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# Migration, mobility and the African city

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- analyse migration as part of broader global change
- contribute to new theoretical approaches
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## Abstract

This paper draws on insights from the African Perspectives on Human Mobility research programme, which included four research teams based at universities in Ghana, Nigeria, Morocco and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The paper first provides some details on the background and findings of the projects conducted by the four teams in various African cities. It then turns to some reflections on the theoretical implications and questions raised by these research findings and presents four broad points. First, by showing African cities as a place of attraction for international migrants, these findings highlight the curious absence of other research into international migration towards other African cities. Second, the city is a zone of departure not just in terms of being a stepping stone to long-distance migration, but also in terms of being what we might call a 'forge' for migratory behaviour – where migration is shaped through urban life. Third, the paper draws attention to the different practices of integration and exclusion of migrants that are in evidence in these African cities, again observing the limited research in this area. Fourth, in contrast to the global cities literature, which largely bypasses the African continent, we note that the cities included in this study are clearly enmeshed in transnational and global networks, not merely as departure points for migrants, but also, significantly, as attractive spaces for migrants and mobile traders – for creativity, connections and exchange. The paper concludes by reflecting on how we might better understand the links between internal, regional and inter-continental migration in the context of Africa, suggesting that examining global African migrations in more detail may help us understand better the emergence of new migration systems.

**Keywords:** international mobility and migration in Africa, urban Africa, global cities, integration

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# Contents

# 1 Introduction

This paper draws on the findings of the three-year collaborative programme, African Perspectives on Human Mobility, which was coordinated by IMI. The programme included four research teams based at different African universities, in Ghana, Nigeria, Morocco and the DRC.

The APHM programme was established with a view to help fill the yawning gap in research on the experiences of mobility and migration across Africa. There has been a growing volume of research on African migration, but our observation was that much of this was framed by a research agenda reflecting European preconceptions and concerns. The volume of research on migration from Africa to Europe far outstrips that on migration within the continent. Concerns about irregular migration, trafficking, insecurity and migration as a response to crises across Africa have attracted disproportionate attention, while the much more common experiences of mobility have tended to be neglected. The APHM programme set out to explore some of what are perhaps the more 'mundane' or 'normal' aspects of African mobility and migration – the mobility that forms part of quotidian experiences of many people across the continent and helps to shape the societies in which they live and move.

We are first going to present some of the central findings by the four research teams in various African cities, namely in Lubumbashi (DRC), Fès (Morocco), Accra and Kumasi (Ghana), and Lagos (Nigeria) . This lays the basis for the analysis in the subsequent section, which looks at the literature on different aspects of African cities and migration. We conclude with some reflections on new areas for research that are opened by the programme.

# 2 Research findings in African cities

The focus for research in both Ghana and Nigeria was on the mobility of market traders rather than longer-term migrants. Both countries have seen a huge boom in the levels of trade with the Middle East and Asia, especially China. The local markets in many African cities and towns are now dominated by Chinese manufactured goods, often of poor quality but always at low prices compared to other imports. The studies undertaken by the University of Ghana and the University of Ibadan set out to examine the movement of people that accompanied the movement of goods to the markets of Accra and Kumasi in Ghana and Lagos in Nigeria. What are the characteristics of market traders undertaking international journeys for their businesses? What routes do they use and how do they organise their journeys? How do they negotiate the various obstacles to their mobility, including logistical and bureaucratic hurdles? What is the impact of their international mobility on their livelihoods? To what extent can these short-term movements be associated with longer-term migration?

In Ghana, the research was conducted in the two largest markets in the country: the Kumasi Central Market in the central belt of Ghana and the Makola Market in the capital city Accra in southern Ghana. A survey was conducted with 154 traders (104 in Makola, 50 in Kumasi) who travelled internationally for their business, and this was supplemented by in-depth qualitative interviews and case studies. The majority of traders in these markets are women, but there is a relatively high proportion of men among those involved in

transnational trade. Most of the respondents had moved into long-distance travel stepwise, starting with their first journeys to other cities and towns in Ghana, before moving into the ECOWAS sub-region and eventually to trading destinations outside Africa. One of the most striking findings was that China was by far the most popular destination for these transnational traders, followed by the United Arab Emirates (UAE), with the UK, often seen as the more traditional destination, lagging some way behind. Perhaps not surprisingly, women in the sample were more likely to travel within West Africa, and there were proportionately more men travelling to China and UAE. Most reported travelling two to four times a year, in visits lasting on average about two weeks, with very few staying beyond one month.

The transnational traders emphasised the importance of networks in facilitating both their mobility and their trade, including visa acquisition, ticketing, and shipping of goods. They employ middlemen – mainly Ghanaians who have settled in the trade destination countries for some length of time – to guide them around as well as to assist them in purchasing their goods. These middlemen also offer information on informal banking services including currency exchanges, and some facilitate the transport of the goods to Ghana, as shipping agents. Over two-thirds of the respondents reported travelling with cash, introducing security risks and meaning they have to smuggle money through the airport to avoid the currency restrictions. However, they claimed that they avoid the formal banking system as it places a limit of $10,000 on their transfers, which they say is too low. This illustrates the scale of the trade.

The development of these rapidly expanding trading networks to Asia and the Middle East is clearly enabled by the growing presence of more permanent Ghanaian migrants in the destination countries. While it might be assumed that these longer-term migrations evolve from the short-term journeys of the traders – where a trader eventually decides to set up business in the destination country and stay longer term – the research provides little evidence for this. The vast majority of those interviewed (95 per cent) had never considered staying more permanently in their trading destinations, despite the exposure that transnational trade has given them. Only 13 per cent even knew friends who had gone to stay permanently abroad in trading destinations, following new business interests, taking up job opportunities, or for education or marriage. While it is possible that a small but growing Ghanaian population in China has mostly been drawn from traders, it is clear that the short-term mobility of trade is not generally transforming people into long-term migrants.

The Nigerian study adopted a different approach by focusing on just one city, Lagos, but looking at four large markets dealing in different goods across the city: Auto Spare Parts and Machinery Dealers Association Market (ASPAMDA); Alaba International Market dealing mainly in electronics; Ikeja Computer Village Market; and Balogun-Idumota Market, which has a very wide range of goods, but the research was confined to traders in footwear and textiles. Using the different trading associations as the basis for sampling, the research team conducted a survey interviewing a total of 728 traders across these four markets, of which 448 travelled internationally for trade and 280 worked only in Nigeria (internal traders). In contrast to the Ghanaian study, the vast majority of the respondents (85 per cent) were male.

Once again, China emerged as the most popular destination, followed by the United Arab Emirates (in particular Dubai) and then Japan. However, there was little evidence of the step by step graduation to transnational trade seen in Ghana; over three-quarters of

transnational traders went to Asia or the Middle East on their first trip outside Nigeria. There were far fewer traders moving within West Africa or to Europe. Those engaged in transnational trade seemed to be more established than internal traders: they were older, better educated and more likely to be married.

Most international traders were travelling by air, using business visas and staying for short periods, usually up to two weeks but rarely as long as a month. Like the Ghanaian transnational traders, the Nigerians also relied on networks of co-nationals who had settled in the destination countries and could help orientate new traders and assist with language (although they emphasised how much could be achieved in business in China with just a pocket calculator to communicate prices). While the respondents anticipated continuing and even expanding their transnational trading – with those engaged in internal trade aspiring to move into the international markets – there was no indication of any desire to join the growing Nigerian (mainly Igbo) population in Guangzhou, one of the major trading towns in China. The Nigerian research team argues that the mobility of the transnational traders can be distinguished from that of longer-term migration by the way that it is shaped by the individual interests of the trader and directed towards a single strategic aim. Ironically, given their strategic cost benefit analysis and individual decision-making, the transnational traders, who are generally not counted as migrants, may conform more closely to the assumptions of neo-classical migration models than longer-term migrants with their much more complex mix of rationales and decision-making frameworks.

The research in Morocco and DRC shifted the focus from the capital cities to secondary cities, Fès and Lubumbashi respectively, and from movement out of the country to inward migration, whether the return migration of nationals, or immigration from within the continent or beyond. Like the Ghana and Nigeria studies, they also called into question the common categorisations of migration that differentiate between permanent movement, transit migration, return migration and so forth. Both uncovered much more complex pictures of settlement that confound such simplistic categories.

Like the Ghanaian and Nigerian teams, the team from the University of Lubumbashi were intrigued by the growing links with China, but their focus was on the settlement of Chinese immigrants in the city. In addition, their qualitative research in the city looked at the settlement of other Asians, immigrants from other parts of Africa as well as Congolese returnees. Lubumbashi is a relatively new city created around the mining industry, which evolved because of immigration, particularly during the colonial era. Today, it is the mobility of its residents that gives Lubumbashi a claim to connection with the wider world: 'Mobility brings life to the city of Lubumbashi: it enables it to be "globalised"' (p. 55 in the DRC report).

There appear to be two prominent 'ideal types' of return migrants living in Lubumbashi: the successful retirees who returned voluntarily and who had invested in property, which they settled into; and younger people who had been forcefully expelled or repatriated due to lack/expiry of their residence permit. The latter group desperately wanted to leave the DRC. The returnees had been to various places, some both within and outside the continent. South Africa was often perceived as a transit place before entering Europe; but due to Europe's restrictive immigration regime, South Africa had rather turned into a substitute destination. Upon return, the less successful former migrants in Lubumbashi tend to work on the street, while the more successful ones use their knowledge of migration to travel and engage in transnational businesses, purchasing goods from

abroad that they would sell in Lubumbashi. Hence, they turned from migration to commercial mobility.

Due to the precariousness of living conditions, Congolese people are constantly moving, both within the nation and externally, looking for opportunities to get by – a kind of 'strategic nomadism' (p. 6). Like the Lushois (the residents of Lubumbashi), the African migrants in Lubumbashi are generally characterised by a culture of mobility – they constantly move back and forth between the city and other locations within and outside the country, conducting business. Moreover, migrants in Lubumbashi are often involved in a multiplicity of overlapping formal and informal activities. Flexibility seems to be the key to getting by (in French, se debrouiller) in this setting. The city facilitates and provides strategies for getting by and for managing on one's own, with migration being one of such strategies.

Several African immigrants have settled in Lubumbashi. Malians and Senegalese migrants, known locally as Ouestaf (West Africans), mainly started arriving in Lubumbashi in the 1960s in the wake of the DRC's independence. Other African migrants to Lubumbashi come mostly from neighbouring countries, such as Angola, Rwanda, Burundi, Cameroon and Zambia. The general attitude of the native population towards African immigrants is: 'if you act like us, you are no stranger'. The sense of community between African immigrants and the Congolese population is reinforced when immigrants marry native Congolese, share their living space, or participate in events such as sports or funerals.

The study from Lubumbashi contains some interesting findings on the inclusion of immigrants in this African city. Unlike Western societies where integration is largely conceived as something implemented 'from above' by the state, migrants in Lubumbashi are taking their own initiatives to navigate in and adjust to their new society. The absence of a functional state apparatus in the DRC means that the society that migrants join is not a coherent one; this raises questions about how new arrivals can be integrated into a society which itself is characterised by tendencies toward disintegration (p. 5). The absence of hard and fast norms and regulations allows migrants to go about their informal activities, and the flexibility of the DRC administration in terms of migrants holding the formally required papers makes it feasible for people to stay – in fact, the DRC itself has been described as a state without papers (Obotela 2002). The 'everything can be sorted out' culture contributes to the attractiveness of Lubumbashi for African and Asian migrants (p. 47). Thus, as the research team argues, 'the city becomes a laboratory where makeshift economic activities and survival strategies can be worked out' (p. 51).

Asian migrants mainly started arriving in Lubumbashi around the year 2000, except for the Lebanese who have been present in the city since the 1970s. Some Chinese and Indian migrant workers in Lubumbashi have been recruited, sometimes forcefully, through patrimonial networks, and they often work on miserable contracts, where they are badly paid, exploited, and entirely dependent on the patron who recruited them in their home country. Other Asian immigrants in Lubumbashi work in the commercial sector. They run construction companies, hotels, restaurants, bakeries, and garages. Asians are also found in the health sector, running pharmacies, clinics and hospitals. The Asian immigrants only really make contact with the local population in professional contexts. This distance is partly due to the way their migration to Lubumbashi is organised. Whereas many African immigrants consider themselves 'adventurers' who have migrated on their own initiative and who are able to get by on their own, many Chinese and Indian migrants have been

recruited through clientilist and, at times, neo-feudal types of arrangements. At the level of the individual, those best placed to take advantage of the opportunities of the city seem to be the African migrants rather than the Chinese in Lubumbashi. The latter are caught in webs of constraining connections that keep them fixed in particular businesses, staying in residential ghettoes, or otherwise fixed. Those who are most directly exploited by these incursions of global capitalism may be the Chinese rather than their African hosts.

The Moroccan research project in the city of Fès also focused on the settlement of three groups of migrants in the city: the families of international migrants, originating from outside the city but which had relocated to Fès; sub-Saharan migrants seemingly on their way to Europe; and Westerners (Europeans and Americans).

In contrast to Lubumbashi, Fès has the features of a 'world city', being an historical centre of trans-Saharan commerce, pilgrimage, and scholarship. Fès therefore has a particular mythical image which exerts a level of attraction on various immigrants groups, including Westerners who describe the city as 'mystical' and 'authentic'. The sub-Saharan presence in Fès dates from pre-colonial times when Fès played a major economic, cultural and religious role in the region. The Sahara used to be a space of circulation and commercial exchange as well as a route for the penetration of Islam from the north.

Since the 1980s, Morocco has been transited by sub-Saharan migrants on their way to Europe. Fès has now for a few years started receiving sub-Saharans who are neither students nor pilgrims, and who the research team contacted through snowball sampling. Almost all migrants in the sample had followed formal education, with 76.7 per cent having secondary-level qualifications and a remarkable 14 per cent having university-level qualifications. Before departing, most had lived in an urban setting and the majority had been economically active or studying. While economic determinants partly explained their decision to migrate, these were combined with non-material factors such as fleeing from war, family problems, or desire for travel and adventure. While most of these migrants were aiming to get to Europe, about 38 per cent had other plans. The research thus questions the stereotypes of African migrants as being motivated merely by economic factors and, particularly for those who have moved to North Africa, as transit migrants headed towards Europe. Expenses incurred on transport and bribes during their journeys forces these migrants to stop and find work in various transit areas, including Fès. Here they tend to socialise with previously arrived migrants, but remain marginalised from the local society. Fès has not normally been part of the itineraries on the journey to Europe. But due to tougher border controls and more restrictive immigration policies in Europe, as well as the ties of solidarity with people in various parts of Morocco established by the migrants en route, Fès is becoming a new destination – usually only after the migrants have been staying in other Moroccan cities, failing to move onwards to Europe. These journeys differ from the traditional migration projects which would involve the entire family and would follow well-established paths. Instead, their journey is characterised as an adventure (aventure), which is more spontaneous and with less certainty about the final destination. Settling in Fès has rarely been planned in advance and usually occurs after the migrants meet compatriots or other sub-Saharans who know the city. The migrants tend to live in isolation from city life, and most are struggling to find work. Many are day labourers or contracted on a short-term basis. More than half of the sub-Saharan migrants in employment work in call centres, a recent activity employing those with university-level education.

The main destinations for Moroccan emigrants are France, Spain and Italy. International migration from Fès is recent, becoming visible in the 1980s and significant since the 2000s. Urban increase in Fès is mainly due to internal migration. Interestingly, internal migrants do not continue to migrate internationally, but remain settled in the city. Migrants abroad often invest in urban housing and they then transfer their families to the urban residence. Hence, the 'rural exodus' towards Fès is not linked with poverty, but is related to a search for a comfortable lifestyle, a better quality of life, and somewhere for the migrants to invest or spend the savings made abroad.

By the end of the 1990s and increasingly in the 2000s, it became fashionable, among Westerners in particular, to own a ryad (traditional house) in the medina (old town) of Fès. The buyers are mostly Europeans, but there are also Americans and various other nationalities. The relatively low prices were attractive to these foreigners and also, Fès appealed to those who were looking for 'authenticity' and who were interested in experiencing a different kind of life. The Westerners in Fès share the aspiration to escape the stressful daily life in the West and to 'live life at a better rhythm'. But they also have varied personal motivations for settling in the city, including the economic advantages of moving, particularly for people in financial difficulties; mid-life crises, including the desire to 'start a new life'; and due to the presence of other family members. The term 'lifestyle migration' tends to be applied particularly to Europeans, who migrate to places where living costs are relatively cheap, allowing for a comfortable lifestyle, and which they perceive to have a better climate and a less stressful social environment (Benson and O'Reilly 2009). The Moroccan research pointed out that such lifestyle concerns are not particular to Northern migrants, but also apply to Moroccans, who move to the city from the countryside; and even to sub-Saharan immigrants who consider themselves 'adventurers' and who are looking to broaden their horizons by experiencing other parts of the world. The identification of lifestyle migrants as Western and economic migrants as African is misleading. The migration decisions of Westerners settled in Fès were to a large degree motivated by economic concerns.

The study in Fès differs from the Congolese research in the sense that it considers the impact of mobility on places rather than its impact on particular people. Hence, the study looks at the settlement patterns of different migrants groups and whether there is any spatial overlapping which brings these groups into contact. By way of comparison, the three migrant groups in Fès insert themselves in different parts of the city: Westerners in the medina; Moroccans in the periphery where they can afford to buy property; and sub-Saharans either near their compatriots at the university, or just outside the city centre in cheap accommodation. Hence, the three groups live in isolation. The Western immigrants express a sense of responsibility towards and belonging to the city of Fès, and they consider their restoration of the ryads as contributing to local development and creation of employment. Meanwhile, there is an emerging gentrification in the old city as the Fassi (established residents of Fès) begin to sell off their properties to wealthier foreigners, and the neighbourhoods with more foreign investments stand out from areas with houses of poorer quality.

Many of the sub-Saharans and Westerners do not see Fès as their final destination. Rather than considering Fès on a par with other metropoles attracting immigrants, the city should perhaps rather be seen as a hub for various African and Euro-Mediterranean migratory systems. The research team argues that, 'it could be said that Fès has been

integrated at a late stage into a migratory field by capturing part of the flows destined for other cities' (p. 69). So while the sub-Saharans for example are not seen as permanent residents of Fès, and their turnover is significant, this population group does perhaps retain a permanent presence in the city, as more sub-Saharan migrants pass through and settle.

## 3 Analysis

What then do these four studies together contribute to our understanding of mobility and African cities? We now turn to review the broad findings of these studies in the context of the wider literature. We begin by turning to the literature on migration and urbanisation in Africa, starting from the colonial period, which shows how cities have emerged as a place of attraction for migrants. This story has focused almost exclusively on internal migration, but, with the exception of South Africa, very little attention has been paid to international migration towards African cities. Even less attention has been paid to immigration from beyond the continent, such as the Chinese moving to Lubumbashi or Europeans moving to Fès; they may not see themselves as migrants, but there is no analytical rationale for not including them under that rubric.

Despite the common portrayal of African cities as dangerous, squalid environments, part of their attraction has been associated with their purported role in preparing potential migrants for onward journeys – especially in Morocco for onward movement to Europe. To this extent, African cities are recognised as zones of departure. However, this leaves little space for acknowledging the extent of movement of those travelling from the city for their businesses. The city does enable, and to some extent require, its residents to move out into the wider world. But this international, often intercontinental mobility is little understood. What is clear from the APHM research is that there is no direct link between the international travel of traders and the longer-term settlements of African migrants in destination countries.

We next turn to the question of the impact of migration on African urban life. Once again there is a long record of research into the role of rural–urban migration in transforming African societies, and even discussion on the emergence of multi-racial societies. However, with a few notable exceptions, such as South Africa and situations of potential conflict, there is far less recent analysis of the integration of international migrants. The APHM research starts to cast a light on the extent to which integration may be evident in the everyday lives of Africa's cities.

As our research shows – in agreement with many other studies – it is far too simplistic to consider African cities primarily as places of arrival or departure. The challenge is to understand, on the one hand, how mobility interacts with the development and change of urban space, and on the other, how the life of the city transforms people's mobility; both their needs and aspirations to travel further afield. In the expanding literature on global cities and their interconnections, the continent of Africa has tended to be identified with the periphery and largely bypassed. The APHM research shows how even second tier cities, such as Kumasi and Lubumbashi, are entwined in global networks.

### 3.1 The city as a place of attraction for migration

Africa, together with Asia, is the least urbanised major region in the world (Zlotnik 2006). However, it has the fastest rate of urbanisation compared to all other regions; over the next two decades its urban population will probably more than double (Pieterse 2009). Some famous towns and cities, such as Fès and Kumasi, were established long before the modern era (see Anderson 2000), but many of these declined or were completely transformed during the colonial period. Often their decline was associated with the establishment of new urban centres (like Lubumbashi in the DRC) that emerged as direct products of colonialism (Epstein 1967). The colonial centres of business and commerce grew rapidly in the twentieth century and the growth continued in post-independence capitals. For example, the population of Lagos grew from 75,000 in 1939 to 675,000 in 1962 (Anderson 2000). Today, estimates range from eight to fifteen million people (NPC 2009; UN-Habitat 2000; CSAR 2000). Likewise, between 1948 and 1960, Accra's population grew from 135,000 to 325,000 (Anderson 2000) and today is close to four million.

The management of urban growth was a major preoccupation for the colonial governments as they attempted to control the expansion of the cities while ensuring there was a sufficient African working population to serve colonial enterprises and administrations (Bakewell 2008). Initially much of this growth was driven by migration from rural areas. This stimulated a large body of literature which set out to explain the reasons for people moving to cities.

Classic studies showed how the introduction of taxes forced subsistence peasants into the cash economy providing wage labour for colonial enterprises, such as mines, plantations and armies. Hence, many moved to work in the growing urban centres (Burawoy 1976; Meillassoux 1983; Wolpe 1972). While this may have contributed to the beginnings of urban growth (although some would dispute that; see Gewald 2007; Manchuelle 1997), it does little to explain why such growth continued long after the colonial strategies to force people into the capitalist system had ended. Other incentives to draw people into wage labour in the cities included the need for cash to meet the desire for manufactured goods and the enhanced services of education and health care which were associated with urban settlement (Gilbert and Gugler 1992).

The growth of urban unemployment and poverty along with the inadequate infrastructure made the continuation of rural–urban migration seem increasingly irrational. One of the explanations offered for this behaviour was the 'bright lights theory', which argued that rural dwellers were naïvely curious and attracted to the adventure of city life, and largely unaware of the social problems they would encounter once they settled in the urban area. However, while such theories which present rural–urban migration as irrational behaviour have retained some popular resonance, they have not been supported by empirical evidence (see Beauchemin and Bocquier 2004).

The Harris-Todaro model provided a more convincing theory, suggesting that people's decisions to migrate were more concerned with expected, rather than actual earning (Harris and Todaro 1970). This was further refined first by the recognition of the important role of the 'informal sector' which provided livelihoods for many of the new migrants arriving in the cities (see Todaro 1980), and then with the development of household economics and the acknowledgement that migration decisions were also concerned with spreading risk and diversifying income streams (the new economics of labour migration – see Stark and Bloom

1985). Such theoretical advances shed some light on the puzzle of why people continued to move to cities despite the limited job opportunities (Beauchemin and Bocquier 2004; Hart 1973; Hansen and Vaa 2004; Gilbert and Gugler 1992).

Nonetheless, while the economic and social rationales for migration from rural areas to cities may now be better understood, the attraction of African urban areas continues to remain a puzzle for many. As Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch (2005) points out, African cities are often associated with concepts like the informal sector, urban bias, and rural exodus, and cities are stereotypically seen as evil. Meanwhile today, migration plays a smaller role in urban growth, and under conditions of economic decline there has been evidence of migration out of cities (Ferguson 1999; Potts 2009; Beauchemin and Bocquier 2004).

For almost all of this literature looking to explain migration to African cities, the focus has remained resolutely on internal migration rather than international migration (e.g. Tacoli 2001; Gugler and Flanagan 1978; Bocquier 2004; Beauchemin and Bocquier 2004; Mitchell 1987). Some exceptions include long-standing work on the southern African regional labour migration system to urban mining areas of South Africa (see Crush 2000), recent studies on xenophobia in South African cities (Nyamnjoh 2006; SAMP 2008; Africa Spectrum 2009) and a growing body of work on urban refugees in African cities (Campbell 2006; Grabska 2006; Landau 2006; Kibreab 1996). However, the role of international migration in urban development across the continent has generally been neglected.

The APHM research draws attention to three mechanisms involving international migration that contribute to urban migration in Africa. First, as noted in Lubumbashi and Fès, there is the return of international migrants to their country of origin. In many cases, returning migrants settle in larger urban areas in their country of origin rather than moving back to the smaller towns and villages from which they started. The numbers involved may be relatively small, but their contribution to urban development and change may be significant if they bring investment capital and new ideas and practices with them.

The second mechanism is more indirect, where African international migrants send remittances which fund the relocation of rural families to the cities. This phenomenon was highlighted by the Moroccan APHM research in Fès, where emigrants in Europe have transferred significant resources to build urban residences to enable their families to move. The residential mobility of these families in Morocco is directly related to the success of migrants in Europe. These moves may be much harder to explain with reference to the existing migration theories which struggle to incorporate the extended decision-making of households spread over (transnational) space and time. Such interactions between transnational mobility and resources transfers and internal migration have been little explored across Africa.

The third mechanism, and perhaps the least explored, is international migration to African cities, in particular second tier cities. This includes immigration from other parts of Africa, such as the Ouestaf in Lubumbashi and the Senegalese in Fès, and from other parts of the world, including European immigrants to Fès and Chinese in Lubumbashi, Accra, Kumasi and Lagos (and many other sub-Saharan African cities, see Mohan and Tan-Mullins 2009). While the attractions of Fès may be evident for the European so-called 'lifestyle migrants', it is less obvious for the sub-Saharan Africans. Likewise, Lubumbashi has rarely been considered a destination for migrants from across Central and West Africa. The APHM research offers explanations for these particular movements, but in addition, these rare

studies make all the more clear the curious absence of other research into international migration towards other African cities.

## 3.2 The city as a zone of departure

Another strand of research on African cities has examined them as zones of departure. The dominant discourses on African international migration portray movements as linear progressions, whereby migrants move stepwise from the village to the town or cities, which in turn become springboards for further migration to Europe or the US – possibly via some transit zone elsewhere in Africa (Afolayan 1985; Conway 1980; Paul 2011; Baldwin-Edwards 2006). While most international migration originating in Africa is to other African destinations, the vast majority of this research has looked at international migration beyond the continent. In particular, there have been countless studies of migration from West and North Africa to Europe – particularly to the former colonial powers, such as France and the UK – as well as to the US, Asia and the Middle East. These have addressed questions about the numbers, directions, and routes for emigration; and the role of networks in international migration beyond the continent. Clearly, such questions are related to Western policy concerns with managing migration and especially, surveillance and reinforcement of the southern borders of 'fortress Europe'.

While it may be true that sub-Saharan Africans in a city such as Fès neither planned nor desire to stay there, the evidence from the APHM research is that the sub-Saharan population is establishing a permanent presence in the city. Although many individuals may move on, new people arrive and there are also some individuals who are staying for prolonged periods in Fès. The analysis of the migration of sub-Saharan Africans to Fès as 'transit migration', as if the city is merely a place of sojourn ready for departure elsewhere, both denies historical trans-Saharan connections and distorts many of actual patterns of international migration and settlement. It is based on the assumption that African international migration is a uni-directional, linear movement from South to North, which leads to problematic claims like the widespread idea that all sub-Saharan migrants in North Africa are necessarily en route to Europe (Bredeloup and Pliez 2005).

The Ghanaian and Nigerian studies highlight another aspect of the idea of African cities as places for preparation for departure from the continent, which takes us beyond the notion of stepwise migration. Starting from a study of market behaviour, the studies in Ghana and Lagos start to show how economic life in the city stimulates mobility and initial phases of migration across the world. The huge markets of Accra, Kumasi and Lagos draw in products and people from all over the world (most notably the Chinese traders) and also encourage further movement across the world. In order to function as a city and to have functioning markets, the people, even quite poor, relatively low-skilled people, must move for trade. This takes us beyond the notion that people migrate out of African cities because of the lack of employment, poor living conditions and poverty, which is the prevailing view underlying much of the migration literature.

What is remarkable about the findings from Ghana and Nigeria is the extent to which intercontinental mobility is playing such an important role in sustaining economic activity – especially market trading – far below the elite level. The informal sector tends to be seen as the end of the global commodity chain, where international trading businesses import goods on a large scale and may then use local traders for wholesale and retail distribution

within African states. Instead, the APHM research shows evidence of African traders travelling directly to manufacturers in China to place orders for specific products, even on a relatively small scale.

This mobility is creating new linkages and destinations giving rise to new migratory patterns. This can be seen in the emergence of substantial movement back and forth from West and Central Africa to the Middle East, India and China. However, as both the studies show in Nigeria and Ghana, for many of those involved, the African city remains a zone of very short-term departure. In general, the four projects challenge the 'finality' of the word migration (cf. DRC report p. 3). They argue that the people they are studying are more flexible and mobile than the stereotypical image of a migrant, who moves from one place to another for a long period without any immediate plans to return or continue elsewhere. Traders need to be mobile and move back and forth between various localities rather than being fixed in one place. Similarly, the Lushois get on by being strategic nomads, as do the immigrants in Lubumbashi. In Fès, a number of Western immigrants consider themselves as 'new world nomads' (p. 101) with an immense desire to migrate constantly, without becoming fixed anywhere or absorbed by the culture of the host society.

Even informal markets are now embedded in the global political economy, not just as a result of incorporation into the tail-end of global commodity chains that shift from formal international trade to informal markets. The African transnational traders are not passive recipients of global forces but they are going out there and making and taking opportunities in face-to-face encounters in other countries. This argument might be taken beyond the markets to apply in a broader context of urban life. Here we might suggest that the city acts as a forge for migratory behaviour – where migration is shaped or fashioned through urban life. The concentration of people, ideas and economic exchange in the city requires international mobility for its energy to be sustained, in order to create livelihoods. This is widely recognised in industrialised states and the 'global cities', but there tends to be an assumption of what we might call 'segmented mobility' which focuses on the movement of elites and those engaged in the formal sector of the economy. These issues are picked up below in the section on African cities in the world.

### 3.3 The impact of migration on urban life

Cities are, almost by their nature, sites of encounters and exchanges among very diverse groups of people. As the growth of African cities was initially driven primarily by migration, the consequences of rural–urban migration for urban society became an early theme for social scientific research. Colonial authorities were keen to ensure the circulation of labour migrants so they would return to their 'homes' at the end of their contracts or on retirement (Mitchell 1987; Peil 1984; Epstein 1967; Bakewell 2008).

Scholars at the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute (RLI) in Zambia were among the first to draw attention to the fundamental social and cultural changes related to rural–urban migration in Southern Africa. Their work explored the extent to which Africans living in cities became 'detribalised' and cut off from their traditions (Van Velsen 1960; Watson 1958). Philip Mayer (1961) for example did a study of rural Xhosa migrants in urban South Africa and found that many of these migrants remained 'tribesmen', dedicated to the rural Xhosa community and its way of life, while others became 'townsmen', committed to education, Christianity, and enjoying the pleasures of city life. He thus showed that it would be wrong

to assume that prolonged stay in town would eradicate migrants' traditional customs and beliefs and replace these with a modern, urban lifestyle. Epstein's study of Politics in an Urban African Community (1958) focused on the ways labour disputes were settled in the mines where increasingly, African migrant workers would rely more on the younger, educated urban administration than on the traditional authority of the elders; here, class more than age or ethnicity was becoming the marker of social stratification.

More provocatively for the colonialists, some of the RLI researchers posited the emergence of urban societies cut across racial divides, highlighting the interactions between black African migrants and European mine managers; an 'integrated multi-racial society' (Simons cited in Gewald 2007, p. 28). Racial separation was extreme during colonialism (and continued in apartheid South Africa), and African urban dwellers were almost universally housed on their own separate estates outside the cities where they worked during the day (Epstein 1967, p. 277). Nonetheless, Gluckman and other RLI scholars argued that these different social groups formed one urban society which translated into urban African identities that were distinct from tribal identities. Gluckman's seminal text, 'The Bridge' (Gluckman 1940), was a study of a social situation in modern Zululand intended to show that the white colonial administrators and missionaries formed part of the same system as the Zulu – even if their relationship was asymmetrical and their interests opposed, they were all part of the capitalist economy of South Africa. According to James Ferguson, Gluckman challenged Malinowski's notion of culture contact, arguing that:

> Malinowski's "culture contact" formulation obscured the fact that colonialism in Africa was not simply a matter of one "culture" influencing another, it was a matter of the forced incorporation of Africans into a wholly new social and economic system. Largely through land alienation and the system of migrant labour, Africans had come to participate with Europeans in a "single social system" (Ferguson 1999, p. 26).

Besides studying the urban cultural encounters and contact zones between Africans and extra-continental migrants, research in this field has of course also considered African immigrants of different nationalities. In 1970, Schildkrout pointed out that political development and social change in urban Africa was often analysed according to a traditional-modern model, which posited the colonial period and the intrusion of European civilisation as the starting point for analysis of change. This omitted the fact that long before the colonial period, African migrants were at the forefront of social, cultural and political change (Schildkrout 1970, p. 253).

Common research questions in this area have centred on the relationships between 'hosts and strangers' in African cities, which has particularly been a focus of research in West Africa, where Africans of foreign ethnicity tended to live in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods (or 'stranger communities') often referred to as zongos (Skinner 1963; Schildkrout 1970; Agier 1983; Schildkrout 1978; Shack and Skinner 1979; Rouch 1956). Schildkrout (1970) for example wrote about the 'strangers' in Kumasi in what is today Ghana. There were the Muslim traders from the north, who had settled in the city in the nineteenth century and became socio-culturally integrated into local Ashanti society; and then there were the immigrants of the colonial period, who came as seasonal labourers and eventually settled as the cocoa and mining industries developed. Schildkrout shows the changes in how these two groups participated in local politics, how they viewed each other, and how the local authorities and the autochthones related to them.

However, in more recent work, such ideas of multi-racial integration seem to have largely faded from consciousness outside the confines of ex-apartheid South Africa (and possibly Zimbabwe). Despite the slew of material on the integration of immigrants in other parts of the world, in particular Europe and North America, there is a dearth of such research in the African continent. There is research on social cohesion, reflecting concern about the different language or ethnic groups found in almost every African city, but this concerns citizens and not migrants. There has been some exploration of the politics of national identity and notions of autochthony, but generally focused on areas threatened by violent political conflict (Ceuppens and Geschiere 2005; Konings 2001). The other side of the coin, namely cosmopolitanism and pan-Africanism, has also been highlighted; but relatively little research deals with the inclusion of migrants on the African continent, including what Landau and Freemantle call 'tactical cosmopolitanism' (Landau and Freemantle 2009; Sichone 2008; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2010; Kihato 2010); or the transnational linkages and engagements of international migrants settled in African cities (see Whitehouse 2007). While there is a growing body of research dealing with the phenomenon of diasporas around the world, including African migrants overseas, very little attention has been paid to African diasporas within the African continent (Bakewell 2008).

In contrast, the research in Fès and Lubumbashi highlights the importance of the more everyday experiences of integration of international migrants from elsewhere in Africa and from other continents. Despite the tendency in the literature to emphasise the exclusion of immigrants in Africa, the APHM research projects did not find autochthony or xenophobia as particularly prominent themes, when analysing the experiences of immigrants in various African cities. Rather, the focus of the APHM research has largely been on the agency of the migrants, and not merely their victimisation by a dominant host society. The West African immigrants in Lubumbashi, DRC, appeared to espouse a pan-African outlook, stressing that they had no problem with 'integration': they spoke French, were married to locals, and their children grew up as Congolese.

Migration is part of the changing social dynamics in the city and the transformation of the urban space. The Congolese APHM research draws attention to the notion of 'crowding', which reflects the gathering of the population, the concentration of the crowd on a particular site, in a particular place, and at a particular time. 'Crowding' in cities entails that people relate to each other and live their lives in a particular way. Hence, there is something distinct about social dynamics in the city, as houses pop up like mushrooms and people mix across boundaries. We might even argue that a particular city identity is emerging in some contexts. A distinct term actually exists to denote the urban residents of Fès and Lubumbashi: the Fassi and the Lushois. No such equivalent terms were identified for residents of Accra, Kumasi or Lagos. It might be that this is a particular francophone construction, which is less common in English. We may talk of Londoners or New Yorkers but there is rarely a similar term for the inhabitants of smaller cities and towns; a distinct urban identity is perhaps only granted to the residents of global cities. Meanwhile, the francophone constructions such as Fassi and Lushois imply a sense of belonging to the city and seem to suggest that these cities have their own distinct ways of life and of functioning, into which their residents are tied.

Some interesting reflections on exclusion arise when we compare the finding of the APHM research teams on the Chinese in Lubumbashi to those on Western 'lifestyle migrants' in Fès. Both groups appear to live in 'ghettoes', secluded from the surrounding

local population; but whereas the Chinese were deliberately accommodated together in compounds provided by their employers, in Morocco this isolation was self-imposed. Perhaps echoing the inherent racist assumptions evident in the RLI studies which, despite proposing multi-racial integration, refer to Africans in the cities as migrants while Europeans are settlers, it is telling that the Europeans in Fès do not see themselves as migrants and are rarely considered in the same category as sub-Saharans in the city.

Nonetheless, the isolation of these immigrant groups did not appear to be linked to xenophobia or other forms of exclusion on the part of the wider local population. Despite seeming to live apart, as the APHM research shows, in the urban environments of Fès and Lubumbashi there are symbiotic economic and even social relationships between the different migrants and the native Fassi or Lushois. Migrants mix with other people in the city and accumulate social capital which cuts across boundaries, such as religion, nationality, and class. Hence, the sub-Saharan immigrants in Fès sometimes go to church to make connections with Westerners, or they may join the Moroccans or Tijani pilgrims in the mosque. Migrants need to engage in such strategic cosmopolitanism in order to get by in the city. These practices of quotidian integration are no doubt replicated across many cities in Africa but have yet to be researched.

Landau (2010) raises the important question as to what exactly it is that migrants in African cities become included (or 'integrated') into. These cities are not necessarily characterised by strong social coherence but instead, ethnic heterogeneity, economic disparity, and cultural pastiche; hence we cannot assume that there is any longstanding, dominant host community and political order with identifiable values and institutions, into which migrants become included (or excluded). This may result in the migrants themselves negotiating alternative forms of inclusion, which may be rather strategic and partial rather than constituting wholesale 'urban citizenship'.

This leads us to consider what kinds of belonging are possible in African cities. Simone (2004, p. 137) has pointed out that there is a generalised claim that Africans – and we may add, immigrants – have a limited sense of belonging to their cities. This claim seems to be based on a rather static and inhibiting notion of belonging, which entails cutting one's ties to other localities and cultures and adopting an introvert, city-focused lifestyle. Yet, other forms of belonging are possible in the city – for example, people multiplying their social ties and adopting a 'citizen of the world' attitude, where migrants and locals appreciate their respective differences. Sichone (2008) makes the case that cosmopolitanism is not merely for the elite but is an attitude and a practice that is evident among people from different layers of society and different parts of the world – which he exemplifies with the story of a Somali migrant he encountered in Cape Town, 'a perfect example of the cosmopolitan postcolonial subject who does not have a college education but is fluent in four languages, has lived in over ten countries on three continents (…)' (ibid: 320). Sichone also argues that, 'even though cosmopolitanism implies mobility, not all citizens of the world are mobile. Some people live transnationally while remaining rooted at home, waiting for the world to come to them and provide the opportunity for tapping into other human experiences.' (Sichone 2008, p. 310). This includes, he argues, the 'xenophilia' displayed by women in the congested urban slums of Africa who, 'greet the stranger with a tray of food'. Such theories of cosmopolitanism are certainly insightful; meanwhile, they are also relatively normative and only provide limited insight into the actual practice of cosmopolitanism among migrants in urban Africa. Landau and Freemantle (2009) offer a slightly different perspective in their

analysis of 'tactical cosmopolitanism': to navigate in a highly xenophobic environment, immigrants in Johannesburg, South Africa, 'draw on a variegated language of belonging that makes claims on the city while positioning them in an ephemeral, superior and unrooted condition where they can escape localised social and political obligations' (Landau and Freemantle 2009, p. 380). This practice of cosmopolitanism is not intended to promote universal values or address the root causes of exclusion but rather, it is a tactic used to justify and legitimise the migrants' presence.

## 3.4 African cities in the world

Finally, we turn to consider how the findings from the APHM research relate to the broader literature on urbanisation reaching beyond Africa. Reviewing the state-of-the-art literature on urbanisation and migration within Africa, we were struck by the fact that it hardly discusses the international, let alone the global, ramifications of these processes. At best, it points out the mutual constitution of rural and urban areas by highlighting the multiple connections and exchanges between these spaces. But the further entanglement of African cities and migrants into the global webs of mobility and flows, particularly through trade and migration, are less prominent in current accounts of African migrants and cities. While the isolation of African cities has indeed been questioned by researchers, the counter-argument tends to be that cities are connected with other locations within or just across the national borders. As Bocquier notes, African cities tend to extend beyond their administrative barriers (Bocquier 2004, p. 149). Although Bocquier is here referring to rural–urban connections, this argument could be developed to include locations far beyond such a relatively small geographical reach.

World systems theory and other structuralist approaches to migration have dealt with the links between the international capitalist economy and migration from poorer parts of the world (Gilbert and Gugler 1992). Such thinking was developed in Africanist scholarship in the 1970s, particularly by Samir Amin (1974), who argued that migration in Africa was related to the incorporation of an area into the international capitalist economy, as the introduction of capitalism into peasant economies in Africa substituted the capitalist for the domestic mode of production (cf. Peil 1984, p. 116; Gilbert and Gugler 1992). Such research usually had Marxist underpinnings, and there was an implicit normativity which rendered this involvement of Africans and their cities in wider global structures as essentially negative and exploitative. The research conducted by the APHM teams emphasises a different side to this involvement, as they show how transport, telecommunications, and the availability of mass-produced cheap goods enables traders in African markets to engage in import of foreign goods from Asia and the Middle East. This poses new and interesting questions about the boundaries and reach of the African city. Indeed, the local markets in Accra have fluid boundaries, as noted by the Ghanaian research team. The APHM research emphasises how migrants and natives are connected to locations far beyond the city through trade, migration, travels, and translocalism. Such dimensions and perspectives are conspicuously absent from much of the contemporary literature.

Possibly as a consequence of the move away from structural and functionalist approaches to a focus on agency and meso- and micro-levels, more recent studies of migration and African cities hardly deals with how African cities and migration relate to larger international and global structures and processes. Moreover, the global cities literature, much in vogue in the past couple of decades, has largely bypassed the African

continent (cf. Sassen 1994, 1991; Knox and Taylor 1995). Global cities are often described as the 'control and command centres' of the global economy. Few attempts have been made to inscribe African cities into global city hypotheses. Onyebueke (2011) discusses the place and function of African cities in the global urban network; and van der Merwe (2004) considers whether there are arguably any 'global cities' in sub-Saharan Africa. It might appear a bit far-fetched to put cities like Cape Town or Lagos on a par with New York and Tokyo, and to analyse the networks and functions of African cities with theoretical models derived from studies of a narrow range of prominent world cities. But the endeavour to inscribe Africa in contemporary theoretical debates is certainly welcome.

Much of the world cities literature draws on Friedman's seminal essay on 'The world city hypothesis' (Friedmann 1986) analysing cities in terms of specific attributes, mainly economic ones, which are then used to determine their status in an international ranking of world cities. Revisions of Friedman have argued that the changed nature of the world system meant that such hierarchical classification according to attributes was becoming less convincing, because cities' hierarchical position could be reversed, depending on the kinds of functions considered (Knox 1995); hence the hierarchy should not be measured as a static structure but as a dynamic ordering of cities (Taylor 1997). Newer approaches place more emphasis on the networks rather than attributes of cities, arguing that hierarchies can only be described through relations, since the relations between world cities is the basis of their power (Taylor et al. 2002; Sassen 2005; Beaverstock, Smith, and Taylor 1999). Yet, the empirical focus of analysis tends to be on transnational business and finance networks, i.e. economics. The diverse experiences of cities and empirical knowledge about these places are given little priority (Robinson 2002; see also Taylor et al. 2002).

Saskia Sassen (2005, p. 28) distinguishes between what she calls global cities, which are specific to the way the global gets structured in the contemporary period; and world cities, which have existed over the centuries, at different times in different places around the world. In the current period of globalisation, it is not only national states that articulate cross-border economic processes. Other spatial units or scales are on the rise, such as sub-national regions, cross-border regions, and supra-national entities; global cities have emerged in this context of 're-scaling'. While the global economy is geographically dispersed, it is organised and serviced by locally based specialised firms. These service firms are situated in various global cities, which in turn are connected to each other through their provision of services to large global firms. Hence, 'there is no such thing as a single global city – and in this sense there is a sharp contrast with the erstwhile capitals of empires' (Sassen 2005, : 128). These are all important insights which have not only informed urban theory but also, migration studies. Indeed, the move away from methodological nationalism implicit in studies of the global urban network is appealing to many contemporary social scientists interested in other global actors than the state.

One prominent thesis of the world city literature is that these world/global cities become destinations for large numbers of migrants (Friedmann 1986; Sassen 1988) :

> Linkages between global cities and distant hinterlands created paradoxes wherein enormous wealth and highly remunerated professional employment coexisted with growing unskilled service industry employment and Third-World-like employment conditions in underground industries. The casualization of labour and growing illegal alien employment were characteristic of global cities. (Castles and Miller 2009, p. 240).

Hence, global cities are destinations for flows of high-skilled, low-skilled and unskilled migrants. The problem with applying this theory to African cities and specifically, using it in the APHM projects, is that it is derived from world systems thinking, where Africa, along with other poor regions, is relegated to the periphery – the 'hinterland' – and merely plays the role of supplying cheap raw materials and migrant labour to the global economy and global cities (eg. Friedmann 1995, p. 42). As a result, the implications of the APHM research – that ordinary, medium sized African cities are attractive destinations for migrants, not only from other African countries but Europe and China too; or indeed, that Africans play an active part in global commodity chains, importing products that they themselves (i.e. highly mobile African traders) have sourced from outside the continent – do not register.

We conclude that African cities, alongside many other cities in poor countries, and 'ordinary cities', do not really fit these models of contemporary urban theory. As Robinson argues, they appear so far down in the hierarchy of global cities (or in the periphery of the world system) that they are deemed structurally irrelevant to the global economy and hence, to urban theory (Robinson 2002; Robinson 2006). However, rather than claiming that African cities constitute an exceptional category that cannot be analysed alongside other urban areas of the world, we prefer the argument that urban theory is simply not developed in relation to the experiences and trajectories of these cities (Robinson 2002; Pieterse 2010). Robinson (ibid) argues that urban studies are divided between urban theory focused on the West, and development studies focused on the 'Third World'. Because of this geographical divide, theoretical research tends to draw on examples from Western cities which are 'deemed, implicitly, more developed, complex, dynamic and mature. Thus, urbanism is largely equated with complex social, natural and material interactions that unfold in Western cities' (Pieterse 2010, p. 207). The developmentalist approach, on the other hand, generalises about poor cities, focusing on the lack of infrastructure and economic stagnation, thus obscuring other aspects of city life (Mbembe and Nuttall 2004; Robinson 2002).

In contrast to this binary of urban theorising, a number of prominent, contemporary Africanist scholars are arguing that researchers need to take African cityness or worldliness seriously – meaning, accounting for the sense of creativity and the celebration of innovations and novelty that characterises urban modernity (see Pieterse 2010; Mbembe and Nuttall 2004; Robinson 2002; Simone 2004; Coquery-Vidrovitch 2005). Mbembe and Nuttall lament that scholars continue to describe Africa as an object apart from the world, which 'underplays the embeddedness in multiple elsewheres of which the continent actually speaks' (Mbembe and Nuttall 2004, p. 348). Instead, they argue, scholarship on Africa should be de-provincialised – thus echoing Robinson's (2002) call for urban studies to embark on a cosmopolitan project of understanding ordinary cities.

The APHM research shows that African cities are not static and isolated spaces, whose connectivity is limited to provincial rural–urban webs. Cities in Africa are nodes in translocal, transnational and also global webs and flows – not merely as departure points for migrants but also, significantly, as attractive spaces for migrants and mobile traders. Hence, it seems that certain processes similar to what is going on in the global cities are occurring in African cities, albeit on a very different scale; we might consider these African urban spaces to some extent as 'control and command centres', not at the global level but perhaps at a regional or transnational level. This would imply a kind of 'globalisation from below' (Portes 1997) – albeit in a broader sense than that described by Portes. The transnational processes that we

are witnessing in Africa, as documented by the APHM research, do not merely implicate flows and networks between migrants and origin communities, but also goods being exchanged by individual, mobile market traders without the involvement of state institutions or multinational firms and seemingly without any transnational community ties.

Indeed, globalisation and the global economy are processes which affect all cities of the world (Robinson 2002). Moreover, a persistent feature of cities in general is their diverse range of links with places around the world (ibid). Pieterse has recently argued that the high levels of migration in Africa suggests that urban territories are 'nodal points in multiple circuits of goods, services, ideas and people'; and that economic globalisation reinforces 'the imperative of mobility as a constitutive dimension of livelihood strategies of both the poor and middle classes in many African cities' (Pieterse 2010, p. 208-9). Moreover, as Robinson argues, the global economy is only one of many forms of global and transnational economic connection (Robinson 2002, p. 539). Rather than focusing on segments of city economies, she suggests looking at the diversity of city economies in poor cities, where local and trans-local informal economic activities co-exist with national and trans-national formal economic connections (ibid, p. 542). She calls for a spatialised account of the multiple webs of social relations which produce ordinary cities – that is, 'networks which stretch beyond the physical form of the city and place it within a range of connections to other places in the world' (ibid, p. 545).

Landau's (2010) analysis takes these arguments further: based on observations in various Southern and Eastern African cities, he argues that in these contexts, moving to the city is a means of accessing globalised networks: 'for many domestic and (especially) international migrants, the process of moving to the city – or toward larger, more networked cities – is also, if not primarily, a step into a global "imaginary"' (Landau 2010, p. 180). The city, he argues, is a space to access opportunities not available in less networked settings. But these networks differ from those described in the standard 'global cities' literature that we have dealt with above:

> the networks they join are also those shaped by their diasporas of kin, coethnics, coreligionists, and conationals. This can be seen both within the city and at a more global level. Within cities, these networks can provide advice on making one's way in the city: finding accommodation, securing work, and eluding police surveillance and corruption (…) Viewed from a global vantage point, movements to the cities allow people to access networks and own international familial diasporas. As primary nodes of communication, banking, and cultural exchange, the movements of people into cities represent what Portes (1997) terms a "globalization from below" (Landau 2010, p. 180)

Landau (ibid) further argues that migrants in the African cities may feel a stronger sense of inclusion in the globalised networks they can access there, than in more localised networks and cultures.

## 4 Conclusion

The studies conducted for the African Perspectives on Human Mobility programme have identified a number of gaps in the literature on mobility in Africa, particularly in relation to the evolution of urban spaces. The prevalence of studies that look at African cities as either zones of attraction for internal migrants from the rural hinterland or stepping stones for

emigration beyond the continent draws attention away from the rich patterns of mobility to and from urban areas across Africa. The literature on urban Africa does not adequately address the issue of international migration and mobility that characterises not only capital but also secondary cities on the continent. In stark contrast to many other parts of the world, in Africa the integration of international migrants in metropolitan areas has hardly been explored beyond South Africa.

Nonetheless, as the APHM research demonstrates, this immigration and settlement is changing the face of some cities. Moreover, as we have shown in this paper, contemporary urban theory does not shed sufficient light on social processes in African cities. They are considered as lying on the periphery of the global economic and social system and hardly figure at all in discussions of global cities. Their complex and deeply embedded links in the global networks of mobility and trade remain largely unrecognised.

If the APHM research projects have started to make clear the existence of these lacunae in the academic literature and offered some initial findings that start to fill the gaps, they are serving their purpose. We can summarise the basic findings from the four projects very simply as follows:

- Africans are circulating, migrating, and intimately connected to locations very far afield, both within and outside the continent. Hence, Africans are not only moving as migrants who settle permanently elsewhere. They are also moving as traders, who circulate between distant locations overseas where they source their goods, and their stalls in the major markets in cities of Africa.

- International migration in Africa is not just about people leaving. It is also about people arriving and settling in Africa, and about circulation and mobility between Africa and elsewhere.

- Migrants from several countries, both within and outside the continent, settle in African cities – migration in Africa is not just a question of rural–urban migration.

- Primary motives for moving to and from cities in Africa are not only labour, but also trade, education, retirement, and entrepreneurship.

- Local markets in African cities are connected to distant markets outside the continent.

On reflection, to a large extent none of these findings should be a surprise; the same points could probably be made of mobility in relation to any part of the world. However, these findings do fall outside the boundaries set by the highly circumscribed studies of African migration that focus on only a few strands of the rich tapestry of mobility.

The question remains as to how we can develop more comprehensive analyses of mobility that can help to dissolve these boundaries. One step forward is to escape the separation between 'sending' and 'receiving' or 'origin' and 'destination' areas. Over many years, scholars have argued that African towns are not self-contained entities but that they are placed within a wider field of social, economic and political relationships, with other urban and rural areas (Epstein 1967; Tienda et al. 2006; Mitchell 1987; Gutkind 1974). Many rural migrants do not simply settle in towns and cut ties with rural areas. There is a coming and going between different localities and rather than an urban/rural dichotomy, it has been suggested that we need to acknowledge a continuum of possibilities for mobility and

settlement, with implications both for migration patterns and different ways of adapting one's lifestyle (Tienda et al. 2006, : 338).

However, we need to go further to take account of the international dimensions of this mobility and understand how internal, regional and inter-continental migration are linked in the African context, and what role the cities play in this. This echoes a general concern in migration studies to understand the interplay between internal and international migration (King and Skeldon 2010). As Coquery-Vidrovitch (2005) argues, African cites are not solely destinations, but poles in networks of exchange; and they are sites of modernity from below. As the APHM research findings show, migration and cities in Africa are tied into transnational and global networks and constitute 'globalisation from below'. These endorse the views of authors like Coquery-Vidrovitch (2005), Mbembe and Nuttall (2004), and Simone (2004), who differ from the often static and pessimistic analyses of migration and cities in Africa, instead highlighting that cities in Africa are spaces for creativity, connections, and exchange.

A useful theoretical starting point for exploring these complex interactions between the movement of people (and also goods, ideas and other resources) between different places at various scales is the notion of migration systems. The systems approach put forward by Mabogunje (1970), based on empirical findings from Nigeria, is one of the few strands of migration theory to emerge from African universities. It was put forward as a way of explaining the perpetuation of migration to cities after its initial driving forces appear to have faded. Mabogunje's observation of the feedback of ideas and support to rural areas to support further migration directly contributed to Massey's later formulation of 'cumulative causation' as a mechanism by which migration between localities was perpetuated, calling into question the push-pull models which dominated the field (Massey 1990).

Ironically, Mabogunje's theoretical insights on migration systems have been enthusiastically applied to international migration in other regions of the world (Kritz, Lim, and Zlotnik 1992) but have not been followed up in Africa. His formulation was based on the general systems theory that was fashionable in the 1960s. It adopted a functionalist approach where different aspects and participants in social life were seen as working together in a rather mechanistic manner to support the overall integration and functioning of the social structure. This has been heavily criticised on many grounds, not least for its failure to take account of the agency of different actors. While the term 'migration system' continues to be widely adopted in the literature, it is often so loosely defined as to undermine any theoretical value. Nonetheless, as King and Skeldon argue 'the systems approach remains attractive and it seems to offer a means to integrate internal and international migrations through different system layers and linkages' (King and Skeldon 2010, p. 1633).

De Haas (2010) also provides a strong argument for the reassessment of migration systems but notes that one of the main weaknesses in their formulation is the absence of any discussion of how systems emerge. The APHM studies provide some examples of emerging systems and the mechanisms by which they take hold. We conclude this report with a tentative discussion of these in the case of the intersection of internal and international migration in Fès and the Africa–China links examined in Ghana and Nigeria.

The findings from Fès show how international migration to Europe is related, through family networks and remittances, to further internal migration from rural areas into the city.

Here we see a clear relationship between different types of migration (internal and international) which results in movement in different directions. Moreover, there is no evidence that this is a process of 'stepwise' migration. Instead, we can see this is a process of induction, akin to the electro-magnet induction where change in one circuit induces change in another.

A more indirect example of induction is provided by the Africa–China system. This is concerned with induction between different types of mobility (short-term and long-term) between the same destinations. The studies show the initial evolution of extended mobility between Africa and China driven by trading relations; but one of its perhaps unexpected results is the limited evidence of direct involvement in migration. The transnational traders of Accra, Kumasi and Lagos show little sign of settling into longer-term migration to China. The evolution of any migration system does not appear to come from the people who actively engage in mobility for trade. However, it may play a vital role in stimulating longer-term migration as people move to service the traders, providing translations, food, shipping and so forth.

There has been a longstanding relationship between trade and migration routes across the African continent, starting from the caravan trading of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which required large numbers of labourers, supplies of food etc. to function. However, even before such relatively formalised networks were established, evidence from south central Africa (upper Zambezi, Kasai) suggests that individuals were moving over very long distances to trade, establishing contacts but perhaps not generating the requirement for trading infrastructure that came later with the caravans and subsequent forms of trade (von Oppen 1995). Hence, from very early days, Africa and Africans were immersed in global trading systems.

Through the twentieth century with the growth of formal global trade, container shipping, air cargo, the expanding road network, and the multinational corporation, a formal infrastructure of mobility and trade has been established. As we have shown already, many have argued that Africa remains at the margins of the globalised world. However, this must be called into question given the central role of African resources in driving the global economy. Instead we should be focusing on the different ways in which Africa is incorporated into the global system. Ferguson contrasts the socially thick investments in early industrial development, particularly mining, in southern Africa, with the much thinner contemporary resource extraction of the modern industrial processes which operate in enclaves cut off from the majority of African societies (Ferguson 2006).

Perhaps we can trace a similar distinction in international trading networks. The formal systems which have emerged over the last 50 years have tended to rely on large-scale operations which have tended to exclude the local entrepreneurs. Intercontinental transport costs have remained high and international trade has been an area beyond the scope of most small-scale business people. They have had to rely on the large-scale import-export businesses. They have been the informal end of formal international trade links. Hence, this form of international trade has been socially thin.

However, with recent reductions in transport costs, the expansion of air routes and the drop in fares, and the massive growth in Chinese business, the scope for small-scale international trading has expanded enormously. As a result, moving anywhere in African markets, one can come across people who have travelled across the world for their

business. This would appear to be a much socially thicker form of trade. Are we seeing a return to the days of the caravans where the movement of individuals for trade requires others to move to provide services? In other words, trader mobility induces longer-term migration and settlement by others.

The APHM research does not provide a sufficient empirical base to pursue such arguments further. However, it does show that the analysis of mobility within Africa can provide a rich source of stimulation to new thinking on migration within the continent and across the world.

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