

**Title :** Studying at home or abroad? Evidence from Ghana and Senegal

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Literature on students' mobility does not offer precise information about *who* are "International students". Studies on the topic has normally focused on motivations and determinants (see, for example, Agarwal and Winkler 1985, McMahon 1992, Mazzarol and Soutar 2002, Mitchell and Nigel 2003) and less on background characteristics of this population. Besides, the numerous surveys collecting information on International students are usually carried out by the governments of the countries of destination to analyse the position of the country in the "global" competition to attract "talents" (one of the most inclusive example of this kind of survey is the German one carried out by the *HIS* Hochschul-Informationen-System, see under <http://www.his.de>). This kind of surveys, however, collect information exclusively on people who have already migrated to study, presenting an important bias of selection. Thus, individual-level evidence on the impact of variables affecting the decision and possibility to study abroad and the comparison with people who never migrated to study can be considered the two key missing values in the literature on this topic. The reason of this gap is certainly the lack of surveys comprising observations on migrants and non-migrants. The use, in this paper, of the data collected within the Migration between Africa and Europe project (MAFE) in both sending and receiving countries will allow us to fill this gap.

The aim of this study is to understand the main factors explaining the choice to study abroad (tertiary education). Four main questions are being asked: 1) Who are international students? 2) Are they different from other students of their origin country in terms of socio-economic characteristics, education and mobility profiles? 3) At which moment of the life course does the decision to migrate for tertiary education occur 4) What are the main factors explaining the choice to study abroad (tertiary education)?

### **Methodology and data source**

This article relies on new longitudinal data collected in Ghana and Senegal within the Migration between Africa and Europe project (MAFE)<sup>1</sup>. The project collected data both at origin (among non-migrants and return migrants) and at destination (among migrants) in order to offer a more accurate picture of the migration experience. Surveys were carried out in three African countries: Senegal (2008), DR Congo (2007 and 2009) and Ghana (2009); additionally, migrants from these respective countries were interviewed in their main European destinations: France, Italy and Spain (2008; Senegalese migrants); Belgium and the UK (2009; Congolese migrants); the UK and the Netherlands (2009; Ghanaian migrants).

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<sup>1</sup> For further information see the project website: [www.mafeproject.com](http://www.mafeproject.com).

Retrospective information was collected on various aspects of the respondent's life through a biographic questionnaire: education and employment, family formation, housing, assets, their migration trajectory as well as those of their personal network, etc. The information was generally collected on a yearly basis. In this paper, we use the biographic survey datasets to analyse Ghanaians and Senegalese students' international migration. According to these datasets, 20,02% respondents in Ghana and 9,08% in Senegal among those who realised an international migration declared that the main reason was to pursue their studies.

**Table 1. Number of international students (reason for migrating)**

	<b>Ghana</b>	<b>Senegal</b>
Number	204	108
Pourcentage	20,02%	9,08%

Descriptive analysis:

We first conduct a descriptive analysis in order to assess the difference between international and non international students taking into account the following variables: sex, family rank, social class of the father, place of birth (rural/urban), generation... We then use sequence analysis to compare education trajectories (linear, non linear, second activity) and migration trajectories (internal/external).

Explicative analysis:

The determinants of studying (or not) abroad are then be identified through a discrete time event history analysis. Our dependent variable is: first migration for tertiary education. Our independent variables are: sex, ethnic group, family rank, social class of the father, place of birth (rural/urban), generation (fixed variables); economic resources, activity, family structure, networks (time varying variables).