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COMPARATIVE REPORT: AFRICAN MIGRATION TRENDS

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Introduction[1]

The following paper draws inspiration from the four national state-of-the-art papers, prepared as part of the ongoing research programme 'African Perspectives on Human Mobility'. This programme aims to explore alternative conceptions of human mobility based on empirical research in Nigeria, Ghana, Morocco and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The three year programme, co-ordinated by the International Migration Institute at the University of Oxford, involves a series of empirical studies designed and conducted in partnership with research based in the following universities: The Centre for Migration Studies, University of Ghana; Département des Relations Internationales, Université de Lubumbashi/Katanga, République Démocratique du Congo; Equipe de Recherche sur la Région et la Régionalisation (E3R), Université Mohammed V, Maroc; Department of Geography, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. The African Perspectives on Human Mobility Programme is supported by a grant from the MacArthur Foundation as part of its initiative on Global Migration and Human Mobility, which supports projects that aim to reshape perceptions of human mobility throughout the world.

During the first phase of the programme, these partners conducted a literature review, focusing particularly on migration research produced within their respective countries, much of which is not readily available to an international audience. Their findings were

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summarised in four country papers (Afolayan, et al. 2009; Awumbila, et al. 2009; Berriane and Aderghal 2009; Ngoie Tshibambe and Vwakyanakazi 2009). This report is a first attempt to prepare a synthesis of these different papers, the discussions at programme workshops, and the preliminary empirical work conducted during the first year of the programme. The country papers have revealed that, despite many differences, there are many points of comparison in migration trends and experiences and this paper reflects on some of the key issues raised within the programme so far. Five major themes have emerged, which will be discussed in this paper and illustrated with material drawn primarily from the four country papers. The themes, around which this paper is structured, are the following:

1. The current state of migration in Africa: complexity and diversity
2. Historical continuities and discontinuities
3. New insights: forgotten dimensions of African migration dynamics
4. Connections between different forms of mobility
5. The conditions for migration research in/on Africa

The current state of migration in Africa: complexity and diversity

The four papers share certain observations regarding the current state of migration in Africa that exemplify the diversity of experiences and the complexity of migration processes across the continent. Research suggests that over the past decade, there are more people moving into and within the African continent; that the trajectories of migrants in Africa are less straight-forward than they were in the past; and that an increased variety of actors and places of departure and destination are involved in African migration. This should serve as a caution against adopting naïve acceptance of assumptions about African migration when faced with a lack of data. Indeed, the papers show that African migrants are not an easily identifiable, homogenous group with similar origins, motives and destinations and evidently, African migrations cannot be reduced to symptoms of misery and conflict.

The DRC is a striking example of the changing migratory trends on the African continent. During the first half of the 1990s, it was one of the major receiving countries in Africa, but in the late 1990s it developed into a sending country (van Dijk, et al. 2001: 16). Emigration accelerated in 1997 as the country entered a devastating war, described as "the First African War" (Ngoie Tshibambe and Vwakyanakazi 2009). During this period, many Congolese fled into exile abroad. Emigration has attained a positive social value, as a strategy to circumvent the crisis in the country:

> "…terms, used in local dialects in the DRC translate the paradise-like character of developed countries like the USA and those in Europe. Families with members in the Diaspora are respected in the country and boast about it at weddings, funerals or important events. Nowadays, remittances from abroad are the livelihood of many households in large towns and even in villages: they are part of the monthly budget of families in the DRC" (Ngoie Tshibambe and Vwakyanakazi 2009:26)

In response, a number of NGOs supported by certain European countries have recently launched an awareness raising campaign ("*restez au pays*") to persuade the DR-Congolese to remain in the country (ibid:34).

This shift from immigration to emigration in the DRC can be contrasted with findings from Morocco (Berriane and Aderghal 2009), which is facing growing levels of immigration from both sub-Saharan countries and also from Europe (this will be discussed in more detail below). Moreover, this change in direction is accompanied by a diversification of origin and destinations. Moroccan migration dynamics can no longer be described as the point-to-point movements that were witnessed during the era of labour migration to France and other European countries. Rather, Morocco is witnessing simultaneously the movement of migrants in, out and through the country, sometimes in a circulatory manner; transnationalism and social networks are playing increasingly significant roles in these processes.

This diversification has been observed across the four countries. In Nigeria, the last quarter of the 20th century was marked by heightened labour migration from several parts of the country to the main administrative and economic centres of the country and to more varied destinations than ever before (Afolayan, et al. 2009). Increasing numbers are migrating to more developed countries including the US, Saudi Arabia, and Western Europe. Within Africa, more Nigerians are moving to South Africa, Botswana, Kenya and Ghana. The destinations for DR-Congolese migrants now include most of the neighbouring countries, Western Europe, the US, Canada and South Africa. Migrants are also crossing temporarily into Angola in search of diamonds[2] and into Burundi and Rwanda, where Congolese teachers are working, maintaining households on both sides of the border (Ngoie Tshibambe and Vwakyanakazi 2009:36).

Over the last two decades, new migration dynamics have also developed in Ghana along with globalisation and shifts in the global political economy, as well as the economic and political stabilisation of the country. These changes have brought about increasing diversity and complexity in internal and international mobility patterns, where Ghana is simultaneously experiencing internal migration, immigration, transit migration and emigration both within and outside Africa. The research from Ghana also identified one of the most striking innovations in contemporary migration patterns from Africa: the emergence of new international migration destinations in Asia and the Far East, including China, Malaysia and Dubai. This reflects the tremendous importance these countries and regions have attained in global political and economic affairs (Awumbila, et al. 2009).

Alongside this diversification in destinations, a greater variety of migration forms are being identified. As already noted, while many movements entail bipolar movements from one location to another, all the countries noted the growing prevalence of temporary and circular migration. In Nigeria, both internal and international migration is characterised by circulatory movement, particularly in the cases of migrant labourers and traders. Not only migrants are crossing the frontier, but also commuters, visitors and people working in the frontier areas (Afolayan, et al. 2009). This is an important reminder that border crossing is an important part of many people's lives and livelihoods. Hence, attempts to control migration

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[2] In 2006-7 more than 22,230 Congolese were expelled from Angola. These were part of an ongoing pattern of tit for tat expulsions of migrants between Angola and DR-Congo since 2003. In 2009, 18,800 Congolese had been forcibly removed from Angola and 23,000 Angolans had been expelled from DR-Congo http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=86567.

by more restrictive policing of borders may have many unintended consequences, as it is impossible to distinguish the migrant from other travellers.

A person's plans for temporary or circular migration may change with circumstances and they may end up much further away and for a longer time than originally envisaged. This is illustrated vividly in the DRC, in the growing migration of young men and women, including unaccompanied children, who are crossing the border into neighbouring Congo Brazzaville and further on to Gabon. They go there to make a living with the intention of coming back to the home-country with pocketfuls of money. As they are not subject to administrative controls at the border post of Beach Ngobila, the children use the subterfuge of accompanying handicapped persons towards Congo Brazzaville. Once they have crossed the river, and they are on the other side of the border, these young people set forth into the wide world by themselves to make a living in the Congo-Brazzaville and Gabon (Ngoie 2008 in Ngoie Tshibambe and Vwakyanakazi 2009: 27).

Current migration flows in Africa also include an increasing presence of women as independent (labour) migrants. Moroccan research is starting to consider women as migrants and there are also studies of the impact of migration on women who stay behind in Morocco (Berriane and Aderghal 2009). The feminisation of migration is also being documented by current research in Ghana. In the past, women moved in their capacity as accompanying spouses and these movements were over short distances. In contemporary times however, women move independently within and outside the country for economic as well as other reasons such as education and career development (Awumbila, et al. 2009).

The above examples seem to suggest that, over the past decades, migration within, to and from the case study countries has become more diverse and complex. There has been a partial shift away from post-colonial migration patterns, with an increasing variety of migration origins and new destinations and an overall increase in distances travelled (cf. Bakewell and de Haas 2007). This may be linked to improvements in infrastructure, transport and communication technology, which have also facilitated the scope for maintaining transnational contacts. Such changes, many of which can be observed in other regions of the world, may also reflect both the impact of globalisation, and more nuanced analysis of migration provided by more intensive migration research. Standard models of African migration that were developed in an era of colonial labour migration do not adequately capture the complex migratory phenomena observed in Africa today; and perhaps they never did. The current focus on communities, households and migrants' agency reveals patterns and dynamics of African migrations that could not easily be captured by 'colonial push-pull' models. Hence, the observations of greater complexity that challenge standard models of migration, do not merely reflect changing patterns of mobility on the continent, but also changing interpretations of mobility (de Bruijn, et al. 2001).

Historical continuities and discontinuities

African migration dynamics can be described in terms of various historical continuities and discontinuities. The four countries examined here all share the experience of colonialism and the associated processes of state formation and capitalist development, which have to a significant extent, shaped and structured contemporary migration patterns. For example,

current north-south migration in Ghana is linked to colonial labour migration, as was industrialisation and urbanisation in Lubumbashi, which was virtually non-existent as a town before the onset of colonialism. Furthermore, the English-French language divide still marks much migration within, to and from the continent; hence, the large exchanges of populations between Ghana and Nigeria, which are both Anglophone countries.

There is an ongoing debate about the impact of the imposition of borders by the colonial powers on African mobility (Bakewell and de Haas 2007; Herbst 1990; Mbembe 2000; Nugent and Asiwaju 1996). Following one strand of the argument, Afolayan et al (2009) suggest that the borders that split people of common culture and ethnic groupings into different countries were more or less perceived by the people across the border as 'artificial'; hence, many of the international migrants that originated just across the Nigerian border in the neighbouring countries of Benin, Niger, Chad and Cameroon perceived their movements as within the same socio-cultural space rather than between two different nations. Meanwhile, it is interesting to note that this was only raised for Nigeria: the reviews of migration research from Ghana, Morocco and DRC do not mention borders. For example, the paper focusing on the DRC talks about cross-border moves, without raising questions about the border's 'artificiality'. This is despite of the strange appearance of the DRC border, particularly of the southern Katanga province, which forms the Pedicle (*la botte du Katanga*) that "dips" down into Zambia, reflecting the colonial struggle for control of the mines in this area.

However, while such borders may appear strange and many were imposed with little consultation with the people whose land they divided, this does not necessarily make them more "artificial" than any other borders in the world. In a sense, all borders are artificial and borders always separate people. Furthermore, Mbembe (2000) argues that although the boundaries inherited from colonisation were not defined by Africans themselves, this does not necessarily mean that they were arbitrary. Many were based on natural limits (oceans, rivers, mountain ranges), some take the old kingdoms into account, and others are "imagined lines", as the boundaries between countries in the Sahara and Kalahari deserts (Mbembe 2000:264). An alternative perspective on African borders may suggest that despite their origin, for many people living on the continent the national borders today have become "naturalised" as boundaries which delimit and define important aspects of social and political identities – in particular nationality – rather than tearing communities apart.

The development of regional economic communities in Africa has various implications for the established borders, trade and migration on the continent. Since the establishment of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 1975, the Community's protocol on free movement of people and goods has attracted significant attention. It has stimulated the movement of people both between neighbouring countries and also between ECOWAS countries that do not share borders. In simple terms, the community's protocol has fuelled cross-border activities, including trade (Awumbila, et al. 2009). In Ghana, border towns such as Aflao, Elubo and Sampa are involved in some of these activities. The authors of the Ghanaian country paper ask whether these cross-border activities have something to do with migration, and if so, do they constitute enough justification for undertaking borderland studies with migration as a focus (Awumbila, et al. 2009).

The migration patterns that developed with colonialism were overlaid on pre-existing migratory patterns, some of which have re-emerged. One example of the continuity of migration patterns is from Nigeria, where pre-colonial migration was often linked to pilgrimage to religious places in the Arabian Peninsula. This is still relevant to international mobility, and it has been documented that a significant number of Nigerian pilgrims stay back in Saudi Arabia for economic reasons after their Hajj ritual (Alkali 1985 in Afolayan, et al. 2009). Another example is the ancient tradition of trans-Saharan mobility, which was often linked to both pilgrimage and trade, and which is resurging, as an increasing number of sub-Saharan migrants move into Morocco, either permanently or as a transit stop on their way to Europe (Berriane and Aderghal 2009). The Moroccan city of Fes plays a religious role for sub-Saharan populations adhering to the Tijani brotherhood. The Tijani come from Senegal, where they constitute one of the most prominent Muslim brotherhoods. One of their principal saints is buried in Fes, and the city is therefore an important destination for Tijani pilgrims. Moreover, Fes has historically been involved in migrations that were linked to commercial exchanges with sub-Saharan Africa; it is likely that this history of exchange has established Fes as a place of familiarity and anchoring for the sub-Saharan migrants who come to the city (Berriane and Aderghal 2009).

Migration across Africa has been and continues to be associated with trade. This is highlighted in the case of Nigeria by Afolayan et al. (2009b). Before British colonial rule, migration was often linked to short- and long-distance trading, sometimes across the Sahara. The traders traversed the relatively stable kingdoms and empires, which, though ill-defined in terms of territorial boundaries, indicated movements over perceived separate political entities. Prominent among them were the Yoruba and Hausa traders, who traded across empires in the forested zones, up to the Sahelian belt within and outside the present day Nigeria and even up to the coastal states of North Africa. The colonial era witnessed the introduction of an export-oriented economic policy, which focused on the cultivation and trade of essentially cash crops in exchange for manufactured goods. In addition, Nigerian international migrant traders were not only patronizing markets in the Gold Coast (Ghana), Ivory Coast (Cote d'Ivoire) and Dahomey (Republic of Benin), but were settling down in the host countries in sizeable numbers over a longer period. After independence, international migrant traders from Nigeria were made up of more varied categories of people, and transacted business over a wider area and in more varied goods. Many of the destination countries are tightening the requirements for entry into the formal economic sector; hence many Nigerian migrants are trading in the informal sector (Afolayan, et al. 2009).

As migration researchers are beginning to accumulate more empirical knowledge of migration on the African continent, the picture that emerges is increasingly complex. This might obscure our interpretation of historical patterns which then appear more simple and linear, in contrast to the perceived current complexity. So, the observation of growing complexity may just as well derive from the fact that we have more data now than we did in the past. Most probably, migration in Africa has always been a rather complex phenomenon, with various categories of migrants engaged in different forms of mobility. Meanwhile, our lack of insight into the details of historical migration dynamics makes it hard to establish whether the current state of migration in Africa does indeed differ significantly from that of previous eras. This reveals a strong need to connect current research with historical trends:

only by looking at historical continuities are we able to understand the discontinuities and determine what is really new.

New insights: forgotten dimensions of African migration dynamics

This section discusses some overlooked dimensions of African migrations, which have been brought into light by newer research. A pertinent aspect highlighted in the country papers and ongoing research is immigration into the four countries. Several examples come from Morocco, which has seen modest but increasing levels of immigration since the beginnings of the 1960s. The most recent developments in Morocco's migration dynamics are flows of migrants coming from the regions south and north of the country: namely sub-Saharan Africa and Europe.

Although massive media attention has recently focused on sub-Saharan migrants in Morocco, research on this subject is only just beginning. Studies show that the status of many of these migrants is currently changing from that of 'transit migrants' *en route* to Europe, to that of immigrants who are settling in Morocco. Since pre-colonial times, Morocco has been a historical crossroads between Europe and sub-Saharan Africa, with migratory flows moving in both directions. However, the current forms of sub-Saharan migration in Morocco tend to be analysed quite separately from Moroccan migrations (Berriane and Aderghal 2009). The main motivation for many sub-Saharan migrants to enter Morocco may be to use it as a transit country, a step on the way to enter Europe. Yet, the majority of them end up settling in Morocco, awaiting their hypothetical passage to the North. On the basis of qualitative research in Rabat, Tangier and Casablanca, Collyer (2006) concludes that the spiralling costs of migration mean that a growing number of sub-Saharan migrants whose financial resources are exhausted have become stranded at different stages along the way, with little prospect of continuing, but also no hope of returning. These individuals are extremely vulnerable to exploitation by other migrants or by unscrupulous officials and have no option but to live in unsanitary conditions with inadequate food supplies and no health facilities.

The current figures on sub-Saharan migrants are mere approximations; but the first surveys have documented the presence of populations in Morocco who have arrived from various countries in Central and West Africa. This includes countries marked by war and conflict such as the DRC, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Rwanda, Sudan and Angola; or unstable countries like Nigeria. Migrants also come from countries with a more stable political situation but with increasing impoverishment, like Senegal, Niger, Mali, Benin or Guinea; and finally, from countries without conflict, like Cameroon (Escoffier 2006).

The Moroccan city of Fes is an interesting case, as it has become the receiver of a significant number of sub-Saharan Africans (Berriane and Aderghal 2009). The city is a cross-road for these migrants, who move on from Fes in two opposing directions: either towards the north (Tangier) and north-west (Nador and Oujda) of Morocco, or towards the cities on the Atlantic coast (Casablanca and Rabat). In Fes, the sub-Saharan migrants tend to stop and reconsider, or momentarily suspend, their migratory project. According to anecdotal evidence, an important group of sub-Saharan immigrants in Morocco are merchants, many of whom are taking advantage of the activities of pilgrims and other travellers. In Fes, many

Senegalese merchants have established shops in the vicinity of the tomb of the Tijani saint, where they sell both religious and non-religious merchandise. Casablanca is another hotspot for sub-Saharan merchants, and this phenomenon is closely linked to the presence of the airport, which covers a large number of international destinations.

Immigration is also a largely neglected feature of migration patterns to the south of the Sahara. The DRC has for a long time received immigrants from Senegal, Mali and Nigeria. The first two groups have been present for generations. Nigerians are mainly visible in the capital where they dominate certain niches of commercial activities. In Lubumbashi, Malians and Senegalese, known as '*Ouestaf*' (colloquial for West Africans) occupy certain neighbourhoods where they carry out activities that distinguish them from other residents, such as jewellery production and purchase of precious objects (matières précieuses).

Very little of the current research on Ghanaian migration addresses the situation of people moving either into or within the country. More attention has been focused on the so-called brain-drain and on Ghanaians living abroad. Immigration into Ghana has mainly been studied in relation to the visits/return of diasporas from the US, Caribbean and South America, or Liberian refugees in Ghanaian camps. The few exceptions that look at migration into the country include research on Lebanese migrants (Akyeampong 2006) and Nigerians (Antwi Bosiakoh 2008; Eades 1993). Meanwhile, other African migrants from Niger, Togo, Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali and Ivory Coast have not been sufficiently studied. Many of these migrants are traders, in products such as grains, cola and yams; they are also found selling herbal medicine, working as porters carrying loads and in urban vegetable production. The different dynamics, including motivating factors and socio-demographic characteristics underlying this intra-regional migration, need to be better understood (Awumbila, et al. 2009).

A striking and little researched aspect of recent migration trends has been the growth in the number of migrant arriving from other continents. This is not wholly new; Cuban doctors have been delivering medical services to towns and villages in Ghana since the 1980s, yet no studies have been done on their presence in the country. However, it has expanded recently with growing populations of Asian immigrants. Since the end of the war in the DRC in 2001, the country has become highly attractive to foreigners, particularly due to the boom in the mining sector. Investors from China, India, Korea and Pakistan are becoming increasingly visible. In the Katanga province, about 280 Chinese owned mining companies have been created since the elections in 2006. The attractiveness of African destinations is also highlighted by researchers in Ghana, where interest in immigration is likely to increase significantly. Not only does the country enjoy political stability, relative peace and security, but also very significant discoveries of oil have recently been made in its south-western corner. All these factors point to the possibility of an increase in migrant labour, immigration and general foreign presence, especially in the petro-chemical industry in Ghana (Awumbila, et al. 2009).

Another under-exposed aspect of migration dynamics is that of north-south migration into Africa. European immigrants are now entering Morocco and buying property in order to set up second homes, establish businesses, or to move there as full-time residents. Old city centres are increasingly opening up to international residents. However, the development of

such foreign communities still remains the preserve of cities such as Marrakech, Essaouira or Fes. The phenomenon started in Marrakech in the 1960s. The first to arrive at that time were hippies, artists and top fashion designers. Nowadays, the circle has widened and the phenomenon has grown from the first half of the 1990s to include other layers of western society, including intellectuals, senior white collar workers, and fashionable tourists. By the end of 2000, 457 foreigners had bought more than 500 homes in the old city of Marrakech. These newcomers are of different nationalities, with French nationals making up 60%. Like Marrakech with its large *riads* (traditional houses), Essaouira has been chosen as a place to live by foreigners of various backgrounds from all over the world. Since the end of the 1990s, foreign investors have been buying *riads* in the old city either to use as a home or to run a guest house. Surveys have revealed that no fewer than 200 houses in the old city have foreign owners. Finally, the city of Fes has joined these conurbations, housing more and more European migrants who come to settle in Morocco as part of a recent and original movement which reverses the flows between Morocco and Europe. In July 2008, the old city of Fes was home to some 251 foreigners who had settled there, although the phenomenon did not take hold until 2004, benefiting from the development of budget air fares to Morocco and Fes. This suggests that this is a process which is only just beginning. The French head the list, making up 50% of this foreign community, followed by the English (20%), the Americans (9%), the Spanish (3%), then the Irish, Australians, Germans, Dutch, and others.

As part of the same process which generates the north-south flows towards Morocco, the residential migration of retired Europeans is also growing. Geographical and economic proximity, the possibility of reducing fixed and operating costs for European service organisations and the prospect of a quality of life linked to the sunshine are some of the main factors that offer these European immigrant populations in Morocco the hope of living out their retirement in good health at a lower cost. Statistically, this phenomenon is still marginal, but the tendency is for it to increase, which raises a number of questions for researchers to study. These foreigners who have come to settle for good in Morocco have thus far been treated by research as tourists, and never as immigrants. Yet these new actors match the definition of migrants perfectly and deserve to be studied as such.

Given this wide range of immigration experiences identified in the four country literature reviews, the lack of research into the process of integration of migrants is all the more striking. The Ghana paper draws attention to an insightful study on this subject conducted by Meier (Meier 2005). This sheds some light on the social lives of migrants settling in Ghana's urban areas. The study explores whether rural migrants in the cities of Accra and Tema make use of the concept of friendship as a means of social integration and for attaining social peace. Meier argues that, instead of committing themselves to intimate personal relationships, many of these migrants are hesitant to initiate and encourage friendship relations. Indeed the concept 'ambivalence' best describes their attitudes towards forging friendship relations. The migrants fear that making friends with fellow migrants from the same ethnic background could lead to information misuse. Many of these migrants therefore choose their friends 'from amongst completely unrelated groups, preferably those from different ethnic backgrounds' (Meier 2005: 68).

A further dimension of African migrations that research has been slow to incorporate is the relationship between migration and gender. With the growth in female migration and an

expansion of research, this is gradually being remedied. Since the 1970s, the role of women has been recognised as very important for understanding Moroccan migration and in this respect Berriane and Aderghal (2009:62) highlight three aspects of the female involvement in migration and its implications for gender relations:

> (i) Mothers who left Morocco in a situation of inferiority and who over time acquired some power within the family which was consolidated by relative financial autonomy;

> (ii) The emergence of a second and third generation of educated women born in migratory circumstances whose status is controlled by the laws of the host country, but whose relations with their male counterparts are governed by rules which belong to a different cultural reference than that of their family;

> (iii) For many women, the act of emigration over the last two decades has become part of an autonomous plan rather than being controlled by male migrants.

The authors point out that migration of Moroccan women reflects far-reaching social change, whereby cultural norms have become less restrictive and there is less social control over the mobility of women. However, research on this topic is still quite rare.

While some earlier studies in Ghana draw attention to the effect of women's migration on their lives and reproductive roles, most current studies emphasise the economic and social independence and reproductive role of women and young females. The changing labour market trends and the increasing participation of women in the global workforce have increased opportunities for skilled female migrants. In the area of health care, women dominate the nursing sector and have formed a large part of the skilled labour migration out of Ghana. Nurses and midwives form the majority of health worker migration in Ghana. Although several studies have been undertaken on the migration of skilled healthcare workers from Ghana and its impact on the health care sector, very little has been done in terms of a gender analysis of the Ghanaian health worker migration.

In summary, the four country reviews have highlighted at least four aspects of African migrations which are of particular significance, but which tend to be under-researched:

- Although they are known as 'emigration countries', all four countries, even the poorest, have experienced substantial African immigration. Considering that most international migration occurs within and not away from Africa, the significance of immigration should be obvious. Yet, this challenges common categories of emigration and immigration countries, and also interrogates standard migration theories.

- Immigration to African states from Asia and, in the case of Morocco, Europe is a nascent trend in intercontinental migration which has yet to be subject to detailed investigation.

- Given this paucity of research into immigration, it is not surprising that the corresponding issues of adaptation and integration of immigrants in their African host societies (van Dijk, et al. 2001:21-22) are also neglected. Integration tends to only be considered in the context of Western societies. However, the occurrence of frequent

expulsions endorsed by states and incidents of violence towards immigrants in different parts of Africa make research into these issues all the more pertinent.

- Much of the existing migration literature tends to consider primarily the movement of males in their economically productive age, forgetting that women and children have always been migrants, and may be a growing proportion of them. This late recognition of the impact of migration on gender relations and the 'feminisation of migration' is by no means unique to Africa (Adepoju 2008; Yamanaka and Piper 2005)

Another frequently neglected dimension of African migration research, which could be mentioned here, is the very 'normality' of the movements considered by the literature reviews. This is striking in a field which is dominated by many studies driven by policy concerns about 'managing migration' or responding to African migration crises, which results in a disproportionate focus on movement to Europe or the plight of refugees. This is not to suggest that such issues are not important, but this skewing of research does tend to obscure the fact most migrants in Africa (like the rest of the world) move for other, 'normal' reasons including trade, marriage, education, pilgrimage, and status.

Connections between different forms of mobility

While a number of prominent migration systems from and within the African continent have been identified, many of these systems are in fact interconnected and may consist of smaller subsystems. Much media and political attention has been paid to West Africans migrating to Europe, often transiting through North Africa. This has obscured the fact that many sub-Saharan migrants in North Africa are not necessarily in transit and that a number of them reside there more or less permanently. Most of the sub-Saharan migrants in Morocco are represented in popular discourse as 'clandestine', but many of them have legal residency status as students or workers. Studies tend to only emphasise the more spectacular and visible forms of migration, such as the irregular boat migration between Africa and Europe, while in fact student migration is an important part of these sub-Saharan migrant flows.

A study conducted in Rabat by Johara Berriane (2007) showed that the students from sub-Saharan Africa usually have grown up in an environment that was favourable to migration, and that the students in Rabat maintain social ties with sub-Saharan migrants around the world, including Europe and other African countries. These transnational ties can play an important role in decision making and the pursuit of their life projects. Ideally, the students' stay in Morocco is considered a stage in their migratory project, which they envision to be followed by subsequent moves for study or work. Moreover, they experience their stay in Morocco as a confrontation with, on the one hand, a host society which is culturally different and, on the other hand, sub-Saharan immigrants of various origins. From this "double encounter", new identities develop as the sub-Saharan student forms an identity as a "citizen of the world" who is, at the same time, anchored in an African community of origin.

The study by Johara Berriane draws attention to the fact that student migration is not only directed towards other continents, particularly Europe and the US, but is also occurring within the African continent. This raises the question as to whether the term 'brain-drain' sufficiently captures the impact of student- and high-skilled migration. The concept is rather

normative, construing migration as a negative drain. However, on the one hand, it has been shown that high-skilled emigration can benefit the countries of the departure, especially if the migrants return. This is exemplified in the country paper from Ghana, which argues that return migration has resulted in "brain gain" and/or "brain circulation". The authors mention that return migration involves the transfer of skills back to Ghana and job improvement on the part of return migrants. Moreover, evidence from the 1995 migration survey indicates that some return migrants received higher level formal education abroad, a useful contribution to human capital formation for the country (Awumbila, et al. 2009: 17).

On the other hand, the brain-drain concept is biased because it only captures the departure of the "autochthonous" population, and not the departure of immigrants or ex-pats who might have carried out important functions in the country they are leaving. Their departure may be judged in more ambiguous terms and this challenges the normative conceptions of the brain-drain. A very interesting example comes from the DRC country paper, which considers the exodus of Belgian colonial administrators as a type of brain drain:

> "Whether through a deliberate strategy or not, the Belgians were forced to leave the Congo en masse, leaving it without competent and experienced manpower to ensure the running of the State apparatus and of the public administration services. This return of Belgian and other expatriates in the context of the civil war can be compared to a return migration. This is a particular form of brain drain, the consequences of which are deeply felt in the country they flee from. This is also a particular form of brain drain because the departing 'quality' human resources are not nationals, but on the contrary foreign nationals, notably nationals from the former colonial mainland who 'desert' the ex-colony." (Ngoie Tshibambe and Vwakyanakazi 2009: 21)

A different example of how mobilities are interlinked comes from Morocco, where international migrants originating from the Moroccan countryside often choose to build their houses and resettle in the urban parts of Morocco. This is due to the cities' superior investment climate and living conditions, compared to the more impoverished rural areas where the migrants originate from. These migrants tend to bring in their families from the countryside to the new urban residence. Hence, in Morocco, internal migration is strongly connected to and often a result of international migration (Berriane and Aderghal 2009:58-59).

The connections between different forms of mobility also pertain to the fact that most people move for a variety of overlapping reasons. The boundaries between different categories of movers tend to be blurred, as people may fit into several categories at once, or they may change their status from one category to another. For example, as has been mentioned earlier in this paper, European tourists travelling to Morocco may turn into permanent immigrants settling down in one of the old towns and buying property. Other studies on migration in Africa have shown that the boundaries between forced and voluntary migration, or between family reunification and labour migration are blurred; that pastoralism is sometimes tied to urban migration during the dry season; and that sometimes, seasonal moves end up becoming permanent. Hence, there is no strict separation between various forms of mobility and this makes it harder to identify migration. In Ghana

and Nigeria, the mobility of traders across international borders is closely tied to migration dynamics. Also, many Nigerian emigrants are turning to trade either as their primary economic activity, or as a supplement to their income (Afolayan, et al. 2009). Networks often overlap, and migration and trade tend to be mutually reinforcing. Hence, there is often a close and reciprocal relation between trade and migration processes. However, "trade" does not necessarily mean the same in the various contexts across the African continent. In order to properly understand the role of trade in migration processes, researchers need to connect with more general debates on migration and not to merely focus on (migrant) traders as such.

The above findings indicate that there are strong and probably growing interconnections between different forms of mobility occurring on the continent, increasingly connecting countries on the continent, including the four case study countries. The geographical reach of migration has increased, possibly fuelled by the lowering of transportation costs and improved infrastructure, making it easier to travel longer distances. Moreover, there are cases of interconnectedness between patterns of internal migration, immigration and emigration. Migration of the one type can be a precursor of, or stimulates the other type of migration.

The conditions for migration research in/on Africa

Apart from the various research findings discussed above, it is also important to draw attention to the conditions under which current knowledge about migration in Africa is being produced. There are several constraints on migration research on and in Africa, which partly explains why the general knowledge and understanding of African migrations is partial and fairly limited.

Firstly, there is a lack of basic empirical data: much 'knowledge' on African migration is based on (partly self-reinforcing) assumptions, rather than sound empirical evidence. Some of these assumptions have been discussed above. This includes the idea that international migration is always directed away from Africa; that most the majority of African migrants are refugees or victims of trafficking; that mainly or only men migrate; and that people are generally moving out of African countries, instead of in to them. The lack of data is not simply a reflection of the constraints on African research but also the underlying dearth of reliable national statistics, in particular from censuses, household surveys and administrative processes, which are often needed as an essential foundation for migration research.

Much research is funded by Western institutions and international agencies, which biases research agendas. Research becomes focused on specific 'crisis migration' issues, such as trafficking, refugee flows or irregular migration to Europe, reflecting policy priorities although these are often actually relatively small in comparison with 'normal' migration.

As a result of such constraints, there is a general lack of reciprocal connections between empirical studies of African migration and general migration theory. Most work is purely empirical and does not aim to test theory-derived hypotheses. Similarly, few empirical studies attempt to contribute to theoretical debates. The result is that migration theory is hardly informed by African migration realities. Although many studies refer to "push-pull"

factors such as urbanisation, income and employment differentials and structural adjustment, this is generally done in a rather haphazard way to explain migration phenomena *post-factum*. Such explanations tend to be so general that they have neither much heuristic value nor can be subjected to empirical tests.

Finally, African migration research suffers from a lack or limited availability of publications. Many studies on migration in Africa remain unknown, because the research is either not published, or because publications are not accessible to a wider audience, both within and outside Africa or indeed, as electronic publications on the internet. Particularly the work done by students at African universities is generally only accessible on the shelves of the particular university's library. Such grey literature on African migrations could potentially contribute to the general knowledge and understanding of migration, both in terms of descriptive and analytical insight, and also in terms of theory building.

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