study, resilience has been defined as a process of harnessing resources to sustain well-being (Panter-Brick & Leckman, 2013). This definition is vital to understand the construct of resilience in the context of cross-border forced migration in three different ways. First, the word process brings dynamism to the application of resilience in the context of forced migration by unfolding it over the course of displacement that goes far beyond just an attribute and a capacity. Second, the word resource enables to understand the most important resources of well-being among vulnerable groups like refugees. Third, the use of well-being goes beyond the narrower version of resilience as health and absence of pathology. At this juncture, it is important

to bring how the two central concepts of resources and well-being, which make up the notion of resilience in the context of the study, are used. Well-being is defined from a eudaimonic point of view as the fulfilment of a person's functioning in terms of satisfying one's needs, goals and demands (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryan et al., 2008). Resources refer to the refugees' social, cultural, personal and material means of securing their well-being in the process of cross-border displacement (Ryan et al., 2008). The presence of at least one stressor is a prerequisite to the discussion of resilience (Ungar, 2011). The stressors under the realm of the study refer to general adverse circumstances that include suffering and difficulty that are related with hardship, trauma and daily stressors spanning the pre-migration, transit and post migration phases of displacement (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013).

The COR theory's concepts of 'resource caravans' and 'passageways' are well suited to explore the aforementioned version of resilience. According to the theory, people are protective of what they value as essentials and when these resources are lost, threatened to be lost or when the investments on them fails, they react in different ways. The tendency of these resources to either aggregate or fail to aggregate and to not exist in isolation is known as resource caravans (Hobfoll, 2014). These resource caravans exist and persist in the context of the environment; hence, giving emphasis to the environmental context, which has been metaphorised as resource caravan passageways, should be vital in dealing with trauma response. In COR theory, passageways refer to the environmental conditions that facilitate the change of resources either positively or negatively (Halbesleben et al., 2014). Looking at refugee resilience through the lens of resource caravans and passageways offers a three pronged advantage. First, the environment is given a weight in understanding refugees' pathways of resilience building. Second, it can help to grasp cultural nuances of resilience building. Third, it acknowledges refugees as actors that try to negotiate and navigate their way out of the predicaments they find themselves in. Thus, the concepts of resource caravans and passageways have the ability to characterize the phenomenon of resilience among refugees as they grapple with different stressors, try to adjust their footing in life, and even thrive. By doing so, the paper provides an insight into issues and general problems of forced displacement in Africa by taking the East, Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes Region (EHAGL) in general and Ethiopia in particular as corridors of cross-border displacement. The main objective of the article is to explore the resilience experience of refugees living in Addis Ababa from the perspective of resource caravans and passageways theoretical perspective.

The study adopts the broader refugee definition of the 1969 OAU convention governing the specific aspects of the refugee problem in Africa (Arboleda, 1991). Accordingly, refugees are people who are outside their country of nationality and are unable or unwilling to avail themselves to the protection of that country due to a well-founded fear of prosecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, political opinion, external aggression, occupation, foreign domination as well as events seriously disturbing in either part or the whole of their country of origin or nationality (OAU, 1969).

2. Research Methods

2.1 Research Setting

The study is conducted considering the EHAGL region as a case in point. The EHAGL region is composed of three sub regions within East and Central Africa namely the Great Lakes Region, the East African region and the Horn of Africa. The region is regarded as a major hotspot of forced migration and it has shown a steady rise in its number of refugees and asylum seekers over the last decade (see figure 2). As a result, countries in the region have been the source, transit and destination countries of refugees (see figure 1). The region takes the mantle in hosting the largest number of refugees and asylum seekers in Africa. Within the region, Addis Ababa is an important refugee spot city as it is currently hosting more than seventy thousand refugees coming from twenty six different nations with Eritreans and Somalis being the two largest urban refugee groups (Betts, 2019; RRS, 2022). It is therefore a crucial city for conducting a study on the phenomenon of refugee resilience in its wider scope. The study used sefers (neighbourhoods) and operational offices of refugee organizations as primary field sites as they are the two main locations in the city where refugees gather in significant numbers.

Figure 1 below shows the overall situation of cross-border displacement in the EHAGL region as of February 2023 (UNHCR, 2023). As shown there, except Eritrea, which is a significantly net refugee sending country, all other countries are source, transit and/or destination countries of refugees in the region.

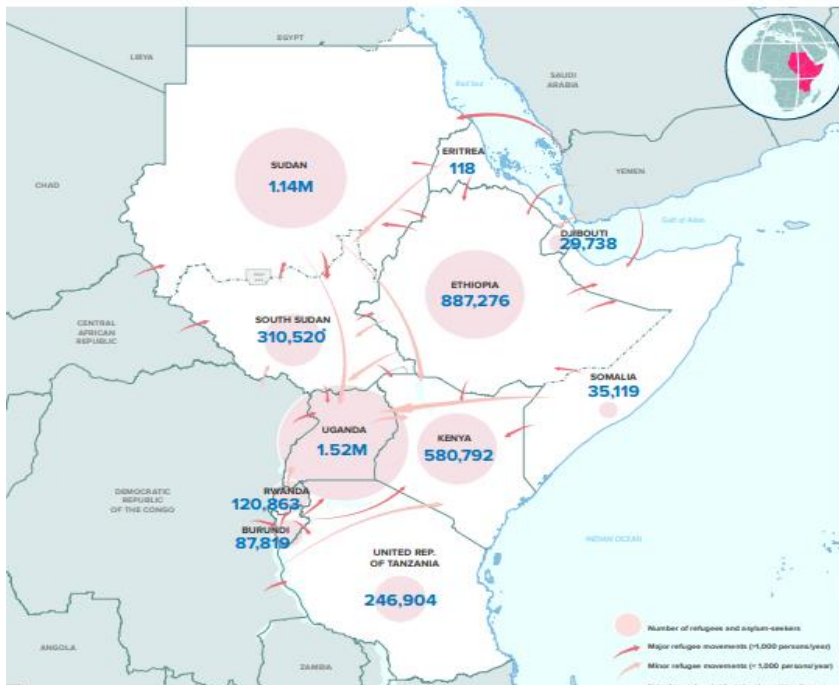


Figure 1 Total no. of refugees and asylum-seekers in the EHAGL region by country of Asylum as of 28 February 2023 (Source UNHCR Regional bureau for East, Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes)

Figure 2 below also indicates the ten years (2013- 2023) annual number of refugees and asylum seekers in the region. As shown in the figure, there is a steady increase in the number of refugees and asylum seekers showing that cross-border displacement has become a norm of the region.

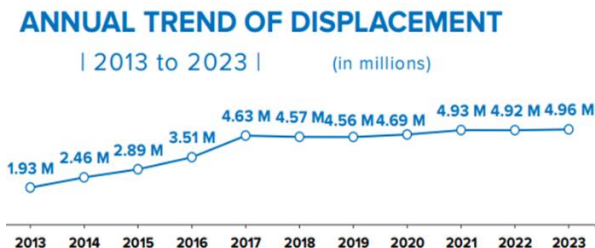


Figure 2 Annual trend of cross-border displacement in the EHAGL region (2013-2023) (Source UNHCR Regional bureau for East, Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes)

2.2 Data Collection Tools and Procedures

Data were collected using in-depth interviews (n=46), focus group discussion (FGDs) with Eritrean refugees (n=3), key informant interviews (KIIs) with humanitarian and government officials (n=6), participant observation of sefers (neighbourhoods) and secondary data including proclamations and websites of refugee organizations such as UNHCR, DICAC, DRC, NRC and ZOA. The study was conducted in two phases. First, contact was made with refugee focusing governmental and non-governmental organizations in Addis Ababa to recruit potential research participants. Then, empirical qualitative data were collected using the aforementioned data collection tools. The in-depth interviewees were selected with the intention of maintaining the heterogeneity of participants. FGDs were conducted only with Eritrean refugees since it was difficult to gather other refugees as they are either small in number or difficult to bring them in one setting. In addition, the extremely large number of Eritrean refugees residing in Addis Ababa also necessitated the deployment of FGD in their case in order to involve them in large numbers within a reasonable period of time. FGD participants were recruited by offering incentives and through local networks and contacts. Two of the FGDs had five respondents whereas the third one had six participants.

To collect the qualitative data, three research assistants (Eritreans refugees with previous experience of working in humanitarian situations) were recruited and inducted on the purpose, methods and modalities of the data collection. In order to incorporate the views of humanitarian professionals and practitioners, key informant interviews were conducted with two government officials and six representatives of NGOs. Participant observation in different sefers of Addis Ababa was also conducted in order to understand the whereabouts of refugees in the city and the resources they have at their disposal for sustaining their well-being. The observation has focused on observing refugee concentrated sefers, visiting refugee owned and cultural business establishments and restaurants as well as participating in cultural activities carried out by the refugee communities in the city. To this end, repeated transect walks have been made across the sefers. While conducting the participant observation, closer attention was made to the conversation among refugees as well as exchanges carried out with non-refugee inhabitants of the city. Notes were taken during the field observation

sessions and compiled later on to form ethnographic field notes of the study. Interviews were conducted in English, Amharic, Tigrigna, Arabic, Nuer, and Kiswahili languages with interpreters hired to cater for refugees who preferred to be interviewed in their mother tongue.

This ethnographic study is part of a larger research project that was conducted between June 2022 and December 2023. Prior to the commencement of the data gathering stage, ethical clearance of the study was issued by the review committee of the Centre for African and Asian Studies in the Addis Ababa University. The interpreters were inducted about the purpose and methods of the study prior to data collection. All interviewees were recorded on a portable device and transcribed verbatim. Coded names were assigned to the actual names of the study participants in order to ensure confidentiality. A consent script was read for the participants and their verbal consent was obtained before each of the data collection session. Since the study investigates the life experience of refugees in Addis Ababa, refugees were sceptical and fearful initially when they were approached to be involved in the study. However, attempt was made to win back their trust by establishing gradual and repeated contact with them. To that end, participant observation enabled the data collector to get close to the day to day life of the refugees in the city.

2.3 Data Analysis

The study conducted a thematic framework analysis for analysing and interpreting observation notes, interview scripts as well as discussion and relevant secondary data. According to Gale et al. (2013), this method is helpful for identifying commonalities and differences while analysing qualitative data as well as for establishing associations between different parts of the data to elucidate descriptive and/or explanatory conclusions that band together around themes. The seven steps of conducting the thematic framework analysis include transcription, familiarizing oneself with the data, coding, developing a working analytical framework, applying the analytical framework, charting the data into the framework matrix and interpreting the data. The study used the N Vivo 9 qualitative data analysis software which can assist with data management and analysis.

3. Findings

3.1 Resource Loss Factors at the Time of Initial Displacement

Literature shows that pervasive resource loss is the prime reason for cross-border displacement of people. When refugees talked about the life they had in their countries of origin, they pointed out a number of nuanced adversities that threatened the resources they had and forced them to flee their homeland. Some of these resource loss factors include political repression, state fragility, interethnic civil war and multipartite civil war.

All Eritrean FGD participants underscored the manner in which their life back home had been compromised severely as a result of the prevailing repressive political environment that exists in their country, the most notable form of it being the presence of “me ‘ekebi zeyblu hagerawi agelglot” (indefinite mandatory national service) that was levied on every adult citizen of the country. According to the FGD participants, the high degree of state censorship that existed in the country permeated different spheres of life beyond

the military. This has prevented the majority of Eritreans from achieving their personal dreams and aspirations. This total control of the state bears down on ordinary citizens of the country in the form of acts of human rights violations and crowding out of political and economic spaces making them unsafe and unable to pursue their life goals. The state's domination in the political and economic sectors of the country starved off their participation in these domains of life. The human right violations range from the violation of basic rights like freedom of expression and movement to extreme forms of rights violation like arbitrary arrests, detention without trial and persecution on religious and political grounds. A woman Eritrean refugee disclosed how hopelessness about her future life fuelled her displacement as she was transfixed by the unchanging political condition of their country for as long as she could ever remember it in their life. Likewise an interviewee from Burundi, Bujumbura fled his country in 2011 after witnessing the killing of his parents due to the violence committed by government security forces. This shows how political violence persisted to exist in the country long after the presumed ending of the civil war in 2005.

Another cause for displacement is insecurity and marginalization amidst state fragility in the context of Somalia. In this regard, interviewed Somalia refugees discussed how their life was affected as a result of the prevailing insecurities in different parts of their country. Two interviewees from the Somali Bantu community narrated how they had to initially flee from Kismayo to Mogadishu and then leave Somalia as their life was put in danger when they had to endure attacks and persecutions targeting their community amidst the volatile security situation of their country. Another twenty-one years old former Mogadishu resident said the al-shabab threatened the life of his mother for working with the federal government's ministry of health on the polio eradication programme. A twenty-five years old former inhabitant of Gulgudud region in the Galmudug state of Somalia close to Ethiopia talked about how the unpredictable security situation of the town made him runaway crossing the border of Ethiopia.

The third identified cause of displacement is interethnic conflict. Data obtained from South Sudanese interviewees indicated that the civil war they experienced in their country was ethnic in nature as belligerents on the warring sides were coalescing along ethnic lines. Targeted attacks against perceived targets of opposing ethnic communities were common occurrence after the outbreak of the war. South Sudanese refugees interviewed in the study recounted how their experience of violence in the aftermath of the war casted a shadow on their life. They narrated experiencing traumatic events like loss of loved ones, gunshot wounds, being caught up in crossfire and the danger of being abducted by militant groups while they were living inside their country. The refugees from Congo cited the civil war in the Eastern part of their country as the underlying reason that made them leave their country. One of the Congolese refugees, for example, narrated how he had to flee his home town of Goma in North Kivu following the eruption of Mount Nyamulagira in 2001 towards the direction of Bukavu in South Kivu only to be displaced again into Rwanda as a result of the fight that ensued between the government soldiers and rebel groups that operate in eastern DRC. Two of the Burundian refugees attributed their forced departure to the civil war that engulfed their country from 1993-2005 as they narrated experiencing the loss of loved ones in the course of the gruesome civil war that overwhelmed their country.

The involvement of multiple countries in the conflict in Yemen and Syria is another cause for the displacement of Yemeni and Syrians. Regarding this matter, Yemeni refugees emphasized the eruption of a multipartite civil war between the Yemeni government and the Houthi fighters as the crisis that turned their lives upside down. They were exposed to different traumatic events that made them flee their country. A thirty-three years old Yemeni former resident of Sana'a explained how she fled from Yemen amidst the raging war as follows:

“Where I lived in Sana'a, there were mountains and the Houthi rebels mounted a missile a top of the mountains. In return, Saudi Arabia blanket bombed in the city to strike the missiles. We had to endure witnessing the horrible loss of life and destruction of property that was happening as result. I felt completely unsafe. That is the time when I decided to leave Sana'a and Yemen.”

Likewise, a forty-one years old Syrian refugee described the horrible effects of the Syrian civil war on the lives of Syrians to explain why they were forced to leave their country.

“We used to have a good life, but our house was destroyed as a result of the war. Our shop was destroyed and we lost everything at once. We were lucky to leave Syria alive. Our life was the only thing we could salvage.”

Refugees also lost their resources while they were on the journey to flee their country. While fleeing their home, they faced multiple risks including physical, psychological, economic, social and cultural ones. All these risks in one way or another have deteriorated the available resources of migrants. In this regard, Eritrean FGD participants stated about the stress they went through as they anxiously awaited the day they left their country. They pointed out the importance of paying brokers in securing a safer route out of the country. Eritrean refugees attempting to escape alone have a high chance of facing different risks including getting caught, facing attacks by wild animals or becoming causality of the government's shoot to kill policy along the country's border areas. The story of an Eritrean refugee who had been a victim of rape and unwanted pregnancy and ended up being caught inside Eritrea as she was fleeing to Ethiopia illustrates the incredible risk of fleeing Eritrea, and is an example of the risk that migrants face in their journey to flee their country. She had to wither time in prison for her crime of escaping from Eritrea and stigma surrounding her unwanted pregnancy before succeeding in her second attempt to flee to Ethiopia. Similarly, South Sudanese, Congolese, and Burundian refugees mentioned about the very long treks they had to make while leaving their countries often facing exhaustion, hunger and wild animal attacks. The Somali refugees experienced making long and arduous journeys as they were exiting their country. Some had to pay exorbitant prices to embark on a boat that took them out of Mogadishu. All these risks of refugees resulted in a loss of physical, social, psychological and economical resources. In such circumstances, refugees had to rely on the resources at their disposal for the different risks they took and investments they made while they were leaving their countries.

The Syrian and Yemeni refugees spoke about investing whatever asset they had at their hand to finance the journey of leaving their respective countries. For example, information collected from a Syrian refugee revealed that he left his country by selling his properties with small amount of money just to rent a vehicle that eventually took his family out of Syria. Another Syrian interviewee mentioned that, as the war was unfolding in the country, he sold his belongings to catch the final flight departing from Syria to

Sudan. The Yemeni informants also mentioned the investments they had to make while leaving their country. An interviewed Yemeni refugee recounted how he invested his lifelong saving to finance his flight out of Aden to Djibouti when he escaped the conflict in his country. Previous investment the refugees made on social ties helped some of them in securing a pathway to Ethiopia. In this respect, a Somali refugee disclosed about the role of chain migration in his journey to Ethiopia as he and his siblings came to the country following the footsteps of their mother and a friend of their mother's arranged their journey to Ethiopia.

Despite the resource loss and different kinds of risks that refugees endured and the investments they made while leaving their countries, they all agreed, they were under strained resource loss of displacement. This demonstrates the maxim "resilience as a process of harnessing resources to sustain well-being" at play during the initial phase of their cross-border displacement.

3.2 Situating Resource during Second time Displacement/Migration

Considerable numbers of refugees and asylum seekers pointed out that they had settled and started living in other countries after leaving their respective countries of origin. For some refugees, it took only a few days to leave those countries while others stayed for quite a long time. Most were forced to flee again while some made a conscious decision of migrating to Ethiopia hoping to leverage the perceived resource they would get by moving to the country.

3.2.1 Pervasive Resource Loss

Refugees can be prone to multiple displacements in their life time if they experienced a situation that put their well-being in danger. In the study, there were refugees who were forced to leave the countries they were seeking asylum and flee to Ethiopia. Their resource was compromised to a degree that put their life in harm's way when they were living in these countries. Congolese and Burundian refugee interviewees who arrived to Ethiopia after passing through and staying in the East African countries of Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya mentioned how they felt unsafe while they were in those countries and had to move further north into Ethiopia. A thirty-three years old Congolese refugee said he decided to leave Rwanda because he felt threatened as a result of the tense relationship that existed between the governments of Rwanda and the Congo despite being in a country of people who share common cultural and linguistic features with him. Another thirty-two years old Congolese refugee mentioned that powerful people in Uganda who supported the March 23 Movement (M23) forced him to back and even work with the rebel group simply because he hailed from the Tutsi ethnic group that the rebel group is "allegedly" fighting for. He reported that

"They obliged you to fight for your tribe just because you hail from the same tribe they belong to despite the fact that you are personally an ardent proponent of peace and non-violence".

He did not want to take the risk of staying there and decided to leave Uganda.

Interviewed Burundian refugees also stated feeling threatened when they were in Tanzania and Kenya. They attributed the sense of fear and anxiety they were having in those countries to the danger of being attacked and forcibly returned to Burundi by agents and supporters of the Burundian government. The situation a forty year old Burundian refugee found himself in when he was staying in those countries can attest to

this claim. When he was staying in Tanzania, he, his wife and their two children had been forcefully repatriated to Burundi from Mtabila refugee camp in Kigoma, western Tanzania. This is in the aftermath of a forceful closure and destruction of the camp following the agreement that was reached by the government of Tanzania and Burundi in December 2012. Haunted by his childhood trauma and hearing the imprisonment and murder of fellow returnees in Burundi, it took him and others only a day to embark on a trek to Tanzania once again as it was the closest and only way they knew out of their supposed home country. But their intention during the second time was not to stay in Tanzania because of what had already happened to them. Thus, he said they first went to Kasulu, a Tanzanian town close to Burundi. From there, they took a bus to Mwanza, in Northern Tanzania, before eventually crossing the Kenyan border via the Sirari-Isebenya border crossing. He said he stayed in Kenya for one year applying to get a refugee status and decided to cross the border of Ethiopia when he realized that he was no longer safe there because of the danger posed by supporters and spies of the then Burundian government.

A forty-one year old Bantu Somali refugee on his part narrated about how he stayed in Yemen for 8 years and managed to start a family life after exiting Somalia only for him to be displaced again from Yemen as a result of the civil war in the country forcing him to seek asylum for the second time in his life in Ethiopia. Refugees fleeing Yemen identified Mukala (South Yemen) to Bosaso (Puntland), Aden (South Yemen) to Berbera (Somaliland) and Aden (South Yemen) to Obock as the three routes refugees from Yemen use when crossing the Arabian Peninsula to the Horn of Africa. There are also Eritrean refugees that were in another country prior to fleeing to Ethiopia due to the adverse circumstances they experienced in Eritrea. Specifically, one Eritrean refugee explained how the outbreak of the South Sudanese civil war forced him to flee South Sudan and enter Ethiopia via Sudan after living in the country for four years.

3.2.2 *Perceived Resource Gain*

The fact that refugees leave one host country to travel to another does not mean that they cease to be considered as a refugee or simply become migrants. However, refugees still make conscious decisions about changing their choice of country of asylum based on the perceived resource they expect to gain by moving to another country. This study identified refugees who relocated from their countries of first asylum by hoping to leverage on the resources they hoped to get in Ethiopia. A thirty-three year old Yemeni refugee who was a banker and had a better life before the start of the war in Yemen had invested her saving to migrate to Egypt when the war broke out. But she did not feel welcomed in Egypt because of the visa restriction that was put on Yemeni citizens arriving in Egypt. She then decided to move to Ethiopia instead of seeking refugee status in Egypt as her parents were Yemenis of Ethiopian origin and she felt that it was better to move to Ethiopia. Another forty year old Yemeni refugee flew out of Aden with his children to Djibouti amidst the ongoing war in his country but found it convenient to move with his children to Ethiopia as they could not cope with living in Djibouti due to the expensive cost of living. Another twenty five year old Yemeni left his country by taking a boat trip from Hadramout to Bossaso in the Puntland region of Somalia and said he was not able to get any kind of support from the UNHCR despite paying \$30 to get registered in Hargeisa, which finally made him decide to move to Ethiopia.

A thirty-three year old Congolese, who identified himself as a banyamulenge Tutsi, remarked that he was jailed on suspicion of being a member of al-shabab when he was both in Tanzania and Kenya despite holding a Congolese ID. Such kinds of mistreatments led him to think that Congolese Tutsi refugees are not welcome in those countries, which made him decide to flee to Ethiopia. When a twenty-six years old South Sudanese refugee was asked why he came to Ethiopia via Sudan, he explained that he was cut off from his family members who were residing in Nasir, a town close to the Ethiopian side of the border due to the ongoing war. He then had to escape to Sudan and move to Ethiopia to reunite with his family who managed to reach Gambella safely. Similarly, all the participants from Syria that were interviewed in the study claimed entering into Ethiopia from Sudan in order to escape the fallouts of the political instability that had become a common occurrence of the country. An Eritrean interviewee on his part stated that Eritrean refugees who managed to save some money in their time in Israel preferred Ethiopia as one of the relocation countries to invest their savings given the extremely discriminatory Israeli immigration policy and the refusal of the Eritrean government to accept Eritrean returnees from Israel.

3.3 Resource and Well-being Compromise in Refugee Camps

Refugees stated that they were able to avoid some of the resource loss issues they were having in their prior setting when they started residing in the refugee camps of Ethiopia. Yet, they pointed out facing various environmental factors that forced them to leave the camps and relocate to Addis Ababa. Two slightly somewhat different range of opinions emerged when the refugees were asked how they saw the quality of life they had when they were residing in the camps. FGD participants and in-depth interview informants who were in different refugee camps prior to their arrival in Addis Ababa made reference to how the limited resources they had were further undermined due to the severe situation that existed inside the camps eventually forcing them to move to Addis Ababa. They complained about how their well-being was compromised as a result of the lack of adequate medical services, meagre allocation of monthly rations, limited and low paying employment, underdeveloped infrastructure, harsh climatic conditions as well as conflict and security issues that existed in and around the camps. For these refugees, the conditions were unbearable and they considered them as the main factors that made them look for every opportunity they could find to relocate to Addis Ababa. Other refugees indicated that they were willing to remain in the camps with the support they were getting from UNHCR, the World Food Programme (WFP) and other donors but they had to leave after the existing situation deteriorated and threatened their life.

Refugees in Ethiopia are allowed to remain in Addis Ababa de jure only if they originated from minority countries or are critically ill at the time of their arrival. Otherwise, refugees in Addis Ababa are expected to stay in one of the refugee camps that are sprung out in different remote areas of the country and indulge in one of the two processes of securing a city residence permit. The first choice offers a pathway of temporary relocation to Addis Ababa for camp refugees on grounds of medical treatment and physical protection. For example, a South Sudanese mother with her two children was relocated to Addis Ababa from Kule refugee camp in Gambella region, Ethiopia, after their tent was set ablaze following refugee-host community violence that already claimed the life of her brother-in-law. Another 23 year old South Sudanese refugee was relocated to Addis Ababa following the injury he sustained due to the collapse of an illegal gold

mining that claimed the life of two of his co-workers on the spot in an area close to Tsor refugee camp of the Benishangul-Gumuz region, Ethiopia. He said he was engaged in such kind of illegal activity in order to support the meagre and untimely food ration they were getting at the camp. There were also Eritrean, Somali, Congolese and Burundian refugee participants who were relocated to Addis Ababa because of the life threatening health situation they had when they were in different refugee camps. The second pathway of urban relocation is through the Out of Camp (OCP) scheme of relocation to urban areas for refugees that can support themselves and provide a security guarantor for staying in the city. A 27 years old blind Eritrean refugee narrates how he managed to relocate to Addis Ababa from Adi-Harush refugee camp in Tigray through the OCP in the following manner:

“After arriving in Adi-Harush camp, I stayed there for two months. There was a girl who helped me in terms of maintaining my hygiene and doing my laundry. I was with her for two months. When she left to Addis Ababa to pursue her process to go abroad through marriage, I did not know anyone that could take care of me. On her own initiative, she said she would take care of me and I came to Addis to be with her.”

Initially, this urban relocation scheme was offered only for Eritrean refugees but it has now been extended for refugees of other countries. However, Eritrean refugees still remain as the main beneficiaries of this arrangement. An Ethiopian humanitarian professional working for the Refugee and Returnee Services (RRS) attributed this to the three advantages Eritrean and to some extent Somali refugees have over the other refugees in Addis Ababa. First, the law was initially applied only for Eritrean refugees and that has paved the way for them to be in Addis Ababa in large numbers. Second, the fact that the culture of the two communities is prevalent in the capital city motivates them to relocate to Addis Ababa. Most importantly, they are likely to get financial support from relatives and family members abroad and this entices them to relocate to the city of Addis Ababa through the OCP and pursue their dreams.

Nevertheless, there were Eritrean refugees that had been relocated to the city on their own without adhering to these working principles on the ground. For instance, an interviewed Eritrean refugee explained how he moved straight from the border to Addis Ababa when he arrived in Ethiopia and started working at a barbershop that was owned by his fellow countryman in order to save money before returning back to the camp to attain registration and residence permit. He eventually chose to return back to the city after securing only his registration even if it was illegal to be in the city without the residence permit. He justified his decision to move back to Addis Ababa because of the difficult living conditions and bureaucracy he observed when he was in Adi-Harush refugee camp. The relatively better living condition and work opportunity is also the reason for his relocation to Addis Ababa. The two years long armed conflict in northern Ethiopia that took place between November 2020 and 2022 also saw an influx of Eritrean refugees who were residing mainly in the four refugee camps that were located in Tigray region of Ethiopia. In this regard, an interviewed Eritrean refugee recounted the moment the war made its way inside the Adi-Harush refugee camp as follows:

“Fighting erupted at 10:00 in the morning. Soon, mortars began landing in the middle of the camp. Some people got hit. There was a child who was called wedi keshi [the son of a priest]. He is about ten or eleven years. When he got hit, he died instantly. His sister was hit as well. An infant who was their neighbour also got hit. He was about six months old. Houses numbering three to four were hit with the fractures of the mortar.”

Seeing the deteriorating condition at the camp in the days and months following the war and interruption of important services including food aid, he had no choice but to leave the conflict zone. Thus, he went to a higher ground to beat the fizzling mobile network and managed to contact his uncle in Canada who sent him money to finance his journey to Addis Ababa. What followed was his trip to Gondar with his friend where they accessed money and embarked on their journey to Addis Ababa. As soon as he arrived, he was received by his cousin who already managed to leave to Germany at the time of the interview. The study did not find Somali refugees that relocated to the city on their own. However, conversations with members of the host community revealed an existing trend of unregistered Somali citizens coming from Somalia and spending a few days in one of the different pensions that are sprung out in the Bole Mikael sefer of Addis Ababa before embarking on another journey that takes them out of the city in another direction in what purportedly could be construed as act of illegal human trafficking and smuggling that might be taking place in the area.

3.4. Refugee Resilience in Addis Ababa

3.4.1. Opportunities of Refugee Resilience in Addis Ababa

Cities in the developing world are increasingly becoming important passageways that shape the well-being and resilience of refugees. They provide refugees the opportunity to dwell on their social, cultural and personal resources in their own unique way. In the course of the study, observation was made about how the life of refugees in Addis Ababa is influenced by the procession of resources they possessed.

- *Social Resources*

Social support, albeit varied in its intensity, is one of the refugee resource pools that dictated how refugees lead their life in Addis Ababa. Discussants and participants from the refugee community claimed receiving different forms of social support during their stay in the city. However, the act of receiving remittances was significantly recurring among Eritrean participants. In fact, the existence of a sizable number of unemployed Eritrean refugees who were able to live in both metropolitan and suburban parts of the city was evidence of the influence of remittances within the community. Eritrean refugees specifically discussed how their fellow countrymen and women immigrated to other countries with the financial and informational assistance, and how that could one day enable their migration dreams to come to true. A case in point is a testimony of a twenty-four years old Eritrean woman. She explained how the financial support she received from her relatives abroad was crucial for covering her daily cost of living in Addis Ababa. She also remarked how her cousin and former roommate was able to migrate illegally to Uganda through Kenya thanks to the financial support from their relatives living in Europe. She never put the idea of migrating to another country off the table as well. A forty-two years old Eritrean refugee on his part identified the route to Libya and Uganda as the most common illegal route for Eritreans leaving Ethiopia. He said he was pleading with friends and relatives abroad to help him relocate out of Ethiopia by any means, as he believed that he had a slim chance of relocating abroad through the resettlement program. Eritrean participants identified migration to Canada through the Group of 5 (G5) immigration process and migration to other Western countries through marriage and family reunification as the two common legal migratory pathways of their fellows in Ethiopia. The group of five (G5) is a process where 5 or more

Canadian citizens or permanent residents arrange to sponsor a refugee living abroad to go to Canada. The involvement of Eritreans in costly business undertakings such as managing to invest, register and work in taxi hailing companies and opening service establishments like shops and restaurants can also indicate the importance of remittances.

In-depth interview informants from other refugee countries also mentioned getting financial support from abroad. A twenty seven year old South Sudanese refugee stressed the significance of the monthly financial assistance from his brother in the United States for paying his tuition fee at a private medical institution and pursuing his ambition of becoming a medical nurse. Another Yemeni immigrant, who was able to work at the Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission (DICAC) as a volunteer social worker, claimed that if it were not for the remittances she got from her family overseas, including her brother who had been relocated to Norway from Ethiopia, she would not be able to make ends meet. But the occurrence of the support had not been reported as recurrently as it had been reported by the Eritrean participants. One possible explanation for this could be gleaned from the way key informant interviews perceived refugees in the city in terms of the extant support they had from their respective diaspora communities. An interviewed officer at the Refugee and Returnee Services [RRS] of Ethiopia attributed the reason for the high number of Eritrean refugees and less number of other camp based refugees in Addis Ababa to the abundant support the Eritreans enjoyed from their large diaspora population. According to this informant, the less diaspora support of the other refugees had made it difficult for them to survive in Addis Ababa. As such, they mostly preferred to stay in the camps. Likewise, the response of a Congolese interviewee to the question why the majority of Congolese refugees opted to stay in the camp despite the expansion of the OCP scheme for every camp based refugee was “as far as the Banyamulenge people are concerned, it is difficult to survive on our own in the city because we do not have many people abroad which can support us”.

Social resource in the form of organizational support that is provided to the refugees by GOs, IOs and NGOs is the other resource of refugee resilience available in the city. According to the Ethiopian refugee proclamation, the Refugee and Returnee Services (RRS) is the main organization that is assigned to oversee refugee related activities (FDRE House of People’s Representative, 2019). Actually, the importance of RRS and the UNHCR in the life of the refugees in the city is evident from the recurrent occurrence of their names in the refugees’ accounts of their life and the high number of refugee service seekers inside the liaison office compound of the two organizations at enkulal fabrica sefer of the city during data collection. Both the UNHCR and the RRS had an important place in the life of refugees as they had to be physically present in these places to access the crucial services pertaining to Refugee Status Determination [RSD], relocation, transfer, registration, protection and other similar services that are provided by the organizations.

Addis Ababa is home to a number of NGOs catering for the needs of refugees, some of which have been in the city for a long time. The three main types of assistance offered by the organizations are short-term humanitarian support, psychosocial support and long-term resilience building support. Short-term assistance, such as a monthly living allowance, medical cost coverage, the supply of edibles and hygiene kits, and temporary

shelter, was mainly directed towards meeting the immediate needs of urban vulnerable refugees. Psychosocial support, including counselling services, reconciliation programs, information sharing and referrals, language interpretation services, community centre services, and home visits, are provided to address the social and psychological needs of the refugees. Long-term organizational supports such as educational supports for refugees of different age groups, short vocational skills and awareness raising trainings, financial grants sponsoring income generating activities and scholarships, were intended to bolster the well-being and resilience of refugees over a longer period of time. These supports played a vital role particularly in supporting the life of refugees that relied on them for survival.

The other theme of social support that frequently emerged in the study was communal support, which refers to the assistance refugees received from their local community members and Ethiopians in the city. The amount of community support they had varyingly affected their well-being. Interviewees reported communal support coming from Ethiopians including the provision of a roof over their heads, giving them a little reprieve from the housing shortage that affects not just the refugees but also residents of the city. The communal support coming from their fellow compatriots, however, is the recurrent sub-theme that emerged in the data. For instance, there were refugees who had individuals receiving them when they first arrived in the city and that helped them to make a smooth transition and adaptation of life as opposed to refugees who had no one helping them. Eritrean refugees in particular invoked the blood kinship they have with Ethiopians of mixed Eritrean background and how they had used them as guarantors when they relocated to Addis Ababa and needed to get a work license for their business. Furthermore, refugees rented residential places in groups of two or more as a strategy to offset the expensive cost of housing in the city. This has helped them to reduce their expenditure in addition to providing a sort of emotional security as they were able to reside with someone who shared similar experience. Strengths drawn from intra-refugee associations were also cited as a source of communal support that the refugees had. Being both formal and informal in nature, these associations attempted to help their respective refugee communities in times of social occasions and emergencies.

- *Cultural Resources*

As cultural resources are important for improving well-being by providing information, skills, and beliefs acquired within a cultural context, people from different refugee backgrounds discussed how they used them when they try to survive and succeed in Addis Ababa. Information collected from Burundi and the Congo refugees described how they leveraged their fluency in French and Kiswahili to work at private schools and international organizations. The Somali interviewee refugees explained how they benefited financially from their part-time and full-time work as interpreters and Somali language instructors in hotels, schools and other service centres. Yemeni refugees shared their experiences of working in Yemeni and Arabic restaurants as well as in the informal perfume and frankincense trade. Similarly, refugees from Syria and Yemen revealed how they partnered with Ethiopians to open up Middle Eastern restaurants and bakeries, but this was only done by those having financial clout. The majority of the Syrian refugees cited begging as their primary source of income in Addis Ababa. In fact, at the height of their arrival in the capital, it has been normal to observe Syrian refugees begging on various traffic signal crossroads of the city. Two of the Syrian participants

reflected that they preferred earning their income doing any available job in the city. Yet, the income they could get from it would not be able to support their family needs. So, they made begging in the streets their number one choice. It might not be unusual to see members of other refugee nationals begging in the streets of the city as well. But the way the Syrians did it seemed to be in an organized and planned manner as it involves whole family members begging in different parts of the city and returning to their common residential places in the evening.

Cross-regional petty trade was also identified as the most prevalent cultural source of income by the South Sudanese participants. For example, one lady recounted her attempt of smuggling dried fish from Gambella and sell it to South Sudanese residents of Addis Ababa. Others were involved in smuggling inexpensive goods from Moyale and Jigjiga and shipping them to Addis or Gambella. The South Sudanese women also brought up their engagement in starting domestic cultural businesses such as doing hair braiding, handicrafts, and cooking as well as selling traditional South Sudanese food as a means of generating income. As the biggest refugee community in Addis Ababa, the utilization of cultural resources as a means of revenue generation was also widely observed among Eritrean refugees. In fact, it is common to find different Eritrean owned business establishments like shops and restaurants in heavily populated Eritrean sefers such as Lafto, Gofa Mebrathaile, Saris Addisu Sefer and Bole Arabsa catering for the needs of both refugees and host communities. The refugees were also keen on stressing how visiting religious sites and praying had a positive impact on their lives. Eritrean refugees, in particular, had the freedom to follow some of the banned religions back home and discussed how that has a positive impact on their well-being. In terms of learned culture, long-term city residents stated how they leveraged their knowledge of the host environment's cultural resources to enrich their well-being. In this regard, Eritrean and Somali refugees also reflected how the presence of huge Eritrean and Somali community in the city positively impacted their well-being.

- *Personal Resources*

Personal resource, referring to the physical and internal aspects of individual resource, has also been presented as a resource pool that had a perceived knock on effect on refugee resources, well-being and resilience. For example, Eritrean and Congolese refugees did mention how desperate women often indulge in acts of prostitution as a means of securing their livelihood. Interview and observation data showed the refugees' practice of procuring menial job employments in different organizations like refugee owned business establishments, diplomatic residences and international organizations. This could also be taken as another example in which refugees used their personal resources to secure their well-being. The hope of relocating to a third country at some point in their future life also served as an impetus that informed the day to day life of the refugees, particularly among those with high hopes of immigrating abroad.

3.4.2 Constraints of Refugee Resilience in Addis Ababa

Despite the tendency of perceiving refugees as resilient individuals that are capable of utilizing the resources they have at hand and maintaining their well-being, their pathway to ensuring resilience is riddled with diverse challenges. Certainly, these challenges are likely to grow particularly in the context of an urban environment that is situated in a particular context of the Global South.

- *Policy Constraints*

Various refugee stakeholders complained about various environmental constraints frustrating efforts of resilience building in the city. However, the difficulty of getting work permit and license has been identified as the main obstacle of refugee well-being in the city. Although article 26 of the current refugee proclamation grants refugees the ability to work, it falls short of fully providing them that right as it stipulates that they "may be afforded the most advantageous treatment as accorded to foreign nationals in areas permitted to foreign nationals" (FDRE House of People's Representative, 2019). According to the information collected from an Ethiopian government humanitarian official, the goal behind the refugee work right's exclusive nature was justified by the need to preserve residents' access to employment in a nation with a high rate of youth unemployment. However, refugee participants did express their dissatisfaction with the way refugee employment laws discriminated against them. In this regard, an interviewed Burundian refugee with multiple foreign language skills and a driver's license, stated that he gave up looking for work after losing the jobs he was able to secure due to lack of a work permit. He then reverted for job offers in the informal market, which pays significantly less than formal employment. Even some of the refugees who were successful in finding paying job complained about being paid less than Ethiopians who were performing the same type of work, blaming the proclamation that does not protect their employment rights as the primary culprit. Moreover, the majority of the businesses that are allowed for refugees are not those open to citizens. As a result, they must partner with Ethiopians to obtain a work permit and launch their own business and this would leave them open to claims of ownership by the licensees. In fact, the refugee participants did provide examples of extortion and loss of investment that they and their fellow business owners faced. Interviewed refugees also expressed that although government agencies like the Ministry of Labour and Skills and the Ministry of Trade in collaboration with the RRS issued work license and permit on an individual basis, this was done to a very limited number and for symbolic reasons on some special days and occasions like the celebration of the World Refugee Day. According to humanitarian professionals working in different NGOs in Addis Ababa, the delay and failure in addressing the work permit and business license had a negative effect on the resilience building projects in the city as refugees who enrolled on different trainings became disinterested after learning about the almost impossible scenario of getting a work permit and license in the end. On top of this, donors funded urban refugee projects in the city on the promise of refugee employment. Thus, when these projects failed to materialize, they took away the possibility of galvanizing funding for future projects. This led to putting a lot of burden on the refugee resilience building endeavours in the city.

The delay in drafting and enacting regulations and directives slowed the applicability of the recently enacted refugee proclamation at the lower echelons of society. This is having a ripple negative effect on both individual refugee lives and general refugee related activities of the city. Refugees reported observing employees of governmental and private service providers lacking knowledge on issues of refugee benefits, legal rights and obligations and how that had a negative effect on the well-being of refugees in the city. A number of examples were given in this matter, ranging from not willing to serve refugees due to not recognizing their ID cards to not knowing how to apply the proclamation in the context of specific scenarios.

- *Practical Constraints*

Institutional constraints, referring to challenges of well-being arising from core and ancillary refugee serving organizations, are other forms of constraints that limit the well-being of refugees. Most of the refugees criticized the refugee service provided by the RRS and UNHCR on a number of points. First, recipients of monthly financial assistance from the UNHCR lamented about how the assistance was even barely sufficient to cover their basic needs which puts a huge strain on their life. Second, refugees were critical of the high level of disorganization of the organizations as it led to a delay and confusion in accessing some of the vital services they get from them. They complained how the interruption and delay in the process of resettlement, Refugee Status Determination (RSD) and renewal of identification cards had a negative outcome on their well-being. Third, they were frustrated with the lack of transparency and accountability they observed in the organizations which they thought encouraged corrupt practices and made them feel helpless at times. Officers working in these organizations, on their part, put the sheer mass of Eritrean refugee service seekers in the organizations as the main challenge that overwhelmed and overstretched the already limited human, material and financial resource capacity of the organizations.

Refugees also stated that refugee resilience building projects provided by NGOs were full of short comings. First, they narrated how they were discouraged by the meagre allowance that was not even enough to cover the cost of transportation forcing them to boycott the resilience building programs that they were enrolled. Second, the start-up capital provided for venturing into private micro and small enterprise is very small which left refugees idle even after completing a certain resilience building training. Some others were grateful for the available support from these organizations but pointed to the mismatch between demand and supply as the number of NGOs that exclusively focused on urban refugees were very few in number. Officers working at refugee NGOs of the city, on the other hand, stated how they were impacted by funding cuts and resource shortages which had a knock on effect on their operation on the ground. Interviewees from different refugee NGOs also pointed out the lack of having a common urban refugee database that could serve as a refugee repository.

In addition to the policy and organizational focused limits, other environmental constraints had also come to light in the study. One is the impact of language barrier. This had to do with how their inability to communicate in the local languages affected their ability to obtain services and information. However, this particular constraint was more prevalent on those refugees that did not had a long experience of staying in the city as well as on those that had a less cultural tie with the host community. Another barrier to their well-being in the city was the propensity of some hosts to view refugees as wealthier. This has led private service providers to raise consumer prices against them compounding the already dire financial situation. Interviewee informants also indicated that the refugee situation in the city is not immune to the political, economic and social crisis that happens in the country. Some Eritrean and South Sudanese refugees, for instance, mentioned how they felt victims of mistaken identification or caught up in internal politics particularly following conflicts involving member of their ethnic kins in different parts of Ethiopia. Eritrean refugees displayed high tendency of disbelief and scepticism as they were approached for interviews and FGDs, which could be linked to the presence of a strong perception among the refugees about the presence

of Eritrean regime operatives operating inside the city clandestinely. Others specified how the high inflation rate in the country ate in to the already meagre resource of refugees and how the effect was being extremely felt particularly by vulnerable refugees who relied only on financial assistance for a living. In sum, the well-being of refugees in the city is frustrated by a number of constraints at the level of policy and practice and that is having a lot of impact on the resilience building effort of the refugees in the city.

4. Discussion

This study presents a descriptive account of cross-border displacement in the Greater Horn of Africa and Great Lakes region by examining cross border displacement and the resilience experience of refugees in Addis Ababa. It uses the resource caravans and passageways corollaries under the COR theory as a lens of zooming into the phenomenon as there has been a call to focus on the resource and resilience of refugees for its implication for theory, research and practice (Issari et al., 2021; Renkens et al., 2022).

During the initial phase of displacement, each of the refugees experienced pervasive resource compromises that led them to flee their homeland. Eritreans cited the repressive political environment in their homeland as the overriding factor that forced them to flee their country. They put government repression in the form of me 'ekebi zeyblu hagerawi ageglot (indefinite military and national service), as one of the resource loss factors that led them to flee their country. The political, economic and socio-cultural domains of life in the country are under strict control of the government engendering feelings of hopelessness and pathways of cross-border displacement. Previous research puts Eritrea as one of the most repressive and among the top ten refugee source countries of the world (Ogbazghi, 2011; Hepner, 2013; Kibreab, 2016). Conflict was the common denominator of cross-border displacement for the rest of the refugees. The Somali refugees cited insecurity and fear happening amidst the decade's old protracted civil war of their country as the main reason of displacement from their homeland. Persecution against the Bantu, extortion by the al-shabab and being caught up in a raging battle against the backdrop of the intermittent civil war their country has been mired in for decades were illustrations of immediate resource loss factors that were brought up by the participants. Previous studies have shown armed conflict and its associated and recurring resource loss factors like drought, human right violations and persecution as the main drivers of displacement in Somalia (Abdi, 2004; Hammond, 2014; Odeysuge, 2020).

South Sudanese participants attributed their forced displacement to the onset of the December 2013 civil war that casted a shadow on their life. The ongoing South Sudan civil war that has begun in 2013 has produced Africa's worst refugee crisis with Uganda, Ethiopia and Sudan hosting most of the asylees (UNHCR, 2023). The Congolese refugees referred the prevailing civil conflict in the eastern part of their country as the main reason that made them run away. The literature review identifies the Congo as a source of refugees fleeing natural and man-made disasters (Amsi, 2006; Ronald, 2022). Burundians said their displacement was induced following the civil war that engulfed their country from 1993 to 2005 and the continued state repression and violence that haunted them afterwards. Burundi had a notorious history of civil war and political violence that led to the outflow of refugees from its borders (Schwartz, 2019). Meanwhile, Syrian and Yemeni refugees linked their displacement to the multipartite

conflict that happened in their respective countries. The human toll of the protracted multipartite civil wars in Syria and Yemen has been discussed by a number of authors (Byman & Speakman, 2016; Al-Absi, 2018).

Refugee movement towards the city of Addis Ababa is influenced by resource loss factors in countries of first asylum and refugee camps as well as the resources they hoped to gain by moving to Ethiopia and the city of Addis Ababa. The Burundian and Congolese participants fled countries of Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya due to resource loss factors such as fear of forced recruitment in to guerrilla insurgency and forced repatriation, fear of attack as well as discrimination and extortion they experienced in these countries. Previous scholars have also identified these resource loss factors of refugee well-being in the context of East Africa (e.g., Pavanello et al., 2010; Muleefu, 2013; Akello, 2019). Yemeni refugees raised different resource loss factors that made them move to Ethiopia. Resource loss factors such as high costs of living in Djibouti (Frows & Akumu, 2016), insecurity, extortion and bribery in Somalia (Al-Absi, 2022) and Yemeni visa waiver cancelations in Egypt (Al Desoukie, 2016) drove others to move to Ethiopia. Meanwhile, the Syrian refugees said they relocated to Ethiopia in the aftermath of the 2019 political instability in Sudan (Tobin & Kanhoush 2020). There were also neighbouring country refugees that lived in other countries before coming to Ethiopia. South Sudanese refugees who fled to Ethiopia via Sudan cited family separation as a resource loss factor that made them move to Ethiopia.

Somali and Eritrean refugees who were in Yemen and South Sudan referred to the civil war in the respective countries as the resource loss factors that made them move to Ethiopia. Information regarding the presence of Eritrean refugees who were deported from Israel also surfaced in the study (Yaron et al., 2013). Even though camp life gave the refugees the opportunity to evade some of the major resource loss threats they faced in their previous settings, it presented its own diverse resource loss factors that made them relocate to Addis Ababa. Relocation on medical grounds, relocation through the OCP and self-settlement are the three main ways the refugees escaped the punishing environments of the camp and repositioned themselves in Addis Ababa. Inter-communal violence, inter-state conflict as well as harsh and deteriorating living conditions inside the camps are forwarded by the refugee participants as the resource loss factors that forced them to move to Addis Ababa. Previous studies both inside Ethiopia and elsewhere have shown the difficult living conditions of the camps and the trend of refugees relocating to urban areas to benefit from the advantages cities offer over rural areas (Fábos & Kibreab, 2007; Kobia & Cranfield, 2009; Checchi et al., 2007; Meyer et al., 2016; Arega, 2017; Massa, 2020).

Refugees exhibited resilience inside the city by utilizing the different resources at their disposal as they strived to meet their needs, pursue their aspirations, and manage their demands. Social support in the form of financial assistance from abroad, particularly among Eritrean refugee participants, was the most consequential resource that shaped the well-being of the refugees in the city by enabling them to make investments in ventures of business and emigration among others. The role of remittances in sustaining the life of urban refugees in other transit cities have already been discussed previously (see Grabska, 2006; Lindsley, 2007; Pavanello et al., 2010; Jacobson et al., 2014; Anyanzu & Wet-Billings, 2022). Organizational and communal supports are the other forms of social resources that influenced the well-being of refugees in the city.

Organizational supports from core refugee organizations like the UNHCR and RRS as well as NGOs were vital particularly in sustaining the life of beneficiary vulnerable refugees. Communal supports from their respective family members and ethnic nationals as well as other refugees and Ethiopians (albeit on rare occasions) also played a role in enhancing the well-being of the refugee residents in the city.

Refugees from all countries were able to exploit their cultural resources in various ways as a means of securing their well-being in the city. In fact, certain patterns of refugee cultural resource use as a means of sustaining refugee well-being did emerge in the study. Examples include enrolment in teaching foreign language like English, French and Kiswahili among refugees from the Great Lakes region, working as Somali and Arabic language interpreters among Somali refugees, opening up different business establishments like restaurants and traditional clothing and accessory shops among Eritrean refugees, begging in the streets of some neighbourhoods of Addis among Syrian refugees, selling perfumes and frankincense in the streets among Yemeni refugees, and preparing and selling traditional meals among South Sudanese refugees. Religion, host community cultural similarity and adaptation are the other examples of cultural resources that have been cited as having a positive influence on their well-being. There were also participants that put personal resources in the form of physical attractiveness, energy and hope of relocation to a third country as important resources that helped them in maintaining their well-being. However, their effort of building resilience in the city is under duress from a number of socio-political challenges that are detracting their well-being. The participants identified the difficulty of obtaining refugee work license and permit and the delay in drafting and enacting regulations and directives that will expedite the implementation of the recently enacted Ethiopian refugee proclamation as the major passageway constraint of refugee resources and well-being in the context of Addis Ababa. Organizational constraints, language barrier, host communities' misconception that refugees are wealthy as well as the country's political and economic crisis are additional barriers of urban refugee resilience that have been identified in the study.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The various causes of displacement have caused the loss of resources for refugees from different countries in the region. Refugees have faced resources loss at various stages of their migration process. While losing their resources at the same time they have invested their available resources to escape the problem they have faced in the various phases of displacement. Moreover, to build their resilience in the face of displacement, refugees have harnessed various forms of resources from different sources through still they are in dire need of resources to sustainably build their resilience.

The results of the study highlight the need for a complex response by multiple stakeholders to prevent and manage cross-border displacement in the EHAGL region at initial and lateral stages. Resolving politically entrenched resource loss factors of persecution and conflict that endanger the well-being and resilience of citizens in origin countries could be vital to minimize forced migration at the grassroots level. Ensuring the protection and resilience of refugees by controlling passageway resource loss and gain factors that detract and enhance the well-being of refugees at the lateral stages of displacement could play a role in stifling the shockwaves of forced displacement both within and across member states. This translates into combating and controlling

resilience diminishing factors like discrimination, forceful military recruitment, extortion, refoulement, fear and the danger of being attacked in countries of first asylum and intrastate conflict, inter-communal violence and poor living conditions and black box bureaucracy in and around the camps in the context of Ethiopia as well as promoting and enhancing resilience enabling factors like tending to the high work license and permit demand among refugee stakeholders, expediting the drafting and enactment of regulations and directives that aid in fast-tracking the implementation of the Ethiopian refugee proclamation, improving the service quality and shortage of resources at core and ancillary refugee serving organizations, and tackling the different environmental constraints of refugee well-being in the context of Addis Ababa. Resolving the problem of refugees requires a multi sector as well as multi organization collaboration and partnership that needs to be mobilized by refugee agencies including UNHCR and the source, transit and destination countries of forced displacement.

7. Limitation of the Study

The huge logistics and resources the investigation of the study required meant that it had to rely on qualitative tools in order to capture the pre-migration, transit and post-migration resilience experience of adult refugees at the Horn of Africa. Samples in the study are not large enough to establish a pattern that could be generalized conveniently. However, the study has used a multi-method approach to gather and examine multiple forms of qualitative data. Notwithstanding the limitation, it is believed that the study has been able to provide the application of the resource caravans and passageways principle of the COR theory to understand the scourge of cross border displacement in the EHAGL region by taking the experience of adult urban refugee residents in the city of Addis Ababa as a case in point.

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