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**Migrant Families between Africa and Europe:
Comparing Ghanaian, Congolese and Senegalese
Migration Flows**

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1. Family life between Africa and Europe

West African families are often described as complex and households as fluid. This is partly related to the long history of internal and international migration in this part of the world. Migration of household members is often used as a coping strategy for the survival of the family and children may be relocated to other households in the extended family to enable migration (De Bruijn et al, 2001; Tiemoko, 2003). Over the last decades however, migration patterns have changed from internal migration or migration within Africa to larger shares of migrants moving to Europe and North America. This type of international migration has consequences for the organization of family life yet these consequences are not yet well understood. Decisions on how to organize family life across borders are influenced not only by the family systems practiced in the country of origin, for example norms around child fostering or the occurrence of polygamous marriages, but also depend on the migrant receiving context, most notably visa/citizenship and family reunification policies.

For policy makers in Europe, family reunification has become a major concern and increasingly constraining policies in this domain have been implemented. The underlying presumption is that migrants come to stay and family reunification is their ultimate goal. However, the academic literature on transnationalism (Basch, Glick-Schiller & Szanton 1994, Faist 2000, Wimmer & Glick-Schiller 2002) has highlighted the fact that nowadays, through modern communication technologies and the ease of travelling long distances by plane, migrants often maintain a variety of ties with countries of origin through regular visits and transactions such as remittances and might not have reunification as their preferred outcome. For example, some anthropological studies on West African migration systems argue that migrants are reluctant to reunify in Europe and prefer to organize their family life transnationally (Barou, 2001; Bledsoe & Sow, 2011; Riccio 2006).

Locoh (1989) identified some key characteristics of the African family, including the tendency for extended family structures, high separation of gender responsibilities, stronger lineage than conjugal solidarity, integration of reproductive and productive functions, and dominance by elders. Nevertheless, the organization of family life and patterns of migration differ between countries in West Africa. For example, whereas a feminization of migration to Europe can be witnessed from Congo and Ghana, this is less so for Senegal where a stricter gender hierarchy is in place and polygamous marriage is more common than in Ghana and Congo (for details, refer to Beauchemin, Caarls *et al.*, 2013 ; Caarls, Schans *et al.*, 2013 ; Beauchemin, Caarls and Mazzucato, 2013). Similarly, family reunification and formation policies differ among European receiving countries. For example, Dutch family reunification policies have become increasingly stringent and are now among the most demanding in the European Union. Since 2006, family members in origin countries are required to take a computerized test on language proficiency and knowledge of Dutch society at the Dutch embassy as a visa-requirement for family migration (Integration Abroad Act). Combined with other recent requirements such as the age limit of 21 years for spouses, and a high-income requirement (120 % of the minimum wage) for the migrant, family reunification and formation has become increasingly difficult. Moreover, all migrants do not equally enjoy rights to family union. On the contrary, they are highly

dependent on factors such as class, ethnicity, nationality and gender (Kraler, 2010). Undocumented migrants have no legal means of family reunification.

Finally, migration histories and migration patterns differ between receiving and origin countries, in turn also affecting family arrangements. For example, migration from Congo to Belgium and from Senegal to France has a longer history, related to colonial ties, resulting in more established migrant populations in these countries. Yet while migratory flows tended to follow old colonial ties between countries, since the 1980s they have been diversifying to include new destinations so that Senegalese migrants can now be found in large numbers in Italy and Spain, Congolese in the UK, and Ghanaians in the Netherlands (Grillo & Mazzucato, 2008; Schoumaker, Flahaux et al., 2013).

This report presents some of the first salient findings with regards to migrant families – how they function, stay in touch with home, where family members are located – from the three migratory flows of the MAFÉ research project to provide a comparative picture between these flows.¹ The dataset is unique in that it collects information from both the migrant sending as well as the migrant receiving country, providing thus a multi-sited account of migrant family life. The paper is structured as follows: in a first section we describe the ties that those at home maintain with migrants overseas from the perspective of households in Congo, Ghana and Senegal. Various questions are addressed such as; what percentages of households is connected to migrants and where are these migrants located, what is the position of migrants in the household and did the household contribute to the migration and in what ways does the migrant contribute to the household, both in terms of remittances and contact. In a second section, we turn to the perspective of migrants in Europe and compare the family arrangements of migrants between countries of origin and destination and show the different family compositions that prevail. The focus in this part of the report is particularly on transnational families, where nuclear family members are divided across borders and/or in the process of family reunification. Finally, we draw the main conclusions.

2. Data and Methods

This report aims to provide a comprehensive picture of the organization of family life between West Africa and Europe. It uses multi-sited data collected for the MAFÉ project (Beauchemin C., 2012) which enables us to adopt a double viewpoint in this study: the African sending country perspective using data from household and the biographical surveys conducted in urban areas in Senegal, Ghana and Congo, and the European receiving country perspective, using biographical data collected in urban areas of Belgium, France, Italy, Spain, UK and the Netherlands. By comparing migration flows between different countries of origin and destination, the paper

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describes differences in the organization of family life across borders not only by comparing different African flows but also different migration receiving contexts.

3. Results

3.1. Households in Africa with migrant members

Migration within Africa has been a long-standing phenomenon reflecting historical trading ties, mobility due to conflict and long-standing relationships between regions, which were artificially divided by borders during the colonial division of territories (Davidson, 1966). More recently, however, migration to the Global North has become increasingly important, especially since the late 20th century. Increasing migration flows from Africa to Europe and more generally to the Global North has led to many ties between people living in Africa and migrants in the Global North. Such ties are often referred to as transnational relationships/ties/networks or communities. Here we will discuss transnational family ties as they relate to nuclear as well as extended family and to non-kin members of a household. The MAFÉ surveys show that a large share of households in the surveyed African cities has contacts with migrants abroad where 43.5% of the Ghanaian households, 63.2% of the Congolese households, and 46.3% of the Senegalese households have contact with migrants abroad. In Table 1, these numbers are broken down by the relationship of these migrants with the household head. For all three countries, most transnational ties are with extended family members, while a minority are nuclear family members.

Table 1. Households with nuclear and extended family members abroad

	Households with contact abroad						Total	
	Nuclear family contacts		Extended family contacts		No contacts			
Country:	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Ghana	185	11.3%	465	32.2%	596	56.5%	1,246	100.0%
Congo	235	12.6%	792	50.7%	549	36.8%	1,576	100.0%
Senegal	245	17.2%	371	30.1%	525	52.7%	1,141	100.0%

Notes: weighted percentages & unweighted numbers; *Source:* MAFÉ data; *Population:* Ghanaian households (n=1,246), Congolese households (n=1,576), and Senegalese households (n=1,141); *Time of survey:* 2008

Interpretation: The Ghanaian sample consists of 1,246 households. Of the interviewed household heads in Ghana, 185 have nuclear family members abroad, which is 11.3%.

In Table 2, we see that these migrants are mostly located in the Global North, and this is especially the case for Ghanaian and Senegalese households, where 85.3% and 78.2%, respectively, of these migratory contacts reside in the Global North. Congolese households also have a large share (47.6%) of migratory contacts living in other African countries.

Table 2. Regions of residence of household's migrant members

	Where do contacts abroad reside?						Total	
	Africa		Global North		Other			
Country:	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Ghana	144	9.31%	1,061	85.31%	67	5.38%	1,272	100.00%
Congo	1,286	47.56%	1,224	51.44%	26	1.01%	2,536	100.00%
Senegal	193	17.01%	977	78.17%	57	4.83%	1,227	100.00%

Notes: weighted percentages & unweighted numbers; *Source:* MAFÉ data; *Population:* Ghanaian migratory contacts (n=1,267), Congolese migratory contacts (n=2,533), and Senegalese migratory contacts (n=1,221); *Time of survey:* 2008

Interpretation: The Ghanaian sample consists of 1,267 migrant household members. Of the migrant household members in Ghana, 144 currently reside in Africa, which is 9.4%.

Below, we examine more closely the type of relationship of the migrant with the household in Africa. We do this by looking at the share of households with a spouse abroad, with a child abroad and with other members of the household abroad for each country. Additionally, for each relationship type, we will show where they reside abroad. Information on the share of households that are married and with children can be found in Table 3A in Appendix 1. In Table 3, we see that of the household heads interviewed in Ghana, almost 10% was married to a spouse who migrated abroad. These percentages were lower in Senegal (6%) and Congo (4%).

Table 3. Households with family members abroad

	Spouse		Households with contact abroad*			
	<i>f</i>	%	Children**		Extended family members	
Country:	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Ghana	151	9.7%	144	11.5%	465	32.2%
Congo	64	3.9%	363	24.0%	792	50.7%
Senegal	76	6.1%	269	20.7%	371	30.1%

* Percentages and frequencies of members abroad shown; ** only biological children of the household head included

Notes: weighted percentages & unweighted numbers

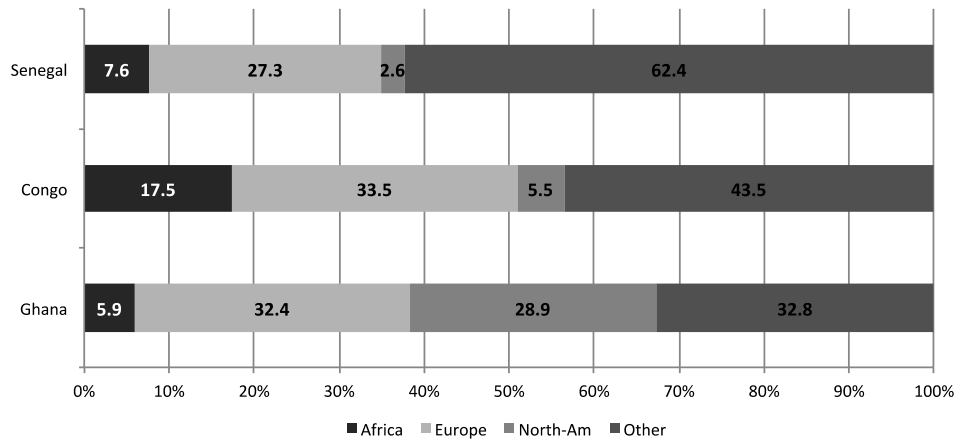
Source: MAFÉ data; Population: Ghanaian household heads that are married / with children / with extended family (n=868/997/1,246), Congolese household heads that are married / with children / with extended family (n=1,186/1479/1,576), and Senegalese household heads that are married / with children / with extended family (n=847/1,032/1,141); Time of survey: 2008

Interpretation: The Ghanaian sample consists of 868 household heads, of which 9.7% have a spouse abroad.

Yet we see a different picture when looking at children of household heads living abroad. Ghanaian household heads are least likely to have a child living abroad (11 % compared to 24 % in Congo and 21 % in Senegal). Congolese household heads are the most likely have an extended family member living abroad, which is 50.7%, compared to 32.2% of Ghanaian household heads and 30.1% of Senegal household heads.

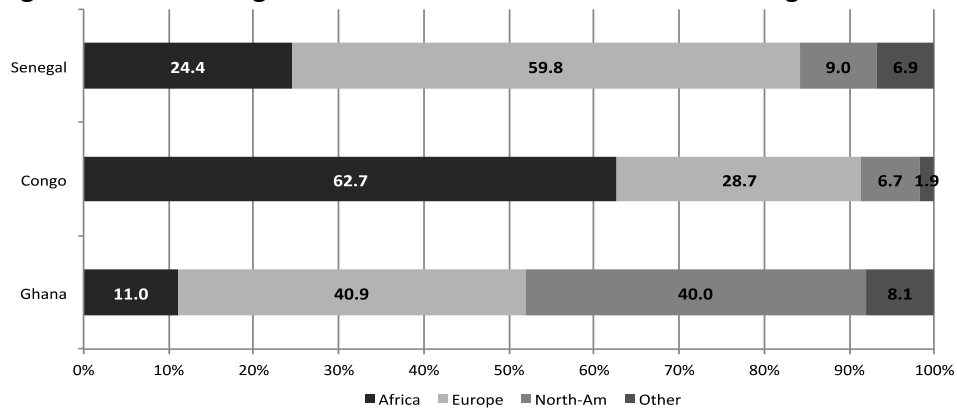
In terms of country of destination, it is notable that Ghanaian households have a large percentage of nuclear family members (spouses and children) living in North America while this is less common for Senegalese and Congolese households, which have Europe and Africa as major destinations (Figures 1 and 2). Extended family members – mostly siblings and other relatives and in some cases non-kin members of the household – follow similar patterns in which Ghanaian households tend to have contact with migrants located mostly in Europe (49%) and North America (38%); Congolese have a large percentage in Africa (42%) and in Europe (48%) and Senegalese mainly in Europe (74%) (see Figure 3).

Figure 4. Current region of residence of household heads' migrant spouses



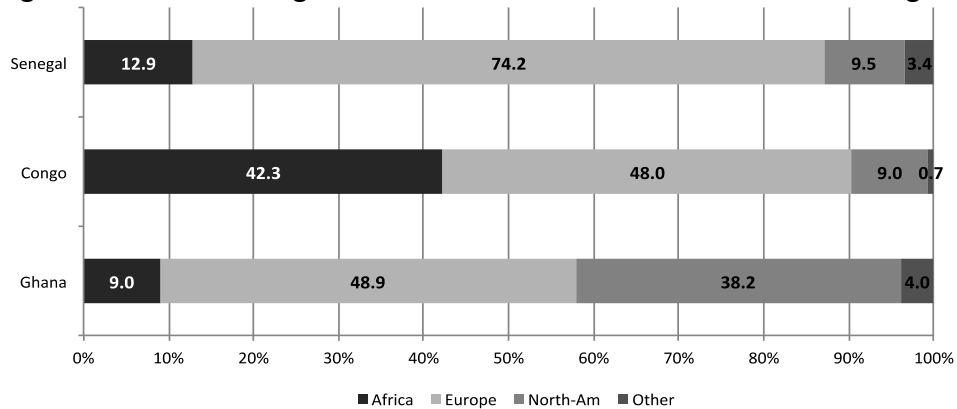
Notes: weighted percentages & unweighted numbers; Source: MAFÉ-data; Population: Ghanaian migrant spouses (n=146), Congolese migrant spouses (n=61), Senegalese migrant spouses (n=71); Time of survey: 2008. Interpretation: The Ghanaian sample consists of 146 migrant spouses, and of these, 5.9% currently reside in another African country.

Figure 5. Current region of residence of household heads' migrant children



Notes: weighted percentages & unweighted numbers; Source: MAFÉ-data; Population: Ghanaian migrant children (n=273), Congolese migrant children (n=697), Senegalese migrant children (n=464); Time of survey: 2008. Interpretation: The Ghanaian sample consists of 273 migrant children, and of these, 11.0% currently reside in another African country.

Figure 6. Current region of residence of household heads' migrant



Notes: weighted percentages & unweighted numbers; Source: MAFÉ-data; Population: Ghanaian migrant extended family members (n=848), Congolese migrant extended family members (n=1771), Senegalese migrant extended family members (n=690); Time of survey: 2008. Interpretation: The Ghanaian sample consists of 848 migrant extended family members, and of these, 9.0% currently reside in another African country.

3.1.1. Family functioning across borders: support, remittances and visits

Above we have explored the relationships that households have with people abroad. Here we look more into the type of contacts households have with migrants. Such contacts can be of a very different nature, ranging from receiving remittances, visits and phone calls. Furthermore, current migration theories, most notably the New Economics of Labour Migration, stipulate that migrants remit to pay back the initial investment the household made to send the migrant overseas. We therefore also look into whether households supported the migration of members, whether the migrant sends remittances and if there is a relation between these two activities. Furthermore we describe the amount of contact and the occurrence of visits of migrants. Again, we compare these results between Ghana, Congo and Senegal.

Migration is often described as a household strategy, where households invest in the migration of a household member. Our data (Tables 4, 5, 6) show that this situation is the case for only a quarter, or less of total migrants (19 percent in Ghana against 26 percent in Congo and 27 percent in Senegal). There are large differences though in the type of family relation households supported. In all countries household heads are most likely to support the migration of their children. Yet Senegalese and Congolese household heads are less likely to support the migration of their spouse, favoring instead to support siblings and other kin. This might be an indication of the “weakness of the conjugal bond” in these countries (Findley, 1997, p.123) or prevailing gender norms that prefer to keep women under the supervision of the husband’s family.

Table 4. Migrants receiving support from the household in Ghana, by relation to the household head

Relationship to the head:	Received support from the household:							
	No		Yes		Missing		Total	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Spouse	99	65.6%	37	29.3%	10	5.1%	146	100.0%
Children	103	49.9%	133	43.9%	37	6.2%	273	100.0%
Siblings	362	86.9%	58	10.1%	12	2.9%	432	100.0%
Other kin	331	87.9%	40	10.6%	20	1.5%	391	100.0%
Non-kin	23	92.1%	1	6.0%	1	1.9%	25	100.0%
Missing	4	61.8%	1	38.2%	0	0.0%	5	100.0%
Total	922	78.2%	270	18.6%	80	3.3%	1,272	100.0%

Notes: weighted percentages & unweighted numbers

Source: MAfE data; Population: Ghanaian migrant household members (n=1,272); Time of survey: 2008

Interpretation: Of all 146 spouses abroad of household heads, 37 (29.3%) have received support for their migration.

Table 5. Migrants receiving support from the household in Congo, by relation to the household head

Relationship to the head:	Received support from the household:							
	No		Yes		Missing		Total	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Spouse	49	83.4%	11	15.8%	1	0.8%	61	100.0%
Children	384	46.6%	279	40.8%	34	12.6%	697	100.0%
Siblings	490	74.5%	152	20.9%	20	4.6%	662	100.0%
Other kin	853	77.1%	196	21.3%	37	1.7%	1,086	100.0%
Non-kin	23	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	23	100.0%
Missing	7	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	7	100.0%
Total	1,806	68.7%	638	26.0%	92	5.4%	2,536	100.0%

Notes: weighted percentages & unweighted numbers

Source: MAfE data; Population: Congolese migrant household members (n=2,536); Time of survey: 2008

Interpretation: Of all 61 spouses abroad of household heads, 11 (15.8%) have received support for their migration.

Table 6. Migrants receiving support from the household in Senegal, by relation to the household head

Relationship to the head:	Received support from the household:							
	No		Yes		Missing		Total	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Spouse	52	71.7%	11	14.9%	8	13.4%	71	100.0%
Children	195	44.4%	226	44.2%	43	11.4%	464	100.0%
Siblings	167	65.3%	80	28.1%	15	6.6%	262	100.0%
Other kin	309	78.6%	55	12.3%	46	9.1%	410	100.0%
Non-kin	16	87.7%	0	0.0%	2	12.3%	18	100.0%
Missing	1	25.4%	1	74.6%	0	0.0%	2	100.0%
Total	740	63.9%	373	26.6%	114	9.5%	1,227	100.0%

Notes: weighted percentages & unweighted numbers

Source: MAfE data; Population: Senegalese migrant household members (n=1,227); Time of survey: 2008

Interpretation: Of all 71 spouses abroad of household heads, 11 (14.9%) have received support for their migration.

In Tables 7, 8, and 9, we look at the percentages of migrants who send remittances, according to household heads. Around half of the households indicate they receive remittances. These remittances do not only come from spouses and children (nuclear family) but also substantially from siblings and other kin. Here as well some differences between countries are noticeable. Whereas in Ghana and Senegal a majority of spouses remit (80% and 73%, respectively), in Congo this is only a little over 50 percent.

Table 7. Remittance behavior from Ghanaian migrants to the household, by relation to the household head

Relationship to the household head:	Remittances							
	No		Yes		Missing		Total	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Spouse	31	18.8%	113	80.3%	2	0.8%	146	100.0%
Children	111	32.5%	160	67.3%	2	0.2%	273	100.0%
Siblings	218	51.4%	213	48.6%	1	0.0%	432	100.0%
Other kin	217	47.8%	166	52.0%	8	0.3%	391	100.0%
Non-kin	20	72.4%	5	27.6%	0	0.0%	25	100.0%
Missing	3	48.2%	2	51.9%	0	0.0%	5	100.0%
Total	600	44.1%	659	55.7%	13	0.2%	1,272	100.0%

Notes: weighted percentages & unweighted numbers

Source: MAfE data; Population: Senegalese migrant household members (n=1,227); Time of survey: 2008

Interpretation: Of all 146 spouses abroad of household heads, 113 (80.3%) sent remittances.

Table 8. Remittance behavior from Congolese migrants to the household, by relation to the household head

Relationship to the household head:	Remittances							
	No		Yes		Missing		Total	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Spouse	22	44.3%	38	54.8%	1	0.8%	61	100.0%
Children	331	53.8%	365	46.1%	1	0.1%	697	100.0%
Siblings	322	49.4%	339	50.2%	1	0.4%	662	100.0%
Other kin	550	50.3%	520	48.8%	16	0.9%	1,086	100.0%
Non-kin	14	83.0%	9	17.0%	0	0.0%	23	100.0%
Missing	2	25.7%	5	74.3%	0	0.0%	7	100.0%
Total	1,241	51.0%	1,276	48.5%	19	0.5%	2,536	100.0%

Notes: weighted percentages & unweighted numbers

Source: MAfE data; Population: Congolese migrant household members (n=2,536); Time of survey: 2008

Interpretation: Of all 61 spouses of the household head abroad, 38 (54.8%) sent remittances.

Table 9. Remittance behavior from Senegalese migrants to the household, by relation to the household head

Relationship to the household head:	Remittances						Total	
	No		Yes		Missing		f	%
	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Spouse	12	19.3%	56	73.2%	3	7.5%	71	100.0%
Children	173	35.1%	262	56.3%	29	8.6%	464	100.0%
Siblings	121	50.5%	135	47.8%	6	1.7%	262	100.0%
Other kin	214	57.8%	184	39.6%	12	2.7%	410	100.0%
Non-kin	8	45.8%	9	51.6%	1	2.7%	18	100.0%
Missing	0	0.0%	2	100.0%	0	0.0%	2	100.0%
Total	528	46.5%	648	48.9%	51	4.6%	1,227	100.0%

Notes: weighted percentages & unweighted numbers

Source: MAfE data; Population: Senegalese migrant household members (n=1,227); Time of survey: 2008

Interpretation: Of all 71 spouses of the household head abroad, 56 (73.2%) sent remittances.

We also examined correlations (not shown) between support and remittance receipt, which revealed a significant relationship between supporting migration and receiving remittances. That is, those who did receive support are significantly more likely to send remittances than those who do not, giving support to the argument made in the New Economics of Labor Migration, that migrants remit, among other reasons, to pay back their households for the initial investment made.

Finally, we turn to the frequency of visits and contact (such as via phone or internet) between households and migrants in Tables 10, 11, and 12. Whereas only 16 per cent of Ghanaian households received a visit from a migrant in the past 12 months, this percentage increases to 38 per cent for Senegal and even 85 per cent for Congo. These differences are most likely explained by the patterns of migration we described earlier, with Congolese migrants being more likely to reside within Africa compared to the higher intercontinental mobility of Senegalese and Ghanaian migrants. Intercontinental visits are not only more expensive; they are also related to the possession of identity documents that allow return. For undocumented migrants in Europe, visits are not an option.

Table 10. Visits from Ghanaian migrants to the household, by relation to the household head

Relationship to the household head:	Did you visit the household in the past 12 months?						Total	
	No		Yes		Missing		f	%
	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Spouse	111	82.8%	32	16.0%	3	1.2%	146	100.0%
Children	220	86.3%	40	11.1%	13	2.6%	273	100.0%
Siblings	335	77.9%	91	20.5%	6	1.5%	432	100.0%
Other kin	307	84.1%	74	15.2%	10	0.7%	391	100.0%
Non-kin	20	93.6%	4	5.5%	1	0.9%	25	100.0%
Missing	5	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	100.0%
Total	998	82.5%	241	16.2%	33	1.4%	1,272	100.0%

Notes: weighted percentages & unweighted numbers

Source: MAfE data; Population: Ghanaian migrant household members (n=1,272); Time of survey: 2008

Interpretation: Of all 146 spouses of the household head abroad, 32 (16.0%) visited the household in the past 12 months.

Table 11. Visits from Congolese migrants to the household, by relation to the household head

Relationship to the household head:	Did you visit the household in the past 12 months?						Total	
	No		Yes		Missing		f	%
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Spouse	11	22.6%	49	76.6%	1	0.8%	61	100.0%
Children	80	10.4%	613	89.3%	4	0.3%	697	100.0%
Siblings	108	15.9%	552	83.7%	2	0.4%	662	100.0%
Other kin	171	17.4%	903	82.2%	12	0.5%	1,086	100.0%
Non-kin	3	9.9%	20	90.1%	0	0.0%	23	100.0%
Missing	0	0.0%	7	100.0%	0	0.0%	7	100.0%
Total	373	15.0%	2,144	84.6%	19	0.4%	2,536	100.0%

Notes: weighted percentages & unweighted numbers

Source: MAfE data; Population: Congolese migrant household members (n=2,536); Time of survey: 2008

Interpretation: Of all 61 spouses of the household head abroad, 49 (76.6%) visited the household in the past 12 months.

Table 12. Visits from Senegalese migrants to the household, by relation to the household head

Relationship to the household head:	Did you visit the household in the past 12 months?						Total	
	No		Yes		Missing		f	%
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Spouse	28	31.2%	39	58.1%	4	10.7%	71	100.0%
Children	276	58.1%	159	32.6%	29	9.3%	464	100.0%
Siblings	150	58.1%	102	38.9%	10	3.0%	262	100.0%
Other kin	234	57.4%	161	39.8%	15	2.8%	410	100.0%
Non-kin	9	52.3%	8	45.1%	1	2.7%	18	100.0%
Missing	0	0.0%	2	100.0%	0	0.0%	2	100.0%
Total	697	56.4%	471	38.2%	59	5.4%	1,227	100.0%

Notes: weighted percentages & unweighted numbers

Source: MAfE data; Population: Senegalese migrant household members (n=1,227); Time of survey: 2008

Interpretation: Of all 71 spouses of the household head abroad, 39 (58.1%) visited the household in the past 12 months.

In Tables 13, 14, and 15, we examined the frequency of contact between households and their migrant members. The frequency of contact between households and migrants is very high with the majority of spouses having weekly contact and the majority of other relationships reporting weekly or monthly contact. Phone is by far the most popular way to stay in touch reflecting the widespread use of mobile phones in Africa as opposed to Internet use. Interestingly, Congo is the country in which households have the most infrequent contact with migrants. This may reflect the fact that it is more difficult to communicate within Africa due to more limited cellular phone infrastructure and where rates can be higher than calling Europe.

Table 13. Frequency of contact between Ghanaian migrants and the household, by relation to the household head

Relationship to the household head:	How often did you have contact with the household in the past 12 months?								Total	
	Weekly		Monthly		Less than monthly		Missing		f	%
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Spouse	113	80.5%	18	10.4%	5	3.0%	10	6.1%	146	100.0%
Children	143	52.2%	81	32.4%	30	11.0%	19	4.4%	273	100.0%
Siblings	147	27.1%	180	47.5%	90	20.4%	15	5.0%	432	100.0%
Other kin	144	39.7%	114	29.2%	107	27.6%	26	3.5%	391	100.0%
Non-kin	2	3.0%	7	30.6%	12	52.2%	4	14.2%	25	100.0%
Missing	1	5.2%	2	43.0%	2	51.9%	0	0.0%	5	100.0%
Total	550	40.3%	402	34.9%	246	20.2%	74	4.6%	1,272	100.0%

Notes: weighted percentages & unweighted numbers

Source: MAfE data; Population: Ghanaian migrant household members (n=1,272); Time of survey: 2008

Interpretation: Of all 146 spouses abroad of household heads, 113 (80.5%) have been in contact with the household on a weekly basis.

Table 14. Frequency of contact between Congolese migrants and the household, by relation to the household head

Relationship to the household head:	How often did you did you have contact with the household in the past 12 months?									
	Weekly		Monthly		Less than monthly		Missing		Total	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Spouse	34	79.7%	12	11.6%	10	4.7%	5	4.1%	61	100.0%
Children	192	22.8%	298	42.9%	174	28.2%	33	6.1%	697	100.0%
Siblings	126	17.7%	264	39.5%	250	40.3%	22	2.6%	662	100.0%
Other kin	181	14.9%	433	44.1%	412	37.5%	60	3.5%	1,086	100.0%
Non-kin	5	17.9%	5	17.1%	8	57.9%	5	7.1%	23	100.0%
Missing	1	24.3%	3	49.5%	2	24.8%	1	1.4%	7	100.0%
Total	539	19.0%	1,015	41.7%	856	35.3%	126	3.9%	2,536	100.0%

Notes: weighted percentages & unweighted numbers

Source: MAfE data; Population: Congolese migrant household members (n=2,536); Time of survey: 2008

Interpretation: Of all 61 spouses abroad of household heads, 34 (79.7%) have been in contact with the household on a weekly basis.

Table 15. Frequency of contact between Senegalese migrants and the household, by relation to the household head

Relationship to the household head:	How often did you did you have contact with the household in the past 12 months?									
	Weekly		Monthly		Less than monthly		Missing		Total	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Spouse	55	74.6%	7	7.7%	3	10.2%	6	7.6%	71	100.0%
Children	224	48.0%	140	27.4%	51	12.1%	49	12.6%	464	100.0%
Siblings	92	38.6%	83	32.7%	71	24.6%	16	4.1%	262	100.0%
Other kin	131	29.2%	134	35.6%	99	23.6%	46	11.6%	410	100.0%
Non-kin	3	18.4%	9	52.3%	4	22.1%	2	7.3%	18	100.0%
Missing	2	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	100.0%
Total	507	39.7%	373	31.1%	228	19.3%	119	9.9%	1,227	100.0%

Notes: weighted percentages & unweighted numbers

Source: MAfE data; Population: Senegalese migrant household members (n=1,227); Time of survey: 2008

Interpretation: Of all 71 spouses abroad of household heads, 55 (74.6%) have been in contact with the household on a weekly basis.

3.2. Family life: Migrants in Europe

In this section we turn to the perspective of migrants in Europe. Since migrants from Congo, Ghana and Senegal were interviewed in different European countries we first give an overview of the composition of the sample. 410 Ghanaian respondents were interviewed in the Netherlands (263) and the UK (147), 426 Congolese migrants in Belgium (278) and the UK (148) and 603 Senegalese respondents in France (200), Spain (200) and Italy (203). This results in a full sample of 1,439 individual migrants.

There are some notable differences both between the different African samples as well as within the same African flow, between the different receiving countries, as shown in Tables 16, 17, and 18. In Senegal, fewer women than men were interviewed, reflecting the fact that Senegalese migration flows continue to be male dominated. Most Ghanaians (65%) and Congolese (52%) have tertiary education, while only 18% of Senegalese do. Important differences exist between receiving countries for the same African flow. Ghanaian migrants tend to be more highly educated in the UK than in The Netherlands; Senegalese more highly educated in France than in Italy and in Spain and Congolese in Belgium than in the UK. Congolese in Belgium are a bit older than in the UK and Senegalese in France are a bit older than in Spain and Italy. Finally, there is a greater proportion of Senegalese women in France than in Spain and Italy.

Table 16. Overview key demographic characteristics Ghanaian migrants, by survey country

Variables:	Full sample		The Netherlands		The U.K.		Sig.
	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Sex (%men)	410	53%	263	49%	147	54%	-
Age (mean)	410	42.15	263	42.92	147	42.02	-
Education							
Primary (<)	410	27%	263	19%	147	28%	*
Secondary	410	8%	263	46%	147	3%	***
Tertiary	410	65%	263	35%	147	69%	***

Note: unweighted numbers & weighted percentages; Time of survey: 2008; Population: Ghanaian migrants in Europe (n=410).

Interpretation: Of all 410 Ghanaian migrants, 53% are men. In The Netherlands, this is 49% and in the U.K. 54%. These differences are not significant

Significance: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10

Table 17. Overview key demographic characteristics Congolese migrants, by survey country

Variables:	Full sample		Belgium		The U.K.		Sig.
	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Sex (%men)	426	45%	278	44%	148	45%	-
Age (mean)	426	40.47	278	41.37	148	39.32	**
Education							
Primary (<)	426	17%	278	9%	148	27%	***
Secondary	426	31%	278	30%	148	32%	-
Tertiary	426	52%	278	61%	148	41%	***

Note: unweighted numbers & weighted percentages; Time of survey: 2008; Population: Congolese migrants in Europe (n=426).

Interpretation: Of all 426 Congolese migrants, 45% are men. In Belgium, this is 44% and in the U.K. 45%. These differences are not significant.

Significance: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10

Table 18. Overview key demographic characteristics Senegalese migrants, by survey country

Variables:	Full sample		France		Spain		Italy		Sig.
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Sex (%men)	603	71%	200	53%	200	85%	203	78%	***
Age (mean)	603	41.19	200	44.98	200	36.68	203	39.31	***
Education									
Primary (<)	603	54%	200	44%	200	78%	203	50%	***
Secondary	603	27%	200	23%	200	20%	203	37%	***
Tertiary	603	19%	200	33%	200	2%	203	13%	***

Note: unweighted numbers & weighted percentages; Time of survey: 2008; Population: Senegalese migrants in Europe (n=603).

Interpretation: Of all 603 Senegalese migrants, 71% is men. In France, this is 53%, in Spain 85%, and in Italy 78%. These differences are significant.

Significance: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10

3.2.1. Living arrangements of African migrants in Europe

The migration process can lead to families living in different constellations, such as a father who migrates while leaving his wife and children in the country of origin, or a mother who migrates with her husband and children. These different family arrangements, at times spanning different countries, can also change over time. We introduce a typology in Table 19 of the different possible constellations, based on the presence of a spouse and children and on the location of these spouses and children (same country or not as the migrant interviewed). This results in the typology below ranging from no nuclear family to transnational and reunified family.

Table 19. Family arrangements typology

Ego's Spouse*	Ego's Children**			
	No child(ren) <18	Cohabiting child(ren) <i>(always unified)</i>	Cohabiting child(ren) <i>(after period of separation)</i>	Non-Cohabiting child(ren)
No spouse	1. No nuclear family	2. Totally unified family	3. Reunified	4. Transnational family
Cohabiting spouse <i>(always unified)</i>	2. Totally unified family	2. Totally unified family	3. Reunified	4. Transnational family
Cohabiting spouse <i>(after period of separation)</i>	3. Reunified	3. Reunified	3. Reunified	4. Transnational family
Non-cohabiting spouse	4. Transnational family	4. Transnational family	4. Transnational family	4. Transnational family

* Informal unions are not considered, i.e. spouse always refers to marriage, and conversely, no spouse also includes those within an informal union ** Children > 18 (and their whereabouts) are not considered, i.e. no child also includes those with only children > 18; In case of children < 18 who are living at different locations, when at least 1 child <18 is not living with ego, it is considered 'non-cohabiting'.

Box 1. Explanation of the typology of Table 19

Some immigrants in Europe are neither married, nor do they have children (or no children under-18), and as such are considered as having (1) “no nuclear family”. When migrants have a spouse and/or children, and they all live together abroad at the time of the survey, without having lived apart, they are considered a (2) “totally unified family”. Migrants who live together with their spouse and/or children at the time of survey after having lived apart (transnationally) for at least one year are considered a (3) “reunified family”. When migrants have either their spouse or at least one of their children not living with them at the time of survey, or when migrants have none of their family members living with them at the time of survey, they are considered a (4) “transnational family”.

We present the analysis on each flow separately, focusing on the differences between receiving countries. The definition of a transnational family is that at least one of the nuclear family members lives in a country different from the migrant. In Tables 20, 21, and 22 below we present the distribution of the four family types for each migration flow.

Table 20. Family arrangements typology for Ghana

Family arrangement typology:	All countries		The Netherlands		The U.K.	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
No nuclear family	121	26.5%	74	22.5%	47	27.1%
Totally unified family	119	39.7%	62	24.4%	57	42.2%
Reunified family	69	17.3%	46	19.0%	23	16.9%
Partially or totally transnational family	101	16.5%	81	34.1%	20	13.8%
Total	410	100.0%	263	100.0%	147	100.0%

Note: unweighted numbers & weighted percentages; Time of survey: 2008; Population: Ghanaian migrants in Europe (n=410)

Interpretation: In total, we have 410 Ghanaian migrants in our European sample, and of those, 26.5% have no spouse and no children.

Table 21. Family arrangements typology for Congo

Family arrangement typology:	All countries		Belgium		The U.K.	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
No nuclear family	114	26.0%	80	26.7%	34	25.1%
Totally unified family	106	27.3%	59	22.4%	47	33.4%
Reunified family	102	23.9%	56	20.5%	46	28.3%
Partially or totally transnational family	104	22.8%	83	30.4%	21	13.2%
Total	426	100.0%	278	100.0%	148	100.0%

Note: unweighted numbers & weighted percentages; Time of survey: 2008; Population: Congolese migrants in Europe (n=426)

Interpretation: In total, we have 426 Congolese migrants in our European sample, and of those, 26% have no spouse and no children.

Table 22. Family arrangements typology for Senegal

Family arrangement typology:	All countries		France		Spain		Italy	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
No nuclear family	127	24.3%	54	26.3%	33	26.8%	40	19.5%
Totally unified family	118	18.6%	65	31.8%	34	8.1%	19	7.7%
Reunified family	111	12.9%	34	18.7%	46	9.6%	31	6.9%
Partially or totally transnational family	247	44.2%	47	23.2%	87	55.5%	113	65.9%
Total	603	100.00%	200	100.00%	200	100.00%	203	100.00%

Note: unweighted numbers & weighted percentages; *Time of survey:* 2008; *Population:* Senegalese migrants in Europe (n=603)

Interpretation: In total, we have 603 Congolese migrants in our European sample, and of those, 24.3% have no spouse and no children.

The results clearly show the differences that exist in family arrangements between origin countries, and, importantly, between receiving countries. Senegalese migrants are mainly living in transnational family arrangements (44.2%), followed by Congolese (22.8%) and Ghanaians (16.5 %). Receiving countries also make a difference. For example, both Congolese and Ghanaians tend to be more frequently in transnational family arrangements in Belgium (30.4%) and The Netherlands (34.1%), respectively, than in the UK, where around 13 percent of both migrant groups live in transnational families. Senegalese transnational families are more prevalent in Spain (55.5%) and Italy (65.9%) than in France.

These descriptive results do not allow us to draw definitive conclusions, but cultural and structural factors in the country of origin and migration history and migration policies in the receiving context can help to plausibly explain some of these observed differences. For example, in Senegal, the nuclear family is of less importance in a family system in which matrimonial unions are alliances between families rather than individuals and spatial separation imposed by migration is socially acceptable for couples. Furthermore, women are kept under protection and surveillance of the husband's family where it is felt they are safer and better cared for than when they migrate overseas (Beauchemin, Caarls *et al.*, 2013). This is reflected in the high prevalence of transnational families. That Senegalese migrants are more likely to be in a transnational family in Spain and Italy than in France is plausibly related to the fact that migration from Senegal to France has a longer history and more migrants have established themselves there and obtained residence permits or French nationality compared to the newer migrants in Italy and Spain who are often undocumented.

Similarly, more Ghanaians live in transnational families in The Netherlands than in the UK. While the history of Ghanaian migration between the two countries does not differ greatly, with both countries experiencing a large increase in Ghanaian migration since the 1980s, they have different family formation and reunification policies, with The Netherlands being the more restrictive country in the 1990s, making it a more difficult country to migrate as a family. Secondly, the UK attracts more highly educated and fewer undocumented migrants, who are more likely to qualify for family reunification. Congolese migration presents yet other characteristics. The longer history of Congolese migration to Belgium would have us expect more established and therefore unified families in Belgium than in the UK, while the opposite is the case. Yet here again, we see that the conditions in the receiving country make a difference. Many more Congolese migrants entered the UK as asylum seekers than in Belgium, were Congolese migrants have more varied reasons for migrating (refer to Schoumaker,

Flahaux et al. 2013). As refugees, migrants are more facilitated in reunifying with their families than economic migrants.

Importantly, some migrants, irrespective of their provenance, seem to opt for a transnational life style even when the option of reunification is available to them. In the next section we explore the characteristics of those migrants who are in a transnational family arrangement.

3.2.2. *Characteristics of transnational families*

For each country, we compared the characteristics of migrants in a transnational family with migrants that are not. We did so by using a logistic regression, which assesses the likelihood of being in a transnational family. For this purpose, we combined the categories ‘totally unified’ and ‘reunified’ families, and compared them with transnational families (the category ‘no nuclear family’ is dropped for these analyses). In this regression, we explore several relationships simultaneously, which allows us to see the relative importance of each characteristic while controlling for the others.²

For each migration flow, we modeled the odds of being a transnational family for the pooled sample (uniting the data from all three countries together) in models 1, 2 and 3 and for each survey country separately (models 4-9). The results are presented in Tables 23, 24, and 25. For both the pooled and the individual country samples, we examined three models, in which variables were included in a step-wise fashion. The dependent variable is a dichotomous variable representing whether or not a migrant is part of a transnational family. As for the independent variables, the first model includes basic socio-demographic indicators: age (single years) and gender (1 is male, and 2 is female). The second model includes socio-economic indicators: education (measured as years of schooling), occupational status (measured using ISEI-scores), and subjective wealth status (measured on a three point scale: “All in all, would you say that during this period you had enough to live on from day-to-day?”, with response categories: absolutely, it depended, and not at all).³ The third model adds migration specific characteristics: period of arrival at current destination (single years) and residence permit (with three options: a residence permit/citizenship, a visa, or no residence permit/citizenship (i.e. undocumented). Finally, for the pooled sample, we also included a variable representing the country of survey.

In Table 23 we see the estimations for Ghanaian migrants in the U.K. and The Netherlands. While Ghanaian migrants living in a transnational family are on average younger, less educated, and have a lower occupational status, these differences are not significant compared to migrants that are not in a transnational family (see Model 3 in Table 23). Most Ghanaian migrants in a transnational family arrived later compared to those in a unified or reunified family. They also are more likely to have no residence permit, and thus have undocumented status. There is a difference between the UK and The Netherlands, with migrants in The Netherlands being more likely to be in a transnational family. Therefore, we also examined the odds of being in a transnational

² Importantly, these are exploratory analyses, aimed to understand relationships. They are not intended for causal interpretations. Due to the small sample sizes and possible multicollinearity between variables, we have used few variables. For example, we only include period of arrival at current destination, and exclude duration of stay and age at arrival, since these three variables are too strongly correlated.

³ ISEI stands for the International Socio-Economic Index of occupational status. It is a continuous indicator of occupational status, with index scores derived from education and income, and with higher scores referring to higher occupational status.

family for the two countries separately, as is shown in Models 4-6 for The Netherlands, and Models 7-9 for the U.K. Here we see that in The Netherlands, an undocumented status is strongly related to being in a transnational family, while this association is not significant in the U.K. The insignificance of documented status in the U.K. is most likely due to the small sample size as we hardly had any undocumented migrants in our U.K. sample. In both countries, we see that migrants in a transnational family arrived more recently. In The Netherlands, transnational family life is associated with a higher education, while we see the opposite relationship for the U.K. One important difference between these two countries that can help explain the differences in transnational families is that migrants in The Netherlands, and possibly the more educated ones, might be less inclined to bring their families over due to the difficulties children might have in school – not speaking the Dutch language – and the fact that it is more difficult to have one’s educational credentials acknowledged in The Netherlands than in the UK (Mazzucato, 2008). Secondly, the educational system in Ghana is based on the one in the U.K. and therefore has more similarities in curriculum as well as final high school examinations, making it easier for children to transfer to the U.K. schools than to Dutch schools. Lastly, although both the U.K. and The Netherlands have stringent family reunification policies, the U.K. was comparatively more liberal during the 1990s up to the turn of the century, making it easier for families to reunify (Kraler, 2010).

For Congolese migrants a somewhat different picture emerges (Table 24). Similar to Ghanaian migrants, transnational families arrive at an older age, reside for a shorter period in the country of destination and are more often undocumented, with the latter two differences being statistically significant. And even though there are some differences in terms of education and occupational status between migrants with and without a transnational family, they are not significant (Model 3 in Table 24). Migrants in Belgium are more likely to have a transnational family compared to migrants in the U.K. Looking at these countries separately, we see that in Belgium, migrants in transnational families are lower educated. We could not estimate whether having a residence permit affects the odds of being in a transnational family in Belgium because there is no variability: almost all migrants with a visa or without a legal status are in a transnational family. We also see, similarly to Ghanaians in the U.K., that having a residence permit is not significantly related to being in a transnational family. For Congolese in the U.K., having a lower occupational status is related to transnational family life.

Thus, as explained in section 3.2.1, differences in the prevalence of Congolese transnational families between Belgium and Congo seem strongly related to policies in the receiving countries where the UK had less strict family reunification policies than both The Netherlands and Belgium in the latter part of the past century (Kraler, 2010) and the U.K. attracted proportionately more asylum seekers, who, when granted refugee status, are facilitated in reunifying with their families in comparison to economic migrants.

In Table 25, we show the results for Senegalese migrants in Spain, Italy and France. The first three models show the results for the pooled sample. Here we see that for Senegalese migrants gender, for the first time, seems to be an important element. Senegalese migrant men are more likely to be in a transnational family than women, reflecting gender norms prevalent in Senegal where it is considered preferable for the

man to migrate and his wife/wives to stay in Senegal (section 3.2.1). In general, migrants in a transnational family are a bit younger (not significant), are less educated, and have lower occupational status, compared to migrants who are unified or reunified. They arrived in the country of destination more recently and are less likely to have a residence permit. Transnational family life seems more likely in Spain, and especially in Italy, compared to France, reflecting the longer history of Senegalese migration to France than the other two countries. Looking at these countries separately, we see that especially in Italy, undocumented status and being in a transnational family are strongly related. In France, we could not estimate the relationship between undocumented status and being in a transnational family due to a lack of variation: all migrants with undocumented status are in a transnational family.

Table 23. Logistic estimation of being in a transnational family – Ghanaian migrant flow (odds ratios shown)

VARIABLES	Pooled sample			The Netherlands			The U.K.		
	(1) Model1	(2) Model2	(3) Model3	(4) Model4	(5) Model5	(6) Model6	(7) Model7	(8) Model8	(9) Model9
Female	0.63** (0.16)	0.75 (0.22)	0.72 (0.25)	0.60** (0.18)	0.74 (0.26)	0.77 (0.33)	0.79 (0.41)	0.90 (0.54)	0.73 (0.63)
Age	0.96*** (0.01)	0.96*** (0.02)	1.02 (0.02)	0.96*** (0.02)	0.96** (0.02)	1.01 (0.03)	0.94*** (0.03)	0.96 (0.03)	1.12 (0.10)
Education		1.01 (0.04)	1.03 (0.05)		1.04 (0.05)	1.08* (0.06)		0.93 (0.08)	0.87* (0.09)
Occupational status		0.97*** (0.01)	0.99 (0.01)		0.97*** (0.01)	0.99 (0.02)		0.98 (0.02)	0.96 (0.03)
Subjective wealth status									
<i>Absolutely (ref.)</i>									
<i>It depended</i>		0.78 (0.30)	0.85 (0.38)		0.70 (0.34)	0.85 (0.48)		1.22 (0.81)	0.78 (0.72)
<i>Not at all</i>		1.24 (0.83)	1.00 (0.85)		2.19 (2.08)	0.69 (0.82)		0.71 (0.87)	1.19 (1.77)
Period of arrival			1.16*** (0.04)			1.13*** (0.04)			1.62*** (0.28)
Residence permit									
<i>RP (ref.)</i>									
<i>Visa</i>			0.88 (0.49)			0.36 (0.32)			1.98 (1.96)
<i>No RP</i>			3.97*** (2.17)			6.73*** (4.36)			0.17 (0.28)
Country									
<i>U.K. (ref.)</i>									
<i>Netherlands</i>			2.18** (0.94)						
Constant	3.60*** (2.25)	8.29*** (8.14)	0.00*** (0.00)	4.68*** (3.67)	5.19* (6.17)	0.00*** (0.00)	4.29 (5.31)	12.03 (23.47)	0.00*** (0.00)
Observations	289	228	223	189	154	153	100	74	70
LI	-181.7	-140.3	-112.4	-125.7	-100.4	-81.95	-47.03	-37.39	-21.50
df	2	6	10	2	6	9	2	6	9
chi2	10.66	16.05	65.12	6.642	8.348	44.10	6.024	4.988	29.74

Standard errors in parentheses; *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10

Table 24. Logistic estimation of being in a transnational family – Congolese migrant flow (odds ratios shown)

VARIABLES	Pooled sample			Belgium			U.K.		
	(1) Model1	(2) Model2	(3) Model3	(4) Model4	(5) Model5	(6) Model6	(7) Model7	(8) Model8	(9) Model9
Female	0.72* (0.18)	0.90 (0.35)	1.29 (0.63)	0.74 (0.22)	0.62 (0.30)	1.04 (0.60)	1.01 (0.53)	0.57 (0.54)	0.72 (0.98)
Age	0.97*** (0.01)	0.96* (0.02)	1.06** (0.03)	0.95*** (0.02)	0.96* (0.03)	1.04 (0.04)	1.02 (0.02)	0.99 (0.06)	1.13* (0.09)
Education		1.01 (0.05)	0.97 (0.06)		0.81*** (0.08)	0.81** (0.10)		1.13 (0.13)	1.11 (0.14)
Occupational status		0.99 (0.01)	1.00 (0.01)		1.01 (0.02)	1.01 (0.02)		0.96 (0.03)	0.92** (0.05)
Subjective wealth status									
<i>Absolutely (ref.)</i>									
<i>It depended</i>		0.95 (0.58)	1.81 (1.32)		1.51 (1.43)	1.49 (1.56)		1.50 (1.41)	5.39 (8.01)
<i>Not at all</i>		1.00 (0.00)	1.00 (0.00)		1.00 (0.00)	1.00 (0.00)		1.00 (0.00)	1.00 (0.00)
Period of arrival			1.21*** (0.05)			1.19*** (0.06)			1.51*** (0.23)
Residence permit									
<i>RP (ref.)</i>									
<i>Visa</i>			0.13** (0.14)			1.00 (0.00)			4.13 (7.65)
<i>No RP</i>			4.84* (4.75)			1.00 (0.00)			0.77 (1.34)
Country									
<i>U.K. (ref.)</i>									
<i>Belgium</i>			3.70*** (2.02)						
Constant	1.87 (1.13)	1.93 (2.19)	0.00*** (0.00)	8.53*** (6.66)	109.35*** (220.83)	0.00*** (0.00)	0.08*** (0.09)	0.18 (0.45)	0.00*** (0.00)
Observations	312	163	159	198	109	96	114	54	53
ll	-195.9	-91.34	-69.89	-129.1	-63.27	-47.31	-53.86	-21.48	-14.65
df_m	2	5	9	2	5	6	2	5	8
chi2	5.360	3.332	37.38	11.10	8.752	21.27	1.202	2.341	15.67

Standard errors in parentheses; *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10

Table 25. Logistic estimation of being in a transnational family – Senegalese migrant flow (odds ratios shown)

VARIABLES	Pooled sample			Spain			Italy			France		
	(1) Model1	(2) Model2	(3) Model3	(4) Model 4	(5) Model 5	(6) Model 6	(7) Model7	(8) Model8	(9) Model9	(10) Model1 0	(11) Model1 1	(12) Model1 2
Female	0.10*** (0.02)	0.06*** (0.02)	0.05*** (0.02)	0.05** *	0.04** *	0.03** *	0.09*** (0.04)	0.04*** (0.02)	0.02*** (0.02)	0.20*** (0.09)	0.14*** (0.07)	0.08*** (0.05)
Age	0.97*** (0.01)	0.96*** (0.01)	1.01 (0.02)	1.00 (0.02)	1.01 (0.03)	1.11** (0.05)	0.99 (0.03)	0.98 (0.04)	0.96 (0.05)	0.98 (0.02)	0.95** (0.02)	1.00 (0.03)
Education		0.94*** (0.02)	0.94*** (0.03)		1.00 (0.04)	1.03 (0.05)		0.83*** (0.06)	0.82*** (0.06)		0.92*** (0.03)	0.91*** (0.04)
Occupational status		0.97*** (0.01)	0.98*** (0.01)		0.98 (0.03)	0.99 (0.03)		0.98 (0.02)	0.98 (0.02)		0.97** (0.02)	0.98* (0.02)
Subjective wealth status												
<i>Absolutely (ref.)</i>												
<i>It depended</i>		1.19 (0.35)	1.13 (0.42)		1.37 (0.65)	0.87 (0.49)		1.00 (0.00)	1.00 (0.00)		1.28 (0.78)	0.75 (0.53)
<i>Not at all</i>		1.53 (0.88)	1.36 (1.05)		2.44 (2.14)	1.49 (1.90)		0.61 (0.71)	0.47 (0.68)		1.81 (1.82)	2.21 (2.92)
Period of arrival			1.09*** (0.03)			1.26** (0.07)			1.00 (0.05)			1.08*** (0.04)
Residence permit												
<i>RP (ref.)</i>												
<i>Visa</i>			0.27*** (0.15)			0.08** (0.07)			0.32 (0.42)			0.31 (0.39)
<i>No RP</i>			20.80** * (17.07)			2.41 (3.28)			18.85** * (24.42)			1.00 (0.00)
Country												
<i>France (ref.)</i>												
<i>Italy</i>			4.31*** (1.45)									
<i>Spain</i>			1.82* (0.69)									
Constant	13.22** * (8.04)	105.17** * (86.90)	0.00*** (0.00)	6.68** (7.11)	6.21* (8.84)	0.00** * (0.00)	13.44** * (17.80)	276.98** * (516.39)	0.48 (53.25)	2.50 (2.56)	48.72** * (74.48)	0.00*** (0.00)
Observations	476	436	429	167	150	149	163	131	127	146	144	136
ll	-268.4	-223.0	-180.8	-80.80	-67.82	-53.39	-78.90	-53.90	-45.32	-83.76	-75.68	-65.26
df_m	2	6	11	2	6	9	2	5	8	2	6	8
chi2	122.4	157.0	231.9	69.61	71.64	99.24	43.18	51.74	62.61	15.95	30.55	34.27

Standard errors in parentheses; *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10

3.3. Reunification

Family reunification is an important policy concern in Europe. It is reported to account for about 60% of immigration into the EU by third-country nationals (King et al. 2010). In this final section we turn our attention to the process of reunification, including timing and location of where reunification takes place. We examine reunification for couples and for parent-child dyads. First, we show the marital and parental status of the migrant populations at the time of their first migration to the country of current destination as this indicates the percentage of people who could potentially qualify for reunification.

Table 26. Marital status at the time of 1st migration to current destination

	Ghanaian migrants		Congolese migrants		Senegalese migrants	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Single	130	27.5%	189	46.7%	243	46.5%
Consensual union	80	26.7%	38	10.1%	40	6.3%
Married	172	41.8%	172	39.7%	288	42.3%
Divorced	24	2.9%	14	2.7%	25	4.6%
Widowed	4	1.1%	7	0.8%	7	0.4%
Total	410	100.0%	420	100.0%	603	100.0%

Notes: weighted percentages & unweighted numbers

Source: MAFE- data; Population: All Ghanaian migrants (n=410), Congolese migrants (n=420) and Senegalese migrants (n=603)

Interpretation: Of all 410 Ghanaian migrants, 130 (27.5%) were single at the time of the 1st migration to current destination.

For all three flows, around 40 percent of migrants were married when they migrated to their current destination (Table 26) potentially qualifying for family reunification. The percentage of singles is high, especially among Congolese and Senegalese migrants (46.7% and 46.5%, compared to 27.5% among Ghanaian migrants).

Table 27. Parental status at the time of 1st migration to current destination

	Ghanaian migrants		Congolese migrants		Senegalese migrants	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
No child(ren)	234	60.8%	198	50.0%	481	83.6%
Only children <18	69	15.0%	83	22.4%	91	13.5%
Only children >18	88	21.3%	99	18.2%	5	0.5%
Both children < & > 18	19	2.9%	40	9.4%	26	2.4%
Total	410	100.0%	420	100.0%	603	100.0%

Notes: weighted percentages & unweighted numbers

Source: MAFE- data; Population: All Ghanaian migrants (n=410), Congolese migrants (n=420) and Senegalese migrants (n=603)

Interpretation: Of all 410 Ghanaian migrants, 234 (60.8%) had no children when they first migrated to their current destination.

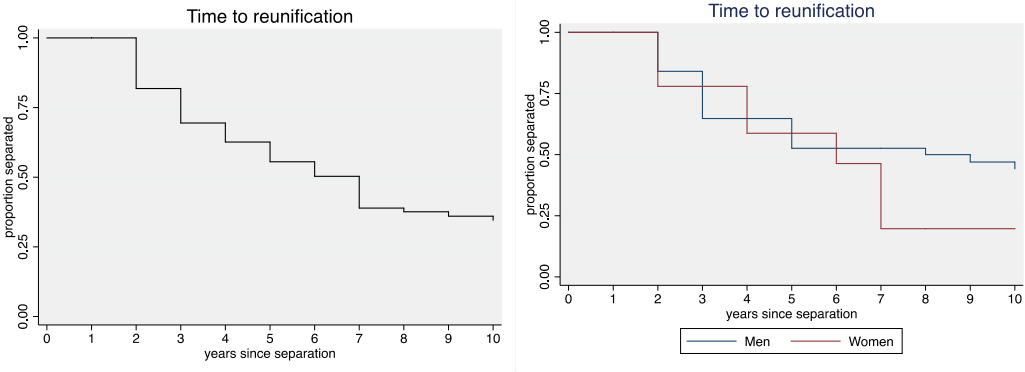
In Table 27, we see that most migrants did not have children when they first migrated to their current destination although between 14% (Senegal) to 22% (Congo) did have children under 18. Ghanaian and Congolese migrants also often had older children (above 18) but this was not the case for Senegalese migrants.

Turning now to only those who are married (in the case of couples' reunification) or those who have at least one child under-18 (in the case of parent-child reunification), we investigate how long they took to reunify (if ever) with their spouse and/or child and whether this differs by country. Please note that we only examine migrants that were married and migrants with children under-18, as both marriage and having children under-18 are requirements for family reunification. We examine the proportion separated, for couples and parent-child dyads, using Kaplan-Meier survival

estimates.⁴ The plots presented below (Figures 4 to 21) show the survival functions consisting of a series of horizontal steps of declining magnitude. The space below this line represents the proportion separated, and this proportion decreases as time passes, since more migrants reunify. In the plots, we show the total proportion of reunified migrants after a 10-year period of separation.

For the first two Figures (4 & 5), the analysis was restricted to Ghanaian migrants currently living in Europe, who, at the time they started their current migration, were married and had their spouse living in Ghana or in another country (n = 82). The event is defined as *reunification*, where couples go from a state of living apart to living together at the current destination. When couples did not reunify before the occurrence of the year of survey (2008) or when they divorced or became widowed, they are not taken into account.⁵ Figure 4 shows the full sample, and Figure 5 by sex of the migrant. Figure 4 shows that not all couples reunify. After 10 years, we see that in total 65.5% reunified, and 34.5% of the migrants never reunified with their spouse. Figure 5 shows that migrant men are less likely to reunify with their spouse than migrant women, but this difference is not significant.

Figure 4. Time to reunification for Ghanaian couples
 Figure 5. Time to reunification for Ghanaian couples, by sex of the migrant



While the above figures concentrate on reunification in the country of destination, we also investigate whether reunification also takes place in the origin country (Figure 18). To examine this, we add to our sample, those migrants who have returned to Ghana and who, at the time they started their first migration to the U.K. or The Netherlands, were married and had their spouse living in Ghana or in another country (n = 103). The event is defined as *reunification*, when couples start to live together at *either* the destination country or the country of origin. For each situation, we estimated a separate survival function, using a *competing risks* approach.⁶

⁴ All Kaplan-Meier survival estimates are with sample weights.
⁵ This is called “censoring”. Censoring refers to a specific missing data problem that is common for survival analysis. When an individual does not experience the event, reunification in this case, during the period of observation, they are described as ‘censored’. In our case, this means that we cannot observe what has happened to these individuals after the time of survey, 2008. Additionally, when individuals divorce or become widowed, they are no longer at risk of experiencing the event, i.e. reunification is no longer an option. Therefore, these individuals will, from the time of divorce or widowhood, no longer be taken into account.
⁶ When we examine reunification at origin, reunification at destination is censored, and vice versa.

Figure 6. Time to reunification at destination or origin, for Ghanaian couples

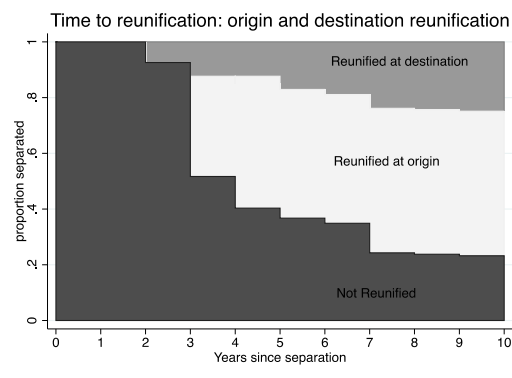


Figure 6 shows that after 10 years, 25.4% of Ghanaian migrants reunited at destination, while 51.9% reunited in Ghana. This shows that reunification can also take place in the origin country. Reunification at the destination might not always be the preferred or at least the feasible option and reunification can also occur through the migrant returning home.

The pattern for reunification for migrants from Congo, who currently live in the U.K. and in Belgium, is slightly different. Congolese migrants are less likely to reunify than Ghanaian migrants. While 65.5% of the Ghanaian migrants reunited with their spouse, this is 51.8% for the Congolese migrants. Especially, Congolese migrant women are less likely to reunify: only 26% migrant women reunited, compared to 68% of the migrant men.

Figure 7. Time to reunification for Congolese couples

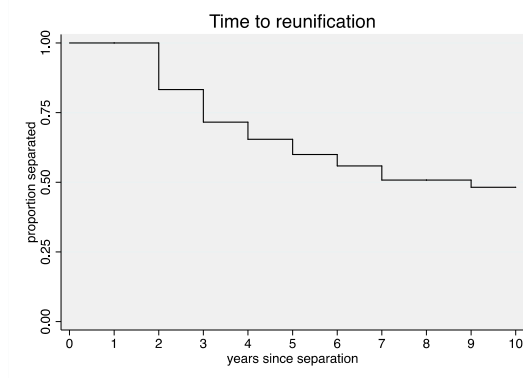
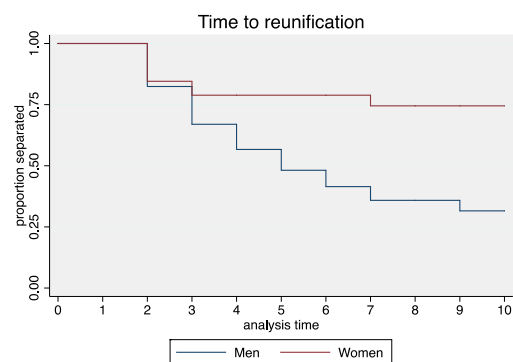
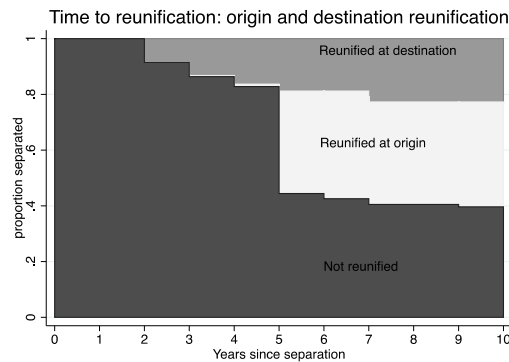


Figure 8. Time to reunification for Congolese couples, by sex of the migrant



Similar to Ghanaian migrants though, reunification does not necessarily take place at destination but can also occur through returning to the country of origin. In Figure 9, we show the survival estimates of the two options: reunification at origin (Congo) versus reunification at destination (the U.K. or Belgium). Interestingly, Congolese migrants also seem to reunify more at origin than destination; 36.8% of the migrants reunited at origin compared to 23.6% at destination.

Figure 9. Time to reunification at destination or origin, for Congolese couples



In a similar way, we examine the proportion of Senegalese couples, and the extent to which they reunify. First we looked at all Senegalese migrants currently living in France, Italy, and Spain. Figure 10 shows that Senegalese migrants are the least likely to reunify: only 18.1% reunited, compared to 65.5% for Ghanaian migrants and 51.8% for Congolese migrants. Contrary to the previous two migration flows, Figure 11 shows that Senegalese migrant men and women are equally likely to reunify (gender differences in Figure 11 are not significant).

Figure 10. Time to reunification for Senegalese couples

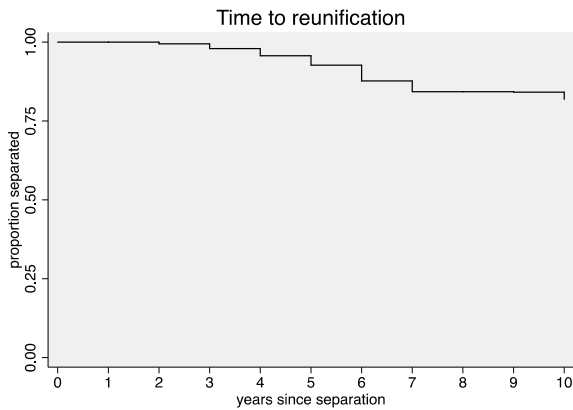
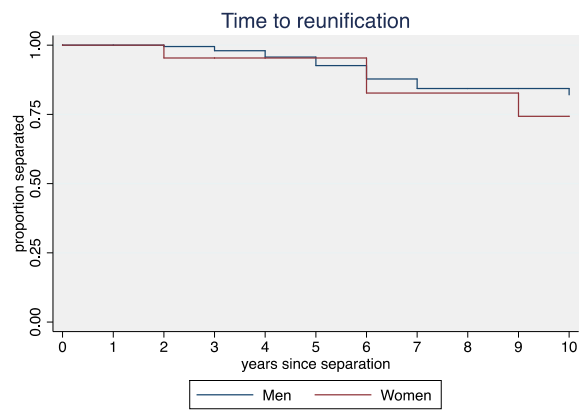
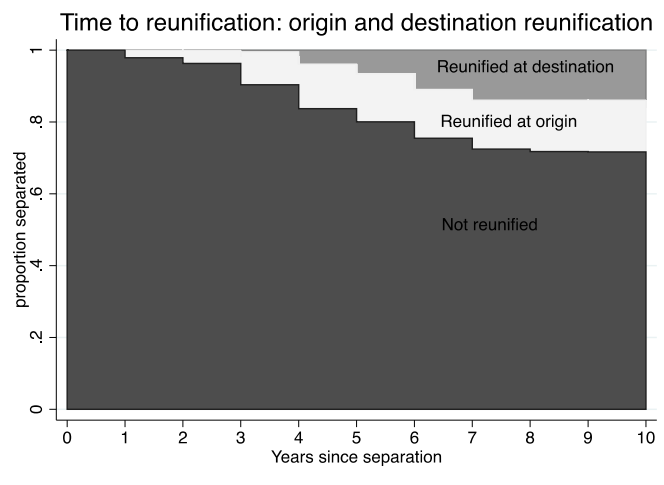


Figure 11. Time to reunification for Senegalese couples, by sex of the migrant



Finally, in line with the examination of the previous two migration flows, we looked at the difference between reunification at origin and at destination. The difference between these two reunification options is smaller for Senegalese migrants compared to Ghanaian and Congolese migrants, and that Senegalese migrants are slightly more likely to reunify at destination. We see that 15.9% of the migrants reunited at destination, compared to 14.3% of the migrants who reunited at origin.

Figure 12. Time to reunification at destination and at origin for Senegalese couples



In the next figures, we look at the time of separation between parents and children in the same way we compared couples above. The analysis is restricted to Ghanaian parents with children under-18, who were living separately from their children when they first migrated to their current destination, either The Netherlands or the U.K. If parent-child dyads have not reunified before the occurrence of the year of survey (2008) or if the child becomes 18 or if the child dies, they are not taken into account. Similar to the plots on couple reunification presented above, we show in the plots below the total proportion of reunified migrants after a 10-year period of separation.

In Figure 13, we see that for Ghanaian parents who left at least one child under-18 behind at the moment of migration about 27.7% had reunified with their child at the moment of the survey. Women (mothers) were somewhat more likely to reunite with children compared to fathers, but this difference is not significant.

Figure 13. Time to reunification for Ghanaian parent-child dyads

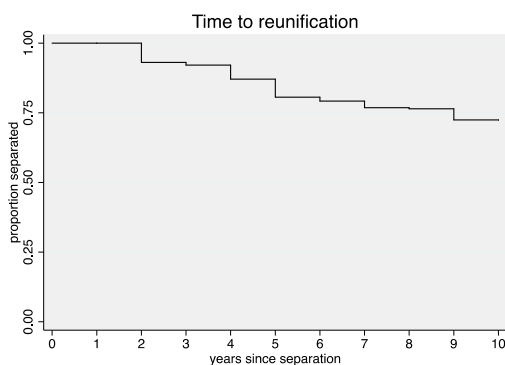
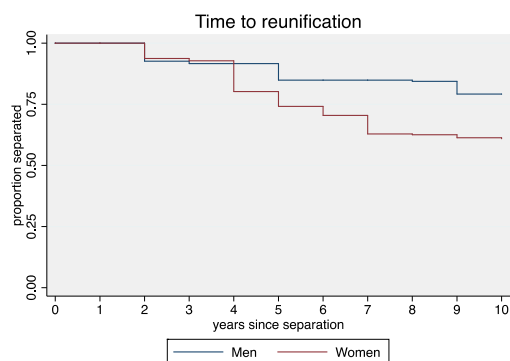


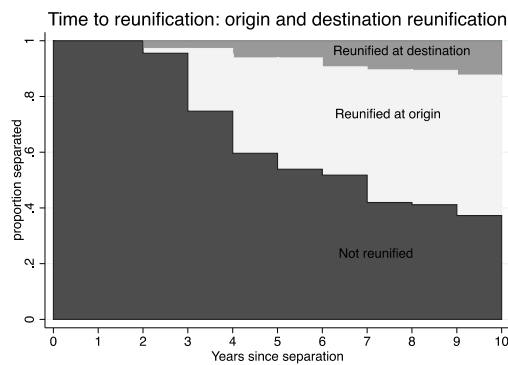
Figure 14. Time to reunification for Ghanaian parent-child dyads, by sex of the migrant parent



Again, reunification can take place both at country of origin and destination. So also for parent-child dyads we examined these two options, by including returned migrants

from the two survey countries, The Netherlands and the U.K. Again, reunification is greater at origin, but reunification at destination is also a significant phenomenon: 12.4% of migrant parents reunified with their child at destination, compared to 50.4% that reunified at origin.

Figure 15. Time to reunification for Ghanaian parent-child dyads, at destination and at origin



For Congolese parents, as shown in Figure 16, a higher proportion of parents had reunified with children at the time of the survey: 49.3%, compared to 27.7% in the case of Ghanaian parents. In Figure 17, we see that migrant fathers are more likely to reunify: 67% compared to 51% of the migrant mothers.

Figure 16. Time to reunification for Congolese parent-child dyads

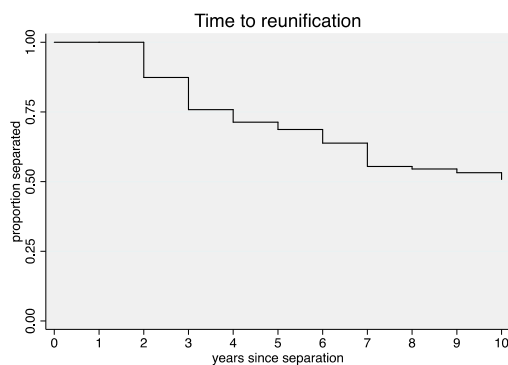
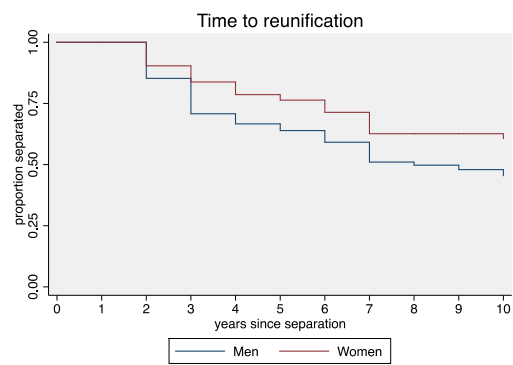
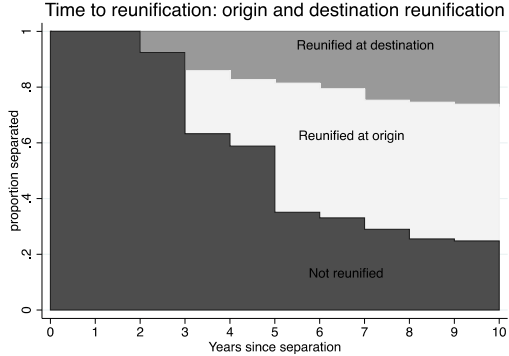


Figure 17. Time to reunification for Congolese parent-child dyads, by sex of the migrant parent



In Figure 18, we see that reunification at destination or origin is more popular: 26.9% versus 49.1%, respectively.

Figure 18. Time to reunification for Congolese parent-child dyads, at destination or at origin



For Senegal, most migrants did not have young children when they moved to Europe. When they did, they mostly left them behind in Senegal. The proportion of reunified Senegalese migrant parents in France, Italy and Spain is low, as shown in Figure 19: only 9.8% of the migrant parents reunified. This is especially low when compared to the Ghanaian and Congolese parents, where 27.7% and 49.3%, respectively, reunified with their child under-18. There is a large difference between Senegalese migrant mothers and fathers: 28.9% of the Senegalese migrant mothers reunified, compared to 5.9% of the migrant fathers.

Figure 19. Time to reunification for Senegalese parent-child dyads

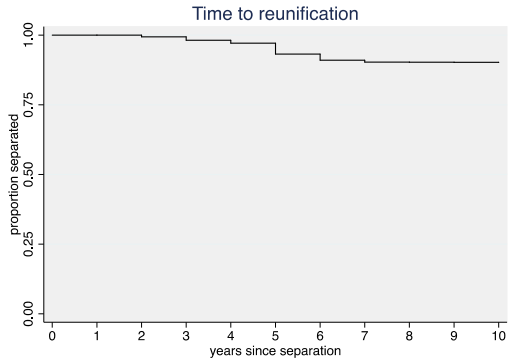
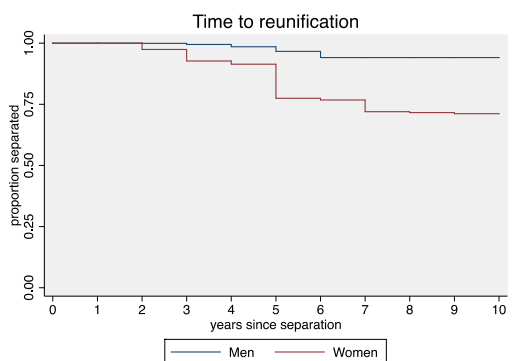
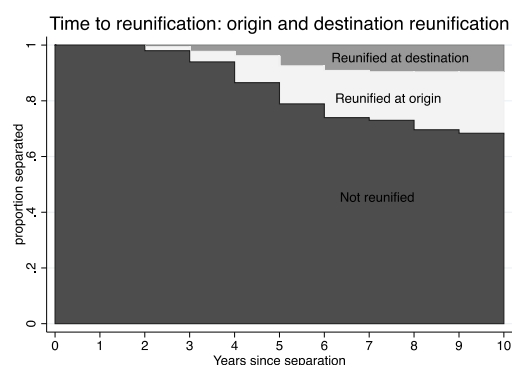


Figure 20. Time to reunification for Senegalese parent-child dyads, by sex of the migrant



Finally, in Figure 21, we looked at the difference between reunification of parents with their under-18 child at origin and destination, by including also return migrants. The difference between these two options is quite large: 22.6% reunified at origin compared to 9.7% who reunified at destination.

Figure 21. Time to reunification for Senegalese parent-child dyads, at destination or at origin



The results in this section indicate that although family reunification has become one of the main ports of legal entry to Europe it does not mean that reunification in Europe always happens and it might not always be the preferred outcome or goal of migrants. Although our data can only show that reunification also happens by migrants returning home, further research should explore whether this is by choice or due to the difficulties imposed by policies in Europe.

4. Conclusion: Comparative perspective on family arrangements between Africa and Europe

This report shows the importance of relationships that migrants and their families back home maintain, both in terms of remittances, visits and contact via technologies such as cellular phones and Internet, but also in terms of the nuclear family relationships that may span nation-state borders. It is therefore of utmost importance to study such dynamics by using multi-sited data that can show the full variety of constellations of migrant families as well as their characteristics and functioning (Mazzucato & Schans 2011). The MAfE project does just this. The African family goes beyond immediate nuclear family members; it includes extended family members, encompassing other relatives as well as non-kin. Moreover, families are not necessarily bound to a particular geographical space. On the contrary, one can observe that a large share of household members lives dispersed throughout the globe. Despite this, family ties persist, and migrants continue to function as members of a wider extended family. The high frequency of contact and the occurrence of remittances are indicators of this.

By comparing both countries of origin and countries of destination we revealed differences in family arrangements and migration patterns between Ghana, Senegal and Congo as well as within these groups based on the European countries they migrated to. Family and gender norms in countries of origin influence the way migrants organize their family lives. In Senegal, for example, polygamous marriage and the spatial separation by couples are socially accepted and current phenomena. Transnational couples are in this context an extension of a form of family life where

couples living apart are common even within the national context. Nevertheless, although it would be easy to say that in the case of Senegalese migrants transnational family arrangements are the culturally preferred option, the MAFÉ data show that this explanation is too simple and does not take historical migration flows between Senegal and France into account, nor the differences in receiving contexts. The fact that transnational family arrangements among Senegalese migrants are much more common in Italy than in France indicates that both migration history and legal status play a role. Migration from Senegal to France has a long history, related to colonial ties, and produced a more established migrant community with fewer undocumented migrants and a longer implementation of family reunification. Italy on the other hand is a relatively new destination for Senegalese migrants and where they are more often undocumented. This results in a higher incidence of transnational family arrangements.

Similarly, the fact that both Congolese and Ghanaian migrants are less likely to be in a transnational family arrangement in the UK compared to in Belgium and The Netherlands, respectively, indicates the importance of policies related to migration and family reunification. Even though policies in the UK have become more restrictive over time, and particular focus has been put on preventing 'fake marriages', the UK has been relatively more liberal than Belgium and The Netherlands, especially in the latter part of the last century (Kofman et al., 2008).

Finally, this report shows that family life is not static with some families reunifying over time. Larger proportions of those who reunify do so in the country of destination. Yet importantly, a significant number of migrant families reunify in the country of origin. There are several factors at play here. Increasingly stringent family formation and reunification policies in Europe make it difficult for migrants to reunify in European countries. At the same time, some migrants prefer to keep their nuclear families in the country of origin where family life and gender roles are more in line with their espoused norms. Yet others feel their children can grow up better in their home communities (Bledsoe and Sow, 2011).

Reunification also seems to be a gendered process with women and mothers reunifying more frequently with their husbands and children in Ghanaian migration while the opposite is true for Congolese migration. Senegalese mothers reunify more frequently with their children. An important matter for further investigation is to what extent these trends are driven by choice and cultural preferences and to what extent, instead, might family reunification policies in Europe be favoring or penalizing men with respect to women.

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Appendix 1. Marital and parental status of household heads – Household survey

Table 3a. Proportion of married household heads and household heads with children, by survey country

	Share of married household heads		Total
	% married*	% not married	
Ghana	71.5%	28.5%	100.0%
Congo	73.6%	26.4%	100.0%
Senegal	74.5%	25.5%	100.0%

	Share of household heads with children		Total
	% with children	% without children	
Ghana	79.40%	20.6%	100.00%
Congo	93.40%	6.6%	100.00%
Senegal	89.70%	10.3%	100.00%

* Informal unions are also included

Notes: weighted percentages & unweighted numbers; Source: MAfE data; Population: Ghanaian households (n=1,246), Congolese households (n=1,576), and Senegalese households (n=1,141); Time of survey: 2008

Interpretation: The Ghanaian sample consists of 1,246 households. Of the interviewed household heads in Ghana, 71.5% are married and 79.4% have children.