Working Papers

Paper 71, June 2013

Moving Beyond Conflict:

Re-framing mobility in the African Great Lakes region

Working paper for the African Great Lakes Mobility Project

Oliver Bakewell and Ayla Bonfiglio

Mobility in the African Great Lakes

This paper draws on the theoretical research and empirical work undertaken within the project 'Mobility in the African Great Lakes'. It is published by the International Migration Institute (IMI), Oxford Department of International Development (QEH), University of Oxford, 3 Mansfield Road, Oxford OX1 3TB, UK (www.imi.ox.ac.uk). IMI does not have an institutional view and does not aim to present one. The views expressed in this document are those of its independent authors. The Mobility in the African Great Lakes project has been funded by a grant from the MacArthur Foundation. This has been supplemented by additional support from the Oxford Martin School.

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

It is not surprising that conflict and crisis are often seen as the dominant features moving across the across the socio-political landscape in the African Great Lakes. As a result, many areas of life are analysed in its shadow – politics, economics, cultural norms, and, most pertinent for this paper, mobility. Here, we propose a framework that examines the extent to which crisis and conflict overlay, contravene, and inform mobility in the African Great Lakes; and that tentatively explores these underlying mobility dynamics, which might be expected to remain when conflict and crisis subside.

The framework draws from sociological theories of 'normal' life and agency to examine mobility by looking along three analytical dimensions: aspirations, norms, and practices. It is then tentatively applied to analyse migration associated with three underlying social processes that continue within the Great Lakes: migration relating to education, urbanisation, and family formation. The paper concludes with a reflection upon the challenges of applying this framework for empirical research in the Great Lakes region. We argue that adopting a life-course approach that views movement related to 'key, transitional events' during the span of a person's life may be particularly suited to operationalising this framework.

Keywords: African migration, African Great Lakes, Democratic Republic of Congo, Norms, Aspirations, Capabilities, Mobility, Forced Migration, Conflict, Crisis, Migration theory, Lifecourse

Author: Oliver Bakewell, International Migration Institute, University of Oxford, oliver.bakewell@qeh.ox.ac.uk; and Ayla Bonfiglio, International Migration Institute, University of Oxford, ayla.bonfiglio@qeh.ox.ac.uk

Acknowledgements

Many of the ideas within this paper originated from discussions with colleagues at the International Migration Institute that helped to design the project Mobility in the African Great Lakes. We owe a particular debt of gratitude to Gunvor Jónsson, Agnieszka Kubal and Jamie Goodwin-White. We are also very grateful for the feedback and comments on iterations of this paper from Nalu Binaisa. The ideas presented here also benefited from the insights of the participants at the project workshop held in Oxford in October 2012.

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1 Introduction

In this paper we set out the case for exploring the broad process of migration in the African Great Lakes region looking beyond the conflict framework that dominates analysis in the region.[1] We present a conceptual framework that allows, or even forces us, to examine underlying everyday social processes – those familiar from the rest of the world – that shape people's mobility along with the particular conditions of conflict and violence prevalent in many parts of the Great Lakes. Sadly these conditions may have become part of the everyday backdrop of life within the region. Nonetheless, we look on them as exceptional: in as far as they are not part of the experience of most migrants across the world.

It is not surprising that conflict is often recognised as the dominant feature across the across the socio-political landscape in the Great Lakes. Consequently, many areas of life are analysed in the shadow of conflict – politics, economics, and, most pertinent for this paper, mobility. The study of migration is particularly implicated in the outworking of conflict and violence because flight away from scenes of violence and danger is one of the most commonly observed, critical, and often life-saving, responses. As we will show, there is much empirical work in the Great Lakes that examines the causes and consequences of such forced migration and the subsequent settlement in neighbouring districts or countries.

To deny the impact of this overbearing shadow of conflict would be impossible to justify. Our argument here – and one that we are currently working out in a research project on mobility in the African Great Lakes – is that it is equally wrong to neglect the on-going, perhaps mundane social processes that drive mobility, such as the search for an education, a spouse or a better life in the city.

Conflict and violence with the associated humanitarian and development crises have affected the African Great Lakes for more than three decades, creating one of the most protracted situations of displacement in the world (UNHCR 2010 citing Hughes 1980: 99). The United Nations UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that there are more than 1.5 million internally displaced people (IDP) in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and approximately 5,000 Congolese refugees in Kenya and 82,000 in Uganda (UNHCR n.d.). These figures represent the number of displaced registered and supported by the international community, and it possible that there are many more individuals in refugee-like situations living in these host countries. Such a scale of long-term displacement is horrific and for many people demands action. This paper however, argues that such a presentation of the situation provides a wholly inadequate basis for developing appropriate responses.

If an improved security situation made return to the DRC possible, it cannot be assumed that forced migrants and migrants will wish to return to their origin communities. Migrants, refugees, and internally displaced people may have integrated into host communities and wish to remain, or may desire to move elsewhere to regional cities (Haug 2002; Crisp, Riera et al. 2008; Duffield 2008). Similarly, it cannot be assumed that a decline in conflict and crisis will cause a decline in movement, and that movement therefore is a symptom of disruption (Monsutti 2008). A safer and more economically stable DRC might prompt a significant rise in regional mobility, as people encounter fewer constraints to migrate and experience an expansion of life aspirations (de Haas 2010).

[1] The Great Lakes region of Africa includes Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania.

Additionally, conflict and crisis may transform existing economic or socio-cultural practices by linking them with mobility strategies, leading to greater movement once conditions improve (Lubkemann 2000; Ali 2007).

Therefore, there is a need to better understand the aspirations, socio-cultural norms, capabilities, and agency of migrants and forced migrants to reposition movement as a positive response or adaptation to conflict and crisis and to improve the efficacy of humanitarian and development interventions. This needs a more nuanced approach than focusing exclusively on conflict and crises as the driver of migration, and in doing so, casting all migrants as refugees or internally displaced.

In other contexts, beyond the dominant shadow of conflict, it is widely recognised that people migrate as a result of a complex mix of motivations and structural factors. People move in response to changing labour markets and commodity prices, as part of cultural rites of passage, to pursue educational goals, to establish households with new spouses, and to engage in trade or seek employment, to name a few (Van Hear 1998; Hashim 2005; Easthope and Gabriel 2008; Tati 2009; de Haas 2010; Kim 2010). However, in areas affected by conflict and crisis and where forced migration takes place, one finds a relative dearth of theories about movement, just as one finds a dearth of migration studies literature that engages with conflict and crisis dynamics (Monsutti 2008; Lindley 2010; Bakewell 2011). This is partially the result of the special international protection rights afforded to refugees, whose status is defined by persecution motivating movement. Consequently in forced migration research, it is often assumed that conflict and crisis outweigh all other migration determinants or that other determinants do not exist. Thus, there is a disparity between migration and forced migration theory, and a need to develop a more complex view of mobility drivers and patterns, particularly in the African Great Lakes where conflict and crisis are protracted conditions and have become a part of daily life.

This paper proposes a framework that examines the extent to which crisis and conflict overlays, contravenes, and informs mobility in the African Great Lakes; and that tentatively explores these underlying mobility dynamics, which might be expected to remain when conflict and crisis subside. The framework draws from sociological theories of ‘normal’ life and agency to examine mobility by looking along three analytical dimensions: aspirations, norms, and practices (Emirbayer and Mische 1998; Galasinska and Kozlowska 2009; Lopez-Rodriguez 2010; Rabikowska 2010).

The next section of this paper explains in more detail what is meant by the conflict framework and argues that it covers much of the current academic literature on migration in the Great Lakes region. The subsequent section examines the conceptual and practical limitations introduced by this focus on conflict as a driver of migration often to the exclusion of other factors and explanatory frameworks. It makes the case for moving beyond the conflict framework works and the subsequent section elaborates an alternative approach examining the three analytical dimensions of migration aspirations, norms, and practices. This framework is then tentatively applied to the analysis of migration associated with three underlying social processes that continue within the Great Lakes whatever the scale of conflict and violence: migration relating to education, urbanisation, and family formation. In conclusion the paper reflects on the challenges of applying this framework for empirical research in the Great Lakes region. It argues that adopting a life-course approach that views movement related to ‘key, transitional events’ during the span of a person’s life may be particularly suited to operationalising this framework.

2 Crisis, conflict, and escape: framing mobility in the Great Lakes region

Over the last two decades, the majority of studies of life and mobility in the African Great Lakes have adopted a conflict or crisis framework. By this we mean that conflict or crisis has been placed at the centre of the explanatory framework: providing the strongest rationale for movement; determining how people move; and also shaping the consequences of movement, in particular, the way that they settle in a new place.

The academic literature from the region tends to discuss movement in terms of forced migration and displacement: identifying those moving as refugees and internally displaced; and exploring questions of organised settlement, citizenship, security, social and economic integration in host countries, and repatriation (Harrell-Bond 1989; Bedford 1997; Chaulia 2002; Amisi and Ballard 2005; Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005; Jackson 2007; Clark 2008; Hovil, Clancy et al. 2011; Russell 2011). More generally, much of the contemporary scholarship on the region focuses on analysing violence, failures in peace building and conflict resolution strategies, and aid interventions (Naidoo 2000; Daley 2006; Lemarchand 2006; Nest, Grignon et al. 2006; Bailey 2007; Thakur 2008; Carayannis 2009; Autesserre 2010). It is within this crisis and conflict context that migration is consciously or unconsciously positioned.

There is also a large array of literature on the African Great Lakes arising from the research and evaluations commissioned by international agencies and governments. Given their provenance, it is not surprising that the majority of these studies have been framed by the major problems of the region – conflict, violence, humanitarian crises and the associated displacement – and the development of appropriate interventions (few lay claim to solutions) – conflict resolution strategies, poverty alleviation and humanitarian aid for those affected such as refugees. Hence, international agencies have evaluated patterns of violence in the region, the political-economic-ethnic dimensions of conflict, the types and prevalence of human rights violations, peace building operations and actors, and humanitarian versus development approaches to conflict resolution (e.g. Bedford 1997; Porta 1998; Moore 2003; Mugiraneza and Levy 2003; Clement 2004; ActionAid 2006; Global_Witness 2009). When it comes to mobility, the discussion is again limited almost exclusively to displacement or forced migration. International agencies have explored many facets of the economic and security situation of the displaced in camps; self-settled refugees' challenges with local integration, access to basic services, and livelihood attainment; the plight of internal displacement; and refugees' and IDPs' experiences with trauma and torture (Hoerz 1995; Bedford 1997; AmnestyInternational 2001, 2005; Global_IDP_Project 2003; Chr._Michelsen_Institute 2007; Clancy and Bueno 2008; International_Crisis_Group 2009).

We therefore argue that the conflict framework overwhelmingly dominates the academic and policy literature on contemporary mobility in the region. Few studies examine patterns of mobility that may be shaped by factors other than those directly related to conflict. There are exceptions but these are rather limited. Some work on migration in the broader Great Lakes region stay out of a conflict framework by avoiding reference to conflict or crisis completely. For example, in Bryceson's (2011) research on rural–urban migration and urbanisation and Beegle *et al's.* (2011) research on

migration and poverty in Northwest Tanzania, neither study makes more than a reference to the fact that the site of research was an area that had received hundreds of thousands of refugees over the last 20 years (see also Ellis and Freeman 2004). Moreover, research into selection for migration in Western Kenya includes findings on international migration to Uganda (Miguel and Hamory 2009). While, this area on the Kenya-Uganda border has not been directly affected by conflict and crisis in the Great Lakes, the study makes no reference to regional displacement and crisis dynamics.

There are some studies from the region that highlights the complex interaction between migration or displacement and conflict in the region. In particular, the work of Vlassenroot and Huggins (2005) analyses migration as a historical process that has contributed to conflict through issues involving land rights in Eastern DRC. Here migration is concerned with the expansion of language groups, access to land and livelihoods, and the emergence of new political structures. Their research reveals that the displacement of people from their land can be a strategic aim of violence – people are not forced to migrate as a by-product of conflict, rather their displacement is the purpose of conflict. The central role of seemingly local conflicts about access to land is echoed by Jackson (2002) and Smith (2011). They argue that such land disputes are increasingly connected to broader political and economic struggles with states, international institutions, and corporations over access to resources for mineral extraction, commercial agriculture, and conservation. Many authors acknowledge the historical roots of contemporary migration patterns, such as N'sanda Bulela (2005: 94) who shows how migrants from Kivu established Congolese neighbourhoods in Bujumbura dating back to colonial times. Nonetheless, the point remains when it comes to mobility in the region over the last thirty years, the vast majority of studies see it through a conflict lens.

3 The limitations of the conflict framework

Placing conflict and crisis at the centre of our explanatory frameworks for the analysis of mobility introduces significant shortcomings to both academic analysis and practical interventions. For the former, it tends to see migration (displacement) as aberrant behaviour associated with the exceptional conditions of violence and chaos. This renders invisible the more mundane experiences of migration that are part of many people's life-courses and social practices. It fails to acknowledge the extent to which migration plays a part in people's social worlds regardless of conflict. In short, migration becomes identified with conflict. This makes it impossible to examine how this migratory practice is affected by or may affect a conflict. When it comes to practice, the identification of migration with conflict drives the assumption that migration will stop and people will 'return' should peace be established. Moreover, it becomes much harder to envisage any possible contribution that mobility may bring to post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction in the region. These points are discussed in more detail in this section.

3.1 Bridging the academic divide

The focus on conflict as the primary driver of human mobility in the Great Lakes region neglects the complex mix of motivations and structural conditions that shape people's movement. Elsewhere in the world, including other regions of Africa, migration is seen to have multiple economic, socio-cultural, political and environmental causes. These may include the search for employment or engaging in trade, taking up education opportunities, undertaking a cultural rite of passage, embarking on married life, to mention but a few (Van Hear 1998; Hashim 2005; Easthope and Gabriel 2008; Tati 2009; de Haas 2010; Kim 2010). When it comes to research on forced migration, there is much less recognition of such multiple motivations. Likewise, research into other forms of migration rarely engages with the

conflict and crisis dynamics that shape patterns of mobility. As a result, the study of migration in contexts of conflict and crisis tends to be set apart from other migration studies (Castles 2003; Bakewell 2011; Van Hear, Bakewell et al. 2012).

This divide has been acknowledged for some time and there have been some attempts to blur the boundaries and recognise the complex inter-relationships between 'forced' and 'voluntary' migration. Over the last decade, some middle ground has been claimed by the notions of the *asylum-migration nexus* and *mixed migration flows*. Both are concerned with the spectrum of migration motivations ranging from persecution to improving one's livelihood that make it difficult to distinguish refugees from voluntary migrants (Bakewell 2007; Scalettaris 2007). The former is related more closely to the intersection of policies on asylum and migration (Koser 2001) and has been used more extensively in debates on movement to Europe, North America and other wealthier regions of the world. The idea of mixed migration flows has emerged more recently. It refers to the presence of migrants of different legal categories (e.g. asylum seeker or economic migrant) moving together along the same routes, experiencing the same migration journey, and potentially transferring between categories of status over the course of their migration (Jureidini 2010). While these ideas start to break down the binary views of forced and voluntary migration, neither recognises the multiple motivations prompting an individual migrant's journey.

Developing a more satisfactory bridge between these fields seems particularly important in the African Great Lakes, where conflict, crisis, and displacement are protracted conditions that have become a part of daily life. To deny that impact of this overbearing shadow of conflict would be foolish and impossible to justify. At the same time, to neglect the underlying processes driving mobility that are observed in the rest of the world seems equally short-sighted.

Wacquant (1997: 349) claims that 'even in the most extreme of circumstances, social life is patterned, regular, and endowed with a logic and meaning amenable to analytic elucidation'. This is because people will seek to construct and reconstruct lives that are 'meaningful, reasonable, and normal' (Wacquant 1997). Therefore, rather than define a process or place by its most extreme elements, Wacquant (1997) argues that one should uncover the order within the 'chaos' and reveal the more 'normal' features of life.

There are some studies from other regions of the world that have taken up this challenge. Morrison and May (1994) and Lubkemann (2000) maintain that conflicts in Guatemala and Mozambique, respectively, shape, halt, and further promote existing patterns of migration related to employment and marriage. In their studies, decision-making related to personal security fuses with decision-making related to livelihoods in determining migration strategies. Monsutti (2008) on trade-related and labour mobility in Afghanistan-Pakistan-Iran, and Lindley (2010) on livelihood strategies in Somalia provide other examples of research that acknowledges complex sets of motivations shaping mobility in contexts marked by conflict and crisis. However, similar examinations are lacking in the African Great Lakes.

The current focus on conflict as a driver of migration has tended to identify movement with chaos and disorder in the Great Lakes. In this context, migration becomes part of the exceptional circumstances and can be cast as 'abnormal'. This can be contrasted by the migration processes that are variously described as with terms such as 'normal', 'routine', 'ordinary', 'traditional', and 'natural' (Lemont 2001; Haug 2002; Madsen and van Naerssen 2003; Duval 2004). The use of such terminology however, lacks coherence and uniformity, particularly as studies are situated within

different geographic and temporal contexts, and generates a misleading dichotomy with 'abnormal' migration. In the literature, the term 'normal' migration can refer to the type of migration, most notably migration for employment or change of citizenship (Evans 1987; Buchan 2004). It can also refer to the legality of migration, the timeframe (seasonal or permanent) (Evans 1987; Hampshire and Randall 1999), the scale (steady, self-sustaining flows or small flows) (Houston 1979; Smith 2007), the demographics of flows (de Lange 2007; Easthope and Gabriel 2008), or the predictable or habitual nature of migration (Gordon 1981; de Lange 2007; Dryzek, Norgaard et al. 2011). Furthermore, the term 'normal' migration can describe the type of migration, itself, or refer to migration not affected by some external shock or crisis (Lemont 2001; Haug 2002; Smith 2007), further illustrating the divide that exists in the literature between normal-voluntary migration and aberrant-forced migration and the need for scholarship to endeavour to overcome this divide.

3.2 Implications for practice

In addition to contributing to scholarship, a better understanding of the processes driving mobility in conflict and crisis settings is vitally important for the design of interventions that aim to assist affected populations. Working with the assumption that most migrants are displaced or refugees leads many agencies to focus on finding post-conflict solutions that enable people to return or find new homes. However, efforts by governments and international organisations to organise people's repatriation or onward settlement have run into considerable difficulties, often around conceptualisations of migration and post-conflict or post-crisis life (Greenhouse, Mertz et al. 2002). For example, evaluations of UNHCR's repatriation exercises in Angola and Sudan have noted that many refugees who had been returned to their homes, moved back to their country of asylum or onward to regional cities (Haug 2002; Crisp, Riera et al. 2008; Duffield 2008).[2]

Looking beyond the conflict framework may benefit interventions by showing how mobility will feature in post-crisis livelihood strategies, goal attainment and cultural practices, and by challenging existing assumptions about sedentary settlement being the ideal and/or 'traditional' way of life (de Haan 1999; Monsutti 2008). Conflict and crisis can increase the risks and costs of migration, causing those with insufficient capabilities to reduce the frequency and distance of their movement or to be involuntarily immobile (Carling 2002; de Haas 2010). For instance, Bonfiglio (2010) argues that economic insecurity can prevent Congolese refugee children and youth from accessing schools in Uganda. Hence, we cannot assume that a reduction in violence can be associated with a decline in mobility (Monsutti 2008); instead, an increase in movement may accompany an increase in relative security, as people are better able to realise their capabilities and fulfil their aspirations.

Similarly, conflict and crisis may transform existing economic or socio-cultural practices by linking them to migration strategies, leading to greater mobility in post-conflict and crisis settings. Lubkemann (2000) holds that protracted conflict in Mozambique transformed internal migration patterns associated with polygamous marriage practices into international migration patterns, to cope with the lack of economic opportunities at home (see also Ali 2007). Following the decline in conflict, Mozambican men continued to marry South African women because of the perceived social and

[2] This paper recognises that development actors may not have the mandate to assist displaced populations with local integration or onward movement and are constrained by the laws and policies of host and resettlement states. The issue remains that the 'solution' that international actors and governments offer to the displaced is one that does not necessarily consider their aspirations, capabilities, and agency and, therefore, is one that may not be optimal in establishing and promoting post-conflict and crisis livelihoods.

economic benefits. In this way, 'forced' migration can promote further 'voluntary' migration (see also Boyle, Halfacree et al. 1998; Ní Laoire 2000; Akesson 2004).

Finally, moving outside a conflict framework may open up an alternative perspective on migration as a positive response to crisis and post-crisis that can suggest new more effective interventions. In other words, migration may be an action taken to restore 'normal' life (Wood 1982; Asis, Huang et al. 2004; Rabikowska 2010). This draws on the ideas of Galasinska (2010) and Rabikowska (2010) who argue that the post-1991 migration of Polish families to the United Kingdom was a strategy to achieve a 'normal' life, for they associate life in Britain as offering education and employment opportunities that were no longer possible in Poland. For example, Ansell and Van Blerk (2004) found that child migration could be a positive livelihood strategy adopted by households in Malawi and Lesotho to cope with the challenges posed by the loss of adult family members to HIV/AIDS.

4 A framework for analysing mobility in conflict and crisis

Having made the case for looking beyond a conflict framework in the analysis of mobility in the Great Lakes, we now turn to consider how this can best be achieved. It is important to stress that we are not seeking to disregard the impact of conflict and crisis on migration processes, but to challenge the notion that they are necessarily the primary cause of movement. We start with the assumption that mobility plays a fundamental role in human society. Therefore, we need to move beyond asking 'why people migrate', to also ask 'how people experience, understand, and negotiate their migrations' as part of their day to day lives (Ní Laoire 2000; Easthope and Gabriel 2008: 62).

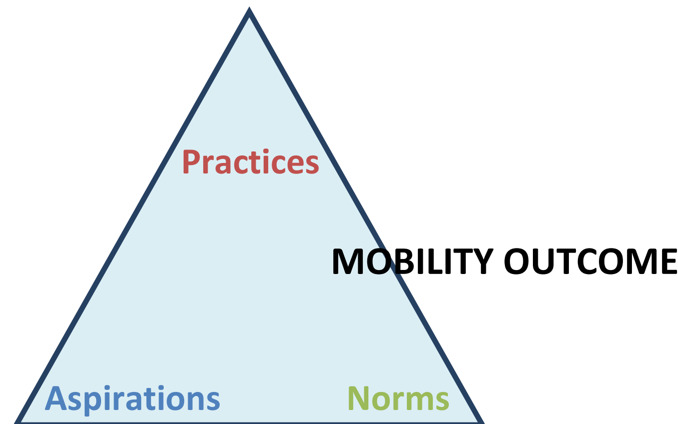
Inspired by the work of Galasinska (2010), Lopez-Rodriguez (2010), Rabikowska (2010) on conceptualising *order* versus *disorder* or *normal* versus *chaotic* life, we propose examining the factors that shape quotidian processes of migration along three inter-related dimensions; we refer to these as aspirations, norms and practices. Aspirations are concerned with people's goals and individual desires that may be realised by migrating – either as a means to an end or as an end in itself. Migration norms are the social practices of movement that are culturally sanctioned and valued within the society. Practices are the ways that people actually move in response to the particular conditions they face.

To some extent we can see these different dimensions relating to different analytical levels and temporal orientations; this is critical for migration processes, which evolve over time between origin and destination, and which are embedded in past experiences and future desires (Castles 2010). Aspirations can be most closely identified with the individual who is planning his or her future life and determining out strategies to achieve this. Norms are derived from one's life in a particular social milieu and are often concerned with upholding traditions shaped by people's behaviours in the past. Practices are undertaken in the face of the constraints and opportunities that any actor faces at a given time; they can therefore be associated with the (macro) structural conditions that shape action within the present. This presents strong parallels with the work of Emirbayer and Mische (1998) on projective, iterative and practical/evaluative aspects of agency (Bakewell, de Haas et al. 2012).

Analysing mobility along these three dimensions will help us to better understand the underlying social processes that shape migration and how they are affected by conflict and crisis. It offers a new perspective avoiding, on the one hand, the view of migrants solely as utility maximising decision-makers and their migrations solely the result of preferences (dominant in the voluntary migration literature); and, an on the other, viewing migrants as passive agents and their migrations as

a function of larger (conflict and crisis) forces and structures (Monsutti 2010). Moreover, by examining the interaction between conflict and crisis and aspirations, norms and practices, it may be possible to develop the fresh perspective that Lubkemann (2000) argues is needed when conflict becomes the context for daily life, rather than an exceptional event that disrupts it.

Figure 1



These dimensions are not mutually exclusive or independent; rather, they often overlap and influence one another, both temporally and more substantively, in generating a migration outcome. For instance, migration resulting from or a part of personal ideals is often shaped by the values shared by members of one's family or community (Jones and Kittisuksathit 2003). Likewise, practices are likely to mould aspirations. Still, it is important to note the features that distinguish each of these dimensions and their implications for migration, as each provides a different lens for viewing migration outcomes in the context of conflict and crisis. The rest of this section looks at these dimensions and how they have been applied to migration in more detail.

4.1 Aspirations

Here we are concerned with individuals' notions of their ideal or good life and their goals for the future. In the context of migration, aspirations can describe one's ambitions to move as well as ambitions that require movement to be fulfilled. For example, aspirations relating to migration may describe a desire to live in a rural or urban area, to gain independence from one's family by moving outside of one's community, and/or to achieve education in a regional city, to name a few (Thorsen 2007; Easthope and Gabriel 2008; Monsutti 2008; Czaika and Vothknecht 2012). Different aspirations may yield different migration patterns when migrants' capabilities are taken into account. Ferro (2006) has identified three categories of aspirational migration patterns: a *committed migration plan*, which is a strong commitment to leave and enter the international labour market; *a desired aspiration to mobility*, which describes the desire to have an international experience and engage in more circular forms of migration; and *a desired but impeded mobility*, which describes Carling's (2002) forced immobility (see also Graves and Graves 1974; Czaika and Vothknecht 2012 on 'aspiration-enhancing' and 'aspiration-deteriorating relative deprivation').

Migration can be the means to achieve an individual's aspiration, the aspiration itself, or both. Lopez-Rodriguez (2010), in her research on Polish female migrants in the UK, argues that migration is a strategy to gain or regain a 'normal' life for migrants and their children. Polish female migrants associate life in the UK with normality, as it offers them and their families the opportunity to achieve a standard of living and lifestyle that used to be expected (or normal) but was no longer possible in

Poland. While many of the respondents had not achieved the 'normal' life they had aspired to at the time of research, the author finds that the women had projected their aspirations onto their children. Similarly, Asis, Huang et al. (2004) argues that women in the Philippines migrate for work in order to send their children to school and college. In addition to pursuing this household aspiration, they contend that female migrants also pursue their individual aspirations to experience migration. Women 'also see in migration a journey of self-discovery and an avenue to experience a different culture in ways that 'symbolically invert the hierarchies of class and status…[by] undermining the exclusivity of the elites' tourist experience' (Asis, Huang, and Yeoh 2004: 205 citing Aguilar 1996: 127). The very act of migration gives women greater confidence, self-reliance, and a greater sense of religious devotion.

Several theories exist as to how aspirations arise. Emibayer and Mische (1998: 985) maintain that aspirations may be constructed differently according to the 'periods, cultures, theoretical traditions, and even individuals' in which they take shape. This does not mean that aspirations are wholly temporally or culturally pre-determined; rather, acknowledging the context in which aspirations form, provides key insights into the aspirations themselves. In addition, structural factors as well as capabilities may shape aspirations linked to migration (Czaika and Vothknecht 2012). There has been some debate about the 'aspiration-migration nexus', focusing on the extent to which higher aspirations found in migrants relative to non-migrants either result from or are a cause of past migration. The latter suggests that there is an element of self-selection in having aspirations to migrate, which point to personal traits, attitudes, and capabilities (Ferro 2006; Czaika and Vothknecht 2012), while the former suggests that something unique to the migration process inspires increased aspiration formation. Czaika and Vothknecht (2012: 20) argue that migration is a process into which people with higher aspirations select and that being young, educated, and economically and socially well-situated accounts for why the majority of the migrants in his study have higher aspirations than non-migrants. This suggests that in contexts characterised by social, economic, and political crisis, aspirations may be severely constrained or at odds with achievable goals.

At the core of many discussions of aspirations and their formation is the idea that they are associated with the individual and are shaped by what Czaika and Vothknecht (2012) call 'individual disposition' or 'individual personality'. Ferro (2006) argues that aspirations to migrate result from a combination of factors, including personal traits and attitudes, as well as market and immigration conditions (practical conditions), and pressures from the social and family environment (normative conditions) (see also Thorsen 2007). For instance, Afghan men in Iran and Pakistan discuss how their migration aspirations were shaped by a desire to seek new experiences, as well as achieve higher incomes, gain access to better medical facilities, and support their households (Monsutti 2008). Hence, aspirations do not spring only from individual characteristics, but they may be formed from a diverse range of normative and structural factors arising in wider society. However, these factors coalesce in different ways and measures within each individual to produce his or her personal aspirations.

De Haas (2010) adds that individuals' awareness of social, economic, and political opportunities in potential destinations can increase their aspirations associated with migration. For example, Burkinabe youth migrants living in rural areas explain that their desire to live in Ouagadougou have grown out of learning about the opportunities that exist in the city as they see migrants return to their rural communities with improved economic livelihoods, fancy clothes, and increased social status; and of a curiosity to experience urban life and enhanced status for themselves (Thorsen 2007).

Such studies suggest that an exploration of aspirations may not only bring to light migrants' ambitions as members of communities and families, but also as individuals who desire personal benefits from the migration process that only they can experience. They also start to show the ways in which the three dimension for analysis – aspirations, norms and practices – interact.

4.2 Norms

For the purpose of this paper, norms are concerned with the set of socially sanctioned rules, customs, and values about mobility (Easthope and Gabriel 2008). Ali (2007: 39) describes migration norms as 'ideas, practices and cultural artefacts that reinforce the celebration of migration and migrants. This includes beliefs, desires, symbols, myths, education, celebrations of migration is various media, and material goods.' Given that such norms are culturally constructed and widely understood, both migrants and non-migrants from a given society will be aware of them and may value them as a guide to their own behaviour or that of others. (Akesson 2004). Of course, someone may be very aware of the norms but be perfectly ready to knowingly contravene them.

It is important to recognise that migration norms are not applied equally to everyone living within a society; in particular, they often vary according to class, generation, and gender. Therefore, it is necessary to qualify norms and 'tease out the differences and inequalities that are often hidden by them' (Ní Laoire 2000: 239). For instance, in Morocco, Heering, van der Erf et al. (2004) found great differences in the norms applied to men and women, reflecting the very different positions and roles men and women play in society. In more conservative communities, emigration was very acceptable and common for men, whereas for women, it attracted disapproval and was far less common. Jónsson (2012) analyses the particular norms and expectations of migration for Soninke young men in Mali, showing how the experience of migration had become part of achieving male adulthood. Hampshire and Randall (1999) found that different Fulani groups in northern Burkina Faso had vastly different migration norms, which varied according the groups' agricultural or pastoral modes of production and wealth.

Such examples highlight a link that exists between norms about migration and the wider social, economic, political and natural environment. While this link may play a role in prompting and influencing norms, migration norms may become divorced from such origins and assume a self-sustaining and reproducing dynamic (Boyle, Halfacree et al. 1998). Migration norms may arise from movement practices repeating for an extended period of time, from the occurrence of a large-scale movement, from repeated and extended contact with immigrants or return migrants, or from having family and community members abroad and engaging in transnational relationships (Kandel and Massey 2002; Akesson 2004; Asis, Huang et al. 2004; Duval 2004; Easthope and Gabriel 2008; Horvath 2008). As a result, as Ali (2007) argues, migration norms are established that appear to have their own effect, producing and reproducing further migration patterns (see also Ní Laoire 2000; Kandel and Massey 2002; Jones and Kittisuksathit 2003). For instance, among Muslims in Hyderabad, the norms of migration to the Persian Gulf and the US appear to have remained salient and further intensified despite the economic growth and increase in employment opportunities in the city (Ali 2007).

Nonetheless, it is important to avoid either essentialising norms or a culture of migration, or ascribing too much causal power to them. While it may be possible to detect these dominant perspectives on migration within any society, the meanings and values attached to migration will not be uniform, nor will their impact be hegemonic. In any society views and attitudes on migration will be contested, in particular between generations, and shift over time. Moreover the ways that these

influence migration patterns are not distinct or uniform as these patterns are subject to structural factors and individual agency, which exert their own influence. Hence, migration patterns that are part of or shaped by norms and cultures can be permanent or temporary, seasonal or circular, and long or short in distance (Hampshire and Randall 1999; Heering, van der Erf et al. 2004; Timmerman 2008).

The way in which norms of migration change over time can be related to the extent to which they are culturally embedded in the society. Three broad groups can be considered here. The first and least embedded group describes accepting, positive, or even idealised beliefs or values a society or culture holds about migration. For instance, Ali (2007) argues that the act of migration in India has come to enhance social mobility and prestige and to make one a more desirable spouse, prompting men to spend time abroad to improve their marriage prospects at home (Ali 2007). In Morocco, migration to Western Europe is not only accepted, but also deemed a desirable method for increasing one's socio-economic status, through increased incomes and better lifestyles (Heering, van der Erf et al. 2004). Here, what is socially valued is the higher income rather than migration itself. Should migration fail to deliver on these material benefits, its cachet is likely to decline.

The second group positions migration as an important feature of life-course transitions, most notably, the transition to adulthood in a society or culture: for example, the Soninke young men for whom migration is an initiation into adulthood (Jónsson 2012). Easthope and Gabriel (2008: 173) describe emigration norms in Tasmania as a 'legitimate and unremarkable step in the process of growing up'. They argue that youth respondents believed it was 'expected' and 'natural' that they would migrate out of Tasmania (*ibid.*). Similarly, in Romania in the 1980s and early 1990s, the out-migration of youth seeking employment opportunities in the 'world' market was perceived as a typical part of the transition between finishing school and becoming an adult and establishing a family. Now, the norm has shifted and tertiary education is the stage at which international migration takes place (Horvath 2008). In addition to schooling and employment being important and culturally valued phases for mobility, the literature on matrilocality and patrilocality also reveals family formation and dissolution as being phases linked to movement norms (Ember and Ember 1971; Carstens 1983; Eloundou-Enyegue and Calvès 2006). In Africa, three-quarters of the groups that follow traditions around family settlement, establish their households in the location of the husband's family, leading to the movement of the new bride (Eloundou-Enyegue and Calvès 2006). Here migration is valued as an essential part of moving through life.

The third and most embedded group of norms are those where migration is seen as an integral part of daily life and a defining feature of people's cultural identities. Despite inconsistencies with regard to the term's use, this group most nearly resembles the literature on 'cultures of migration'. In addition to describing migration as entrenched in everyday lives, cultures of migration perceive migration as an 'ideology' that 'concerns collective experiences of…history, political economy, ecology, and geography' and 'notions about the life of the person' (Akesson 2004: 6-7). Two interesting and distinct types of cultures of migration may be found in 'transnational' communities and nomadic communities. Cape Verde provides a good example of the former culture of migration. Nearly everyone within the island chain has a close relative living abroad and the transnational relationships between those at home and those away – and the resources, ideas, and projects that are actively exchanged and carried out through those relationships – shape the lives and identities of Cape Verdeans (Akesson 2004). Pastoral Fulani groups in northern Burkina Faso (Hampshire and Randall 1999), pastoral Hawaweer in northern Sudan (Haug 2002), and hunter-gathering Mbuti in the Congo region (Kelly 1983) provide good examples of the second type, nomadic cultures of migration (see also Turton 2005). Nomadic cultures of migration practice both 'logistical mobility', in which a select

number of people depart from the community for temporary periods of time to carry out economic or cultural tasks, and 'residential mobility', in which an entire society episodically moves its location, as it fulfils the economic and cultural tasks integral to livelihoods maintenance (Kelly 1983).

This idea of embeddedness offers a heuristic device to reflect on different types of norms but is important to remember that they are closely inter-related and may blend into each other. Hence, as Jónsson (2012) explains, the very strong identification of the Soninke with migration has evolved as a result of a long historical process that can be traced back to the eighteenth century driven. For Soninke men, the norms of migration can be seen as deeply embedded form, as they are recognised as members of the *ethnie migratrice*, but there are also the benefits of higher incomes associated with less embedded norms. The fact that migration generates incomes helps to sustain the norm. In the face of greater immigration controls, it is now much harder to migrate to Europe, the most highly valued destination. As a result many young men cannot live up this norm. This raises the question of whether Soninke norms around migration, however deeply embedded, will continue into the future (Jónsson 2012).

4.3 Practices

The third dimension refers to the actual practice of migration that people undertake when faced with the particular opportunities and constraints of any situation. It provides some counterpoint to the other two dimensions of aspirations and norms. People's actual migration may be strongly influenced by their personal aspirations and expectations of their community but the final decision to move, the route taken and means of travel may be shaped by a final trigger, or precipitating cause (Van Hear, Bakewell et al. 2012), that arises from some external factors, such as a particular opportunity or perhaps a crisis. Similarly, a person's aspirations to migrate for education may be repeatedly frustrated by the failure to pass the necessary examination to gain a place at university. Hence their actual migration practices may overlap with or stand in contrast to social norms and personal ideals.

These factors which may determine migration practices arise from both individual and household capabilities as well as macro-structural conditions that can serve to constrain, shape, or facilitate mobility. Here, capabilities refer to 'what people are actually able to do and to be' (Nussbaum 2000: 124) and they may be bounded by the levels of education received, the financial and social capital base available, physical and mental health, among many other possible factors (see de Haas 2011). With socio-economic development that brings an increase in people's levels of incomes, education and health, their capabilities may increase, enabling them to expand their horizons and migrate to places offering greater opportunities, should they want to (Skeldon 1997; de Haas 2010). In contrast, where people have insufficient capabilities to migrate, despite wanting or needing to as part of their livelihood strategy, the result is 'involuntary immobility' (Carling 2002).

Macro-structural factors refer to organisations and institutionalised patterns of behaviour that 'arise from complicated arrangements of social relations' and 'take on a significance which is greater than the sum of its parts' (Bakewell 2010: 7). Such factors include states, policies, labour markets, status hierarchies, power inequalities, security, and social services at home *versus* the destination, amongst others (de Haas 2011: 10, 17; Kurekova 2011). In his work on Afghan migrants in Pakistan and Iran, Monsutti (2008) finds that migration is driven by a complex combination of structural forces, including conflict and insecurity as well as poverty and expectations of economic opportunities at destinations. He further states that social status and extensive migration networks mediate who participates in mobile livelihood strategies. Monsutti's (2008) work also highlights the fact that both the structures themselves as well as the perception of structures impact migration (see

also de Haas 2011; Kureková 2011). In exploring the migration outcomes of positive *versus* negative expectations for future economic prospects, Czaika (2012) argues that negative economic prospects for origin societies elicit a stronger migratory response than positive prospects in destination societies and, in particular, that expectations about labour markets prompt a stronger response than about general economic prospects.

Taken together, both individual and household level capabilities and macro-structures define the given (structural) conditions in which migration decisions have to be made. Whatever the aspirations or the norms of the people and societies concerned, they cannot simply change their education level or the local job market (for instance) to enable them to match their wishes. Decisions are made and action is taken in the light of the structural conditions that people face at the time. In this sense, we may think of capabilities as micro-structural factors.

This interaction between capabilities and macro-structural factors in varying combinations changes people's resources and information to yield different migration practices that may breaks away from traditions and often people's aspirations. For instance, in the Sahel, Hampshire and Randall (1999) maintain that despite one Fulani group having cultural objections to migration – finding it to be a public display of one's poverty and to be degrading – some members must engage in the practice if economic conditions at home are too dire and no local coping strategies exist. For other Fulani groups, seasonal migration is perceived positively as a livelihood optimising strategy, engaged in by those with a greater amount of wealth who anticipate insufficient yields from agro-pastoralism (see also Eacott and Sonn 2006 on emigration from rural Victoria, Australia). In Somalia, Lindley (2010: 12) argues that it was the confluence of macro political-economic factors, such as outbreaks in violence in the capitol, persecution, chronic political uncertainty, and a lack of economic opportunities, and the steep decline in individual and household socio-economic and political capabilities that prompted a sharp increase in local, regional, and international mobility in 2007-8, beyond what was observed in the previous fifteen years of conflict and crisis.

With the passage of time, these structural conditions and the migration practices they stimulate may be incorporated within a society's norms about migration or help to shape the aspirations of future generations. The critical point is that these three dimensions may often be misaligned at any time. Of course, it is the migration practices that are most easily observed and reported. Moreover, they can often be neatly related to the particular set of structural conditions faced by those who move. When taken in aggregate, these observed migration practices create patterns that relate factors such as economic conditions, migration policies, education levels, political stability or violence to both the timing and the direction of people's moves. If we limit our analysis simply to these practices, it may give us little information about the underlying processes that may pre-dispose people to migrate, or make every effort to avoid it. It does not give us a sufficiently rich account of the causal mechanisms that drive some to migrate and leave others, even when faced with the same structural conditions. Perhaps more to the point, it says little about what may happen as the structural conditions change. In particular, where migration is explained primarily by reference to conflict and violence (as we have argued is the case in the Great Lakes region), an analysis that considers only the flows of migrants (or refugees) will not help us understand how migration patterns could change should a robust sustainable peace be achieved.

By taking account of these three analytical dimensions together – aspirations, norms, and practices – it is possible to develop a much richer understanding of the social processes that drive migration, recognising but looking beyond the immediate structural conditions while acknowledging

the role of social norms and the exercise of individuals' agency. As already noted, these dimensions overlap and, at times, may reinforce each other. Even so, it is important to acknowledge all three, as they each lend a different lens through which to examine how conflict and crisis affect migration determinants and patterns.

5 Mobility in the African Great Lakes: A preliminary examination

Having outlined this broad framework that looks beyond the conflict as a driver of migration, in this section we attempt to apply it to the analysis of mobility migration patterns and drivers in the African Great Lakes. This can only be a tentative exploration as we draw only on the existing literature. As noted above, this is rather limited with the majority bound to the conflict framework, or a much smaller volume looking beyond it; hence, we also refer to research from other parts of Africa. Here we focus on just three fundamental social processes that have been strongly related to migration and mobility in other parts of Africa and the rest of the world: education, family formation, and urbanisation. For each of these, we look at the intersection of aspirations, norms and practices relating to migration and how they have been affected by the conflict.

5.1 Education and migration

We turn first to mobility associated with education, in particular formal secondary and tertiary education, but also referring to formal primary education and non-formal vocational, spiritual or cultural, foreign language, literacy and numeracy education. This section argues that migration for education may be a part of an individual or family's livelihood strategy, a socio-cultural norm and perceived part of life-cycle development, or a part of an individual's aspirations (Moore 2001; Black, Hilker et al. 2004; Punch 2007; Easthope and Gabriel 2008; Tati 2009).

It is possible to see migration for education as a reflection of the variation in educational opportunities across Africa; a result of macro-structural forces. A (perceived) lack of or insufficient access to educational opportunities at home and the availability of such opportunities elsewhere is another key determinant of education migration (Ayiemba and Oucho 2007; Tati 2009). Helgesson (2006) argues that the process of financially sponsoring kin to migrate for their education often varies according to the education systems in African countries. In Mozambique, children are sponsored to migrate after year five of primary school, while in Tanzania children are sponsored for secondary education. This difference is likely caused by a greater availability within Tanzania of all seven years of primary school education. In her study on independent child migration and education in Ghana, Hashim (2007) states that 25 per cent of her interviewees primarily migrated because of education opportunities elsewhere. Primary and secondary educational opportunities tend to be available in home countries, though their attainment may prompt internal migration, while tertiary education often requires students to migrate internationally. Black, Crush et al. (2006) and Black, Hilker et al. (2004) maintain that African students often to go abroad for university education. Moreover, migration within Africa for higher education is increasingly the most favoured option for youth looking for optimal education and employment opportunities (UNDESA 2003; Tati 2009).

Not only may young people seek out these opportunities but also African universities are increasingly recruiting students from beyond their borders. Tati (2009) observed South African universities and higher education institutions prompted students from other African countries to enrol with the promise of financial assistance. More generally, universities and academic institutions are increasingly developing partnerships or establishing overseas campuses, prompting students enrolled

in home country institutions to transfer to programmes abroad. Some African governments are also developing selective immigration policies to attract foreign students in specific academic fields or with specific skills (UNDESA 2003).

The insecurity in the Great Lakes region and the disruption of the educations systems has certainly skewed the distribution of educational resources away from the eastern DRC and making the schools and universities of Uganda, Kenya and (more recently) Rwanda more attractive. Apart from changing these macro-structural conditions, it may also have affected the significance of migration for education within households. Evidence from across the African continent suggests that migration for education can play an important role in the survival strategy or coping mechanism for families. Tati (2009: 16) claims that such migration may offer 'the most viable alternative to long-term deprivation'. For instance, a family may financially sponsor one of its members to receive secondary or tertiary education abroad as a form of economic investment, if it is unable to provide for itself given dire economic conditions at home. This person is responsible for gaining employment and remitting funds back to kin in home countries (Black, Hilker et al. 2004; Black, Crush et al. 2006; Helgesson 2006; Adepoju 2008).

Punch (2007, 2002) and Moore (2001) provide further nuance to this migration process, for they hold that the absence of educational opportunities must be accompanied by the attachment of social, cultural, and/or economic value (i.e. norms and/or aspirations) to such opportunities to prompt migration. For instance, in Ghana families rely on men both socially and economically and cannot afford to let them migrate away from home for education (Hashim 2005). However, in the wider Great Lakes region since pre-colonial times and continuing through to the present, it has been common for children to engage in circular migration to obtain non-formal cultural education or secondary education. In the Buganda Kingdom of Uganda, young males were often sent to live and work with relatives to learn more about their Buganda culture. More recently, there exists a norm of children leaving their homes for boarding schools, often involving travel across large distances (Black, Hilker et al. 2004; Black, Crush et al. 2006). This however, does not encourage movement only away from the region. Hovil, Clancy et al. (2011) claim that despite the instability and violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo, significant numbers of Congolese refugees in Rwanda are still sending their children back to North Kivu to receive a local education.[3]

Similarly, individuals may migrate for education as part of their perceived life-cycle development and in pursuit of aspirations. Punch (2007) contends that youth may consider migration for education and employment to be a rite of passage and a part of their transition to adulthood. Tati (2009: 3) holds that 'young people are less and less relying on their localities of belonging to meet their aspirations [in] terms of education and employment'.

Of course aspirations for education that drive migration are often inextricably linked to longer-term aspirations for employment (Hashim 2007; Blunch 2009; Tati 2009). Sabot (1972) argues there is a strong link between labour markets and the types of education and skills offered at institutions of higher learning as well as the level of qualifications that migrants receive. Local labour markets increasingly demand higher education qualifications or reward higher qualifications with greater salaries, motivating individuals to migrate to achieve higher education levels (Moore 2001; Punch 2002, 2007; Sabot 1972). Moreover, being employed whilst enrolled in university not only

[3] It should be noted that both IRRI studies on education and marriage migration explore the role of such factors in people's decisions about repatriation and do not consider their possible roles in the original (forced) migration.

legitimises a student's decision to migrate, since employment may be a greater sign of success than enrolment, but also provides a student with the financial support needed to live and study abroad. Some students must first migrate abroad to gain employment and save funds before enrolling in a higher education program (Tati 2009).

5.2 Urbanisation

Urbanisation is a process that describes the growth of the population in urban areas primarily by natural increase and migration.[4] Alongside the increase in urban populations, urbanisation refers to the growth of cityscapes, characterised by increasing infrastructure, social services such as healthcare and education facilities, economic markets and employment opportunities, and information hubs; the ethnic and cultural diversification of resident populations; and the increase of possibilities for political participation.

Migration is therefore embedded in processes of urbanisation as both a cause and consequence. The towns and cities expand with migration and the emergent urban spaces then provide new opportunities that draw in further migrants. Movement to towns and cities may be a part of providing for one's livelihood through gaining employment, attaining higher forms of education, having an urban experience, and gaining access to new information networks. This section explores how shifting socio-economic and political environments, socio-cultural norms, and individual aspirations shape urban migration processes. Examining mobility bound up in urbanisation readily shows up connections between the different analytical dimensions as the shifting structural conditions affect people's aspirations and societal norms. The aggregate result of rural-urban migration and urban growth has long proved something of a challenge across Africa. For decades, academics and policy makers struggled to explain why people move to African cities – and often how to prevent them (Bakewell 2008; Bakewell and Jónsson 2011).

The initial causes of urban migration can most easily be associated with macro-structural social, political and economic factors that created pressure for migration. In the wider Great Lakes region before colonial rule, systems of settlement were small and largely rural and clan-based, even within larger kingdoms such as the Bachwezi (or Kitara), Lunda, Luba, and Congo Kingdoms. 'Urban' growth did not appear to emerge until the establishment of industrial agricultural production, mineral extraction, and centres of colonial administrative power in attempts to push people out of subsistence production into the cash economy, generating surpluses for the market (UN-HABITAT 2012). For instance, under Belgian and British administration, Congolese and Kenyans, respectively, were forced to leave their villages and work in the colony's mines, plantations, infrastructural projects, and military service (Peacock 1985; Boahen 1990; Young 1994; Likaka 1997; Vlassenroot and Huggins 2005). The demand for labour was particularly high during and between World War One and Two (Young 1994).

As well as being forced, movement was highly constrained under colonial rule. The vast area of the Congo had very limited and poor infrastructure, which was concentrated on the development of the extractive industries (Ntoko 2011). Uganda's history of British colonial infrastructural development differed as there existed few prospects for resource extraction at the time, and as much of the country's urban growth was initiated by the large-scale Ugandan Railway project, connecting parts of the country to Kampala and connecting Uganda to Kenya (Mukwaya 2004; UN-HABITAT

[4] But it can also be affected by the expansion of the geographical spaces defined as urban by re-drawing city boundaries.

2012). In both the Congolese and Uganda territories, people were not permitted to access and settle in the centres of colonial administration, in Leopoldville (Kinshasa), Kampala, and other cities (Mukwaya 2004). This began to change with industrial expansion and the development of urban facilities and welfare services, prompting the rapid and self-sustaining growth of cities (Perrings 1979; Higginson 1989; Rubbers 2009 citing Fetter 1976). This was soon followed by the development of cities as socio-cultural centres (Rubbers 2009).

After independence, new governments in the Great Lakes region often followed a pattern of centralising social, economic, and political power in capital cities largely to the exclusion of developing secondary cities elsewhere (Mukwaya 2004; Gordon 2005; Jewsiewicki 2008). These were national capitals in all the countries of the region, with the exception of the huge expanse of DRC where some major regional capitals such as Lubumbashi were established. Since 1993 Uganda has shifted to follow a highly decentralised model of national development. In the DRC, centralisation has followed a more extreme path, leading transportation networks to fall into disrepair and the wider country to turn into a 'backwater' of the capital, with very little communication between the core and peripheries (Clark 1998; Reyntjens 2005). This served and continues to serve to considerably constrain movement within and from the country (Mokoli 1989; Clark 1998; Ntoko 2011). Smith (2011) states that the infrastructural development that has more recently taken place, is carried out by foreign companies and functions to extract and export raw materials and exclude the population from accessing such materials, rather than to improve connectivity between cities and between urban and rural areas (see also de Boeck 1994).

Moreover, since independence countries in the Great Lakes region have experienced hyperinflation, economic bankruptcy, and shocks from global commodity prices (Clark 1998; Rubbers 2009). These economic factors have constrained the capabilities of some to migrate to urban areas, and prompted others with sufficient resources to leave behind depressed rural communities in favour of cities. In the last 20 years, rebel groups and state armies across the DR Congo, Rwanda, and Uganda have also constrained and driven movement. For instance, armed groups have limited mobility by erecting road blocks and imposing taxes on traders and labourers moving within and across national boundaries (Clark 1998; Reyntjens 2005; Smith 2011).

At the same time, political instability and conflict have prompted migration to cities in the region, for they have been perceived as safe havens and places where migrants and forced migrants can make a living (Fábos and Kibreab 2007; Mallet 2010; Refstie, Dolan et al. 2010). In this respect, the conflicts and crises may be reinforcing the attraction of urban areas that has been observed elsewhere in Africa. The city offers access to opportunities not available in 'less networked settings', and migrants in African cities may therefore 'feel a stronger sense of inclusion in the globalised networks they can access, than in more localised networks and cultures' (Bakewell and Jónsson 2011: 21 citing Landau 2010). Ngoie Tshibambe (2011) shows how Congolese migrants are constantly moving back and forth between cities and other locations, both internally and internationally, as part of their business activities and livelihood strategies.

This process of urbanisation has a long history and time spent in the city has become embedded in the norms of many societies. This has been particularly well documented in the Copperbelt in Zambia and the Katanga region of DRC, with many debates about the relationships between rural-urban migration and the impact on 'traditional' life and the development of a distinctively urban society (Ferguson 1999; Gewald 2007). While the early growth of urban centres may be explained by colonial policies, this proves inadequate to account for the subsequent growth

and dynamism of urban areas since independence. Time spent in urban areas, whether for education (as discussed above), employment or simply experiencing city life is seen as a routine part of many people's expected life-course. Writing of Burkina Faso, Thorsen (2007: 6) argues that youth migration to urban centres is not solely a result of economic crisis or dysfunctional family structures; it is also the result of youth aspirations to gain employment to support their parents and guardians and to have 'urban experiences'. Moreover, youth desire to assume a higher social status based on their time spent in more cosmopolitan centres and based on their return with improved livelihood prospects. Similar aspirations are likely to be formed in the Great Lakes – perhaps exacerbated by conflict that introduces the added attraction of the city as a place of security. Hence, we must expect that urban migration may also be a part of wider socio-cultural norms and individuals' aspirations.

5.3 Family formation

Finally we consider movement for family formation or dissolution. For the purposes of this study, family formation refers to a socially-recognised marriage or union. In many if not most societies, some degree of mobility is a prerequisite to become a suitable spouse, or as part of the process of establishing or dissolving family units. Additionally, mobility may be an essential part of the family structure, as is the case in transnational marriages where spouses live in separate countries or in marriages in which at least one spouse engages in periodic migrations as part of an income generation strategy. It is far beyond the scope of this paper systematically to review the huge range of literature on marriage practices and the migration associated with it. Here we draw primarily on material from the Great Lakes Region to focus show that while migration associated with marriage clearly reflects cultural values (in particular gender norms), it is also shaped by people's changing aspirations and structural conditions.

There are very deeply embedded norms in most societies that dictate the movement of individuals on marriage. The literature on uxorilocality (or matrilocality), virilocality (or patrilocality), and neolocality (where married couples establish homes in new locations, separate from both sides of the family) reveals family formation and dissolution as being phases linked to movement norms (see Eloundou-Enyegue and Calvès 2006; Ember and Ember 1971; Carstens 1983). As mentioned previously, in Africa, three-quarters of the groups that follow traditions around family settlement, establish their households in the location of the husband's family, leading to the movement of the new bride (Eloundou-Enyegue and Calvès 2006).

Ember and Ember (1971) argue that societies that follow uxorilocal marriage settlement are less likely to engage in internal warfare because it would likely lead to men born from the same family fighting in opposing groups in conflict. This suggests a functional view of uxorilocal marriage settlement as a rather conservative social practice serving to avoid conflict and sustain social cohesion. More recent studies on 'mixed' unions between members of different ethnic, cultural, racial or national backgrounds offer a more strategic view. They suggest that such marriages may affect conflict or promote peace, act as a strategy to gain land, or act as a vehicle for settlement in new territories (Palmary 2005; Bender Shetler 2010; Hartley 2010). For instance, Lubkemann (2000) finds that men in Mozambique adopted transnational, polygamous marriage practices with women in South Africa, in place of nationally-based, polygamous marriages, in response to widespread conflict and depressed economic conditions in Mozambique. Here one can clearly see the intersection between norms and practices.

In terms of marriage as a strategy for enabling settlement in new territories and countries, Bender Shetler (2010) maintains that Luo migrants from Tanzania called upon female kin who had

engaged in virilocal marriage settlement in Kenya and Uganda to assist them in gaining access to settlement in these countries. Hovil and Kweka (2008) contend that family formation between migrants and members of a local population is also an important factor in allowing Burundian refugees to remain in Tanzania. At the same time, these authors point out that such marriages can prevent people from returning home, as much as they can enable people to stay (see also Lubkemann 2000; Timmerman, Lodewyckx et al. 2009).

Additionally, the literature reveals that migration related to family formation may function as an economic livelihood strategy. As industrial economies grew in eastern Africa and cash became the legal currency, husbands had to increasingly migrate to find paid employment to pay taxes and provide for their families (Francis 2002; Archambault 2010). Husbands had an advantage over their wives in labour migration because they often had higher levels of education and skills that were more in demand in the urban labour markets (Archambault 2010). To some extent, this continues today. In Kenya husbands often continue to engage in 'migrancy' or frequent migrations, as the dominants providers of the family, while their wives largely remain in rural homesteads, sometimes meeting their husbands for short periods and less often moving with their husbands (Francis 2002; Archambault 2010).

There is a long-running debate on the norms surrounding the mobility of married women in Africa, with some scholars arguing that women negotiate their movements with their spouses and are far from being 'left behind' in rural areas as men find work in cities; while others maintain that women have effectively no say in their movements and that female mobility away from the husband's land is discouraged by some communities as a sign of disloyalty (Francis 2002; Archambault 2010).

In terms of family formation related mobility as an aspiration, Robinson (2007) argues that little research acknowledges the aspirations of women in entering into marriages and their roles in marriage negotiations because of the tendency to conceptualise wives as goods traded between families or communities. She further holds that the rise in studies about female sex trade and 'mail-order' wives contributes to this dominant conceptualisation, though it is less salient in the African Great Lakes. Women who engage in international migration for marriage, more so than local migrations, may be pursuing aspirations for greater independence, status, or for international experiences, and may be getting married to husbands who stand outside or against socio-cultural norms (Pedraza 1991; Robinson 2007). The same may be true for men, who seek to marry to move away from their homes, to gain independence from their families and become the heads of their own households. Migration may also play an important part in the latter stages of married life. In Tanzania, Archambault (2010) holds that ageing spouses migrate to achieve their aspirations of retiring to rural homesteads and enjoying an improved standard of living with their earned savings.

It is clear that marriage practices and the associated mobility are strongly influenced by the changing socio-economic conditions. In the context of chronic conflict and insecurity, these affects are likely to be amplified as the struggle gain a livelihood is overlaid with the additional imperative to achieve security for oneself and one's family. This is likely to be put many of the norms around marriage under increasing pressure. One of the most extreme examples can be seen in the practice of bride wealth, where the prospective husband has to present a significant sum to the family of the bride. In many societies in the Great Lakes this would involve the husband securing cattle or other livestock. Insecurity and very poor economic conditions make this hurdle before marriage become ever higher: the bride's family's need for the bride-wealth increases while the groom's opportunities to raise it decrease. Here migration can play an important role in both maintaining and transforming

this traditional practice as men move to urban centres or onto large farms to earn money in for bride wealth and to gain an enhanced status associated with migration to become more attractive spouses (Ali 2007; Francis 2002).

The conditions of conflict and war may however result in such norms being violently contravened through the practice of forced marriage. A marriage may be considered ‘forced’ if a spouse’s entry into the marriage occurs without consent or if exit from the marriage is prevented contrary to a spouse’s will (Chantler, Gangoli et al. 2009). In areas of conflict in the African Great Lakes, armed groups have been known to abduct women to act as wives to male fighters. The Lord’s Resistance Army is one armed group well-known for engaging in this practice, to improve the morale of its soldiers, reduce the incidence of HIV infection amongst soldiers, and to repopulate the movement. Forced unions are often temporary and involve the wives travelling with the armed group’s changing base camps (Annan, Blattman et al. 2009).

Here we have only considered the relationship between marriage and migration. In this paper, it has not been possible to extend this analysis to different stages of family life, in particular bereavement and divorce. This will often result in further movement, especially for the woman who may have to return to her ‘home’ place with her parents or male siblings if the couple divorce. The same may also be true if the husband dies depending on the inheritance practices. Any children may follow the mother or remain with the father’s family. Like marriage, such practices are set in deeply embedded norms, but we must expect that these also show considerable variation in the face of individual’s aspirations and the changing structural conditions.

6 Conclusion

This brief and limited review of the relationship between migration and these broad social processes of education, urbanisation and family formation suggests that they may continue to play a major role in shaping mobility within the Great Lakes region even during conflict and crises. Using the analytical framework proposed in this paper, we have tentatively explored this mobility on three dimensions: aspirations, norms, and practice. This has brought to the fore a wider range of range of factors that play a role in mobility beyond the dominant conflict framework. It is important to note that this analysis does not distinguish mobility conceptualised as aspirational, normative, and practical from forced migration, so much as to identify these dimensions within migration processes, whether described as forced or voluntary.

As we have shown, there is a dearth of migration research in the Great Lakes region that explores these everyday processes of migration and the majority discusses mobility primarily in terms of forced migration. This paper however, has argued that framing mobility in the African Great Lakes region as aberrant behaviour and as a response to conflict and crisis not only overlooks the existence of migration determinants and patterns linked to personal aspirations, cultural norms, and practices, but also overlooks how such migration processes may be affected by or may affect direct and indirect drivers of migration generated by conflict and crisis. It has maintained, in order to conceptualise migration dynamics in a region where conflict and crisis are protracted conditions and to design interventions to respond to such conditions, a broader framework is required that takes account of underlying social processes – in addition to conflict – that drive mobility.

This paper has outlined such a framework attempted to use it drawing on existing literature. The more substantive test for such an approach however, is when it is applied to new empirical

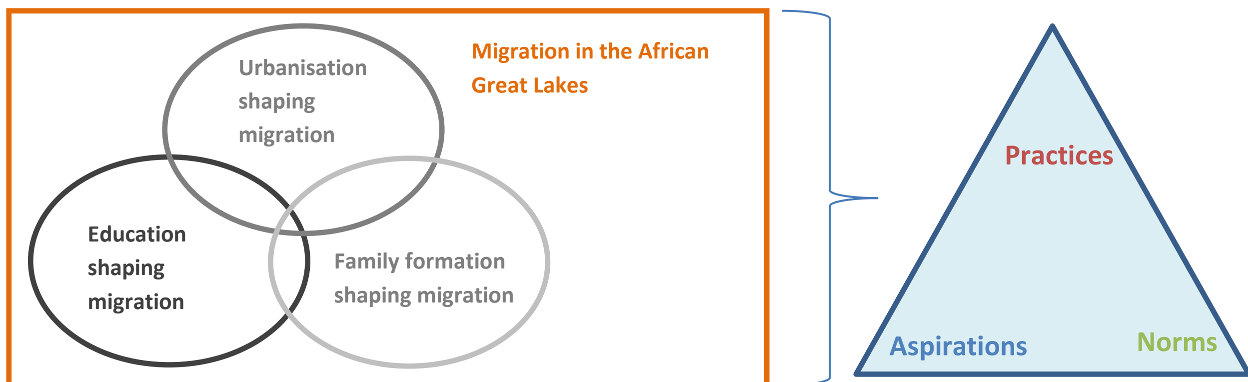
research. This will be undertaken within the African Great Lakes Mobility project. This raises the important question of how adopting an alternative framework will be reflected in fieldwork.

The discussion above makes two things clear. First, it is essential to enquire about more than the immediate causes of people's movement. To understand people's aspirations and the social norms about migration demands exploration of their attitudes, expectations, and other options they may have considered. Second, if we look at the themes of education, urbanisation and family formation, migration can be clearly related to particular stages of people's life cycle. Changing one's place of residence is not only a life-changing event but is often a seemingly inevitable part of growing up, growing old, or establishing a meaningful life in many societies.

Hence, we conclude that adopting a life-course approach may be a useful way to operationalise this framework. A life-course approach perceives migration as a process that is embedded within 'key, transitional events' during one's life (Ní Laoire 2000; Brettell and Hollifield 2008; Beguy, Bocquier et al. 2010; Kley 2010; Castagnone 2011). In this way, different age cohorts experience different migration desires and life-course events (McHugh 1984). Key and transitional events include, but are not limited to, the transition to adulthood, education, marriage or divorce, child birth, employment or retirement (Brockerhoff and Eu 1993; Lututala, Iman Ngondo a et al. 1996; Myers 1999; Kulu and Milewski 2007; Beguy, Bocquier et al. 2010).

The life-course approach is particularly suited to operationalise the proposed framework for mobility in the context of conflict and crisis because 'crises, by definition, involve conditions in which people…must improvise with the elements of their social and political technologies and cope with a variety of unexpected disruptions and opportunities' (Greenhouse *et al.* 2002: 9). Moreover, the approach acknowledges how aspirations, norms, and practices can change over time, moving away from viewing migration as a 'one-way journey'; and it recognises that different economic, political, and socio-cultural contexts experience different life courses and transitional events (Halfacree and Boyle 1993; Lubkemann 2000; McHugh 2000; Ali 2007; Kley 2010). For instance, Hampshire and Randall (1999) claim argue that particular stages in the domestic lifestyle in northern Burkina Faso, most notably newly formed nuclear households, were more vulnerable to poverty than others and less able to carry out optimal migration strategies, because they did not benefit from the labour provided by children and did not possess much livestock.

Figure 2



Taking forward this paper with empirical research drawing on this life-course approach will help to refine the analytical framework and to understand better how the dimensions of aspirations, norms and practices relate to one another.

This paper has provided a very preliminary exploration into migration related to three social processes: migration for education attainment, urbanisation, and family formation. This paper has maintained that all three dimensions provide different views of a given migration process and contribute to producing a more complete picture of movement, despite common associations between education and aspirations, family formation and norms, and urbanisation and practices. Moreover, the types of mobility processes themselves are not strictly distinct and may overlap. Thus, when conceptualising mobility in the wider African Great Lakes, rather than leave mobility unexamined and attribute all regional movements to vague and often misleading ‘conflict’ or ‘crisis’ migration drivers, studies should consider how aspirations, norms, and practices function within mobility patterns and how aspirations, norms, and practices are impacted by conflict and crisis. This will allow not only for a better understanding of mobility in regions like the African Great Lakes from the perspective of scholarship, but also for improved development interventions in the region and more realistic notions for policymakers of what patterns of mobility in the region may emerge if conflict and crisis were to subside.

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