

ARE TRANSNATIONAL FAMILY CONFIGURATIONS PART OF THE FAMILIES' MIGRATION STRATEGIES OR A NECESSARY STAGE OF THEIR SETTLEMENT PROCESS?

A case study of recent immigrant arrivals in France

Tatiana Eremenko, Institut National d'Études Démographiques and University of Bordeaux IV

tatiana.ereenko@ined.fr

Introduction

Growing literature on the **living conditions and practices of transnational families**, particularly those with children.

Definition: Transnational family configurations are families in which one or both **parents residing in the destination country (France)** and at least one **child residing in the country of origin**

Diversity of transnational family situations depending on:

- migrant parent (only father or mother or both parents)
- parent's socio-economic and legal status
- relations with family in country of origin, particularly the children's caregiver

The **reasons underlying these family situations** (beyond the existence of international migration) still remain unclear:

- Chosen family arrangement linked to the migrant parent's return project

→ **Result of a migration strategy**

- Necessary family arrangement through which migrant families go through during settlement process

→ **Result of migrants' precarious socio-economic and legal situation at arrival**

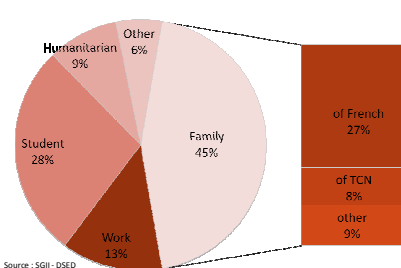
Research questions:

- What are the factors determining transnational family configurations ?
- What are the links between these family situations and the migrant parent's migration projects about settlement and family reunification in the destination country

French context

- In the 2000s the annual immigrant inflow was around 200,000
- African countries account for over 50% of inflows, evenly divided between Maghreb and Sub-Saharan Africa
- Since the 1970s and the halt on work migration, flows have mainly been fueled by family migrants

Fig 1. Immigrant inflows by category of entry, 2009



Source: SGIJ-DSED

Data

Longitudinal Survey on the Integration of Newly Arrived Migrants in France (ELIPA)

- **Population:** migrants receiving their first permanent residence permit in 2009

– excludes students, temporary and highly skilled professionals → represents around 100,000 migrants in 2009

- **Sample size:** 6,100 (wave 1 in 2010) → 4,750 (wave 2 in 2011)

Sample specificities:

- The year of **first permit** does not always coincide with **year of arrival** – 23% in France since 2 to 5 years and 34% more than 5 years

– longest durations for “workers” and “other family members” (mean 8 years) and shortest for family reunification and spouse of French (mean < 2 years)

- Respondents were interviewed about their **children residing outside of the household** (incl. country of origin) **only in wave 2**

Identifying transnational families

One out of four recent migrants had a least one child born abroad:

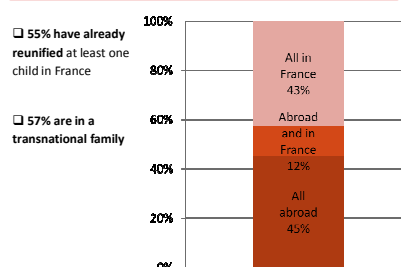
Tab 1. Migrants' parental status (%), W2

| | N | % |
|--------------------------------|------|----|
| No children | 1839 | 39 |
| All children born in France | 1489 | 34 |
| At least one child born abroad | 1428 | 27 |
| Total | 4756 | |

- These migrants are at a **higher risk of becoming transnational parents**
- However family situations of two other groups may evolve in the future

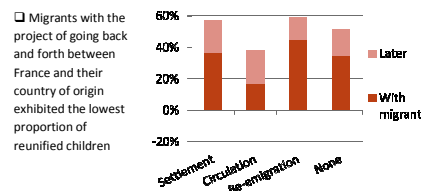
Among migrants with children born abroad:

Fig 2. Place of residence of children born abroad (%), W2



Child reunification

Fig 3. Timing of children's reunification by parent's migration project



□ Migrants with the project of going back and forth between France and their country of origin exhibited the lowest proportion of reunified children

Determining the impact of migration and socio-economic and legal factors on:

Tab 3. Effects on the probabilities of:

Child reunification

Odds ratio, logistic regression

Reunification intentions

Main results :

- The migration project in itself has no significant effect

- **Legal status** plays a major role

→ migrants coming in family categories and refugees are most likely to bring children with them

- **Education** : higher educated parents bring more often their children to France (resources, parenting styles...)

- **Women** are more likely to come or reunify with children, even when controlling for the fact that they more often come in “family” categories

- **Sub-Saharan migrants** are least likely to have brought children to France

- Children in **reconstituted families** tend to be left behind

- **Positive effect of family size**

| Variable | Category | Odds Ratio |
|--|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Migration project | Project of settlement in France | ref. |
| | Circulation between France and origin | 1.2 |
| | Re-emigrate to other country | 1.0 |
| | No specific project | 1.0 |
| Regularity of stay | Irregular status in the past | ref. |
| | Only regular status | 1.5* |
| Category of entry | Worker | ref. |
| | Family reunification | 1.9* |
| | Spouse of French | 1.4 |
| | Other family | 2.4*** |
| | Refugee | 3.3*** |
| | None / Primary | ref. |
| Education | Secondary | 1.1 |
| | Higher | 1.7** |
| | Employed | ref. |
| Professional situation | Unemployed | 1.0 |
| | Other | 1.4 |
| Sex | Male | ref. |
| | Female | 1.7*** |
| Region of origin | Maghreb | ref. |
| | Sahel Africa | 0.3*** |
| | Other Africa | 0.4*** |
| | Asia | 1.1 |
| | Other | 0.9 |
| | Length of stay in France | Less than 2 years |
| Family type | 2 to 5 years | 1.5* |
| | More than 5 years | 1.3 |
| Number of children born abroad (cont.) | Children of couple | ref. |
| | Children of ego only | 0.1*** |
| Age of youngest child born abroad (cont) | Mixed status child group | 0.2*** |
| | Children of couple | 1.3* |
| pseudo R-sq | | 0.3 |
| | | 0.053 |
| N | | 1428 |

Exponentiated coefficients : * p<0.10, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Main results :

- The migration project in itself has no significant effect

- **Refugees** are the only legal category declaring higher intentions
- impact of context at departure (conflict, war) and importance of having children close

- Those **employed** have more often the project of sponsoring a family member
- importance of financial resources (legal procedure, housing)

- **Women** have higher intentions than men to reunify their children

- Migrants **separated for a longer time** from their children tend to have higher intentions

- Migrants with children from a previous union also intend more often to bring their children to France

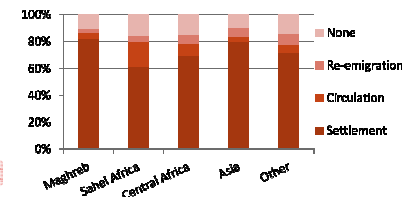
- **Decrease with age of child:**
- Legal criteria but also preferences (of child and / or parent)

Migration project

The migration project does not have the expected impact when controlling for other factors. Possible reasons for this :

- Specificity of sample: migrants who have just obtained a first permanent residence permit for France
- Sample size
- Close relation between migration project and region of origin

Fig 5. Parent's migration project by region of origin



Conclusion

These results point to the fact that:

- Transnational family situations are often the result of the difficulty of carrying out family reunification, but may also be due to cultural preferences
- Reunification intentions are harder to grasp and seem to depend on the migration context as well as the stage in the family's life cycle

Future directions for research:

- **Comparing reunification intentions and realizations:**
- will become possible with results from **wave 3** carried out in 2013

References

Barou, J. (2001). "La famille à distance. Nouvelles stratégies familiales chez les immigrés d'Afrique sahélo-saharienne." *Hommes et migrations* 1232.

Bledsoe, C. H. and P. Sow (2011). "Back to Africa: Second Chances for the Children of West African Immigrants." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 73(4): 747-762.

Caring, J., C. Menjivar, et al. (2012). "Central Themes in the Study of Transnational Parenthood." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 38(2): 191-217.

Gardner, K. (2012). "Transnational Migration and the Study of Children: An Introduction." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 38(6): 889-912.

Kraler, A. and P. Bonzoni (2010). "Gender, civic stratification and the right to family life: problematising immigrants' integration in the EU." *International Review of Sociology* 20(1): 181-187.

Mazzucato, V. and D. Schans (2011). "Transnational families and the well-being of children: Conceptual and methodological challenges." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 73(4): 704-712.

Régnaud, C. and F. Domergue (2011). "Enquête ELIPA - Les nouveaux migrants en 2009." *Infos Migrations* 19.

Salazar Parreñas, R. (2005). *Children of Global Migration. Transnational Families and Gendered Woes*. Stanford University Press.

SGIJ-DSED : Département des statistiques, études et documentation du Secrétariat général à l'immigration et à l'intégration