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Migration, Return and Socio-Economic Change in West Africa: The Role of Family

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Summary

This paper seeks to analyse the influence of migrants' families on return and the transfer of financial, human and social capital by West African migrants who have lived in Europe and North America. Based on a survey of over 600 'elite' and less skilled return migrants to Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, as well as qualitative research with migrants remaining in London and Paris, the paper argues that families play an important role in return migration, remittances, and aspects of human, social and financial capital acquisition and investment. Using Cerase's typology of return migration, the analysis seeks to discriminate between migrants whose return decisions were affected by their families – considered as 'return of conservatism', and those who made individual return decisions – considered as 'return of innovation'. The findings reveal that the relationship between the type of return (and extent of family involvement in this decision), and the extent of financial, human and social capital transfers, varies between countries and across groups of migrants. Although those whose return is influenced by their families might be considered to have made more 'conservative' return decisions, this group was found to be more likely to have transferred financial capital to their home country, and more likely to have maintained social capital gained abroad after their return. They were also as likely as 'innovative' returnees to have promoted changes in family life or in the workplace. The paper concludes by exploring several policy implications.

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1. Introduction

Both migration and development have traditionally been classified as primarily economic issues, in which there is a need to focus on economic growth, investment, earnings, and levels of employment in understanding and explaining these phenomena. However, there is growing evidence and realisation that social factors, including factors relating to household and family structures play a critical role in determining patterns of migration and development, and in influencing outcomes. For example, a major development problem in Africa is the lack of capital and investment, and migrants might be seen as generating capital for investment through remittances (Table 1).

Table 1: Net remittances to Economic Community of West African (ECOWAS) countries, 1994-1999

Year	Remittance to the zone	Remittances from the zone	Net remittances (US\$ million)
1994	1168	579	589
1995	1463	640	823
1996	1597	701	896
1997	2500	661	1839
1998	2097	659	1438
1999	1759	248	1511

Source: IMF Balance of Payments Statistic Yearbook

Nonetheless, although the remittances by migrants to their countries of origin are important, many blame both migrants and their families for not using these resources for investment but rather for consumption (Massey *et al* 1998 Hermele 1997, Thomas-Hope 1985). In the African context in particular, research indicates that remittances are primarily used for consumption and social events (Adepoju 1991 1998, Adler 1985, Cobbe 1982), rather than investment in more 'productive' activities, thus lessening their impact on macro-economic indicators of development. Such behaviour is certainly related to the overall economic investment in the region. According to Snrech (1998: 41), meeting basic needs continues to be a major preoccupation in West African economies and 'investments in housing have been a major component of private investment'.

Return migration, particularly when it is voluntary, seems to have had little historical impact on change and development. Fisher *et al.* (1997) argue that the impact of return migrants on development and change is disappointing because

the crucial type of return in promoting such change – return of innovation – is uncommon. Böhning has argued that 'instead of a boom to development and an injection of dynamism, the returnee means a return of failure, conservatism and retirement' (cited in Hermele 1997: 137). In Cesare's (1974) typology, the 'return of conservatism', along with the 'return of failure', are arguably the most influenced by family and kin.

At the same time, at a micro level, many studies have pointed out that migration needs to be placed in its social context (Adepoju 1998a, 1998b, Afolayan 1998, Faist 1999, Findley 1997, Ghosh 2000, Root and de Jong 1990). Rather than simply being a product of economic 'push' and 'pull' factors, migration is also centrally a social process, and in many cases may represent a household or family strategy that has a whole range and mix of economic, social and/or cultural dimensions. For Adepoju (1998b: 326), social networks in international migration bind migrants and non-migrants in complex social and interpersonal relationships.

Here, we take as a starting point the notion that migration is at least partly a social process, and that social and family issues are and will remain important to migrants. Building on this, we seek to draw specific insights on the role played by family factors in influencing the impact of migration on social and economic development in communities of origin. The central questions addressed in this paper are: how important are family factors in shaping the international migration and return of West Africans? To what extent do family factors affect the acquisition and transfer of different forms of capital that might be invested in development? And to what extent does the use of these different forms of capital by migrants actually contribute to social and economic development?

The paper starts by outlining some methodological considerations (section 2), before exploring the salience of family reasons at different stages of the migration decision-making process, and especially the decision to return, based on a survey of more than 600 return migrants to Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire from Europe and North America carried out in 2000-01 (section 3). Section four then seeks to define a composite variable based on this dataset, which separates 'family-induced migrants' from those whose migration decisions are not directly influenced by their families or family circumstances. This variable is used in the subsequent section to assess the relation between migration, family

factors and the transfer and investment of capital to promote development in the country of origin. The same variable is also used to explore whether there are any differences between the two groups in terms of their impact on social and workplace transformation.

2. Some conceptual and methodological considerations

2.1 Defining 'family' and 'development'

In examining the mediating role of family factors in the relationship between international migration and socio-economic development, it is important first to clarify these concepts. At the centre of this paper is the container concept of 'family'. However, although the notion of a 'family' might appear straightforward, its definition remains complex, especially in the African context (Finch 1989). In this region, there is a plurality of family forms, which have evolved over time (Baerends 1993; Locoh 1988, 1989, 1991, 1995; Vimard and N'Cho 1991, Vimard 1993). From this diversity, Locoh (1989) identifies some key characteristics of the African family, including the tendency for extended family structure, high separation of gender responsibilities, stronger lineage than conjugal solidarity, integration of reproductive and productive functions and dominance by elders. Yet, in stressing the complexity and extended nature of families, others suggest that Locoh might have gone too far, underestimating the conjugal bond. For example, O'Laughlin (1995) argues that both lineage and conjugal solidarity are important to individuals.

In practice, the definition and perception of the family are highly related to the cultural and material settings in which the individuals and family members live and have lived. For this reason, we might expect that migration itself constantly shapes and reshapes conceptions of the family. How then to capture the boundary of the family and conveniently (if at all) define the family? One solution would be the *a priori* definition by the researcher before fieldwork of what constitutes a 'family', with this notion being imposed on respondents. Such an approach certainly has some advantages, notably the ability to directly compare across different migrants and groups. However, it also has an important shortcoming, in that any concept defined *a priori* may be poorly fitted to the lived reality of many migrants.

Instead, this paper adopts an approach that prioritises the perspective of migrants themselves.

Family networks may serve as the primary social network available to migrants; for this reason, we left it largely open to individual respondents to include or exclude from their family network whoever they deemed appropriate. In practice, while spouses and offspring were included *de facto*, the inclusion or exclusion of the other members of the 'family' was left up to each individual respondent. The implication of this approach is that this paper cannot assess the amount of social capital an individual returnee has within family networks. However, we were able to examine how the different roles of family networks (sense of belonging, solidarity, family obligation, and protection in an uncertain and risky environment) were important for different actors.

With regards to socio-economic development, here again there is some contestation about what this means, particularly at a micro-level. Moreover, social changes are multi-directional, so that assessing the impact of migration on development or positive social change is not easy. The most obvious measure would be income, as a measure of poverty, but a decision was taken early on in the survey on which this paper is based not to ask directly about income, both because of a fear of non-cooperation on the part of interviewees, and because it was recognised that the bulk of international returnees from Europe and North America included in this sample were unlikely to be below the dollar-a-day poverty line. Instead, a number of other more or less objective measures related to 'development', such as employment, job creation, the gaining of assets and investment in children's education were included, along with more subjective evaluations by interviewees themselves about whether they considered themselves better off than they had been before or during migration, or in comparison with others who had not migrated.

2.2 Migration, return and socio-economic transformation

Unlike the relationship between international migration and development, which despite some controversies is increasingly viewed as positive because of the significant level of international remittances, the impact of autonomous return migration on development is generally thought to be negative or insignificant. Such a small or negative impact is attributed to the number of returnees, the reasons for return, and the impact of migration on returnees but also the situation in the country of origin (Ghosh 2000, King 2000). It is primarily due to the overwhelming importance of what Cerase calls the 'return of failure' (those

who fail to secure an income abroad) and 'return of conservatism' (those who always planned to return, as their family ties are at home) amongst returnees. These two groups are unlikely to be agents of change on their return. In contrast, it is only those who represent a 'return of innovation' – those who stay to earn money and advancement abroad, but hit a 'glass ceiling' and so seek to move beyond this obstacle by returning to invest in their home country – that are likely to contribute to development.

But to effectively understand the relationship between return and development, it is important to look at the different aspects of development, including micro and meso-level welfare, improving social relations and freedom. Even from an economic growth perspective, a range of factors can be investigated. In other words we need to investigate how migration and return affect financial and human capital formation and usage.

2.3 Data and methods

The data on which this paper is based are derived from a larger study of migration, return and development in West Africa, in which 304 return migrants were surveyed in Ghana and 300 in Côte d'Ivoire, between August 2000 and January 2001. In each country, the sample of returnees was divided into two groups. The first was an 'elite' group of migrants, who already had university education, and fell within the managerial and professional classes in Accra and Abidjan respectively prior to their departure. In the second group, we sought to interview a much broader mix of migrants in terms of occupational backgrounds and places of origin, although the sample remained more highly qualified than the national population as a whole (this difference probably indicates unequal access to migration abroad), and were concentrated exclusively in urban areas of Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. Each group of respondents was identified using snowball sampling techniques, implying that the samples may not be representative of the wider population of returnees in the two countries.

Alongside the surveys carried out in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, a total of forty in-depth interviews were also conducted in London and Paris with both 'elite' and other migrants from these two countries. These interviews aimed at collecting information on migration, contacts with the country of origin and plans for eventual return, as well as exploring the underlying factors behind migration decisions and behaviour. The perspective of migrants still abroad – who remain potential returnees – represents an important

additional source of information to complement insights gained from the survey material.

2.4 Brief description of the samples

Women accounted for 28 per cent of the less skilled sample in both Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana while the elite sample included 15 and 19 per cent female respondents respectively in the two countries. The age distribution ranged from 22 to 70 years but with differences between the two countries and samples. Ivorian returnee respondents were generally younger than the Ghanaians and among the Ivorians, the less skilled returnees were younger than the elite group (median age 34 against 41 for the elite returnees). In Ghana, the majority of the returnees sampled were in their forties (median age 44 for both samples).

With regard to destinations, most migrants sampled had travelled to the former colonial power, but onward migration had sometimes occurred. It should be noted that Ivorian interviewees were more likely to have gone to France than Ghanaians were to have chosen the UK.

In terms of the time spent abroad, the Ivorian returnees had stayed abroad for a shorter period than the Ghanaians, while for both countries, the less skilled had spent a shorter period abroad than those in the elite group. In Côte d'Ivoire, the median number of years spent abroad was 4 and 6 for the less skilled and elite returnees respectively. In contrast, amongst the Ghanaians, more than half of the elite returnees had spent over ten years abroad, whereas amongst the less skilled, the majority had returned after 6 years.

For the majority of respondents, the return to Ghana or Côte d'Ivoire was seen as permanent, although 12 per cent of Ivorian and 14 per cent of Ghanaian elite returnees, and around one third of the Ivorian and 18 per cent of the less skilled Ghanaians said their return was temporary. These differences between countries and the two groups of returnees may be related to the macro socio-economic and political context of the countries, as well as to the personal characteristics of the migrants. With regards to the macro context, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire went through a socio-economic and political crisis at different times, the Ivorian crisis being recent whereas Ghana started to regain political and economic stability over the last decade.

3. The impact of family on international migration

The main objective of this section is a descriptive analysis of the role of family in international migration and the development of transnationalism. Do family factors influence migration and the development of the transnationalism?

3.1 Family and emigration

If we examine this question first from the perspective of why people migrated abroad, family factors do not appear very important. In none of our samples was joining other family members a major reason for the first migration, with most people saying they moved either to study or to work (Table 2 – see appendix). Nor did family reasons feature as a major factor in influencing onward movement to a second country. However, when asked who had made the decision to move, a much larger proportion reported that they took the decision to move with their family. Family members were more likely to have influenced the initial decision to move amongst the elite group, perhaps because of the greater emphasis amongst this group on studying abroad, and the role played by family members in funding their studies.

However, even if respondents did not report the reason for migration being to follow family members, there is some evidence that international migration history in the family may increase access to migration in practice. Around a quarter of each group of returnees in each country reported that their father had already lived abroad, with this rising to over half of the elite migrants interviewed in Ghana (Table 3).

Table 3: International migration experience within families

	Elite			Less-skilled		
	CIV	GHA	Both	CIV	GHA	Both
Father lived abroad	27.3	52.6	40.1	24.0	28.3	26.2
Sibling still lives abroad	32.6	64.3	51.0	50.0	55.9	53.0

Source: Field data, 2000-01

Meanwhile, two thirds of those interviewed in Ghana had a sibling still living abroad at the time of interview. Chain migration within families is a common feature of the migration literature (Chant and Radcliffe 1992, Adepoju 1997, Faist 1999) and was reported upon with pride by interviewees in Paris and London, who spoke of both a duty and an economic incentive to send remittances

and assist other family members to migrate. For example, a 27-year old Ivorian woman in Paris reported:

'When I came things were difficult initially ... but now I am settled ... I have helped my sister to come here and now she is working and helping the family as well. This will help to reduce the burden on me and I can save and focus better on my business project.'

Meanwhile, a Ghanaian man in London commented:

'I help my family and my community in different ways ... My nephew for instance is here because his mother, my sister was almost harassing me to bring her child here. The boy is here and working.'

3.2 Family and return migration

The question of why people return is also complex. For example, a Ghanaian man in his late thirties who had been living for 15 years in London commented:

'the return is circumstantial... and these circumstances include life style, family reasons, lifecycle and importantly family assets back at home.'

Unlike the initial migration decision, when asked to list the factors influencing return, family reasons did come among the three most popular factors amongst each returnee group in each country (Table 4). This was true regardless of whether return was considered permanent, as it was amongst the majority of the sample, or temporary, as was particularly the case amongst less-skilled returnees to Côte d'Ivoire. However, interestingly, respondents were also more likely to report that the decision to return was their own decision, and not made together with family members.

Table 4: Family reasons and influences on return migration

	Elite		Less-skilled	
	CIV	GHA	CIV	GHA
<u>Type of last return</u>				
Permanent	82.7	57.1	76.3	82.9
Temporary	12.0	34.0	18.4	13.8
Intermittent	5.3	8.2	5.3	3.3
<u>Three most popular reasons for return</u>				
End of study	73.3	32.7	25.7	
Family reasons	29.3	40.7	38.2	33.3
Employment at home	27.3	44.7	33.6	28.9
Business at home				28.9
<u>Who took the decision</u>				

for your return?				
Myself	81.3	69.3	73.0	55.9
With spouse	10.0	11.3	15.8	28.9
With family	8.7	19.4	4.6	7.9
Other	-	-	6.6	7.3

Source: Field data, 2000-01

In practice, of course, direct family reasons for return are intertwined with job and business expectations, and a broader expectation of being welcomed by family and relatives. Many of those interviewed had visited home whilst abroad specifically to see family members. The role of the family in migration and return may also be indirect. For example, family and relatives may still have influenced those who stated that they chose to migrate or return themselves. Many migrants interviewed in Paris and London planned to return to their country of origin, especially when they retire. Of course these plans may change and some may exclude return from their options. However, the idea of return is very often related to the sense of family and belonging. This means the reaction and attitude of relatives and family members in the country of origin may play an important role in the decision to return, even where the primary reason is work-related. For example, when asked to identify their work-related expectations on return, one in five respondents chose the response: *'my family and relatives will welcome me'*, with the proportion rising to 31 per cent amongst elite Ghanaians.

In considering the decision to return, it is also important to examine what information is available on the opportunities, constraints and threats at home, and the sources and channels of information that filter and mould this information. Information is crucial for everyone, but more so for the potential returnees. Unfortunately economic information often seems to be inaccessible in West Africa according to Snrech (1998), who urges the region to decentralize knowledge and information networks. The vast majority of return migrants in this survey (over 73 per cent) reported seeking information on their country before their return. In turn, their families and friends were the main providers of such information (Table 5).

Whether the subject of information was jobs, legal matters, or social tensions or security, returnees reported unambiguously that their main source of information was family and friends. Once again, the potential importance of families in the return migration decision is clear, even if the majority of returnees return alone, and their return is not actually organised by their family.

Table 5: Sources of information on return

	Elite		Less-skilled	
	CIV	GHA	CIV	GHA
<u>Sought information before return?</u>				
Yes	90.7	73.0	77.3	91.4
No	8.3	27.0	22.7	8.6
<u>Source of information</u>				
Friends or relatives	81.6	76.6	77.3	85.5
News media	66.0	27.0	65.5	26.6
Government agency	12.5	12.6	8.6	13.6
<u>Return with family?</u>				
No	87.3	81.1	83.3	77.5
With whole family	6.0	11.9	10.0	13.9
With part of family	6.7	7.0	1.4	6.6
Other			5.3	2.0
<u>Who arranged return?</u>				
Current employer	7.3	12.5	2.1	7.9
Government	23.3	11.8	2.7	10.5
Myself	48.7	62.5	69.9	71.1
Family member	5.3	3.9	16.4	6.6
Other	15.4	9.3	8.9	3.9

Source: Field data, 2000-01

3.3 Migration and family solidarity

The previous two sections have considered the influence of families on migration and return, yet once they have returned, family factors also affect the integration of the returnees. Families may help to stimulate a successful return and integration, but in some cases, family related issues and expectations pose problems for return migrants. Indeed, family-related problems were amongst the most common difficulties cited by returnees, whilst the expectation of such problems was also found to have delayed the return of some migrants. The particular problems that might be faced by returnees who are unable to help their families on return were related in two focus group discussions in Ghana:

'Listen, Somebody stays there [Europe] for two, three years and come with cars, build a house; then for somebody who has been living there for 15 years to come without things and to end up as a family dependent is a big problem.'

'Some of them too, they are not making it so coming back is a big problem. They stay away for about ten years some 15 years and coming home with nothing is a big problem'.

Although family solidarity was recognised by some interviewees, nonetheless the resources that family members share or are supposed to share depend on each member's conception of loyalty, privacy and duty (Finch 1989). For example, after living independently abroad, many returnees are

not willing or would be reluctant to be dependent on housing provided by family members back home. Instead, there is a great emphasis amongst returnees on building or buying one's own property. Having a house in the country of origin was repeatedly mentioned in interviews in London and Paris as one of the main conditions for returning. This apparent desire for housing and financial independence may actually be related to the reciprocity of exchange.

Migration also affects family life, inducing a number of points of stress for both the migrant and his or her family. The extent to which migrants remained committed to their families is examined in Table 6. Although, or perhaps because only about one in ten parents migrated with their children, meaning that the overwhelming majority were separated from children during migration, strong ties were maintained amongst those interviewed with their families back home. This is manifested through regular contact with family members in the majority of cases, as well as the sending of remittances to family members.

Table 6: Contact of migrants with family whilst abroad

	Elite		Less-skilled	
	CIV	GHA	CIV	GHA
<u>Frequency of contact with family whilst abroad</u>				
Regular	53.0	42.1	91.2	75.7
Irregular	36.3	31.6	8.2	23.6
None	10.7	26.7	0.7	0.7
<u>Remittances</u>				
Yes	46.9	73.7	55.7	75.8
No	53.1	26.3	44.3	24.2
<u>Use of remittances</u>				
Spouse and children	14.3	8.0	29.8	28.3
Parents and siblings	84.3	75.0	79.8	66.4
Finance projects	2.9	25.9	10.7	26.3
Savings	22.6	3.3	22.6	3.1

Source: Field data 2000-01

4. Disentangling the influence of families on migration and development

To understand further the influence of family factors on migration and on the link between migration and development, this section describes a procedure in which the sample of returnees interviewed in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire was split into two groups using an operational variable. This variable seeks to distinguish migrants whose movement was influenced by their family ('family-influenced migrants', or FIM) and those whose movement was not influenced by their family

('Non-FIM'). In a way, FIM is similar to Cesare's 'return of conservatism', whilst non-FIM involves other types of returns. From the information above, return of retirement and return of failure are insignificant in the sample, so non-FIM might be a proxy of 'return of innovation'.

Family-influenced migrants within the sample were defined as those where the decision to migrate or return was influenced by, or determined by or with family members. Table 7 summarizes the responses to individual questions that led individual returnees to be classified as 'family-influenced'. Based on the criteria listed in Table 7, the less-skilled sample held a higher percentage of 'family-influenced migrants', with 65 per cent in this group in Côte d'Ivoire and 69 per cent in Ghana. Amongst the elite returnees, fewer reported being influenced by their families, with 44 per cent being classified as 'family-influenced' in Côte d'Ivoire, and 56 per cent in Ghana.

Table 7: Family-influenced migration

Question	Response classified as 'FIM'
Who made the decision to leave the foreign country?	'With spouse or with other members of the family'
What influenced your most recent return?	'Family reasons'
Who made the decision for your return?	'Together with spouse, together with other members of the family or family members'
Which of the following best describe your work related expectation before your return?	'My family and relatives would welcome me'

Source: Field data 2000-01

With regards to age, family-influenced migrants were slightly younger than non-FIM at the time of interview. Both groups emigrated in their twenties, but overall, family-influenced migrants were also slightly younger when they left. This is most evident in the elite group, where family-influenced migrants left on average three years earlier than non-FIM. However, amongst the less-skilled group, the difference in age at emigration is not significant.

With regards to the time spent abroad, family-influenced migrants stayed abroad longer than non-FIM in both the elite and the less-skilled groups. The less-skilled FIM remained abroad on average for 7.5 years, or one more year than non-FIM. Among the elite returnees, the FIM spent on average 9 years abroad, that is two more years than the non-FIM. There are also differences between the two countries. In Ghana,

FIM stayed longer abroad and so returned at an older age, whereas in Côte d'Ivoire the reverse was true, with family-influenced migrants returning at an earlier age.

Table 8: Proportion of migrants influenced by their families by sex, country of origin and skill level

	Côte d'Ivoire		Ghana		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Elite	42.2	54.5	48.8	86.2	65.0	80.4
Less skilled	58.3	81.0	67.9	72.1	46.1	70.6
Total	47.7	71.6	57.2	77.8	56.2	74.3

Source: Field data, 2000-01

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the migration decisions of female respondents were found to be more influenced by family than male respondents. Overall, over 70 per cent of interviewed women were influenced by their families, against 56 per cent of men (Table 8). Those interviewees classified as 'less-skilled' were also overall more likely to have been influenced by their families than the elite group, with the exception of women in Ghana.

4.1 Impact of family factors on the acquisition of capital by migrants

By dividing the sample into 'family-influenced' and 'non-family influenced' it was possible to compare the two sub-samples in order to see whether those in each group have different experiences as a result of migration. This section considers the acquisition of three different kinds of capital, human, social and financial, which were considered important in terms of the likely impact of migration and return on development (Ammassari and Black 2001).

Looking first at the acquisition of human capital, for the less skilled migrants, family-influenced migrants were found to be less likely to have gained additional education whilst abroad, and more likely to have worked (Table 9 – see appendix). This difference was significant amongst the less-skilled migrants, but not amongst the elite migrants interviewed. Nonetheless, the majority of the less skilled migrants said they had gained some form of human capital, especially work experience, skills and knowledge (see Sjenitzer, 2003, for a fuller discussion of the acquisition of human capital amongst less-skilled returnees interviewed in Ghana).

Social capital is the second point to consider. Social capital is generally found to positively impact on individual welfare and economic

development (Grootaert and van Bastelaer 2002). Despite the general agreement on the role of social capital, there are difficulties in measuring it, especially finding a measure that captures its different dimensions (horizontal, vertical) and type (cognitive and structural). Although family and kin network are important parts of social capital, in this research we were concerned more to focus on the 'new social capital' gained during migration. To measure the acquisition of social capital, we used three indicators: membership in an association whilst abroad and once the migrant had returned home, and professional contacts kept abroad (Table 10 – see appendix). With regards to membership of associations, a difference can be observed between the elite and less skilled migrants. Thus, the less skilled migrants interviewed were much less likely (45 against 61 per cent) to have been member of any association abroad than the elite returnees. However, there was no significant difference in terms of membership between the FIM and the non-FIM, even though FIM have a slightly higher proportion of membership. Among the elite returnees, the FIM particularly the Ivorian returnees were more likely to be member of country/ethnic organisation than the non-FIM who were predominantly in professional associations. With regards to the less skilled returnees, those who were members of an organisation abroad were generally in associations with non-ethnic members (65 per cent) and more educated members (90 per cent). The only significant difference between FIM and non-FIM is found among the less-skilled Ghanaians. Studying the role of Ghanaian association in Toronto, Owusu (2000) found that these associations appealed to those who find themselves in difficult economic circumstance and that long term immigrant tend to have less need for ethnic association.

The relatively lower involvement of less skilled migrants in associations, particularly amongst the Ivorians interviewed, may be related to mixed feelings about and experiences of ethnic and country associations amongst the return migrants interviewed for this survey. For some, such associations help to maintain social and cultural links and values and are particularly helpful at times of hardship. However, others commented that such associations create problems as they provide opportunities for members to gossip and criticise other migrants. Such negative perceptions of associations were found to be particularly prevalent among the Ivorians interviewed in Paris. To the question: 'are there associations of Ivorians or people from your tribe, and if yes are you a member of any of them?', responses included:

'Yes there are but I am not a member because ivorian groups are full of hypocrisy. There is no trust and I have been betrayed by many ivorian friends... Otherwise back in Abidjan I was an active member of my town association' (Female Ivorian, aged 30s, 3 years in Paris).

'No. I am not interested in these associations. Currently my main concern is my paper [i.e her legal status].' (Female Ivorian, aged 20s. Undocumented, 1.5 years in Paris)

'No. I am not interested in Ivorian association. There are always fighting, abuse and other form of violence whenever Ivorian associations or Ivorians get together' [Ivorian Male. Aged 30s. Documented 18 years in France].

But others said they were either planning to join such an association, or had been a member in the past.

Once back to their country of origin, more than half of the less skilled returnees reported their involvement in different organisations or associations to enlarge or revitalise their local social network. The proportion of less skilled Ivorian respondents was below 50 per cent, but importantly, of those who had joined such associations, most were active, and a quarter had become the leader of the association. In contrast, in Ghana the situation is somewhat different: although the less skilled returnees were overwhelmingly (over 75 per cent) members of an organisation, at least one third were not active, and only 15 per cent held a position of leadership in the organisation. There was no significant difference between the family influenced and non-family influenced groups.

An important aspect of returnees' social capital is the strength of contacts established abroad. The West African returnees interviewed had in large majority kept the contacts (both personal or professional) they had established abroad. The FIM were more likely to have kept professional contact abroad, consistent with the notion that this group are more 'conservative'.

Turning to the acquisition of financial capital, the generation of remittances, savings, and investments by international migrants is a key area of current policy concern, and one where the role of families in promoting such transfers may be critical. As expected, the sample shows that family-influenced migrants were more likely to have sent remittances to family members when they were abroad, whilst the amount remitted per transfer and the maximum amount ever remitted

per transfer was also significantly higher amongst family-influenced migrants (Tables 11 and 12 – see appendix). Indeed, amongst Ghanaians, who in general had remitted larger amounts of money, the average amount remitted per transfer by family-influenced migrants was more than double the average amount remitted by non-FIM.

These remittances were, as expected, overwhelmingly used to support family and relatives, and especially parents. However, in some cases, they were used also, or instead, to set up a business or a project (such as the construction of a house). The less skilled were more likely to finance a 'project' using their remittances than the elite, and this was particularly true for less-skilled family-influenced migrants returning to Ghana. In contrast, amongst the elite, the non-FIM were more likely to be investors in projects than the FIM.

In addition, those whose migration was influenced by their families were also more likely to save money whilst abroad than those whose migration was not influenced by their families. However, when the amount saved is considered, the difference between the two groups becomes more complex; thus, in Côte d'Ivoire, non-family influenced migrants were more likely to have accumulated relatively large amounts (over \$5,000) in savings, whereas in Ghana, the situation was reversed. In neither case was the difference statistically significant. In Ghana, family-influenced migrants sent more money more frequently *and* also accumulated more savings as well compared with those whose migration was not influenced by their families. Indeed, a total of 48 less skilled Ghanaian respondents in the sample had accumulated over \$10,000 in savings, of whom 32 were 'family-influenced'. Nonetheless, with the exception of the less-skilled returnees in Ghana, family-influenced migrants were found to be no more likely to have invested savings in a business or project than the non-family influenced group.

In practice, the separation of human, social and financial capital is somewhat artificial, since all are important in terms of investment by returning migrants in business ventures. For example, setting up and running a business is a risky venture, and more so in an uncertain environment. But the risk increases as well when the interests of the different business partners diverge (implying a lack of social capital) or when the actors lack management skills (implying a lack of human capital). Speaking about those who migrate to Europe to work in the black market in

order to then return to set up a business, one respondent in London explained:

'Most of them after one two years will lose their money and fail in business. The business environment back home is not easy and there are many problems there, the legal and social system. Some of them want to improve their living standard quickly so they don't reinvest their profit in business. For some it is bad luck and misfortune. All in all many of them just fail. So you will see some of these guys trying to come back to England again. Very few of the returnee are successful because they have connection or they are just lucky.'

Another respondent in London who had started a housing project with his sister in Ghana for his old age explained the different forms of remittances:

'Yes. Yes. Sometime your friends or family members ask you. My sister back home is doing some trading and she is always saying this or that is finished or I need this and I need that.'

INT: Have you experienced this? And do you have to do it?

RESP: Yes, that is my personal experience. Everybody is facing the problem. That's why I was talking to somebody, that man they ask or send letters to people for charity. I don't do because we give more to charity than they do. We have to send more money for charity out there. Many Africans especially Ghanaians have been sending money home regularly. I have a standing order for my mum. One of my friends there pays it to my mum. So this is something we have been doing.'

Setting up a business was not found to be particularly frequent among the returnees interviewed. Nonetheless, although cases of mismanagement or failure were reported to be many, they had not stopped some migrants from trying new business ventures, often seeking to minimize risks by working through relatives and friends. The case of an Ivorian woman interviewed in Paris shows how some migrants may persist in using their social capital for investment. Mrs A. sent over \$9,000 to her brother to do business, and especially to buy vehicles and run a taxi business. But the brother used only half of the sum on very old cars and only one of them is working. But Mrs A. is keen to continue business venture in Cote d'Ivoire. She is trying now to develop a new business with her former husband with whom she had a child.

Although their relationship ended more than four years ago and her son lives with her own grandparents, she is turning to her former husband in a desperate attempt to work through social network. She said:

'I trust that guy. And I said even if he wants to misuse the money he won't because he will think about the child, the future of the child. He is very organised. I have sent a mobile phone to him to make our communication easier. I will buy used car here and send to him to sell. We will share the benefit and if things work well he will deposit my part in my local account.'

When asked whether she is not afraid of him misusing her money, or why she trusts him she expressed some doubts:

'Well who knows, people change when it comes to money. I just hope he will think of our child's future work correctly.'

4.2 Family factors and social transformations

In addition to direct investment in productive activity, another important aspect of poverty reduction is the achievement of positive social transformations particularly in terms of social relations (including family relations and gender relations), work ethics and work relationships. The returnee survey provided some insight into how family-influenced and non-family influenced migrants see themselves in this process and how have they used their acquired skills to bring about social change.

In the survey, respondents were asked: 'could you give concrete examples on how you used what you have learned to contribute to bring about change in the family sphere?' Although about one in five returnees said nothing, many others thought their migration had induced changes in their families. The concrete example of changes induced by their acquired skills are diverse and many (Table 13 – see appendix). However when the three most frequently cited examples are considered and ranked by the relative frequency, it appears that FIM and non-FIM are not particularly different in terms of changes they induced.

Gender differences and particularly gender inequality in labour market and household decision-making is another area in which migration might have an impact (Brydon 1992). On the one hand, 'improved family relations' was cited by many respondents in response to the

question noted in the previous paragraph. In addition, the survey sought to 'objectively' evaluate respondents' opinions of gender equality in the labour market. Respondents were asked whether they agreed or not with the proposition: 'Wives should have same career opportunities as husbands'. A third of all less skilled migrants strongly agreed, with a higher proportion of FIM saying they strongly agreed. This difference was significant in Ghana, though not in Côte d'Ivoire. For the elite, over 50 per cent strongly agreed with the proposition, though there was no significant difference between FIM and non-FIM in either country.

4.3 Family factors and change in the workplace

It is also possible to compare the two groups to assess changes in the workplace. Here, it might be expected that since family-influenced migrants are more influenced by bonds of family solidarity, and generally remit and save more money for investment primarily in their families, that they would have contributed less to change in the workplace.

How do FIM and non-FIM behave on the job market and at their work place? Are they active agent of changes in their working place and if so what kind of changes do they think they have brought? Here, the most important difference is that the family influenced migrants are more likely to be self-employed than the non-FIM, with this difference being particularly striking amongst less skilled Ghanaian migrants (78 per cent of FIM in this group were self-employed, compared to just 34 per cent of non-FIM). Since most of the self-employed had also employed others in their businesses (Black et al 2003), and as they were also more likely to have a partner who is self-employed, it can be concluded that family-influenced migrants were more likely to have contributed to the creation of jobs in their country of origin.

However, with regard to changes induced in workplace by returnees, it appears that about one in five returnees did not think they had brought about any change, whilst for those who did think they had brought some changes, there was no difference between the family influenced and non-FIM groups. Although there were various examples of workplace changes cited, the three most frequently given concrete examples were improvements in management, strengthened professionalism and work ethic, and improved relations with colleagues.

5. Conclusion

This paper set out to look at the influence that migrants' families might have on the transfer of human, social and financial capital by migrants and their contribution to development and the fight against poverty. The findings reveal that families are important part of international migration. They play a substantial role in influencing especially return migration, and have an important role to play in relation to the development, transfer and use of certain forms of capital.

In particular families seem to have a positive influence on the volume of remittances, the transfer of savings and the nature of investments by migrants. However some of these financial transfers and investment do not yield their potential productivity to foster sustainable development.

When analysis is extended beyond the transfer of material resources, those migrants who are more influenced by their families were not found to be more 'conservative' than other groups of returnees. Indeed, through the capital gained and their attempts at promoting social transformation, they may be equal if not better agents of development than other returnees.

Another important role played by families is in the provision of information. International migrants seek up to date and reliable information on their country of origin, both to plan their return, as well as to feel satisfied in their lives abroad. The West African data used here shows that social networks in the country of origin remain the main source of information, especially information concerning security and job or investment opportunities.

The fact that family-influenced returnees are contributing to the development of their country of origin as much as other returnees suggests either that (a) the reasons for return are complex and family reasons are just one but important aspect of them; (b) FIM and non-FIM have the same broad reference values, and/or (c) social ties may be an incentive to gain capital which will help to improve the welfare of the migrant and her kin and subsequently contribute to development.

These findings suggest that Cesare fails to consider in any depth the ongoing transnational links back home of the return of conservatism.

In terms of policy implications, these findings point to a number of questions:

- Can policy towards the sustainable return of migrants work through families and friends?

Since migrants look to family and friends for information about return, yet they also report problems in their relations with families on return, should more attention be paid by policy makers to these families, rather than the migrants themselves? This specifically leads to a second question:

- Can policies to promote investment and savings by migrants work through families?

Since most of the projects and investments made by migrants whilst they were abroad involved relatives, and yet the number of business failures is also substantial, an immediate question arises as to whether it might be helpful to train families and relatives of migrants on investment opportunities and business management, rather than focusing such training solely on potential returnees. Family members at place of origin serve as a point of reference for many migrants, especially those who fall into Cerase's 'return of conservatism'. A more innovative approach to investment and development might therefore target this group.

- With regards to the flow of information from country of origin it might be useful to think of improving such flows through families.

This question links to good governance in the sense that government and state media may work hard to attract migrants' interest but many of these migrants would listen more to their relatives (as they understand the local situation) to assess the quality of the information. As Snrech rightly recommends to West African authorities,

'above all, information must not simply serve a few macro-economic policy-makers, ... it must give every citizen the possibility to grasp not only the changes that are occurring but also the issues of the future, thus rendering possible the adoption of a realistic strategy' (Snrech 1998: 87 Emphasis added)

As the comparison between the two countries and between less skilled and elite returnees have shown, such policies should be context sensitive and focus on poor and unskilled migrants for whom family factors seem to be more important.

In the arena of policy on information, evidence that return migrants get their information from families suggests that government and development stakeholders should concentrate on

providing quality information through media that are used by local populations.

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Annex

Table 2: Main reasons and decision-makers in emigration

	Elite		Less Skilled		Total	
	Côte d'Ivoire	Ghana	Côte d'Ivoire	Ghana	Elite	Less Skilled
<u>Main reason for Emigration</u>	n=150	n=152	n=150	n=152	n=302	n=302
Study						
Work/Business	96.6	78.9	62.7	46.1	87.7	54.3
Family reasons	2.0	6.6	28.7	44.1	4.3	36.4
Other	0.7	5.3	7.3	6.6	3.0	7.0
	0.7	9.2	1.3	3.2	5.0	1.3
<u>Main reasons for onward migration to 2nd country</u>	n=34	n=64	n=25	n=46	n=98	n=71
Study	74.4	39.1	40.0	39.1	53.3	39.4
Work/Business	23.3	31.3	48.0	41.3	28.0	43.7
Family reasons	2.3	10.3	8.0	13.0	7.5	11.3
Other	0.0	18.2	4.0	6.6	11.2	5.6
<u>Decision-maker (emigration)</u>						
Myself	54.7	50.7	57.3	60.5	52.6	58.9
With family	42.7	36.2	32.0	28.9	39.4	30.5
Employer/government	2.6	13.1	10.7	10.6	8.0	11.6
<u>Decision-maker (onward migration)</u>	n=34	n=64	n=25	n=46	n=98	n=71
Myself	59.5	48.4	72.0	47.8	52.8	56.3
With family	38.1	40.6	16.0	34.8	39.7	28.2
Employer/government	2.4	11.0	12.0	17.4	7.5	15.5

Source: Field data, 2000-01

Table 9: Acquisition of human capital

	Côte d'Ivoire		Ghana		Total	
	FIM	Non-FIM	FIM	Non-FIM	FIM	Non-FIM
<u>Studied abroad (%)</u>		100.0				
Elite	97.8	78.1**	96.0	100.0	97.0	100.0*
Less skilled	67.6		64.0	66.2	65.8	72.3
<u>Gained additional qualification abroad (%)</u>						
Elite	39.1	36.9	70.4	65.2	56.4	46.9*
Less skilled	50.0	56.8	46.4	39.7	48.1	48.6
<u>Gained work experience abroad (%)</u>						
Elite	87.0	77.0	93.0	73.0***	90.2	75.5***
Less skilled	76.3	70.3	90.5	80.9*	83.8	75.4*

Source: Field data, 2000-01

Note: Respondents considered to have gained additional qualification abroad only if the qualification obtained was at least equal to any qualifications obtained before migration

Statistical significance: ***=1%; **=5%; *=10%.

Table 10: Acquisition of social capital

	Côte d'Ivoire		Ghana		Total	
	FIM	Non-FIM	FIM	Non-FIM	FIM	Non-FIM
<u>Member of an association abroad (%)</u>						
Elite	60.3	60.9	62.5	57.5	61.8	59.2
Less skilled	44.7	48.6	46.4	39.7	45.4	44.4
<u>Keep professional contact abroad</u>						
Elite	94.5	91.4	94.7	90.0	94.6	90.8*
Less skilled	35.5	32.4	46.4	28.0**	41.2	30.2***
<u>Member of an association since return (%)</u>						
Less skilled	48.7	41.9	76.5	77.6	58.9	63.1

Source: Field data, 2000-01

Table 11: Acquisition and transfer of financial capital

	Côte d'Ivoire		Ghana		Total	
	FIM	Non-FIM	FIM	Non-FIM	FIM	Non-FIM
<u>Sent remittances whilst abroad (%)</u>						
Highly skilled	41.8	55.2	73.3	75.0	58.8	63.3
Less skilled	59.2	52.7	77.4	75.0	68.8	63.4
Total						
<u>Saved money whilst abroad (%)</u>						
Highly skilled	64.1	48.3*	88.4	90.0	77.5	65.3**
Less skilled	73.7	71.6	92.7	87.9	83.8	80.3
Total						
<u>Median amount saved whilst abroad</u>						
Highly skilled	<\$10,000	<\$10,000	<\$10,000	<\$10,000	<\$10,000	<\$10,000
Less skilled	<\$5,000	<\$5,000	<\$10,000	<\$10,000	<\$5,000	<\$5,000
Total						
<u>Saved over \$10,000 whilst abroad</u>						
Highly skilled	12.0	8.6	34.8	22.5c	24.5	14.3**
Less skilled	7.4	11.3	40.5	27.1	27.1	19.6**
<u>Remittances used for projects (%)</u>						
Elite	0.0	6.6	16.1	27.5*	12.0	18.1
Less Skilled	13.3	7.7**	46.2	19.6***	32.7	14.1***

Source: Field data, 2000-01

Table 12: Remittances from the less skilled returnees.

	Côte d'Ivoire		Ghana		Total	
	FIM	Non-FIM	FIM	Non-FIM	FIM	Non-FIM
<u>Average amount par transfer</u>						
Male	189	238	432	207	334	221
Female	217	178	315	291	273	244
Total	199	226	396	224	315	226
<u>Maximum amount remitted in a transfer</u>						
Male	590	847	1488	915	1,128	885
Female	1,774	439	1208	594	1,450	530
Total	984	770	1401	850	1,231	815
<u>Estimated total remittance</u>						
Mean						
Male	7,857	6,088	14,444	7,139	11,738	6,675
Female	9,311	5,531	3,914	3,554	6,227	4,368
Total	8,342	5,983	11,102	6,392	9,951	6,214
Median						
Male	2,925	1,921	3,562	1,755	3,375	1,839
Female	3,150	1,125	2,257	1,683	2,835	1,425
Total	3,150	1,650	2,835	1,693	2,868	1,650
Sum						
Male	235,740	182,662	621,110	271,296	856,850	453,958
Female	139,668	38,715	78,293	35,535	217,962	74,250
Total	375,408	221,377	699,403	306,831	1074,812	528,208

Source: Field data 2000-01

Note: The total remittance during stay abroad was estimated as follow: Duration of stay less six months of adjustment X average amount per transfer X frequency of transfer.

Table 13: The three most frequently cited social changes

	Côte d'Ivoire		Ghana	
	Less Skilled	Highly Skilled	Less Skilled	Highly Skilled
FIM	1. Sensitise/advise family 2. Introduce new approach in family management 3. Give special attention to children	1. Sensitise/advise family 2. Introduce new approach 3. Special attention to children	1. Give special attention to children 2. Consult partner and children 3. Introduce new approach in family management.	1. Financial support 2. Sensitise/advise family and relative 3. Promote family cohesion
Non-FIM	1. Sensitise/advise family members 2. Introduce new approach in family management 3. Limit extended family interference	1. Introduce new approach 2. Special attention to children 3. Sensitise/advise family members	1. Special attention to children 2. Sensitise/advise family and relative 3. Introduce new approach in family management	1. Financial support 2. Sensitise/advise family and relative 3. Promote family cohesion

Source: Field data, 2000-01