

**African Migrations Workshop:  
“African Migrations Research: Methodologies and Methods”  
Rabat, Morocco  
26<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> November 2009**

**Funded by  
The International Migration Institute (IMI), University of Oxford  
and  
The « Equipe de Recherche sur la Région et la Régionalisation (E3R)  
Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines, Université Mohamed V (Rabat)**

**Report on the workshop  
by  
Gunvor Jónsson**

The workshop was attended by approximately 50 people. 20 papers were given over 6 sessions, in addition to various sessions dealing with conceptual and empirical aspects of research. The workshop also included a practical session on the use of methods, a documentary film screening, and a guided excursion in the city of Rabat. Contributions from the floor are listed anonymously as bullet points. Links to the presented papers are available on the IMI website ([www.imi.ox.ac.uk](http://www.imi.ox.ac.uk)).

The workshop also included presentations related to the *African Perspectives on Human Mobility* programme. This is a three year research programme that is being conducted by the IMI in partnership with universities in Ghana, Morocco, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Nigeria. The programme aims to explore alternative conceptions of human mobility based on empirical research in these four countries. The programme is also designed to help develop the capacity of African institutions to undertake state-of-the-art migration research. At the workshop, the programme partners presented overviews of national migration trends and research on the basis of literature reviews in their respective countries. They also presented their proposals for empirical research to be conducted in 2009.

**Wednesday 26 November**

**Session 1: Case studies from the DRC, Morocco, Nigeria and Ghana (part of the *African Perspectives on Human Mobility* programme)**

**Chair: Hein de Haas**

**Presenters: Mohamed Berriane, Peter Quartey, Germain Tshibambe Ngoie, Adejumoke Afolayan**

- While the papers showed great diversity, there were a number of common points: the intensification, diversification, complexification and feminisation of migration; the domination of outsider perspectives. The stated drivers included ‘push-pull’, urbanisation, development of migration policies and increasing policy interest to gain from migration.
- Is the observation of change a result of better research or actual transformations? Interesting to look at change – how do current patterns differ from historical ones? What are the similarities between changes across the

countries? Some common factors have been mentioned like SAP and ‘push-pull’, but these are very general. Are there more specific factors we can identify?

- All cases had periodisation: two used colonialism as the turning point, noting that the postcolonial era is marked by complexity. To suggest that migration in Africa is framed by colonialism makes it different from migration elsewhere. Seems colonialism has framed many of the structures that guide migrations in Africa.
- There are valuable questions of *comparison* that this project can answer, e.g. what is the effect that policy can have on migration flows? Also consider why issues have not been discussed in a similar manner across these countries, e.g. some issues are seen as problematic some places but not elsewhere.
- Many of the papers asked for policy reform but what is the outcome of good policy? Managing migration tends to lead to more irregularity. What is the impact of sub-national migration policy? Cities seem to have a very important role to play; the policies of municipal authorities have important effects on how migrants move. Yet, there is a danger that research becomes too defined by policy.
- Striking that the discussion emphasised policy – but maybe we should turn around the question and not merely consider how migration policies can enhance national development, seeing these policies as part of the *context* in which migration takes place, and involving other policies too, for example trade policies.
- Where are the children in the cases presented?

## **Session 2: Overview lecture: methods and methodology**

**Presenter: Stephen Castles**

Topics touched upon included: Dilemmas of social research; whether migration research in Africa raises specific issues compared to other regions; quantitative vs. qualitative approaches; top-down vs. bottom up; categories; contributions of specific disciplines; link between methods and theory; ethics; relationship between research and policy; difference between methodology and methods.

- Migration should be considered in its broader context, in relation to development and the structure of global capitalism. Researchers should be aware of the broader context, including global and national structures.
- Caution against false dichotomies like quantitative vs. qualitative and positivist vs. constructivist approaches. For example, quantitative methods can also answer questions about meaning.
- What is inter-disciplinarity? In migration studies, it does not entail that one researcher should master multiple disciplines, nor that there is one overarching theoretical framework. It entails that people from different disciplines collaborate and talk to each other to take into account micro, meso and macro perspectives. Teams could also be transnational, bridging language divides.

## **Session 3: Qualitative methods**

**Chair: Mohamed Berriane**

**Presenters: Jose Bazonzi, Rachid Olaniyi and Isaïe Dougnon**

- Question the strategic use of researcher’s ethnicity for gaining access to informants (eg. “*cousinage*” in Mali) - researchers be careful to retain some distance to their informants.

- Compatibility of various sampling methods (snowballing vs. random sampling), and the limitations of methods used.
- Researchers don't have to revolutionise everything, but we want to improve our methodology and methods. We are here with two schools of thoughts, the Francophone and the Anglophone; it is good to listen to others' approach and reflect.
- Question the use of colonial archives: What position should we have in relation to these sources?

### **Thursday 27 November**

**Session 1: Applied quantitative and mixed methods, part I**

**Chair:** Loren Landau

**Presenters:** Mandhouj Makrem, Félicien Fomekong, Alban Ahoure

- Theory has to guide methodology and methods - what is the theoretical context of these studies?
- Terminology: what is the definition of the term "sub-Saharan"? How do you define 'mixed marriages'? How do you determine something as "corruption"?
- Reliability of data: how does one discuss informal transfers of remittances when there is no data? Also, consider the limits of census data (state level data reflects power that is held by the state; in a marriage census, the definition of marriage is determined by the state).
- Migration research needs to move beyond South-North relations
- The duration of the study is important to take into account

**Session 2: Multi-sited methods**

**Chair:** Florence Boyer

**Presenters:** Yasmin M. Ahmed, Mohamed Berriane, Mohamed Aderghal and Lahoucine Amzil, Alberto Capote Lama, Una Okaikwo Osili

- How do you classify a place as 'less developed'?
- How do you locate and interview the informants if they are moving around?
- Ethical and methodological questions regarding contacting informants who have been identified by people in another site; how do you ensure consent and cooperation?
- What will be the point of departure in multisited research? Origin, arrival or transit space?

**Session 3: Presentations of research proposals by Ghana and the Democratic Republic of Congo (part of the *African Perspectives on Human Mobility* programme)**

**Chair:** Maruja Asis

**Presenters:** Peter Quartey, Germain Tshibambe Ngoie

*Titles and summaries of proposals:*

Ghana: "Changing Mobility Patterns and Livelihood Dynamics in Africa: the Case of Transnational Ghanaian Traders". This study will explore the evolution of migratory patterns shaped by trading practices, including regional movements in local markets and emerging links to new destinations such as China and other areas of the Middle and Far East. Also to ascertain the role of transnationalism in the livelihoods of these traders.

DRC: “Dynamics in the DRC: morphology, logic and impacts in Lubumbashi”. This study will investigate the changing patterns of emigration from Lubumbashi and (Chinese, Indian, Senegalese, Nigerian) immigration to Lubumbashi and the impact on both migrant and non-migrant households.

*Questions and comments:*

- What are the comparative aspects between the case studies – how to go beyond describing patterns and changes in current migration patterns? Will you build on shared theoretical questions? Do you try to compare as explanatory value whether migration routes are created by markets forces, or rather by knowledge routes, historical patterns, networks? Also, do you take the fact of migration for granted and try to explain it, or rather look at case studies and within that society, the changing role of mobility? What influences what, migration upon society or reverse?
- On sample sizes: interviewing 200 people over two years is modest, you could do bigger esp. in this comparative framework
- Rather than depending on documents and officials, you can use your personal experiences/knowledge of what happens in the field, to question categories and enlighten this research.

To the DRC:

- What do you expect from this study, what do you want to discover? What is the very problem?
- Normally mining towns becoming ghost towns and areas of emigration.
- You will study foreigners in Lubumbashi but what about nationals?
- Surprising you avoid quantitative methods considering the questions you pose.
- Ethics important; the relation between you the researcher and the undocumented immigrants; they may have certain expectations when you introduce yourself. How overcome power dynamics between interviewer/-ee?

To Ghana:

- How can a migrant be at the same time migrant and trader? If you are in Dubai you cannot operate in Kumasi, all you can do is send your goods to someone in Kumasi. Unless they are businessmen, instead of migrants, going on business trips. What is the link between traders and migrants? Are the migrants in Ghana also in international trade? And what is the role of the Ghana diaspora in the conduct of trade? Interesting to consider international traders as actor of migration – is a species in extinction in Latin America. Is it an important actor in migration in Ghana? What role do they play in migration processes?
- Regarding the locality of the survey: have you tried to think about the market and what size it plays in the city? May be census available. How do you define this place which is the market?
- Where are we with respect to research on *new* migration? In Ghana, what is the share of women in commercial activity? Compare men and women, different behaviours.
- Proposal will answer who and what questions, but could also study how patterns emerge. This deepening of the question will answer *how and why*.

*Responses:*

Ghana: Traders are undertaking actual repeated movements but we also include those who not move but are engaged in international trade. We focus on the link between these mobilities and migration – these kinds of mobility can lead to

permanent migration. Long distance trading can eventually lead to migration, as those who go buy goods and come back eventually become permanent migrants. Women will be many of our respondents. Is a new role for men.

The DRC: The image of DRC migrants is that of illegals, but when you are in the field you note that people move as migrants and migrants even come to the country. The research problem is to understand the complexity and varied dynamics of migration, and see continuity and discontinuity. The DRC is an underdeveloped country affected by capital forces in the globalisation era. There is a boom in investments in the mining sector in Lubumbashi; yet, it is a ghost mining city because capitalism has exploited all the mining wealth. Chinese immigrants arrive straight from their villages; they don't even know their own capital city.

### Friday 28 November

**Session 1: Methods and methodologies for studying vulnerable migrants**

**Chair: Mohamed Aderghal**

**Presenters: Hanaa Motasim, Abdou Ndao, Julio Aderito Machava, Samir Rouis**

- What are the differences in the way an architect approaches 'space' compared to geographers? Do the concepts differ? Architects may pay particular attention to 'design'.
- How can we study and understand the complexity and blurring of categories like refugees and IDPs? This requires a methodology that is very close to the empirical field, a very precise description of the place and the space from the inside, including people's mental mapping, their perception of the space.
- In the case of Sudan, how can the researcher remain neutral in such a sensitive situation? How did the religious beliefs of the researcher affect the relationship with informants of a different faith?
- Regarding methods of play (*méthodes ludiques*): do the children accept the rules of the game? Do formal institutions accept the results of play methods? Particularly if the methods highlight children's agency rather than their victimhood. How can one adapt the 'play methods' to different age groups? With what methods can we study the behaviour that develops at different ages? Can play methods be used with adults? At what age is someone a child? Cultural and legal definitions differ.
- What exactly is implied by vulnerability (cf. topic of session)? All migrants could be considered vulnerable. Are children necessarily vulnerable? Under the conditions of a gerontocratic system, children are being dominated; but as migrants they might consider themselves as liberated; meanwhile, the NGOs that work with them may prefer to categorise them as vulnerable.
- What are the connections between the visual methods (photography) and the interviews? Are the methods complementary?
- The techniques for using life history are very specific; be cautious not to use the term in too general and vague a sense.
- Consider the problematic/political aspect of labelling the subjects of your study 'clandestine'; who defines them as clandestine and why? Also, how do you carry out research on illegal migration in a state with a high level of police

control and surveillance of the population (including researchers and migrants)? May have to conduct research in a 'clandestine' fashion.

- Is it possible and desirable to formulate and test hypotheses in social scientific research? If this is our aim, we need to be very specific about selecting the right informants.

**Session 2: Presentations of research proposals by Morocco and Nigeria (part of the *African Perspectives on Human Mobility* programme)**

**Chair: Raúl Delgado Wise**

**Presenters: Mohamed Berriane and Adejumoke Afolayan**

*Titles and summaries of proposals:*

Morocco: "New mobilities around Morocco viewed through the case of Fes". This study will look at the trajectories and motivations of migration among three groups, European migrants to Morocco, sub-Saharan African migrants to Morocco, and households of migrants who have left. The work will take place in the town of Fes.

Nigeria: "Dynamics of International Migrant Traders in Nigeria". This study will include research into migration associated with trade in particular products (possibly car parts, rice, and consumer electronics) in Lagos and Kano.

*Questions and comments:*

- The topics that are coming out of these projects would not be similar if the programme was conducted in Latin America; eg. the role of traders would not be considered it is mostly labour migration that is taken into account. Interesting to look at spaces in relation to mobility and migration.
- Trying to link the different studies: apart from DRC the others seem to speak about commerce. Fes looks like a commercial city; but there may be spaces in Fes where behaviour is different, eg. relation between Jews and Muslims
- Mobility is a more useful term than migration but there seems to be no ambition in scientific realm to change this migration paradigm.
- The projects have in common the desire to shift from migration to mobility. The relation between migration and development forces a shift to look at mobility: to see the connection of migration to development one must also look at different types of mobility that play a role in social change.
- Talking of migration or mobility doesn't reflect a change in phenomena, but a change in perspectives. Mobility sound so positive, a possibility to develop opportunities through movement. But mobility is still very constrained for some. Using the approach of migration emphasises what states do to monitor and control migration. Both perspectives are crucial, almost like the agency/structure debate, so we need to focus on both; they are different lenses which are equally valid.
- Consider synthesis within each project. Moroccan research on three flows of migrants could look at interactions between those within the city of Fes, ie. Fes as a migrant city. How will you interpret those interactions? Study them empirically or only after in your analysis? Nigerian research has different types of migrants and political economy as the context. How will you make the synthesis between these two perspectives, ie. how migrants affect political economy and vice versa? The Heckscher-Ohlin (HO) model seems to suggest a synthesis, please elaborate.

Nigeria

- Focus on two cities in a huge country and two ethnic groups that work differently is a problem. How do you take these differences into consideration?
- Idea of traders is intriguing – not necessarily the people but the goods who will move. If they have been traders for long they might have contacts, clientele, and resources they have built up over long, and probably linked to improvements in technologies and communication – so then it is the goods instead of people who will move. Proposal lacks mention of Asian presence, Chinese investors and traders and development assistants.
- Notion of trader is not clear. Are they smugglers? Within Africa it seems there is a very small formal labour market so people move more in the informal sector, so this is perhaps a field in which traders are moving. Second, political economy to me is something different than what you propose, ie. asymmetries between countries, inequality etc.

#### Morocco

- How do you involve those local networks of researchers in Fes?
- Many *Tijani* [Muslim pilgrims mainly from Senegal] come to Fes. Would be useful to have a specific case study on the occupation of space, and articulation between mobility and this religious community.
- Would be innovative to study different *terms* for mobility from a socio-linguistic view point, ie. popular semiology. But researchers should avoid arbitrary typologies and dualities between types of migrants that don't take complexity into account. The inter/cross-cultural term can lead to such deadlocks; eg. why should sub-Saharan migration not include cross-cultural aspects?
- How will you study the articulations of mobility of the three populations identified? How will you concretely analyse in order to go beyond two types of mobility (internal vs. international)?
- Would you take into consideration migrants who left Fes but have not settled yet?
- What quantitative collection tool have you used? What type of member of household have you chosen?

#### Responses:

##### Morocco:

- Often our research is polarised only looking at labour migration, but we realise that increasingly there are movements we cannot classify. Continuations of movements connect the Mediterranean shores.
- Working on these three migrations there is a danger of hierarchising that we will avoid. We want to assess them in same way with same methodology. Europeans have settled in the small streets of the medina where you cannot afford not to communicate with locals, so inter-culturality is very important. Does not mean that in the other forms of migration there is no such thing, though.

##### Nigeria:

- Regarding political economy, we try to conceptualise how changing policies over time have influenced economic interactions and how they have facilitated flows across borders. Migrants move not because the environment is suited for it but to improve their situation

- It is hard to explain why people move to specific places and not to others. Also, we need to explain the reversal of movement, where people move in to Nigeria.

**Session 3: Applied quantitative and mixed methods, part II**

**Chair: Germain Tshibambe Ngoie**

**Presenter: Tara Polzer, Agbada Mobhe Mangalu, Netsayi Noris Mudege**

- Important to consider female migration: women's motives are often different from men's and women are not just dependent migrants; women discuss their migration histories differently from men.
- Is 'non-representative survey' the right word to describe a survey that still appears to be trying to reach representativity and produce numbers? This type of survey might be satisfactory for advocacy work, but it is problematic to apply this method in academic research. Maybe this method would be less controversial when applied to the collection of qualitative, rather than quantitative data.
- What are the potential problems of researchers subcontracting volunteers to collect the data they need? Researchers then have less control over the process of data collection but on the other hand, they can ensure that the data is comparable because data collectors have been centrally trained and use the same methods. Comparativity can be difficult in partnerships where different research teams collect data and then come together and do a joint analysis, because the various research teams may have applied different methods and methodologies.
- Important to consider other factors apart from education that characterise African migrants in destinations outside the African continent.
- A neighbourhood does not necessarily constitute a 'community' – especially if it consists of people who are all about to emigrate. Do these people have a sense of community, or are they all just in transit?
- The work environment may impede researchers who would like to improve their research by gathering additional data. May be difficult working as an anthropologist in an environment dominated by demographers, where value is placed on quantitative methods to the exclusion of qualitative research.

**Saturday 30 November**

**Session 1: Innovative methods**

**Chair: Babacar Ndione**

**Presenters: Caroline Kihato, Darshan Vigneswaran, Julien Brachet**

- Photos might fixate a reality which is continually changing; for example, certain African ethnic groups are still represented with photos taken in the 1930s. There is also the risk of misinterpreting a photo – people in a forced marriage might look happy in their wedding photo.
- What are the limitations to the kind of photos people take when representing themselves? The home might be considered a space that has to remain invisible; but not all people have these cultural concerns.
- Illiterate or non-educated people might have difficulty using cameras and expressing themselves through photography. There are alternative methods like mental maps that can be produced with thread and buttons to represent

precise routes and places. Such techniques are under-utilised and can complement the visual techniques.

- The GIS gives a very abstract impression; where did the observations take place in the real scale? What are the ethical issues of using GIS – that is, observing people without their knowledge or consent? GIS images can be used for comparing statements with the actual events – for example, whether police action was actually focused on the crime or whether it was targeting irregular immigrants rather.
- The presentations give examples of studying migration in an *analogous* way, as it occurs – instead of the usual either prospective point of departure or the retrospective point of arrival.
- How can the method of studying transit/transport be reproduced elsewhere? Do you follow the migrants' routes (the structures) or the migrants themselves (the actors), or both? The routes are created by people, but when people use the routes they may deviate from them and they might return or settle along the way. It is impossible to exactly transpose this method, but it can be adapted to other settings, especially where migration occurs in steps. Requires a lot of improvisation: you follow certain migrants, then you change route to follow others, then you meet up again later on.
- When a traveller has not yet reached his destination, can we then call him a migrant? Is a study of 'transit' really a study of migration? Analysis of transit is complementary to the common studies in places of departure and arrival. We can never tell exactly what is the final destination of a person, when and where they are going to stop and settle for good - only upon death. There are many gaps in our analysis of migration, and the analysis of circulation is one way to tackle this, by interrogating the logic and practices of mobility.
- The space of transit is not homogenous. To take account of its heterogeneity, the researcher can interrogate the different forms of territoriality for example, territories of legality, of corruption, or those of a clandestine nature.

**Closing session: Key findings and closing comments**

**Chair: Stephen Castles**

**Panel of speakers: Mohamed Berriane, Josh Dewind, Raúl Delgado Wise, Maruja Asis, Papa Demba Fall**

- Depiction of African migration has been skewed towards trafficking and unauthorised migration, as well as remittances. This programme made a conscious decision that the research agenda be generated from within the region.
- Dominance of research conducted in South Africa. Elsewhere, little has been published or only appears in grey literature or non-peer reviewed publications. Important that the research in this region be visible in academic journals.
- There is new data and new processes, a starting point for future collaboration. New processes: apart from linking data to theory and to go beyond method towards methodology, is also the question of the use of data; the links between data and advocacy is important. Must question and explore the links between policy implications and data; research and advocacy; and research-based evidence and public education. We need solid empirical data from a comprehensive perspective. Must work on information systems on migration and development with new analytical categories.

- Have we really advanced in our knowledge of African migrations? What is the final goal for research? Data is often missing in the analysis of migration; it is up to us to initiate and stress the importance of the collection of data.
- Revisiting of old issues – eg. that binary categories are no longer relevant and cannot capture different mobilities in the region. Statistics and data generated by government agencies are inadequate to capture new migrations. Researchers can respond by generating own primary data but must also demand from government the importance of data, they have a responsibility to generate data as well.
- We are not pioneers in research on migration; it is fundamental to revisit previous work, eg. on internal migration or trade networks. Economists are an endangered species in migration meetings, but quantitative analysis still relevant in our research. We have to also highlight the data that exists, not just show the gaps in knowledge and not reinvent the wheel. We looked mainly at international migration, but have much to learn from the link between internal/international migrations. Bridging Franco-/Anglophone research is also productive.
- Crucial to move towards an alternative agenda apart from that imposed by the North which focuses only on security and integration. We must move to a more comprehensive approach. This implies a lot of collective work, and dialogue that is interdisciplinary and inter-institutional and is north-south and south-south. Need a lot of comparison and networking.
- Important aim of our work is to influence public opinion and policy making. We should think of ourselves also as development agents. Knowledge is very important for policy making and public opinion. We need to realise there is need for a fundamental change at this moment and knowledge is a fundamental tool for this change.
- But we should not erect the migration/development nexus as the only issue. Migrants are not development stakeholders, and we are not development agents. There is a risk of focusing mainly on the economic dimension of migration. Some surveys are appearing that highlight socio-cultural aspects of mobility, but sometimes then the emphasis is more on culture; need to find a balance.
- We should get beyond the utilitarian approach constructing the responsibility of migrants as development agents. They are individuals with own interests. There is social urgency to deal with xenophobia etc in the era of globalisation; is it not our responsibility to enlighten on this subject?
- Careful not to always place ourselves on the ladder of macro-development, but also consider local and regional development. Migration is important for Morocco's development, but remember that it firstly impacts on the region where the migrants originate and only later influences elsewhere in the country. Studying migration and development we must distinguish the level. What development are we studying?
- Should we only study whenever there is a problem? It is just as important to conduct research that is *not* guided by the need to intervene. We should aim to understand our society, and since our society is in movement we need to understand mobility.
- We must question the limits of our disciplinary methods, go beyond the established rules and be innovative. The field allows us to construct new

arguments based on methods. Sometimes methods cannot be directly implemented in different contexts and need to be tested and adapted to different problems.

- Ethics: who has the right to an image? What is the responsibility of the researcher in terms of the results of research and their use? Do we have the right to diffuse information obtained in intimacy? Protection of our sources?
- Longitudinal study was not mentioned, ie. following the trajectories, keep in touch with people we have already researched, keep in touch with migrants and follow them where they go. Also, importance of new communication methods like computer, internet, mobile phones, and text messages – this impacts on our way of doing research and our relation with research subjects. Also discuss how friendships impact research outputs but also in terms of ethics. How far do you go to help people, eg. help them to move on?
- Our migrant-centrism is striking. This has left out relevant themes, eg. we don't look at the history of what impacted the way people moved in the past; institutional impacts including what states do to regulate (politics of migration); the political-economy of knowledge production in Africa – eg. why is there no emphasis on theorisation? Seems because there is no payoffs in doing that, as we are funded to do practical research
- Expand beyond migration focus – actively target people whose primary identity is not as migration scholars but who touch upon it indirectly in their research, eg. art historians who trace art, technological diffusions, health systems. We should find and invite these people explicitly to these kinds of meetings.
- Methods and methodologies should not be confused. The first concerns the questions we pose and how we pose them. How does the research begin? Will we follow the exact sciences or the political and conflict perspectives? Most discussion was linked to methods/techniques and less to methodology.
- Fundamental missing link and basic weakness is theory. Most research questions were not theoretically formulated or framed. Be aware of the basic paradigms from which the theories come from and the assumptions/postulates/prescriptions that underlie theories. Big challenge is to move beyond migration theories. Deep understanding of agency and structure, avoid eclecticism, expand beyond the boundaries of theories, and incorporate development and social transformations as key issues that have to be strongly tied to migration. Crucial to contextualise. Must move to inter/trans-disciplinary work in theory. Big effort to understand contemporary capitalism, the nature of the current global (financial) crisis, internationalisation of productions. For this we need new concepts and analytical categories.
- Speakers were urged to focus on methods/-ologies and not on outcomes of the research. But this reduces them to techniques of gathering info and perhaps analysing. To understand the conceptual logic that gives data meaning it is more interesting when methods are connected to results or to defining the subjects of the research. Methods by themselves were useful, but the most interesting presentations were the ones looking at context/structure versus migrants' personal choice/agency. The call for inter-disciplinarity is met by linking these two approaches – differences between context/structure/people/society, and combining these two perspectives with methodologies, so that we are able to see both individuals and contexts/societies. We should not just look at methods alone, but consider

what is being studied, the people or the structures. This then leads you back to questions of theory. If theory is explanation then this would be the next natural step of our enquiries.

- Theory tends to be most powerful when it can explain more. There are micro-, meso-, and macro-level theories. We can think of how to combine research in Africa with that in the rest of the world. Leads back to questions of African exceptionalism, which was said to be something we want to get past, stating we need to get beyond poverty migration to look at what is normal migration. But this also suggests there is nothing different or particular about African migration. Yet, comparing with other regions we might notice differences that can help us gain theoretical insight, for example by studying transitions: in the process of development in economies there has been transition like rural-urban, high to low fertility, agriculture to industrialism, emigration and immigration. But in Africa patterns do not necessarily follow these transitions. Maybe colonialism has led to different kinds of transitions in Africa, or the transitions do not lead to the same things in Africa as elsewhere.
- What would make African research different from other migration research, without falling back on African exceptionalism? One common element might be colonialism. Whether established transitions are linked to migration transitions can be questions. Ask whether current research highlighting complexity can highlight past complexities. Changes taking place now have taken place in the recent past. This might be true on a macro level, but through research we might question the whole idea of transition. The importance of theory to frame all the works we do has become evident. Reframing global migration theory may be the next vision for a future workshop.