MAFE Working Paper 28

Understanding Afro-European Labour Trajectories: Integration of Migrants into the European Labour Market & Reintegration into the Country of Origin: The Case of Ghana

BLACK Richard, Quartey Peter, CASTAGNONE Eleonora, NAZIO Tiziana, SCHOUMAKER Bruno, RAKOTONARIVO Nirina

January 2013

Understanding Afro-European labour trajectories.
Integration of migrants in the European labour market
& re-integration into the country of origin:
The case of Ghana

**Richard Black (SCMR, University of Sussex), Peter Quartey (CMS, University of Ghana),
Eleonora Castagnone (FIERI), Tiziana Nazio (FIERI),
Bruno Schoumaker (UCL), Nirina Rakotonarivo (DGSIE)**

1. INTRODUCTION

International migration from Ghana has undergone a number different phases over the last century in line with the changing socio-economic environment. It ranged from a period when intra regional movements in Ghana were initially dominated by traders, fisherman, and nomadic farmers, to a period of new migration dynamics which emerged with the introduction of the economic development policies of both colonial and post-colonial governments. Large-scale emigration of Ghanaians to Europe did not really begin until the 1990s, but has grown rapidly as well as diversifying beyond the UK to other parts of Europe, North America, and other new destinations such as China and the Gulf states. There are now well-organized associations of Ghanaians in major cities worldwide, including Amsterdam, Hamburg and Rome, as well as Toronto and New York.

The reasons for such labour migration from Africa are numerous but prominent among them are poor working conditions in Africa coupled with huge wage disparities between the migrants' home country and destination countries. Colonial ties, language, culture as well as networks help to explain migration patterns of Ghanaians to other countries of Africa (Page and Plaza 2006), but in the case of migration to western Europe, economic factors arguably take on more weight, notably economic conditions in destination countries.

In the case of the UK, expansion of migration from Ghana in the late 1980s and 1990s took place in the context of an expanding labour market as the country emerged from recession to a period of substantial economic growth which continued to the most recent economic crisis of 2008. Immigration to UK during this period, and especially after around 2001, was not only from African countries such as Ghana, Nigeria and South Africa but from an increasingly diverse set of countries, including central and eastern Europe in the context of an opening of the UK labour market to these new countries on EU accession (Black et al. 2010). In the case of Africans, such a liberal approach to labour market access has never applied, and indeed the 1990s saw the tightening of immigration controls for many African countries. Nonetheless, African immigration has grown, including through student and asylum migration, and the direct recruitment of doctors and nurses to the country's National Health Service since the late 1990s (Raghuram 2008).

In the case of the Netherlands, migration from Ghana also represents one element of a major diversification of immigration trends over the past 15-20 years in the context of a buoyant labour market and a very strong policy emphasis on multiculturalism compared to other European countries (Statham, Koopmans et al. 2005). In turn, there is a substantial literature on labour market integration of international migrants in both the UK and the Netherlands focused on this period, although in few cases are the specific experiences of Ghanaian or even sub-Saharan African migrants evident in this literature. In particular, whilst quantitative studies on immigrant integration have been conducted in both countries, in neither case do major quantitative data sources – the Labour Force Survey in the UK, the Social Position and Use of Provisions by Ethnic Minorities survey (SPVA1998; SPVA2002) and the Netherlands Kinship Panel Study in the Netherlands – allow us to drill down even to sub-Saharan Africa, let alone specific African countries. This reflects the fact that African migrants represent a tiny part of even the immigrant labour market – for example in the Netherlands, only Somalis feature in the top 10 migrant origin countries even for 'non-Western' countries, and a major recent report on trends in integration of non-Western migrants in the Netherlands (Gijsberts and Dagevos 2010) does not mention Ghana or Ghanaian migrants at all. Labour market integration can be measured both in terms of whether individual immigrants are employed, but also in terms of the level of employment.

In this paper, we explore the patterns of Ghanaian migrants' integration into the labour market in the UK and the Netherlands, based on a new retrospective longitudinal sample of migrants and returnees in the two countries, and back in Ghana. The paper seeks to fill a gap in understanding of the patterns of integration of these two relatively recent migrant groups, and also to explore their

trajectories over time. It extends this analysis to migrants' return to Ghana, trying to understand the factors that influence both integration and re-integration after return.

There is relatively little literature available to provide background on Ghanaian migrants experience in the two countries, especially from a quantitative perspective. In the UK, a study by Vasta and Kandilige (2010) based on a small sample of Ghanaians living in London suggests that in the context of a relatively hostile policy environment, in which many Ghanaians are undocumented, having overstayed on their initial visas, there is a considerable degree of downward economic and social mobility. London is seen in this sense as a 'leveller' for many Ghanaians in spite of their education and professional background, even though their own efforts at integration through the mobilisation of community and family ties leads to relatively high levels of employment. A similar conclusion, again on a small sample, was reached by Asima (2010) although with the nuance that women's labour market outcomes have been relatively better than those of men, with a significant group of women entering the labour market for the first time, albeit often in low-paid or informal employment.

The Netherlands in contrast was one of the first European countries to develop a formal integration policy for immigrants, based on the experience of recession in the early 1980s and its disproportionate impact on immigrants. However, a recent study for the OECD shows that labour market outcomes for immigrants in the Netherlands in general have remained significantly below those of the native-born population, with particular differences in employment rates for the least qualified (OECD 2008). This report also observes that labour market outcomes for immigrants in the Netherlands fell behind those for immigrants in other OECD countries in the period 2002-06, although this finding reflects the position especially of Moroccan and Turkish immigrants rather than those from sub-Saharan Africa.

As in the UK, there is some variation in integration experience between different immigrant groups. In this context, van Amersfoort and van Niekerk (2006) found in a study of the experience of four 'post-colonial' groups in the Netherlands from the East and West Indies that two factors – Dutch citizenship and 'cultural capital' in the form of educational attainment and Dutch language skills – were significant predictors of levels of labour market integration. Similarly, whilst a study by Bevelander and Veeman (2006) found that Somalis had the lowest probability of being employed of any of the five migrant groups they considered, the acquisition of Dutch citizenship significantly increased the likelihood of employment.

The remaining part of this report is divided into three sections. In the first (section 2), we consider the integration of Ghanaian migrants into the labour market in the UK and Netherlands, based on retrospective life history interviews carried out with around 400 migrants in these two countries as part of the *Migration from Africa to Europe* (MAFE) project[1]. This section highlights the characteristics of the sample of migrants interviewed, including their occupational status, employment status and sector and level and type of employment, before going on to consider how labour market integration differs between the two countries and between genders; the extent to which it involves downward occupational mobility; and the extent to which it is influenced by migrants' legal status. In section 3, we turn to the potential impact of migration on countries of origin by examining how remittances, investments, and participation in economic development initiatives through associations varies amongst different migrants in Europe. Finally, in section, 4, we consider return migration, basing analysis on a sample of 87 returnees interviewed in Ghana, as well as over 1,000 non-returnees (including non-migrants, and returnees from destinations other than Europe).

---

[1] For more details on the methodology of the MAFE project, see Beauchemin (2012).

2. MIGRANTS' INTEGRATION IN THE EUROPEAN LABOUR MARKET

Before proceeding to analysis of the data, it is important to provide an introduction to the profile of migrants that was interviewed, which is provided in tabular form in Annex 1. The sample of 422 migrants purposely included roughly equal numbers of men and women, with quotas of interviewees in different age groups based on weights derived from the best available census data. A total of 273 migrants were interviewed in the Netherlands, and 149 in the UK.

The data in Annex 1 show that those interviewed in the UK had arrived, on the whole, with higher levels of education, as indeed had men compared to women. Nearly three quarters of Ghanaian men interviewed in the UK and nearly two thirds of women held tertiary degrees, compared to much lower figures in the Netherlands. These figures reflect findings elsewhere that African migration to the UK involves individuals with qualification levels that exceed the average for UK-born populations (Kyambi 2005).

It is notable that virtually no migrants interviewed in the UK had only secondary-level education – rather, there is a bi-modal sample with a majority highly qualified, but a significant minority with very low qualifications. This may be a selection bias; however, it may also reflect high participation rates in higher education in the UK, which saw almost a half of all Ghanaian men interviewed in the UK, and over a quarter of Ghanaian women moving into education in the first two years after their arrival. In contrast, those who had completed secondary education but had not gone on to tertiary education was the largest group of all in the Netherlands.

In both countries, a majority of those interviewed – both men and women – had been in Europe for at least 10 years at the time of interview, with little difference in the proportion – around 16% - who had arrived within the past five years. Equally, the vast majority (over 90%) had arrived with a residence permit (or without the need for one), a proportion that remained roughly the same at the time of interview in 2009.

Turning to employment and occupational status, data in Annex 1 provide a picture of a migrant population that is relatively well-integrated economically in these two destinations, with high levels of employment, and, with some caveats, relatively low levels of unemployment. Perhaps the most striking difference between the two countries is the level at which people are employed, partly reflecting the educational differences on arrival noted above. Thus whereas in the Netherlands, 83% overall and nearly 90% of women were employed in elementary occupations, in contrast in the UK over 40% of men and women were employed in higher-level occupations. This reflects the significance of Ghanaian migration to the UK of doctors and nurses in particular, but also university lecturers and other skilled professionals, which is not replicated in the Netherlands case. It may also reflect language barriers for Ghanaian migrants in the Netherlands, shown to be a significant factor in labour market outcomes elsewhere (Dustmann and Fabbri 2003).

However, in other respects, the Netherlands – a country which has retained relatively high employment levels during the current recession more generally – appears to have delivered better employment outcomes to Ghanaians than the UK, albeit in terms of relatively unskilled employment. In contrast, the UK has relatively lower employment levels overall, and accordingly somewhat lower levels of employment for Ghanaians, albeit a relatively well-educated Ghanaian migrant population has avoided unemployment by instead investing in education, or remaining outside the labour market altogether.

In both countries, employment rates found amongst Ghanaians were higher than the overall rates for the working age populations of these countries – in other words, Ghanaian migrants appear to have fared better in the face of the global recession and its impact on employment than domestic workers. This is consistent with trends shown for non-UK born populations in the UK in general, where although employment rates of UK-born workers started to fall in mid-2008, levels of employment of non-UK workers continued to grow to early 2009. It may also be partly explained in the UK case by the concentration of Ghanaians in London and the South East, which overall has

higher employment rates for all nationalities. However, even employment of non-UK born workers had started to fall by mid-2009[2], suggesting that rates of employment for Ghanaian migrants in the UK may also have fallen after the time when MAFE interviews were undertaken.

There are however some variations in the occupational status of men and women who were not formally employed at the time interviews were undertaken. In particular, in the UK, Ghanaian women were very unlikely to be unemployed, a finding consistent with the much lower 'claimant count' for women in the UK in general. Instead, quite high proportions of Ghanaian women in the UK were found to be either studying or inactive. In contrast, in the Netherlands, women were more likely to be unemployed than men, but rather less likely to be studying. Unemployment rates for Ghanaians overall were higher than the national average in the Netherlands (4.5%), but lower than the national average in the UK (7%), suggesting better integration in the UK in spite of lower overall levels of employment.

It is also noticeable that in both countries, the vast majority of those employed were employed by others, rather than self-employed. Nonetheless, amongst men in the UK, and women in the Netherlands, there are higher rates of self-employment. In turn, in the Netherlands, employment for women in particular was dominated by the tertiary sector (trade and services), with relatively small numbers of men in particular gaining employment in the secondary sector (industry and construction) and in 'other' employment, which includes administrative and IT workers, nurses and teachers. In contrast, in the UK, employment is dominated by this latter category for both men and women, with only a third employed in 'trade and sevices' and very few indeed in industry and construction. No Ghanaians interviewed in the UK were employed in agriculture, although this may simply reflect the fact that all interviews were conducted in urban areas.

2.1 The receiving contexts: how labour paths differ according to the destination countries

This sub-section focuses on the different employment trajectories of Ghanaian migrants interviewed in the two countries. As can be seen from Figure 1, in the UK, the proportion of the sample employed in intermediate or higher level occupations contracted between the last year in Ghana and the first year in the UK, with the number in either education or elementary occupations experiencing an increase. However, the share in relatively higher level occupations then progressively rises again until a point around 4-5 years after arrival, when it already regains its status as the largest single occuational status category. In contrast, in the Netherlands, no such 'rebound' of higher level employment is observed; in contrast, a sharp rise in the proportion unemployed in the year after arrival is progressively reduced not by skilled, but by unskilled employment.

---

[2] Office for National Statistics, Statistical Bulletin, Labour Market Statistics, June 2010

Figure 1: Occupational status in the last year in Africa at each year of stay in Europe (for the first ten years), by country of destination
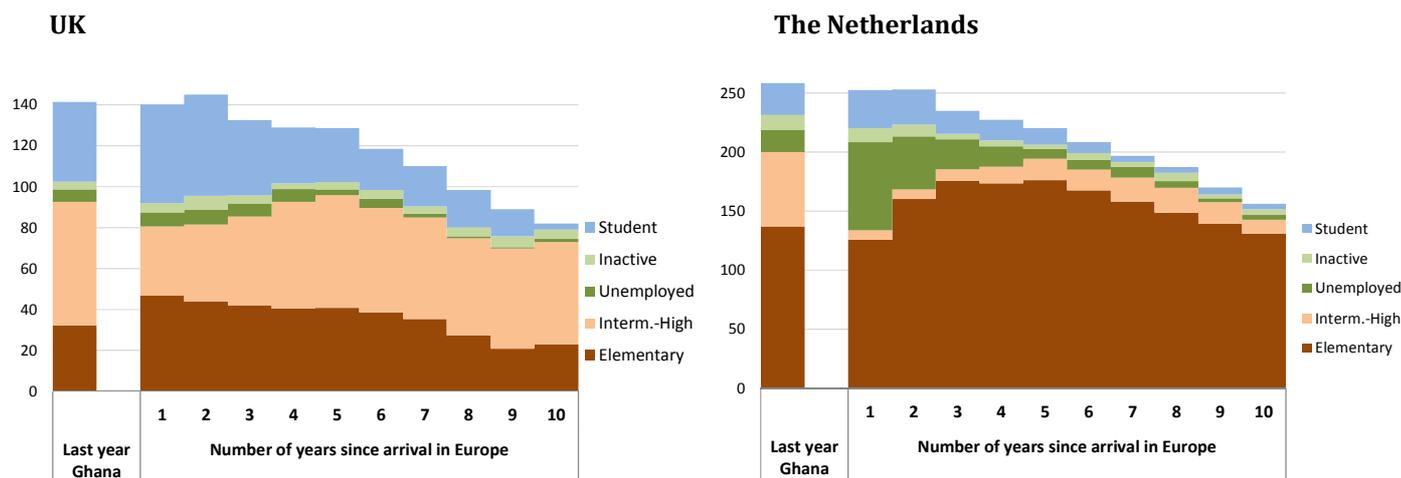
Source: MAFE survey
Interpretation: the figures show the distribution of the last occupational status of migrants in Ghana before leaving (first column on the left); and the same for each year after arrival in Europe. We present only the first 10 years after arrival for easier comparison.

More detailed data on occupational trajectories between last status in Africa and first status in Europe, as well as first status in Europe and status at the time of the survey in 2009 are provided in Annex 2. These show a more complex set of trajectories, highlighting for example that amongst those who had been unemployed or inactive before arrival, there was some movement into employment, especially amongst women, some of whom were also able to move from elementary jobs in Ghana to intermediate or even high status jobs in Europe. Nonetheless, there is some stability in occupational status – for example, 74% of men who had an elementary job in their last year in Ghana had an elementary job in their first year in Europe.

Subsequent to arrival, a certain degree of churning between occupational statuses appears to continue, with over 60% of the sample moving occupational status at least once, and a quarter twice or more, although this mobility is more prounounced in the UK than in the Netherlands (Table 1). In particular, data presented in Annex 2 show that whilst most men and women who obtained an intermediate or high level job on arrival were still in this category at the time of interview, more than one in five of those who obtained an elementary job on arrival, and a quarter of those unemployed on arrival had also found an intermediate or higher level job, implying some measure of upward occupational mobility.

Table 1. Distribution of migrants by number of episodes of occupational status during their stay in Europe (weighted) (possible states : elementary, intermediate-high, unemployed, inactive, student)

	Country		All
Number of states	United Kingdom	Netherlands	
1	37.8	47.2	39.1
2	35.8	40.1	36.4
3	18.9	10.9	17.8
4	6.8	1.8	6.1
5	0.7	0.0	0.6
Total	**100 %**	**100 %**	**100 %**
N	148	273	421
Median duration since departure from Africa (years)	10	11	10

Source: MAFE survey

Table 2 highlights the most frequent sequences of occupational status during their stay in Europe, showing that overall, the most common sequence was for an individual to remain in an elementary occupation, especially in the Netherlands. However, second most common was a move from being a student on arrival to an intermediate or higher-status occupation, followed by a group who remained in intermediate or higher-status occupations throughout, with both of these trajectories most common in the UK.

Table 2. Five most frequent sequences of occupational status of migrants during their stay in Europe, by country of residence (possible states : elementary, intermediate-high, unemployed, inactive, student)

United kingdom		Netherlands		2 Countries	
Sequence	**%**	**Sequence**	**%**		**%**
Student-Interm/High	20,3	Elementary	39,3	Elementary	21,4
Elementary	18,6	Unempl.-Elem.	20,0	Student-Interm/High	17,7
Interm/High	13,6	Student	4,1	Interm/High.	12,0
Student	6,1	Student.-Elem.	4,1	Student	5,9
Elem.-Interm/High	5,1	Inactive-Elem.	2,8	Elem.-Interm/High	4,7
Total	**63.7%**		**70.3%**		**61.7%**
N	149		273		422

Source: MAFE survey

Overall, people who were working in their first year in Europe were very likely to still be working at the time of the survey, and although there was a slight downward mobility amongst those in intermediate or higher level jobs before migration, the numbers are very small and this downward mobility occurs at the time of migration, not after. Meanwhile, those who were unemployed, inactive or students before arrival were very likely to be working at the time of the survey, whilst those who were students in their first year were very likely to be employed in intermediate or higher level occupations.

2.2   Labour integration in Europe: gendered trajectories

Whilst the previous sub-section provided information on labour market trajectories across the board, it is important to break these down by gender, as men and women may vary sharply in their labour market experience (Asima 2010). Data presented in figure 2 represent the absolute distribution of migrants by occupational status for the last year in Africa and the first ten years in Europe. They show that a majority of both men and women in the MAFE sample were in high or intermediate level occupations prior to leaving Ghana, but that amongst those who had just arrived in Europe, this group was a minority. Nonetheless, data presented in figure 3 that the majority of both men and women remained in the same occupational category on arrival that they held before departure in Ghana – in other words, those in elementary occupations were most likely to remain in such occupations, those who were students were most likely to remain students.

Where a difference emerges between men and women is that the number of men in elementary occupations rose sharply after arrival, whereas the main increase amongst women was in the share who became students. Meanwhile, whilst the proportion of men and women moving from intermediate and high occupations to elementary occupations is roughly the same, women who were in elementary jobs before arrival were more likely to move 'upwards' out of these jobs, either to become students, or to a higher level occupation.

Similarly, data presented in figure 4 shows occupational trajectories after arrival in Europe, and shows that women who were in elementary occupations after arrival in Europe were again slightly more likely than men to move 'upwards' to intermediate or high level occupations. However, those women with intermediate or high level occupations on arrival were slightly more likely to

experience 'downward mobility' after arrival, either returning to study, becoming unemployed or gaining an elementary job. Overall, the differences between men and women are not substantial.

Figure 2: Occupational status in the last year in Africa and at each year of stay in Europe (for the first ten years), by gender

Males
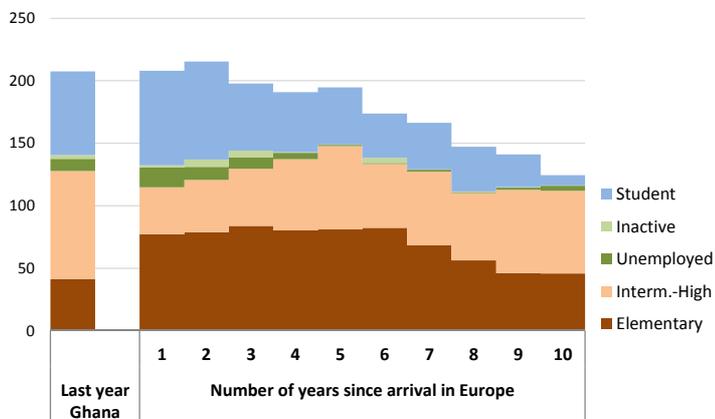
Females

Figure 3. Comparison of last occupational status in Africa before first migration and the first occupational status in Europe, by gender

Males

Females

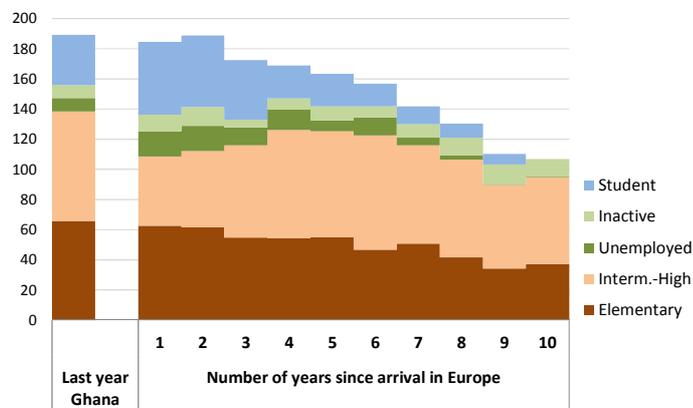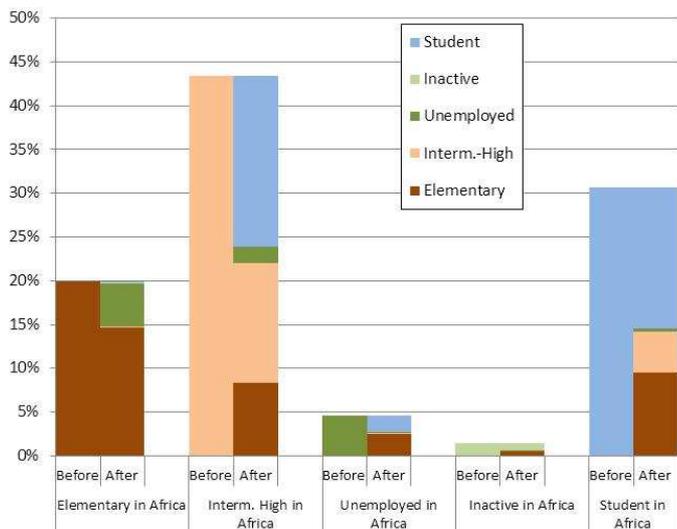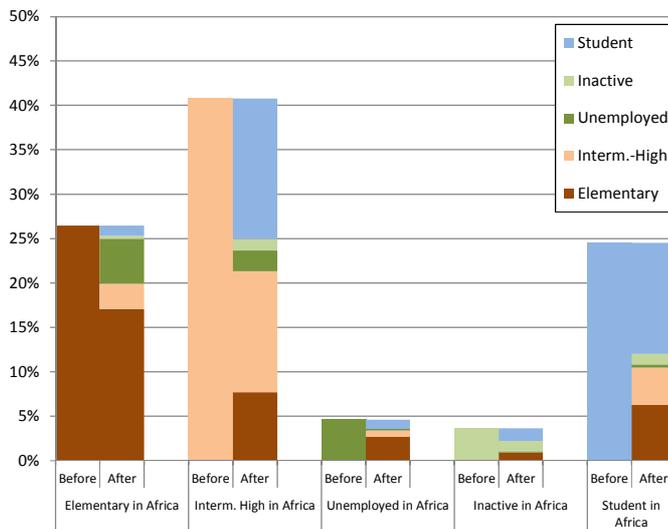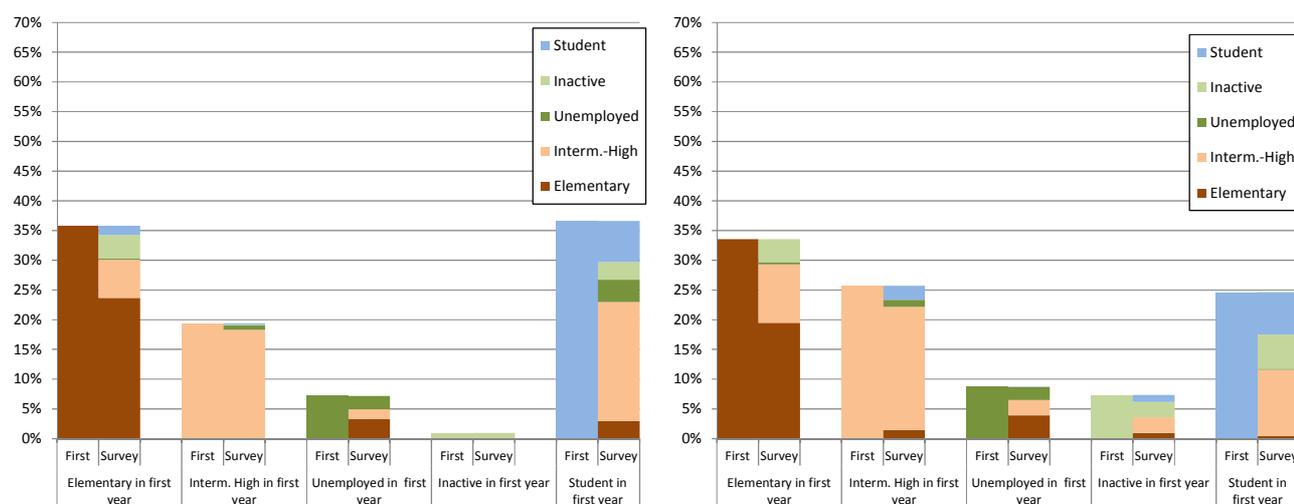**Figure 4. Comparison of first occupational status in Europe and the occupational status at survey time in Europe, by gender**

Males   **Females**

The number and direction of most frequent occupational trajectories are summarized in tables 3 and 4, and show that most trajectories are relatively simple: nearly 40% of both men and women remain in the same occupational status throughout their stay in Europe, and a further sizeable proportion move status only once. The most common trajectory for both men and women was to remain in an elementary occupation – accounting for slightly more men than women, and one in five interviewees overall. However, men were almost twice as likely as women to have a trajectory from student to intermediate or high level occupations, whilst women were slightly more likely to have held an intermediate or high level occupation on arrival and to have remained at this level.

Table 3. Distribution of migrants by number of episodes of occupational status during their stay in Europe (weighted) (possible states : elementary, intermediate-high, unemployed, inactive, student)

	Gender		All
Number of states	Males	Females	
1	38.2	40.1	39.1
2	34.4	38.7	36.4
3	19.0	16.5	17.8
4	8.4	3.5	6.1
5	0.0	1.3	0.6
Total	**100 %**	**100 %**	**100 %**
N	222	199	421
Median duration since departure from Africa (years)	13	9	10

Source: MAFE survey

Table 4. Five most frequent sequences of occupational status of migrants during their stay in Europe, by gender (possible states : elementary, intermediate-high, unemployed, inactive, student)

| Males		Females	
Sequence	**%**	**Sequence**	**%**
Elementary	23,6	Elementary	19,0
Student-Interm/High	22,0	Interm/High.	14,4
Interm/High.	9,9	Student-Interm/High	13,0
Student	4,9	Student	7,0
Elem.-Interm/High	4,6	Elem.-Interm/High	4,7
Total	**65.0%**		**58.0%**
N	330		273

Source: MAFE survey

2.3   Human capital and brain waste

Notwithstanding relatively high levels of education, and high levels of employment amongst Ghanaians interviewed in the Netherlands and especially the UK, the fear remains from much existing literature that many migrants with good qualifications end up working in 'menial' jobs, creating the phenomenon of 'brain waste' (Pang, Lansang et al. 2002; Oyelere 2007). There is some evidence of this in the MAFE-Ghana dataset – thus whilst the majority of those in higher-level occupations (unsurprisingly) have higher level qualifications, around 30% of those with higher level education are working in elemntary jobs (figure 5), suggesting that their qualifications are not fully used.

There are a number of reasons why this might be the case, including the possibility of non-recognition of Ghanaian qualifications, and the likelihood that Ghanaian professionals experience a high degree of discrimination. However, although constituting a form of 'brain waste', this may simply reflect a more general trend within the population towards 'over-qualification' or 'under-utilisation of skills'. For example, in the UK, the proportion of all graduates working in 'non-graduate' jobs is estimated to have grown from around 20% to 30% between 1992-2006 (Green and Zhu 2010), and appears to have risen during the current recession (McKee-Ryan 2011). Meanwhile, brain waste overall represents only a small proportion of the sample (around 7%), because of low levels of education.

Figure 5: Distribution of migrants by level of occupation and level of education (diploma) in 2009
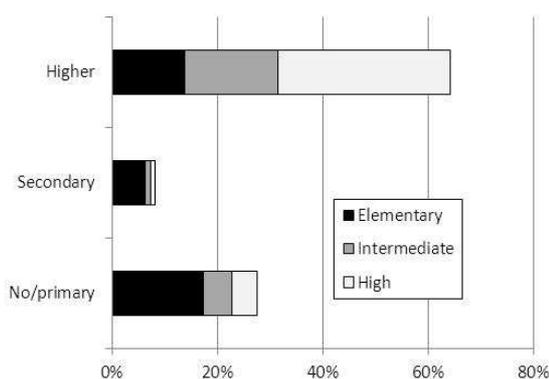
Source: MAFE survey

In figure 6, occupational status is shown by years of stay in Europe separately for those with no or only primary education, those with secondary education, and those with higher education. Interestingly, these graphs show that amongst those recently arrived with low levels of education, the proportion in low skilled jobs was very high, but unemployment had remained low. Similarly, amongst those recently arrived with tertiary education, unemployment was also low, but a significant proportion – almost half the sample – were doing further study rather than working in higher-level occupations. In contrast, it was the group with secondary-level education who had arrived in the past two year – most of whom were living in the Netherlands (cf. Fig. 1) – who were experiencing elevated levels of unemployment.

Figure 6: Occupational status in the last year in Africa and at each year of stay in Europe (for the first ten years), by level of education at time of the survey

Migrants with no or primary education diploma
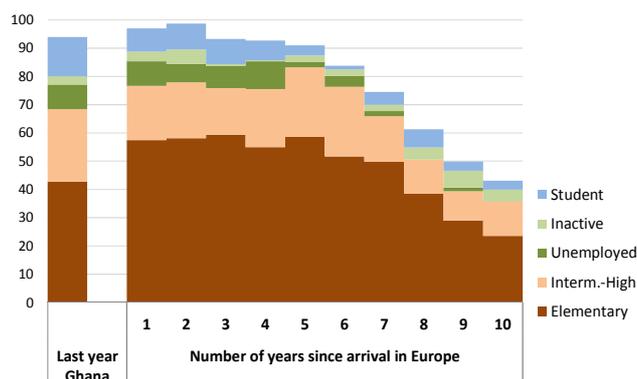
Secondary education diploma
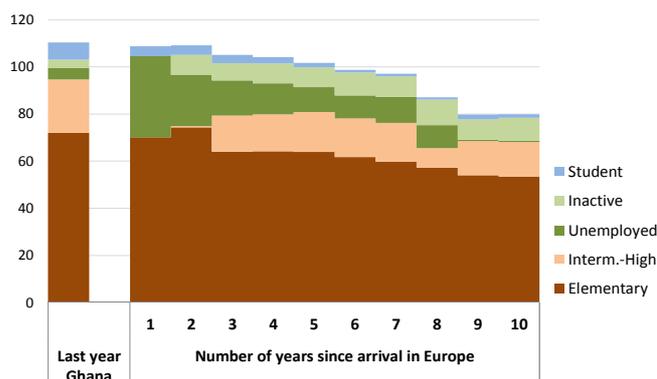
Higher education diploma
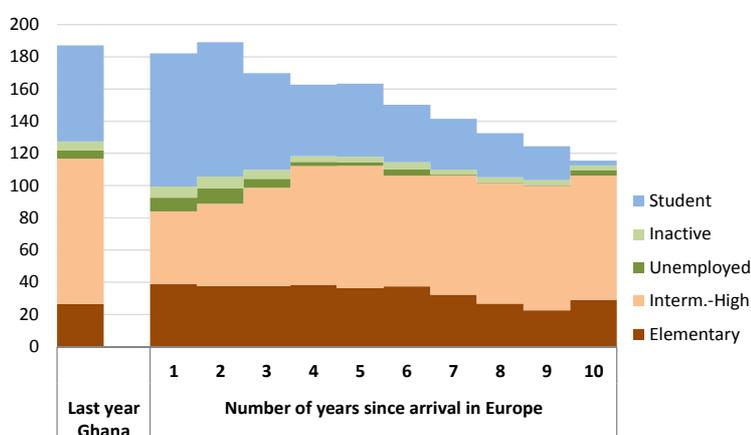
2.4 Economic integration and legal status

A full breakdown of occupational status of migrants by gender, education level and country of interview is provided in table 6 in Annex 1, alongside a cross-tabulation by legal status. The latter shows that those with insecure legal status – i.e. without a residence permit – were significantly more likely to be working in elementary occupations, especially in 'trade and services'. This is evident also in figure 7, which shows recently arrived undocumented migrants much more likely to be working in elementary occupations, and very unlikely to be students compared to documented migrants.

Figure 7: Occupational status in the last year in Africa and at each year of stay in Europe (for the first ten years), by legal status at arrival in Europe

Documented migrants at arrival
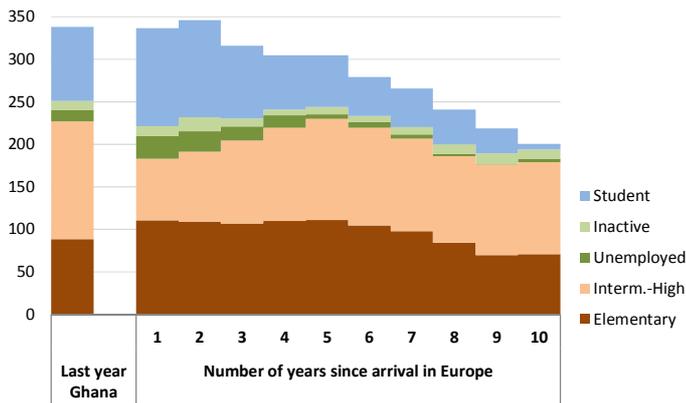
Undocumented migrants at arrival
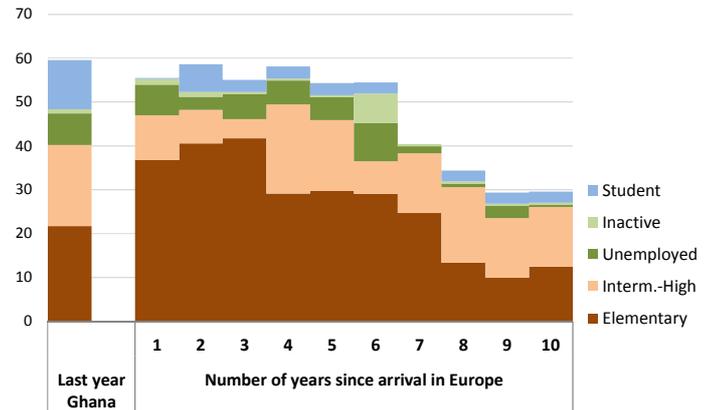
Source : MAFE survey

3   MIGRANTS' ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION TO ORIGIN COUNTRIES

The previous section suggests a reasonable level of labour market integration of Ghanaian migrants in Europe, albeit that this is concentrated in lower-level occupations especially in the Netherlands, and involves different outcomes depending on how long migrants have been in Europe, their gender, level of education and legal status. This section turns to how this translates into economic contributions back to the country of origin, before section 4 considers re-integration back in Ghana of return migrants.

Overall, the evidence of the MAFE survey suggests that attitudes towards the transfer of remittances, making investments back home, and taking part in development initiatives through diaspora organizations also vary according to how long migrants have been in Europe, with a substantially higher proportion doing each of these things at the time of the MAFE survey in 2008 compared with the point at which they first arrived in Europe (Figure 8).

Differences between the UK and the Netherlands, men and women, and people with different levels of education and legal status are less marked overall; in contrast, the biggest differences are on the basis of occupational status, where those employed were unsurpringly more likely to be sending remittances or to own assets than those who were inactive or studying (see Table 9 in Annex 3). Nonetheless, there is some evidence that less educated people, and those with insecure legal status, were more likely to be sending remittances and investing in assets back in Ghana, perhaps reflecting their more tenuous prospects for integration in Europe, and the need therefore to prepare for a possible return.

In the sub-sections below, trends in each of these activities over time are examined in turn, separately by gender, education, employment status and legal status.

Figure 8: Proportion of migrants owning asset(s), sending remittances, paying associative contributions at survey time, by country of residence, at arrival in Europe and at 2009
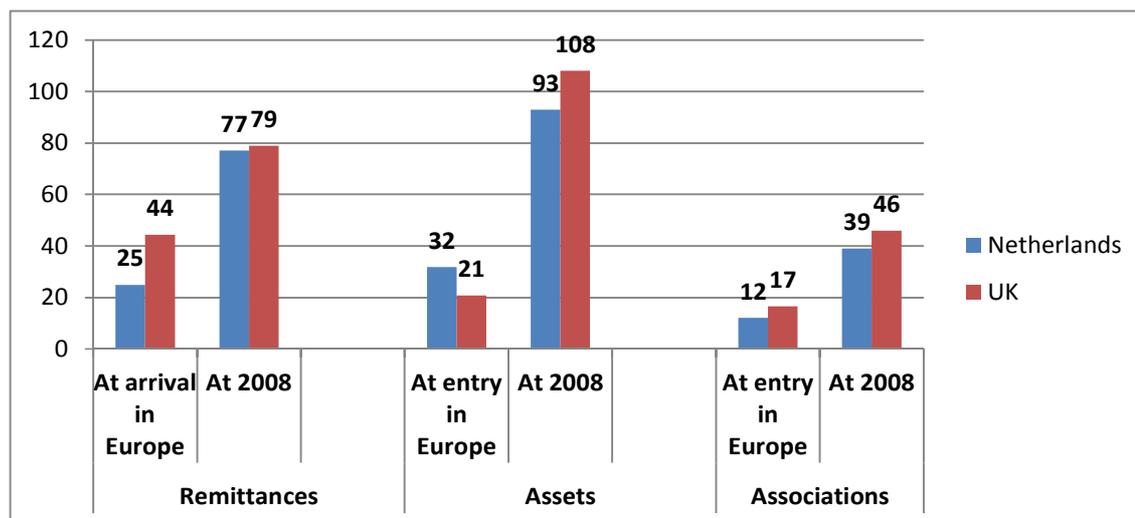
Source : MAFE survey

3.1 Changes in remittances, asset ownership and community investments

In figure 9, the proportion of migrants sending remittances to Ghana is shown according to the number of years they have stayed in Europe, separately by gender, education, employment status and legal status. The data show that although only a minority of those who had just arrived in Europe were sending remittances, this had increased to a majority for those in Europe for at least two years and to a steady state of 65-70% for those in Europe for three years or more, with no sign of a decline, or of any differences by gender. Those with higher level education were less likely to be sending remittances than those with secondary education or less, whilst unsurprisingly, those employed were much more likely to be sending remittances than those who were not in employment. No clear differences can be detected on the basis of legal status on arrival.

Fig. 9: Proportion of migrants sending remittances to Ghana, at each year of stay in Europe (for the first ten years)
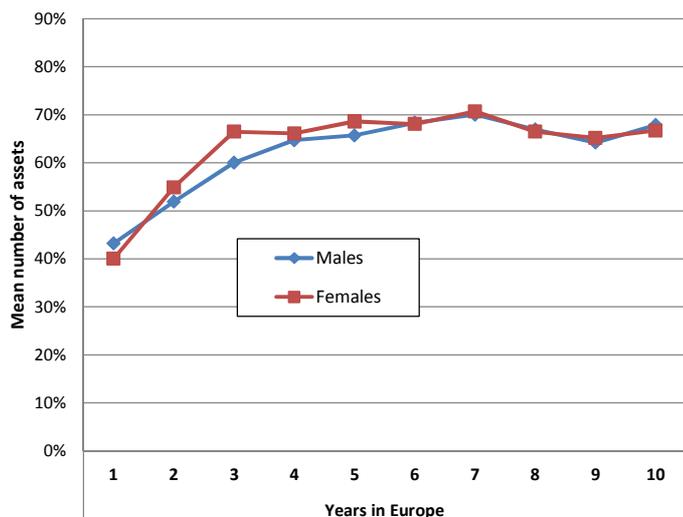
By gender

By education diploma at time of survey
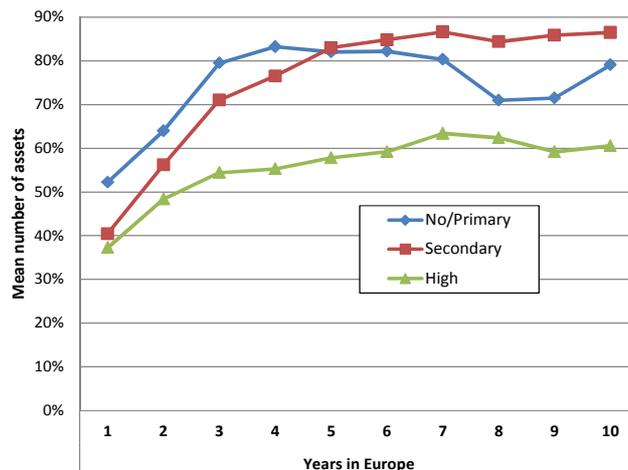
By employment status (time varying, i.e. at each year)
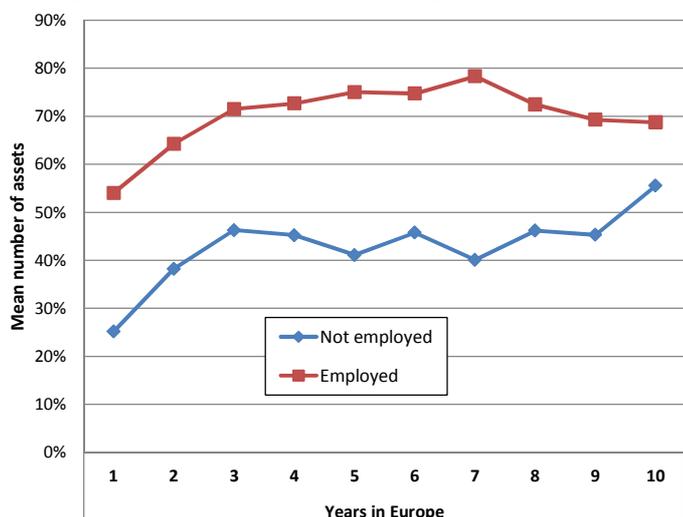
By legal status (time varying, i.e. at each year)
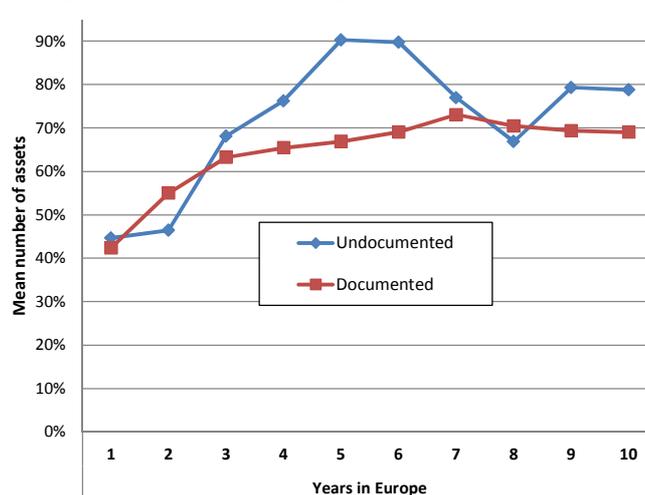
Source : MAFE survey

Turning to assets, data in figure 10 show that from a position where less than one in three men, and one in six women owned an asset – a plot of agricultural land, building plot, housing unit or business – in Ghana before the migrated, this again rises substantially over time, especially amongst men, those with lower levels of education, and those with insecure legal status.

Fig. 10: Mean number of assets in Ghana per migrant at each year of stay in Europe (for the first ten years)
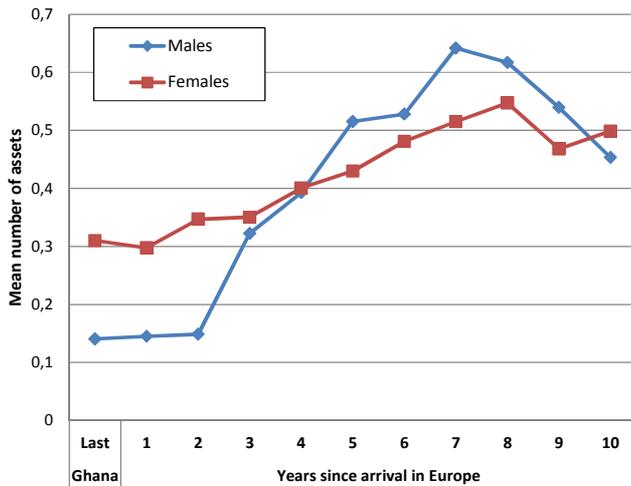
By gender

By education diploma at time of survey
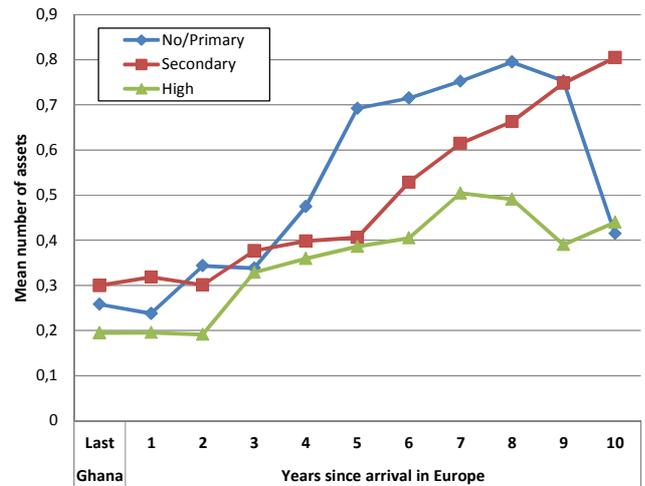
By employment status (time varying, i.e. at each year)
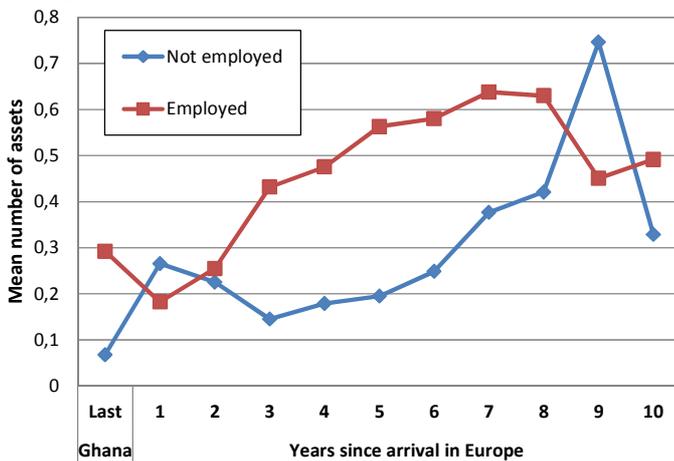
By legal status (at entry time)
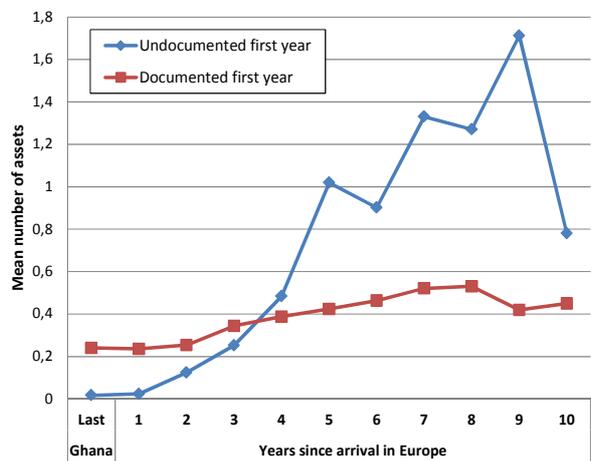
Source : MAFE survey

Finally turning to participation in development activities in origin countries through associations (including religious associations), data presented in figure 11 shows again that this participation is greater the longer that migrants have been in the UK, with women more likely to be paying contributions to associations than men, and those in employment more likely to be paying contributions than those not in employment – although the latter differences only emerges amongst those who had been living in Europe for five years or longer.

Fig. 11: Percentage of migrants paying associative contributions, by duration of stay in Europe

By gender
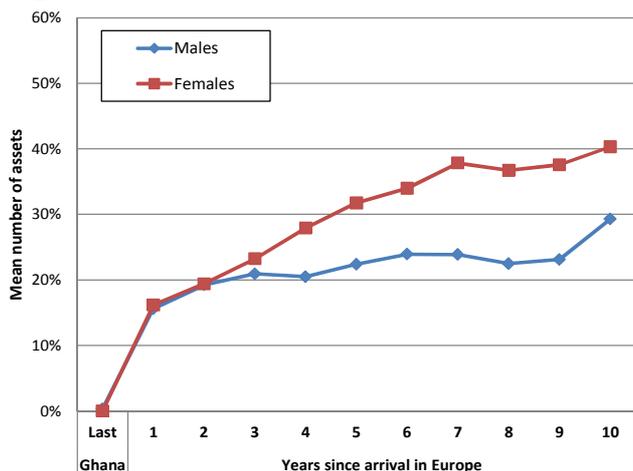
By education diploma at time of survey
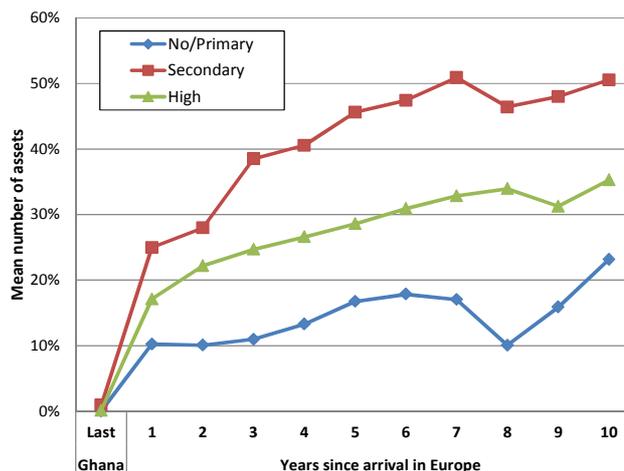
By employment status (time varying, i.e. at each year)
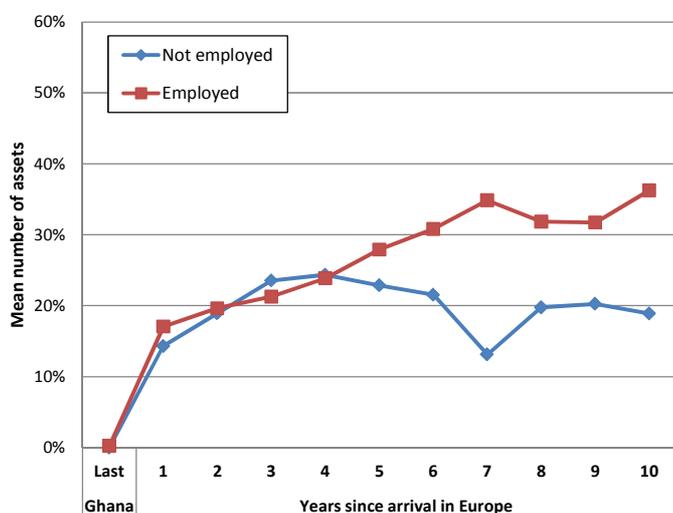
**By legal status at entry time in Europe**
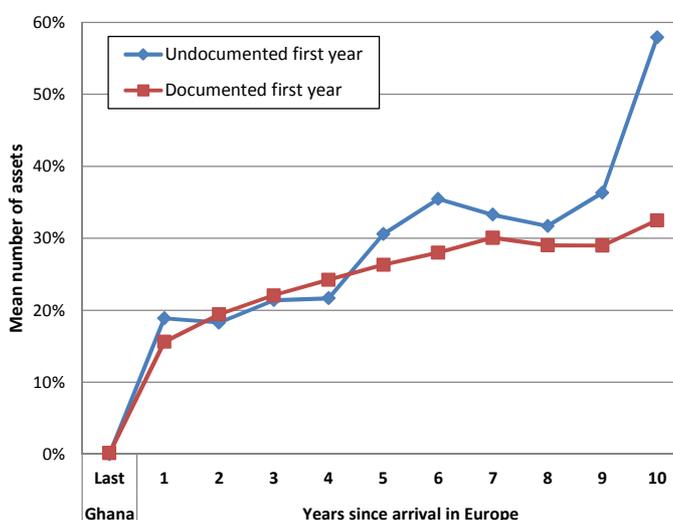
Source : MAFE survey

Overall, interpretation of these figures needs some care, but the data suggests that engagement with home both increases over time, and is higher amongst those who are more likely to be considering return. It is to re-integration on return that the following, and final section now turns.

4. LABOUR MARKET RE-INTEGRATION IN GHANA OF RETURNEES FROM EUROPE

This final section is based on a survey of returnees and non-migrants interviewed in Ghana in the cities of Accra, Kumasi and Cape Coast. In total, 89 individuals were interviewed who had returned after a period of at least one year in Europe, whilst comparison can be made with a further 1,000 others who had either not migrated out of Ghana, or had migrated to, and returned from other destinations, principally in Africa. Overall, the returnee sample was dominated by men, and was well-educated and relatively older compared to the wider population interviewed in Ghana. Nearly three quarters of those interviewed had returned from the UK, and nearly half had spent less than five years abroad (see table 10 in Annex 4). Just one returnee had come from the Netherlands, with the others returning from other EU destination countries.

The reasons for return stated varied quite widely, and although this should be treated with caution due to the small sample, and the fact that only one reason was allowed per returnee, this finding is in line with the findings of other authors who have shown that return to Ghana has been motivated variously by the end of a period of study, work or administrative difficulties abroad, but also work and other economic opportunities back in Ghana, particularly since the country's economic growth from the 1990s onwards (Ammassari 2003). Of particular note is that very few in the sample admitted to being undocumented in Europe, nor was an 'administrative' return (the end of a visa, deportation) common. However, this – and the relatively high level of education of the returnees interviewed – does not necessarily give a representative picture of return to Ghana, where a substantial level of administrative and assisted return has occurred. A possible explanation is that those who had been removed, deported, or had returned with other forms of state assistance or coercion were more difficult to track down, unwilling to be interviewed, or unwilling to talk about their experience if they were interviewed.

Existing literature on return from Europe to Ghana is relatively limited, but is reasonably positive about the extent to which migrant re-integration has been possible, at least since the early 1990s, and about the impact of return on returnees themselves, and on wider chances for development. For example, Ammassari (2004) found that highly-skilled migrants returning to Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire up to the end of the 1990s had generally positive experiences, and a positive impact on development, so long as broader economic and political circumstances in the home country were propitious. She also suggests that there is an 'optimal work duration' abroad – approximately five years – during which the greatest benefits are felt (Ammassari 2003). In contrast, using the same sample of returnees, Black and Castaldo (2009) found that work experience abroad was a critical factor in influencing engagement specifically with entrepreneurial activity after return.

4.1 Occupational trajectories and changes in the quality of jobs of returnees over time

As can be seen from data presented in figure 12, the occupational status of returnees both at the moment of their return, and at the time of the survey, was broadly positive in the sense that a majority had found intermediate or high level employment, including many who some who had worked in elementary jobs immediately before their return from Europe. However, some caution is needed, particularly in light of the relatively highly educated status of this group. For example, nearly 30% of the group were students before leaving to Europe, and nearly 40% had been students immediately before returning, yet it is not clear that all of this group had found higher level occupations on return. Indeed, the proportion of the sample who were unemployed immediately after return was quite high, and even at the time of interview was twice the level in non-returnee population.

Figure 12. Occupational status of returnees from Europe at four points in time in their migratory life and of non migrants at 2009 (%)
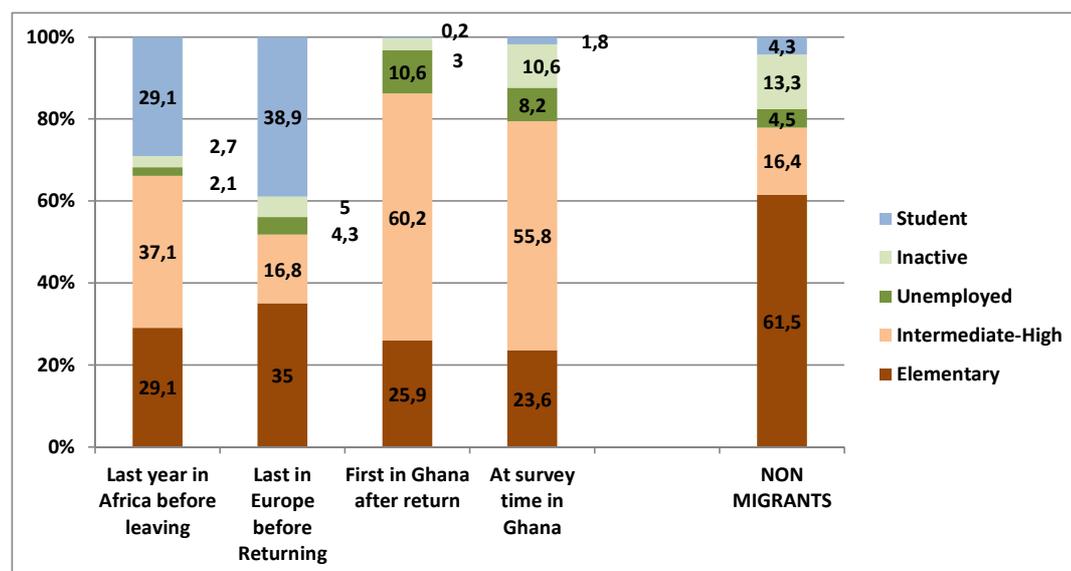
Source : MAFE survey

Turning to employment sector, the principal difference to note is the importance of work in trade and services in Ghana both before departure, and after return, compared to its absence amongst this group during the period they were in Europe, where jobs in agriculture, industry and construction became much more important (figure 13). This may reflect a selection bias amongst returnees, since we know that work in trade and services was significant amongst migrants interviewed in Europe: it may be that those able to find jobs in these sectors in Europe do not return, and it is those in the less 'desirable' or well-paid manufacturing, construction and agricultural sectors who are more likely to choose (or be forced) to return.

Figure 13. Employment sector (working population) of returnees from Europe at four points in time in their migratory life and of non migrants at 2009 (%)
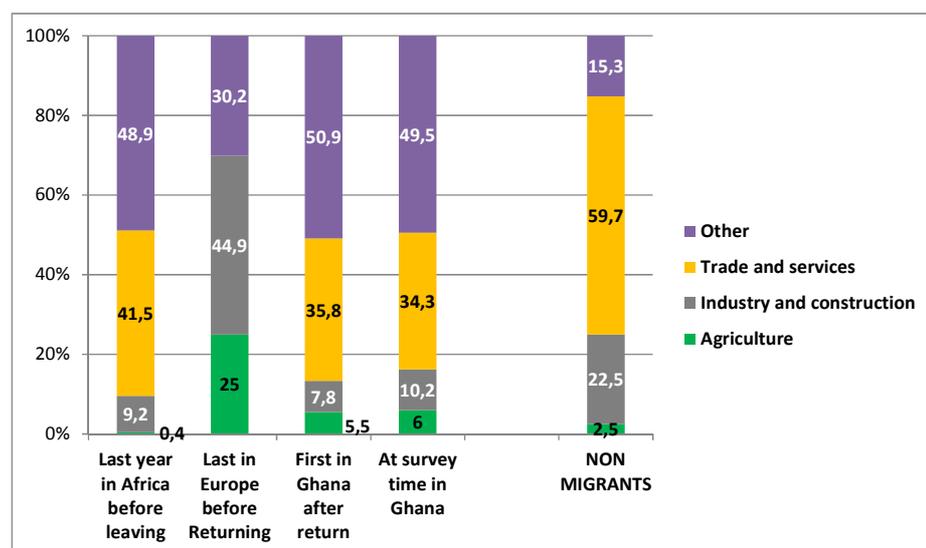
Source : MAFE survey

Data presented in figure 14 shows that the proportion who were self-employed was substantially higher after return than it had been before departure, consistent with the finding of Black and Castaldo (2009) that significant investment in entrepreneurial activity had occurred post-return. However, it is worth noting that the proportion of returnees who were self-employed was still well below the proportion of non-migrants who were self-employed, a comparison that Black and

Castaldo did not make as their sample was exclusively of returnees. Data also suggest that former migrants have more chances of finding a job as an employee than those who never migrated.

Figure 14. Type of employment (working population) of returnees from Europe at four points in time in their migratory life and of non migrants at 2009 (%)
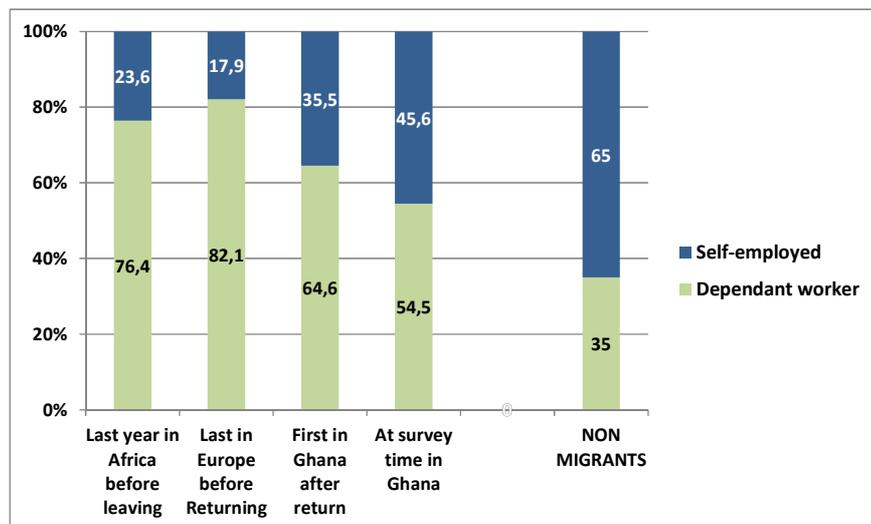
Finally, figures 15 and 16 show that in terms of average occupational level – as measured in the ISEI (International Socio-Economic Index of occupational status) score – and in terms of self-reported living conditions, returnees reported better occupationals tatus and living conditions post return compared to pre-departure. In turn, a significant number of returnees reported that their occupational status and living conditions in Europe were lower immediately before return, perhaps helping to explain why they chose to move back to Ghana.

Figure 15. Mean ISEI score among working people for the the last year in Africa, the last year in Europe, at each year since return in Ghana
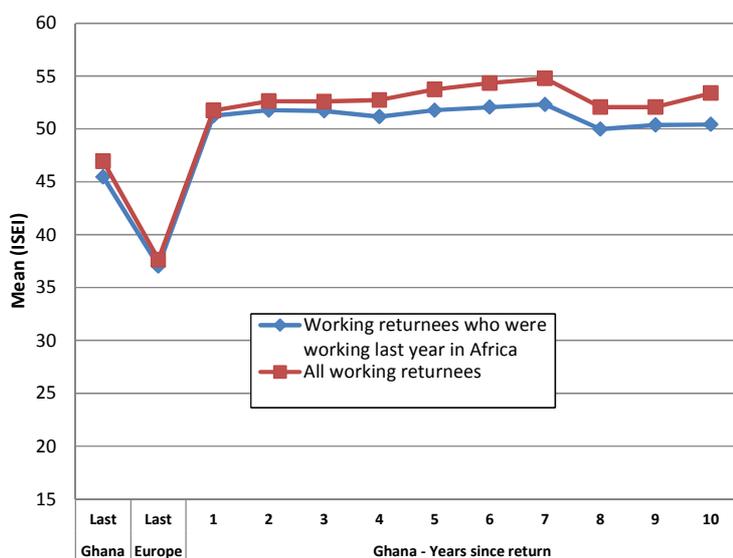
Table 16. Living conditions of returnees (%)
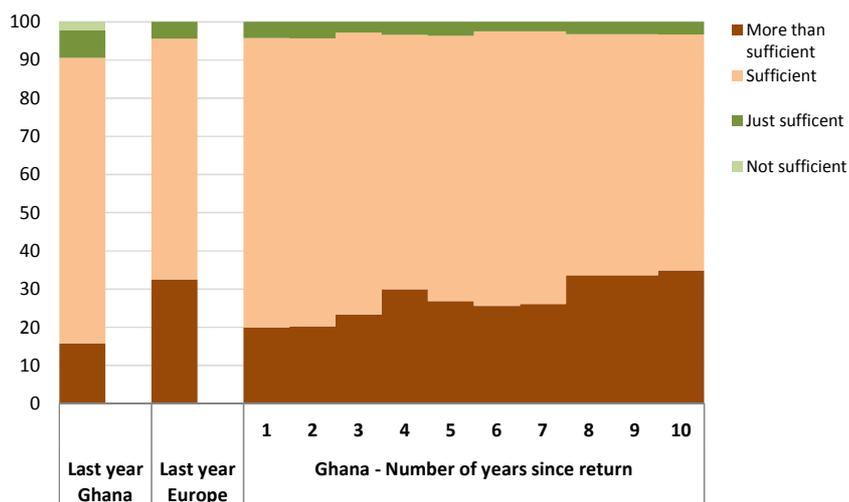
Source : MAFE survey

Conclusions

This report has explored the labour market experiences of Ghanaian migrants in the UK and the Netherlands, based on a new, longitudinal sample of migrants, whilst also considering their engagement with development in Ghana, and their reintegration after return. Although some existing qualitative evidence has been quite pessimistic about labour market integration in the two countries, data from the MAFE project suggests a more optimistic scenario, with Ghanaians more likely to be employed than Dutch or UK nationals, and in the UK at least, quite high levels of employment in intermediate and high-level occupations, reflecting the high educational qualifications of a significant proportion of those interviewed.

However, despite this overall evidence, there remain some reasons to be concerned about the labour market situation of Ghanaians in the two countries. First, those who have arrived been in Europe for less than two years, especially in the Netherlands, have fared much worse, even if there is some evidence that occupational outcomes then improve over time. Second, there is clear evidence from those who have returned to Ghana that they experienced a decline both in occupational status and self-reported living standards, although this conclusion is based on quite a small sample of returnees from Europe. It is also clear that not all Ghanaians have obtained jobs that are commensurate with their level of qualifications, indicating that there is at least some evidence of the phenomenon of 'brain waste' – affecting around 7% of those interviewed.

Meanwhile, whilst a high proportion – around two thirds – of those interviewed in Europe reported sending remittances back to Ghana, this percentage is lower in the first two years after arrival, and there is some evidence of the propensity to remit being higher amongst those whose status in Europe is less secure, or where there is a greater likelihood of return. This suggests that policies designed to promote development through migration need to pay attention to the circularity of migration, but also avoid temporary migration schemes of such short duration that they do not allow migrants to build up the capacity to save and remit.

ANNEX

ANNEX 1: MIGRANTS' PROFILE

Table 5. Migrants socio-economic characteristics at the time of the survey (%)

	Gender		Country		Total
	Males	Males	Netherlands	United kingdom	
Level of education					
No/primary	23,9	31,7	19,7	28,8	27,6
Secondary	5,7	11,6	45,4	2,6	8,5
Higher	70,4	56,7	34,8	68,6	64,0
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
N	222	200	273	149	422
Occupational Status					
Employed	76,5	73,9	82,1	74,2	75,3
Unemployed	6,9	3,8	8,6	4,9	5,4
Student	8,6	10,5	5,6	10,1	9,5
Inactive	7,9	11,9	3,7	10,8	9,8
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
N	222	200	273	149	422
Age					
25-34	25,6	26,3	19,7	26,9	25,9
35-44	37,2	28,6	32,6	33,2	33,2
45-64	37,1	44,7	46,1	39,9	40,7
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
N	222	200	273	149	422
Duration of stay in Europe					
1-4 years	15,6	17,0	17,6	16,1	16,3
5-9 years	25,9	29,4	28,0	27,5	27,6
10 years and over	58,5	53,6	54,4	56,5	56,2
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
N	222	200	273	149	422
Residence permit					
No	9,8	2,3	17,3	4,4	6,2
Yes or does not need	90,2	97,8	82,7	95,6	93,8
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
N	220	196	273	149	416
Residence permit at arrival (first year)					
No	10,4	6,3	16,5	7,2	8,5
Yes or does not need	90	94	84	93	92
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
N	222	200	273	149	422

Table 6. Occupation status of migrants by gender, education, legal status, and country of residence (2009)

	Gender		Education (diploma)			Legal status		Country		
	Males	Females	No/ Prim.	Sec.	Higher	No reside nce permit	Residence permit	Nether lands	UK	Total
Occupational status (total population)										
Employed	76,5	73,9	74.6	75.8	75.6	94.3	73.5	82,1	74,2	75,3
Unemployed	6,9	3,8	7.1	12.5	3.7	4.3	5.5	8,6	4,9	5,4
Student	8,6	10,5	8.9	1.8	10.8	0.0	10.4	5,6	10,1	9,5
Inactive	7,9	11,9	9.4	9.9	9.9	1.4	10.6	3,7	10,8	9,8
Total	100,0	100,0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100,0	100,0	100,0
N	222	200	101	118	203	**59**	**357**	273	149	422
P-value (chi2)	0.60 (ns)		0.59 (ns)			0.11 (ns)		0.02 (**)		
Employment status (active population)										
Unemployed	91.8	4.9	8.7	14.2	4.7	4.3	7.0	9.5	6.2	6.7
Employed	8.2	95.1	91.3	85.8	95.3	95.7	93.0	90.5	93.8	93.3
Total	100,0	100,0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100,0	100,0	100,0
N	**190**	**169**	87	110	162	**57**	**296**	**244**	**115**	359
P-value (chi2)	0.37 (ns)		0.30 (ns)			0.41 (ns)		0.39 (ns)		
Employment sector (working population)										
Agriculture	0.0	0.2	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.2	1.0	0.0	0.1
Industry and construction	7.8	1.2	5.7	12.8	3.5	2.5	5.0	13.0	3.4	4.8
Trade and services	37.8	38.6	60.3	62.2	25.6	90.5	32.8	71.5	32.5	38.2
Other	54.4	60.0	34.0	23.8	70.9	7.0	62.0	14.5	64.1	56.9
Total	100,0	100,0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100,0	100,0	100,0
N	169	146	79	93	143	50	260	208	107	315
P-value (chi2)	0.08 (*)		<0.01 (***)			<0.01 (***)		<0.01 (***)		
Level of occupation (working population)										
Elementary	39.2	35.2	63.0	75.3	21.5	92.5	33.7	83.0	29.6	37.4
Intermediate	23.0	25.7	19.6	14.0	27.5	1.2	26.9	9.0	26.8	24.2
Higher	37.8	39.1	17.4	10.7	51.0	6.3	39.4	8.0	43.6	38.4
Total	100,0	100,0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100,0	100,0	100,0
N	169	146	79	93	143	50	260	208	107	315
P-value (chi2)	0.88 (ns)		<0.01 (***)			<0.01 (***)		<0.01 (***)		
Type of employment (working population)										
Dependant worker	84.3	93.0	83.9	93.3	89.5	72.7	91.4	88.0	88.3	88.3
Self-employed	15.7	7.0	16.1	6.7	70.5	**27.3**	**8.6**	12.0	**11.7**	**11.7**
Total	100,0	100,0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100,0	100,0	100,0
N	172	148	79	97	144	51	264	214	106	320
P-value (chi2)	0.09(*)		0.30 (ns)		0.06 (*)			0.95 (ns)		
Mean ISEI score (working population)	45.6	42.4	36.5	28.8	49.9	26.2	45.7	27.8	47.2	44.2
N	171	142	79	95	139	50	258	211	102	313
P value (F test)	0.11 (ns)		<0.01 (***)			<0.01 (***)		<0.01 (***)		

ANNEX 2: Labour transitions from Africa to Europe

Table 7. Comparison of last occupational status in Africa before first migration and the first occupational status in Europe (%), by gender (migrants in any of the two countries: UK and the Netherlands)

		First status in Europe						
	Men	Elementary	Intermediate/High	Unemployed	Inactive	Students	*Total*	*N*
	Elementary	74	0,3	24,4	0,7	0,7	*100*	**73**
	Intermediate/High	20	32,8	4,7	0	42,5	*100*	**72**
	Unemployed	55,9	2,4	1,5	0	40,3	*100*	**14**
	Inactive	32,5	0	10,5	56,9	0	*100*	**8**
	Students	29,3	19,6	1,2	0	49,8	*100*	**46**
	All	35,6	20,2	7,4	1	35,8	*100*	**213**
	Women	Elementary	Intermediate/High	Unemployed	Inactive	Students	*Total*	*N*
	Elementary	58,2	17,8	15,5	1,8	6,8	*100*	**92**
	Intermediate/High	18,5	36	7,2	7,3	31	*100*	**54**
	Unemployed	61	28,3	7,3	0	3,4	*100*	**10**
	Inactive	23,5	0	2,8	21,8	51,9	*100*	**10**
	Students	15,5	20,8	1,9	14,1	47,8	*100*	**25**
	All	33,6	24,7	8,8	7,2	25,7	*100*	**191**
	All	Elementary	Intermediate/High	Unemployed	Inactive	Students	*Total*	*N*
	Elementary	64,4	11	19	1,4	4,4	*100*	**165**
	Intermediate/High	19,3	34,3	5,8	3,3	37,3	*100*	**126**
	Unemployed	58,4	14,9	4,3	0	22,4	*100*	**24**
	Inactive	25,5	0	4,5	29,5	40,6	*100*	**18**
	Students	24,7	20	1,5	4,7	49,2	*100*	**71**
	All	34,7	22,4	8,1	3,9	31	*100*	**404**

Last status in Africa

Table 8. Comparison of first occupational status in Europe and the occupational status at survey time (%), by gender (migrants in any of the two countries: UK and the Netherlands)

First status in Europe		Status at survey time						
	Men	Elementary	Intermediate/High	Unemployed	Inactive	Students	*Total*	*N*
	Elementary	66,1	18	0,5	11	4,4	*100*	94
	Intermediate/High	0	86,7	11,8	0,5	1	*100*	23
	Unemployed	45,9	22,3	30,4	1,4	0	*100*	41
	Inactive	6,6	0	0	93,5	0	*100*	5
	Students	8,4	57,5	5,9	8,5	19,7	*100*	54
	All	30	46,4	6,9	8	8,7	*100*	217
	Women	Elementary	Intermediate/High	Unemployed	Inactive	Students	*Total*	*N*
	Elementary	58,1	29,3	1,2	11,5	0	*100*	78
	Intermediate/High	5,8	80,4	4,6	0	9,2	*100*	25
	Unemployed	44,2	29,9	25	0	0,9	*100*	41
	Inactive	12,9	36,1	0	34,9	16,1	*100*	15
	Students	1,7	45,4	0,5	23,4	29	*100*	35
	All	26,2	46,9	3,9	12,2	10,8	*100*	194
	All	Elementary	Intermediate/High	Unemployed	Inactive	Students	*Total*	*N*
	Elementary	62,5	23,1	0,8	11,2	2,4	*100*	172
	Intermediate/High	3	83,5	8,1	0,2	5,2	*100*	48
	Unemployed	45	26,2	27,6	0,7	0,5	*100*	82
	Inactive	12,1	31,5	0	42,4	14,1	*100*	20
	Students	5,8	52,8	3,9	14,2	23,3	*100*	89
	All	28,2	46,7	5,5	10	9,7	*100*	411

ANNEX 3: ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION OF MIGRANTS TO ORIGIN COUNTRY

Table 9. Proportion of migrants owning asset(s), sending remittances, paying associative contributions at survey time, by socio-economic and demographic characteristics

	Remittances	Assets (mean number)	Association	N
Gender				
Males	0 .80	1,15	0,43	222
Females	0.79	0,96	0,47	200
Chi2	0.85 (ns)			
Occupational Status				
Employed	0.82	1,14	0,47	324
Unemployed	0.74	1,19	0,31	35
Student	0.59	0,55	0,29	36
Inactive	0.77	0,91	0,55	27
Chi2	<0.01***			
Type of employment (working population)				
Dependant worker	0.85	1,17	0,46	283
Self-employed	0.58	1,01	0,54	37
Chi2	<0.01***			
Country				
Netherlands	0.77	0,93	0,39	273
United kingdom	0.79	1,08	0,46	149
Chi2	0.69 (ns)			
Education				
No/Primary	0.77	0,93	0,39	85
Secondary	0.85	0,92	0,29	147
Higher	0.79	1,19	0,55	190
Chi2	0.59 (ns)			
Legal status				
No residence permit	0.70	1,13	0,33	59
Residence permit	0.80	1,03	0,45	357
Chi2	0.21 (ns)			
Total		1,13	0,46	315

ANNEX 4: RETURNEES' PROFILE

Table 1. Socio-economic characteristics of returnees from Europe and non-returnees in Ghana at the time of the survey (%)

	Returnees from Europe	Non returnees (from Europe)
Sex		
Males	64.5	37,6
Females	35.5	62,4
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**
Level of education		
No/primary	14.3	48.2
Secondary	32.2	37.4
Higher	53.5	14.4
	100.0	**100.0**
Age		
25-34	24.8	37.9
35-44	22 .5	28.3
45-64	52.7	33.8
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**
Country before return		
United KIngdom	71.3	-
Germany	10.2	-
Spain	6.4	-
Netherlands	0.7	
Other European countries	11.4	**-**
Total	**100.0**	
Legal status before return		
Documented	71.8	-
Undocumented	8.5	-
Missing	19.7	
Years in Europe		
Less than 5 years	49.2	-
5-9 years	35.9	-
10 years and over	14.9	-
Motives of return		
Family reasons	13.7	
Work	18.1	
Studies	29.9	
Difficult living conditions	5.9	
Administrative reasons	11.6	
Investment	0.0	
Others	20.8	
Missing	1.0	
N	**87**	**1001**

References

Ammassari, S. (2003). International Migration and Return of Élites to Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. School of Global Studies. Brighton, University of Sussex. **DPhil in Development Studies**.

Ammassari, S. (2004). "From nation building to entrepreneurship: the impact of elite return migrants in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana." Population, Place and Space **12**.

Asima, P. P. D. (2010). Continuities and Discontinuities in Gender Ideologies and Relations: Ghanaian Migrants in London. School of Global Studies. Brighton, University of Sussex. **DPhil in Migration Studies:** 333.

Beauchemin C., 2012, Migrations between Africa and Europe: Rationale for a Survey Design, MAFE Methodological Note n°5, Paris, INED, 45 p

Bevelander, P. and J. Veenman (2006). "Naturalisation and Socioeconomic Integration: the case of the Netherlands." IZA Discussion Paper **2153**.

Black, R. and A. Castaldo (2009). "Return migration and entrepreneurship in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire: the role of capital transfers." Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie **100**(1): 44-58.

Black, R. , Engbersen, G., Okolski, M., Pantiru, C. (2010) A Continent Moving West?: EU Enlargement and Labour Migration from Central and Eastern Europe. Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam

Dustmann, C. and F. Fabbri (2003). "Language proficiency and labour market performance of immigrants in the UK." The Economic Journal **113**(489): 695-717.

Gijsberts, M. and J. Dagevos (2010). At home in the Netherlands? Trends in integration of non-Western migrants. The Hague, Netherlands Institute for Social Research.

Green, F. and Y. Zhu (2010). "Overqualification, job dissatisfaction and increasing dispersion in the returns to graduate education." Oxford Economic Papers **62**(4): 740-763.

Kyambi, S. (2005). Beyond Black and White: Mapping New Immigrant Communities. London, Institute for Public Policy Research.

McKee-Ryan, F. M. (2011). ""I have a job, but ...": A review of underemployment." Journal of Management **37**(4): 962-996.

OECD (2008). Labour Market Integration in Belgium, France, the Netherlands and Portugal. Jobs for Immigrants. Paris, Organisation for Economic Cooperation for Development. **2**.

Oyelere, R. U. (2007). "Brain drain, waste or gain? What we know about the Kenyan case." <u>Journal of Global Initiatives</u> **2**(2): 113-129.

Page, J. and S. Plaza (2006). "Migration and development: a survey of the global evidence." <u>Journal of African Economies</u> **15**(2): 245-336.

Pang, T., M. A. Lansang, et al. (2002). "A global problem needs global solutions." <u>British Medical Journal</u> **324**: 499.

Raghuram, P. (2008) Reconceptualising UK's transnational medical labour market, in Connell, J. (ed) The Internatioanl Migration of Health Workers, Routledge, New York

Statham, P., R. Koopmans, et al. (2005). "Multiculturalism, religion and migrants' claims-making for group demands in Britain, the Netherlands and France." <u>Ethnicities</u> **5**(4): 427-459.

van Amersfoort, H. and M. van Niekerk (2006). "Immigration as a colonial inheritance: post-colonial immigrants in the Netherlands, 1945-2002." <u>Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies</u> **32**(3): 323-346.

Vasta, E. and L. Kandilige (2010). "'London the Leveller': Ghanaian work strategies and community solidarity." <u>Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies</u> **36**(4): 581-598.