# Effects of transnational child-raising arrangements on life-chances of children, migrant parents and caregivers between Africa and Europe TCRAf-Eu

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## *Theoretical and conceptual framework*

The programme opens an innovative area of research. Migration and development studies focus on the impact of remittances and the brain drain on economic growth and poverty alleviation (Adams and Page, 2005; Ratha 2003) without considering non-economic effects such as what migration does to the life-chances (defined as psychological, educational and health outcomes) of spouses, children and elderly who stay behind. Family sociological studies emphasize proximity as a prerequisite for interaction and exchange within families, thereby ignoring family ties that cross borders (Schans, 2007). Thus transnational family practices are ignored or assumed unfeasible (Baldassar and Baldock, 1999; Zontini 2004). Those who have focused on the consequences of transnational lifestyles for children left behind by migrant parents (Dreby, 2007; Parrenas, 2005; Carling 2007) do not analyze in a systematic way the effects of TCRAs on children's or parents' life-chances and rarely include a focus on caregivers. Scholarship on migrant integration focuses on migrant participation in host countries but mostly ignores how activities in home countries influence migrant integration abroad (Snel, 2006). Studies which do take into account ties with the home country usually ignore family ties and focus on the effects of economic and political transnational ties on integration outcomes (Itzigsohn & Saucedo, 2002). Finally, theoretical transnationalism studies draw attention to the need to study linkages that connect people and ideas spanning national borders (Glick Schiller et al., 1992; Levitt, 2001; Levitt and Jaworsky, 2008) yet empirical studies focus on migrants in developed countries. Seldom are two countries studied and never simultaneously (Mazzucato, 2008).

This research programme aims to fill these gaps by building on methodological innovations developed in the Ghana TransNet[1] programme. These emphasize the need to include migrants and non-migrants in samples, to consider the multiple sites and levels of transnational social fields, and to use qualitative and quantitative data collection methods and analyses (Mazzucato, 2008). Following research from Asia and Latin-America a special focus will be on the effects of gender in TCRAs (Parrenas, 2005; Schmalzbauer, 2004).

The research programme will add for the first time a perspective from Africa to debates on transnational child-raising. Studies from Eastern Europe, Latin America and Asia indicate that there are negative consequences to TCRAs for children and parents (Dreby 2007; Fog Olwig 2007; Levitt, 2001; Parrenas, 2005; Smith, 2006; SOROS 2007). However, it is possible that TCRAs in Africa may not have the same effects as in other parts of the world because child fosterage is a longstanding institution (Bledsoe and

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[1] www.ghanatransnet.org (NWO-MAGW grant 410-13-010P), an inter-university collaborative program (UvA, VU, Leiden University and University of Ghana).

Isingo-Abanike, 1989; Goody, 1982; Page, 1989). At the same time, small-scale studies and anecdotal evidence suggest that actors in TCRAs between African and Europe are affected in various ways[2] (Øien, 2006).

Finally, the research programme includes an institutional analysis. Various institutions[3] in migrant sending and receiving countries influence TCRAs in setting limits or facilitating care. First, changes in child fosterage norms make rights and responsibilities of biological parents and caregivers subject to negotiation (Alber, 2003) yet exactly what these changes are and how they relate to transnational migration remains to be investigated. Second, schools in sending countries with high proportions of children raised in TCRAs may have to assume parenting tasks. Third, legal systems in European receiving countries affect the necessity and form of TCRAs (Cornelius, 2004). For example family reunification cases have been rejected because children were living in TCRAs (van Walsum, 2006). In this way the project incorporates a comparative European dimension.

*Research design and methodology*

The main aim of the current programme is to develop an inter-disciplinary model of factors influencing actors in TCRAs, and conduct an analysis of the impacts of institutions on TCRAs using a multi-sited, mixed method approach. The programme will conduct four matched case studies and compare and integrate results from a fifth case study conducted by the NWO funded project. Each matched case study consists of a pair of countries: one European and one African country from which many migrants come. The case-study pairs are the following:

Table 1. Matched case-studies

| Sending country | Case study | Receiving country |
|---|---|---|
| Angola | (1) | Portugal |
| | (2) | Netherlands |
| Nigeria | (3) | Ireland |
| | (4) | Netherlands |
| *Linked case study in NWO project:* | | |
| Ghana | (5) | Netherlands |

Each case study will involve primary data collection. Below we explain what data will be collected and how.

Each case study consists of four work packages. The programme also includes a fifth integrative work package:

**Work package 1: Life-chance outcomes among school children in TCRAs in Angola and Nigeria**

Questions:

- What are the different types of TCRAs in Angola and Nigeria and what factors determine the different types?
- What are the effects of TCRAs on children's life-chances (educational outcomes, emotional wellbeing and health)?

The first work package is a large-scale survey amongst primary and secondary school children in the African countries. The aim of the survey is to gather data on the longer-term impacts of migration on the

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[2] www2.fmg.uva.nl/ghanatransnet.

[3] Institutions are defined similarly to North (1990) as those commonly held categories such as rules, laws, or norms of conduct that guide people's actions and govern social arrangements. Institutions can be formal such as organizations or state laws or informal such as child fostering arrangements.

life-chances of children of migrants who remain in the origin country. Lifechances are defined as emotional wellbeing, school performance and health outcomes. The survey will include children living with both biological parents (control group), children living in a TCRA in which at least one parent has migrated out of the origin country, and children living with a caregiver with their parents elsewhere in the origin country. Special attention will be given to gender as well as children who have been 'sent home' from abroad.

Methods: A large-scale survey amongst primary and secondary school children in Angola and Nigeria (N=2,000 each) is used to identify different types of TCRAs and measure the effects on children's life-chances. The survey will be conducted in rural and urban contexts in areas of high out-migration. The sample will be stratified first by selecting two high, middle and low quality schools in each location. Data will be collected on the children's socio-economic characteristics, educational performance, emotional wellbeing[4], health and TCRA characteristics (relation to caregiver, frequency and quality of contact with caregiver and with parent, length of time with caregiver, etc.). Students from local universities will be employed to conduct the survey where possible.

## Work package 2: Life-chance outcomes for migrant parents in Portugal and Ireland and The Netherlands

Questions:

- What types of TCRAs exist among Angolan and Nigerian migrant parents living in Portugal, Ireland and The Netherlands?
- What are the effects of TCRAs on parents' life-chances (job performance, emotional wellbeing and health outcomes)?

The second work package consists of a smaller-scale survey conducted amongst Angolan and Nigerian migrant parents in three European receiving countries to study the effects of TCRAs on parents' integration and life-chances in the receiving country. This work package brings a transnational perspective to bear on the study of migrant integration by analyzing whether and how characteristics of TCRAs in the home country impact migrants' life-chances in the host country.

Methods: A sample of migrant parents whose children are in their origin country (N=100) will be compared with a sample of migrant parents whose children are in the receiving country (N=100). Both samples will be selected through snowball sampling as no baseline survey exists, using as many different gateways as possible (churches, hometown organizations, cultural projects, city government departments, migrant media in the European countries). Each partner has active research links with migrant populations and will use these to gain access to different types of gateways. Data on migrant parents' socio-economic characteristics, job performance (defined as days on sick leave, number of times promoted/fired, etc.), emotional wellbeing, health, migration and TCRA characteristics will be collected. Additionally, open-ended questions will be asked relating to the decision to migrate with children, whether children used to be in a TCRA, and, if so, the differences between children living in the sending country or in the receiving country and what problems parents experience with child-rearing. Where possible, analyses of variance will be conducted to identify if there is variation in parents' life chances by having children in the origin country or not.

## Work package 3: The functioning of TCRAs between Africa and Europe

Questions:

- What are the effects of TCRAs on migrant parents' rights (child-raising services), responsibilities (remittances and services for caregivers) and how are these rights and responsibilities negotiated?
- How do children experience their TCRAs and the rights and responsibilities they have towards their caregiver and towards their biological parents?

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[4] Indicators similar to those used in cross-cultural child psychology will be used as in Suarez-Orozco et al. (2002).

- What are the effects of TCRAs on caregivers' rights (claims on migrant resources including remittances) and responsibilities (services for migrants and their children) and how are these rights and responsibilities negotiated?

The third work package consists of in-depth studies of parent-child-caregiver triads between Africa and Europe. The emerging research field of TCRAs has focused on children and their migrant parents, yet rarely is an equal focus given to caregivers. Caregivers can help children to deal with the absence of their parents and reduce the risks involved with separation, the way TCRAs function is the result of negotiations between migrant parents and caregivers (Alber, 2003). This work package focuses on parent-child-caregiver triads to investigate the factors that were important in decisions to leave children in a sending country, how a caregiver was chosen, what in/formal arrangements were made at the time of departure, and how these have changed over time. In cases where the parent is not satisfied with his or her child's care, the work package will investigate how parents can influence the workings of TCRAs. Likewise, the work package investigates how caregivers negotiate their rights vis-à-vis the migrant parent and how they act out their responsibilities to the migrants' child. Finally, children's perspectives and experiences of TCRAs and their relationships with caregivers and their biological parents will be explored.

Methods: In-depth interviews, life histories and observation of 20 parent-child-caregiver triads (selected from work package 2 survey based on having a diversity of TCRA types) will identify how caregivers and parents negotiate their rights and responsibilities in TCRAs and how children experience being in TCRAs. Repeated interviews with children, caregivers and parents will be conducted and time will be spent in the caregivers' household in the sending country as well as with parent(s) in the receiving country to observe interactions between different actors (parents, caregivers and children). Thematic interviews will focus on decisions about child fosterage, the relationships between the different actors and how these are negotiated. These in-depth studies build on the simultaneous matched sample methodology (Mazzucato, 2008), and the interviews with children will make use of child-centered participatory methods (Veale, 2006).

**Work package 4: Institutions and TCRAs: child fostering, schools and European migration laws**

Questions:

- How does transnational migration affect child-fostering norms in Angola and Nigeria?
- How are schools in Angola and Nigeria impacted by TCRAs and how do they cater to the needs of children in TCRAs?
- How do migration laws in Portugal, Ireland and The Netherlands impact the types of TCRAs?

Work package 4 focuses on three types of institutions: child-fostering norms in Africa; schools in African countries that have significant numbers of children of migrant parents; and migration laws in Europe that hinder or help family reunification.

Child-fosterage is a longstanding institution in parts of Africa (Bledsoe and Isingo-Abanike, 1989; Page, 1989, Goody, 1982), yet international, long-distance migration may lead to changes in child-fostering norms affecting rights and responsibilities of biological parents and caregivers (Alber, 2003). This project investigates how migration affects child-fostering norms when it operates in a transnational context.

Currently no research exists on the implications for schools of educating migrants' children, although this was identified as an important issue by schools participating in a workshop in Ghana in August 2008.

Migration laws in receiving countries determine whether parents can migrate with their children legally. This programme investigates whether and how migration laws affect the types and workings of TCRAs. Legal studies have argued that immigration legislation in European countries makes family reunification difficult and neglects the position of children (van Walsum, 2006). This focus on law will allow the programme to address issues of family reunification law and migrant children's rights as citizens in European states.

Methods: Changes in child-fostering norms are studied through a literature review of previous child-fostering studies conducted in the 1960s and 1970s when migration was predominantly internal or within Africa. This will be compared with contemporary data from this study. Additionally, life histories conducted in work package 3 will be used to gain insights on how child fostering was conducted when parents and caregivers were themselves children and will be compared with the upbringing they provide to a migrant's child.

The effects on primary and secondary schools are studied through interviews with school principals and teachers of schools participating in the survey in work package 1 and a broader sample of schools.

Effects of migration laws will be studied using two methods. Firstly, through in-depth and repeated interviews as part of work package 3, migrant parents will be asked about their experiences of the law if they migrated with their children. If migrant parents feel alienated by these experiences, what are the implications for their integration into the receiving society? Secondly a historical review of published case law on the admission of children available from specialized databases will be carried out.

### Work package 5: A comparison of the functioning and outcomes of TCRAs according to receiving and sending country contexts

Questions:

- How do the different receiving country migration and family laws affect the functioning and outcomes that TCRAs have on migrant parents in Ireland, Portugal and The Netherlands?
- How do the institutions of child fostering and schools compare between Angola, Nigeria and Ghana?
- How do the different sending country contexts affect the functioning and outcomes that TCRAs have in The Netherlands?

This work package seeks to integrate results from the matched case studies of this project, with the NWO matched-case study of Ghana-The Netherlands. All African cases have a history of child fostering systems; and they include migrant populations that have come to Europe around the same time. The European receiving countries have some similarities and differences between them. Both Portugal and Ireland have had relatively more open immigration policies during the past decade than The Netherlands. Portugal continues to have more liberal migration laws, whereas Ireland is increasing restrictions on migration flows especially from non-EU member countries. Both Ireland and Portugal have a more recent immigration history than The Netherlands. At the same time The Netherlands has a stronger welfare state than Portugal or Ireland. Cross comparisons will show how different receiving country contexts impact the types of TCRAs and the effects that TCRAs have on the different actors. A second set of comparisons will allow us to see whether there are differences in outcomes and how TCRAs function between the different African migrant groups. Finally, a comparison of institutions across countries will be made.

Methods: Because all cases have the same research design and use the same methodological tools, data will be integrated from work packages 1, 2, 4 and the NWO-funded project in order to produce three types of comparisons.

The first type will look at whether the functioning and outcomes of TCRAs differ according to *receiving country context*. To compare outcomes, the samples from work package 2 of the same origin-country populations will be compared between two European sites: Angolans in Portugal and The Netherlands, and Nigerians in Ireland and the Netherlands.

A second type of comparisons relate to whether the functioning and outcomes of TCRAs differ according to *sending country context*. These analyses will be made comparing TCRAs of Angolans, Nigerians and Ghanaians in The Netherlands. Here use will be made of data collected for work package 2 and the NWO-funded programme. Additionally, work package 1 and the NWO programme will be compared to explore difference in life-chance outcomes for children of migrants who live in Angola, Nigeria and Ghana.

A third type of comparison relates to the institutions of child fostering and schools in the three African cases and family migration laws in the three European cases.

### Added value of collaborative programme

Conducting this programme collaboratively between three partners, adds value in two ways:

*Interdisciplinarity*:

The programme brings together scholars from different disciplines, all with a background in migration/transnationalism studies: development economics, child psychology, family sociology, geography and anthropology. All scholars have experience working in interdisciplinary teams.

The framework lends itself well to incorporate different disciplinary perspectives. Insights from migration studies – including legal aspects –, family sociology and transnational studies are combined to create a holistic model of transnational child-raising arrangements. This model will contribute to theoretical thinking about the effects of global migration.

The programme integrates multiple methodologies. Quantitative surveys are supplemented with in-depth qualitative case studies and analyses of institutions. Integration will be achieved in three ways. First, samples between projects are matched to provide information from different actors on the same TCRA. Thus quantitative results from surveys can be explored with insights gained from case studies. Second, researchers will make results comparable through devising similar methodological tools. Third, meetings and field visits are incorporated into the programme to provide opportunities for senior and junior researchers to discuss implications of results for each other's projects.

*Cross-case comparisons:*

The programme provides a common framework and methodological tool kit that permits cross-case comparisons to be made, thus allowing differences to be discerned in the functioning and outcomes of TCRAs between different sending and receiving countries. Work package 5 has been designed to develop an integrated database that combines data from the four case studies and the NWO-funded case study, where appropriate. Joint publications are envisaged in which results from the different work packages are integrated into programme-level findings.

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