

Understanding Transnational Labour Market Trajectories of African-European Migrants: Evidence from the MAFE Survey

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Labor market trajectories of migrants are seldom explored in a longitudinal and comparative perspective. However, a longitudinal approach is crucial for a better understanding of migrants' long-term occupational attainments, while comparative research is useful to disentangle specificities and general processes across destination and origin countries. This article explores the labor market outcomes of migrants from Senegal, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Ghana in different European countries, using the MAFE data

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to compare their occupational attainments before migration, upon arrival and during the first 10 years of stay in Europe in a longitudinal perspective. Results highlight different pattern of migrants' selection across destinations, influenced by prior employment status and education, gender and colonial legacies, and which impact subsequent trajectories into the European labor markets. Our analyses also show a severe worsening of migrants' occupational status in Europe compared to their situation prior to migration, which is the resultant of a dramatic downgrading upon entry and of a slow occupational recovering during the first 10 years of stay in Europe. Results suggest that the educational–occupational mismatch of skilled workers might represent a long-lasting “price” for migrants, unless (further) educational credentials are achieved in destination countries.

INTRODUCTION

The article addresses the patterns of labor market integration of African migrants in Europe through the analysis of occupational attainments before leaving, upon arrival, and during the migration experience. The labor market integration of migrants at destination is a crucial issue in the current academic debate and a major concern for policy makers both within Europe and in origin countries. In the receiving societies, migrants' incorporation into the host economy is viewed as a way for benefitting from the migrants' human capital for stimulating growth and productivity and for promoting social cohesion. In origin countries, the labor market integration of migrants is interpreted in the context of the “brain drain/gain” dilemma and of the potential gains of successful migration in terms of transnational activities and re-integration of returnees.

Several studies have shown that a large share of workers are employed below their formal education level (Büchel, de Grip, and Mertens 2003; Quintini 2011) and that immigrants tend to be more often overeducated than natives working in comparable occupations (Wald & Fang 2008; Dahlstedt 2011; Andersson Joona, Datta Gupta, and Wadesjo 2012; Piracha, Tani, and Vadean 2012). Among foreign workers, several mechanisms contribute to this higher than average mismatch between achieved qualifications through formal education and their occupational levels. Qualifications acquired in the country of origin are often not easily

transferred in the country of destination (Chiswick and Miller 2009) due to language barriers, a weaker signaling potential of qualifications for the employers (Dumont and Monso 2007; Chaloff and Lemaitre 2009), institutional barriers to the formal recognition of educational credentials and discrimination at the workplace (Battu and Sloane 2004), which particularly affects African migrants in Europe (De Beijl 2000; Allasino et al. 2004). Ensuring a good match between acquired skills and qualifications and those required in the labor market is a precondition for an efficient use of the available human capital and for the promotion of an inclusive growth (Quintini 2014). The presence of a mismatch implies individual costs in terms of underutilized competences at the workplace (which can in turn produce lower degrees of satisfaction, commitment, motivation, and performance) and of lower wages, as well as productivity losses and increased turnover at the firm level. Deskilling in turn has important economic implications both for the labor market of receiving countries and for the countries of origin (Pang, Lansang, and Haines 2002).

However, the existing literature on the labor market mismatch of migrants does not appear to have explored the work experience prior to migration and in particular the existence of education–occupation mismatch in the home country before migrating (Piracha, Tani, and Vadean 2012). Moreover, little is known about how overeducation in origin countries relates to later labor market outcomes in receiving countries. Comparing the education–occupation mismatch *before* and *after* departure is crucial in order to understand to what extent migration is rewarding in terms of successful placement of own competences in the European labor market, compared to the origin countries (Simón, Ramos, and Sanromá 2014). Hence, the study of the labor market integration of migrants and of their occupational trajectories before and after migration leads not only to the need of studying the origin and destination countries as two linked and interconnected spaces, but also to add a longitudinal perspective to the analyses.

Only a few studies have adopted a longitudinal perspective when analyzing the long-term labor market attainments of migrants, providing a dynamic picture of their economic integration in receiving countries (Lubotsky 2007; Duleep and Dowhan 2008). While common wisdom suggests that migrants face initial disadvantages upon arrival in the labor market at destination, their outcomes are expected to improve over time (Jean et al. 2010). Yet there is increasing evidence that migrants may face

persistent labor market barriers that threaten their full economic integration and that successful patterns vary sensibly according both to the country of origin (Borjas 1999; Portes and Rumbaut 2006; Münz 2007) and of destination (Münz 2007; Dustmann and Frattini 2010), as well as according to the different profiles of migrants. Despite this, the longitudinal labor market performance of the migrant workforce across different EU member states comparing differences in employment performances and economic integration of different national groups is still under researched.

The fact that data are usually collected and made available at the level of nation-state through national censuses and surveys represents a major limit in this sense, as pointed out by Wimmer and Schiller (2002). Moreover, studies are often grounded on a cross-sectional basis, focusing on singular events (transitions from study or inactivity to employment, etc.) or on specific phases of the migration process (self-selection processes, settlement upon arrival or later integration in destination countries), often disregarding the trajectories as a whole (King et al. 2006). As available data are mainly cross-sectional and collected at a country level, they seldom allow matched analyses of the long-term occupational attainments of migrants between origin and destination countries, *before* migrating, *upon arrival*, and *after* the first settlement at destination.

A few retrospective surveys have overcome some of these research gaps. The “Mexican Migration Project” (MMP) has built a major longitudinal biographic data set, generating numerous insights into patterns of economic integration and transnational behavior of Mexican migrants in the United States (Massey 1987) and was at a later stage extended through the “Latin American Migration Project” to further Latin American countries. Other experiences of longitudinal studies on migrants’ (economic) integration at destination include the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC), the longitudinal survey on the Settlement of New Immigrants to Quebec (ÉNI: Établissement des Nouveaux Immigrants), and the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia (LSIA) (for a review, see: Black et al. 2003). As for Europe, little research has yet been undertaken with such longitudinal, matched, and cross-country approaches.

This paper addresses several of these gaps in the literature in the study of the labor market trajectories of African migrants in Europe, using data produced as part of the MAFE project (Migration between Africa

and Europe)¹. Looking at different stages of migrants' life course, we consider their labor market positioning before leaving their origin country, just after their first arrival in Europe and along the progression of their stay(s) in Europe.

The paper answers the following questions: Do African migrants self-select across different countries and occupations, depending on their education and occupational profile before migrating? How do their careers unfold during the first years after migration? And to what extent their situation before migration has long-lasting effects on their labor market trajectories as migrants in Europe? While engaging mostly with the literature on multi-sited (Wimmer and Schiller 2002) and longitudinal (Black et al. 2003; Piracha, Tani, and Vadean 2012) research, we also try to take account of issues on African migration to Europe, testing hypotheses on the role of gender and of colonialist legacies in shaping individuals' labor market trajectories throughout the migration experience (Kohnert 2007; Hansen and Jonsson 2011; Kraler 2011). A longer duration in the destination country may favor a better knowledge of the local language and culture, the building of stronger and more diversified social networks and may go along with the progression of the regularization process (when it applies), resulting in improved migrants' employment perspective. Hence, we will also explore the role of the length of time spent in Europe in allowing individual migrants to overcome the legacies effect of their pre-migration characteristics.

We argue that, first, colonialist legacies are still powerful agents in shaping migratory trajectories and selection of migrants to destinations (characterized by a better economic integration, wider, and more consolidated social networks, and easier studying opportunities). Second, we expect

¹The MAFE project is coordinated by INED (C. Beauchemin) and is formed additionally by the Université catholique de Louvain (B. Schoumaker), Maastricht University (V. Maz-zucato), the Université Cheikh Anta Diop (P. Sakho), the Université de Kinshasa (J. Mangalu), the University of Ghana (P. Quartey), the Universitat Pompeu Fabra (P. Baizan), the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (A. González-Ferrer), the Forum Internazionale ed Europeo di Ricerche sull'Immigrazione (E. Castagnone), and the University of Sussex (R. Black). The MAFE project received funding from the European Community's Seventh Framework Programme under grant agreement 217206. The MAFE-Senegal survey was conducted with the financial support of INED, the Agence Nationale de la Recherche (France), the Région Ile de France and the FSP programme 'International Migrations, territorial reorganizations and development of the countries of the South'. For more details, see: <http://mafeproject.site.ined.fr/>.

TABLE 1
THE MAFE RESEARCH SAMPLES

	Senegalese			Congolese		Ghanaians		Senegal	DRC	Ghana	TOT
	ES	FR	IT	BE	UK	UK	NL				
Migrants in Europe	200	200	203	279	149	149	273	—	—	—	1,453
Returnees from Europe	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	62	47	87	196
Non-migrants	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	859	1,294	914	3,067
Total	200	200	203	279	149	149	273	921	1,341	1,001	4,716

that gender is still a basic element structuring migrants' experiences in Europe and their chances in European labor markets in line with the (traditional) gender division of labor in origin and destination countries. Third, occupational mismatch of skilled workers is expected to vary by length of time in Europe and potentially a long-lasting "price" for migrants unless (further) educational credentials are achieved in destination countries.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. The second section presents the data and the methodology. The distribution of migrants upon arrival according to their education and occupational profiles is addressed in the third section, while the next section discusses the post-arrival labor market trajectories in Europe. The final section concludes the paper.

Alternative formulation

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 presents the data and the methodology. The distribution of migrants upon arrival according to their education and occupational profiles is addressed in Section 3, while Section 4 discusses the post-arrival labour market trajectories in Europe. Section 5 concludes the paper.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

This paper tests empirically the research questions and hypotheses on the MAFE data set. MAFE is an international research project which yielded a new data set on Afro-European migration systems between 2008 and 2010, through biographic surveys on migrants from Senegal, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Ghana, residing respectively in France, Italy, Spain; Belgium and the UK; the UK and the Netherlands.

The strategy in the destination countries consisted of a probability sampling design (see Table 1) in Spain, using the Municipal Population Register (*Padrón*) as a sampling frame to draw a random sample of people born in Senegal and living in Spain at the time of the survey. The register presents the unique advantage of including undocumented migrants as well as documented ones. In the other five European countries, no suitable sampling frame was available to select randomly individuals, and quota sampling set by age and gender was used instead (Beauchemin and Gonzalez-Ferrer 2011; Beauchemin 2012; Schoumaker and Mezger 2013).

The same eligibility criteria were applied in all countries to homogenize the type of interviewees, who were individuals (1) born in Senegal, RDC, or Ghana (2) with Senegalese/Congolese/Ghanaian nationality at birth; (3) who had migrated to Europe for the first time at age 18 or older; and (4) aged between 25 and 70 at the time of the survey. In all countries, the samples were stratified by sex (with half men and half women as a target) and age (for each sex, half aged 25–40, and the other half aged 41–70). Both documented and undocumented individuals were included in the samples.

Yearly retrospective information – from birth till the survey date – was collected on different domains of respondents' lives, including detailed information on their residential, family, employment, and educational histories.

In our analysis on occupational trajectories of migrants, we highlighted some key stages in their migratory paths, such as the year before their first departure from their origin countries, the year upon their first arrival in Europe, and up to the following ten (not necessarily continuous) years of stay in Europe. The choice to concentrate on key migration events (exit from the origin country, entry into Europe) and on a fixed number of years of migration experience, rather than on a calendar-based approach (*i.e.*, comparing the same years or period for all the respondents), allows a better comparison among different groups, migration timing frames, and receiving contexts (or at least reduces the complexity and the heterogeneity of these elements), to better grasp the *structure* of the main pathways of labor market integration for the three African groups. This choice, however, leads to analyzing similar events at similar stages in the migration history (e.g., entry into the labor market in the first year of arrival at destination), but situated in different historical periods. Choosing to group together individuals who migrated in Europe at different historical times (from the early eighties to much more recent times) means that migrants

were confronted with different economic, social, and juridical contexts at their entrance in Europe. Furthermore, sampled individuals may sensibly differ according to their length of stay in Europe, depending on the time and age at migration (thus of arrival), as well as on the history of the fluxes to Europe (*i.e.*, Senegalese migration to France is of a much longer tradition as compared to that directed to Spain or Italy). Despite these limitations, this approach highlights clear patterns of relationships between labor and migration.

It should be recognized that this type of analysis, which is based on retrospectively collected data, suffers from an implicit selection bias. By collecting life histories from those individuals who “survived” long enough to be sampled in the chosen countries, both more recent (shorter) migrations and less successful trajectories are less likely to be represented in the data. The former are less detectable, the latter are more likely to bring about a further migratory step (either to a new destination country or a return) and thus become increasingly under-represented with the spending of time (Nazio 2008). Accounting for episodes of returns to the countries of origin would not have solved the second issue, because sampling was made among those present in the destination countries at the time of interview.

The key variable for the analyses presented in this paper is the time-varying occupational status of migrants, computed on the basis of two questions in the biographic questionnaire: (1) a question on the self-reported labor market status (student, economically active, unemployed, inactive for various reasons) and (2) for those who declared to be economically active, an open question that recorded the wording of the detailed description provided by respondents about their occupation, level of qualifications, sector and tasks during employment episodes along their life course. This information was subsequently coded using a three-digit occupational classification adapted from the international ISCO-08 classification, to distinguish between “skilled” and “unskilled” occupations according to the tasks involved and the qualifications usually required to perform them. Among non-working individuals, we distinguished between unemployed, inactive, and students (enrolled in formal education or vocational training).

All quantitative retrospective biographic data on the individuals’ different life domains, including their educational and employment trajectories, were collected on a yearly basis. The main occupational status or the main job (either the longest one or the one considered as prevalent from

the interviewee) was recorded in case of changes of status within a single year (e.g., short periods of unemployment after episodes of job loss, or changes in the type of job) or multiple jobs at the same time. Trajectories may be thus oversimplified in the sense that spells shorter than a year and possible secondary occupations were not registered. Also the information on the legal nature of the contractual relationship was not included in the questionnaire. Such a decision allowed reducing sample selection bias (lower questionnaire and item non-response rates), but it did not allow distinguishing the magnitude and characteristics of irregular employment within the sample.

A second key variable is a dynamic measure of labor market mismatch derived by comparing the information on the occupational status with the one on the retrospectively reconstructed educational career (in average number of years required for reaching the corresponding highest level of education achieved, updated also on the basis of interruptions/further spells of education recorded, if any), reporting the highest level of formal education achieved every year since age 5. This time-varying educational–occupational mismatch indicator was derived by comparing the level of education acquired by the migrant (including educational investments in the destination countries) with the (supposed) level of education required to perform the migrant’s job, according to the ISCO code. Occupational levels are high (recoding of open question ranging from value 700 upwards), medium (values between 500 and 700 and category 242 “Businessman”), and low (values below 500, except category 242), and educational levels are high (16+ years/some tertiary education), medium (10–15 years/secondary education), or low (9 years/primary school). Levels of “mismatch” are overeducated (low level occupations with medium or high educational levels and medium level occupations with high education), well-matched (correspondingly low, medium, or high levels of both educational credentials and occupational level), or undereducated (high level occupations with medium or low educational level and medium level occupations with low education).

This indicator of job-skills mismatch is a simple but imperfect proxy for the mismatch between one’s skill proficiencies (all abilities and competencies, also acquired through non-formal education and experience) and the use of skills required at the workplace, which is recognized as pervasive in many European labor markets (for a discussion on the measures of the actual skill mismatch *see* Pellizzari and Fichen 2013; Quintini 2014). Barriers to the transferability of qualifications acquired abroad are difficult

to tackle as the recognition of certified credentials touches upon multiple policy fields, including immigration, trade, immigrant integration, employment, and education (Sumption, Papademetriou, and Flamm 2013). Language barriers, a weaker recognition of certificates by the employers (who are unaware of foreign educational career paths, their content, skills provision, and effort they require), institutional barriers to the formal recognition of qualifications for professionals in many industrial and service sectors (State exams, professional associations, etc.), discrimination at the workplace (Battu and Sloane 2004; Chiswick and Miller 2009) are all mechanisms which impact on the overall labor market integration of foreigners. But these mechanisms are not fixed in time. On the contrary, the educational–occupational mismatch is dynamic as it may decrease with the length of stay in a country, with adjustments occurring through occupational upward mobility and with experience or further training that the migrant might take after migrating in Europe. Although there is a high unobserved heterogeneity that the over- or undereducation with respect to the required level of skills for each occupation cannot capture, comparing the average mismatch at several steps in the life course of the migrant (before leaving, upon migration, and after several years) helps controlling for the unobserved individual abilities and competences.

For the analyses, we also use time-varying variables for individuals' age, duration since first migration from country of origin (measured in number of years of stay in any European country), number of assets (plots of land, house, or business) in the country of origin, possession of a residence permit during migration (if required). Whenever possible, we distinguished for the gender dimension in the migratory experiences. All analyses are weighted.

EDUCATION AND OCCUPATION BEFORE MIGRATION AND THE CHOICE OF THE DESTINATION

Building a social and economic profile of migrants before departure allows linking their characteristics and circumstances at origin with their subsequent labor market trajectories at destination. The descriptive profiles of migrants' before departure disaggregated by different origin and destination countries suggest (*see* Table 2) a strong selection of the destination in Europe according to the occupational profile of migrants.

Migration flows directed to the more recent migration countries are mainly composed by low-skilled workers: Senegalese in Spain and Italy

TABLE 2
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR EACH SUBSAMPLE BY EU DESTINATION (WEIGHTED FIGURES AND TIME OF SURVEY, UNLESS SPECIFIED)

	Senegalese				Congolesse			Ghanaians			Total		
	ES	FR	IT		BE	UK	UK	UK	NL		Senegalese	Congolesse	Ghanaians
Age at 1st migration EU	27.9 (8.5)	27.1 (7.2)	26.8 (5.4)		28.9 (7.4)	28.3 (9.4)		27.5 (6.3)	30 (7.4)		27.2 (6.5)	28.7 (8.4)	27.8 (6.5)
Age at interview	35.7 (8.5)	44 (11.5)	38.3 (6.9)		40.4 (9.7)	38.3 (10.2)		41.2 (11.2)	41.7 (9.2)		40.2 (10.2)	39.5 (10)	41.3 (10.9)
Year of 1st migration	2000 (6.3)	1991 (10.8)	1996 (6.9)		1996 (9.7)	1998 (5.9)		1994 (11.2)	1996 (8.2)		1995 (9.5)	1997 (8.3)	1995 (10.8)
Duration since 1st migration	7.8 (6.3)	16.8 (10.8)	11.5 (6.9)		11.5 (9.7)	10 (5.9)		11.73 (8.2)	13.73 (11.2)		13 (9.5)	10.8 (8.3)	13.5 (10.8)
Transfers at 1st entry EU	45.40%	43.60%	41.30%		33.70%	39.70%		44.20%	25.60%		43.40%	36.30%	41.60%
Transfers	75.30%	79.10%	74.40%		66.30%	60.30%		83.60%	80.40%		76.70%	63.70%	83.20%
Presence of assets at 1st entry EU	14.40%	14.80%	13.70%		22.50%	19.70%		16.50%	20.10%		14.30%	21.20%	17%
Presence of assets in origin country	33.50%	53.20%	39.70%		31.90%	31.40%		55.10%	54%		44.20%	31.60%	55%
Residence permit at 1st entry EU	49.30%	81.50%	59.10%		84.80%	55%		90%	84.20%		66.80%	71.60%	89.20%
No residence permit at 1st entry EU	50.10%	7.90%	35.60%		14.10%	43.10%		4.70%	14.60%		26.70%	27%	6%
entry EU													
No residence permit required at 1st entry EU	0.60%	10.60%	5.30%		1%	1.90%		5.30%	1.20%		6.50%	1.40%	4.80%
Residence permit	69.70%	52.80%	75.80%		50.70%	43.70%		50.60%	43.90%		63.90%	47.50%	49.60%
No residence permit	28.60%	8.50%	16.90%		8.10%	12%		4.50%	16%		16.10%	9.90%	6%
entry EU													
No residence permit required	1.70%	38.70%	7.30%		41.10%	44.40%		45%	40.10%		20%	42.60%	44.30%
Primary/low educ. (0-9 years)	68.60%	38.10%	43.20%		0.90%	10.90%		3.90%	5.70%		46.70%	5.40%	4.10%

TABLE 2 (CONTINUED)
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR EACH SUBSAMPLE BY EU DESTINATION (WEIGHTED FIGURES AND TIME OF SURVEY, UNLESS SPECIFIED)

	Senegalese			Congolese			Ghanaians			Total		
	ES	FR	IT	BE	UK	UK	UK	NL		Senegalese	Congolese	Ghanaians
Secondary educ. (10–15 years)	28.80%	44.40%	43.60%	30%	41.30%	22%	22%	45.60%		35%	35%	25.20%
Higher educ. (16+ yrs)	2.60%	17.50%	13.20%	69.10%	47.80%	74.10%	74.10%	48.70%		18.30%	59.60%	70.70%
Empl. last yr. origin country: skilled*	10%	31%	10%	63.80%	63.60%	65.10%	65.10%	31.60%		17.30%	63.70%	59.80%
Empl. last yr. origin country: unskilled*	90%	69%	90%	36.20%	36.40%	34.90%	34.90%	68.40%		82.70%	36.30%	40.20%
Empl. at 1st entry EU: skilled*	1%	9%	2%	36.60%	24.10%	42%	42%	6.10%		4%	31.70%	37.40%
Empl. at 1st entry EU: unskilled*	99%	91%	98%	63.40%	75.90%	58%	58%	93.90%		96%	68.30%	62.60%
Empl.: skilled*	1%	28%	11%	43.30%	38.30%	70.40%	70.40%	17%		15.70%	42.40%	62.60%
Empl.: unskilled*	99%	72%	89%	56.70%	61.70%	29.60%	29.60%	83%		84.30%	57.60%	37.40%
Students at 1st migration	5.50%	28.20%	11.20%	24%	24.70%	27.60%	27.60%	10.40%		17.40%	24.40%	25.20%
Inactive at 1st migration	11.20%	18.60%	3.50%	10.60%	15.50%	2.70%	2.70%	4.80%		12.20%	12.70%	3%
Unemployed at 1st migration	3.50%	3.20%	17.80%	8.90%	17.80%	4.20%	4.20%	7.30%		7.70%	12.80%	4.70%
Sex (female)	15%	47%	12%	55.50%	54%	47%	47%	51%		29%	55%	47%
Total	200	200	203	279	149	149	149	273		603	428	422

Mean (SD) or percentage (%).
*Percent of employed individuals.

were mainly employed as non-qualified workers before leaving (around 90% of employed individuals), while only 69 percent of those employed before migrating to France were in low-skilled positions prior to departure. The labor demand for foreign work in Southern Europe, heavily skewed in unskilled jobs (Reyneri and Fullin 2011; Pastore, Salis, and Villosio 2013), can be expected to shape the choice of the destination of candidate Senegalese migrants (Castagnone et al. 2005).

Migrants from Ghana having left their origin country as unskilled workers also largely exceed the skilled ones in the Netherlands, accounting for over 80 percent of the total employed in the NL at the time of interview (from 68% before migration), while those migrating to the UK show an inverted proportion, with 65.1 percent of those employed registering a skilled occupational status prior to migration, well matched by the 70 percent as skilled workers at present times.

An “anomaly” is provided by Congolese migration, where a significant proportion of students directed to both host countries at time of first migration (around 25% of migrants were students directed to Belgium and 24% those to the UK), with a rate between around 20 and 30 percent of non-working individuals (inactive and unemployed together), reflecting the specific circumstances of migration for this group, many of whom had left the Democratic Republic of Congo as asylum seekers.

Migration to “traditional” destinations, on the other side, involved much higher proportions of both former students and employed in qualified

TABLE 3
EMPLOYMENT STATUS BEFORE DEPARTURE (ROWS) AND AT FIRST ENTRY IN EUROPE (COLUMN),
WEIGHTED DATA

	Occupational Status	Employed	Unemployed	Inactive	Student	Total
Senegalese	Employed (62.6%)	78.5	10.1	6.9	4.5	100
	Unemployed (7.5%)	64.2	28.0	0.9	6.9	100
	Inactive (12.3%)	36.5	2.4	53.0	8.0	100
	Student (17.6%)	30.1	2.3	8.5	59.1	100
	Total	63.7	9.2	12.4	14.7	100
Congolese	Employed (50.2%)	17.4	15.9	27.6	39.1	100
	Unemployed (12.9%)	9.0	48.5	12.5	30.1	100
	Inactive (12.7%)	4.1	7.8	58.8	29.3	100
	Student (24.3%)	7.8	8.0	18.9	65.4	100
	Total	12.3	17.2	27.5	43.1	100
Ghanaians	Employed (66.8%)	59.8	11.1	3.5	25.7	100
	Unemployed (4.6%)	73.3	4.3	0.0	22.4	100
	Inactive (3.0%)	30.3	5.4	16.1	48.2	100
	Student (25.5%)	39.0	1.5	4.7	54.9	100
	Total	54.2	8.1	4.0	33.7	100

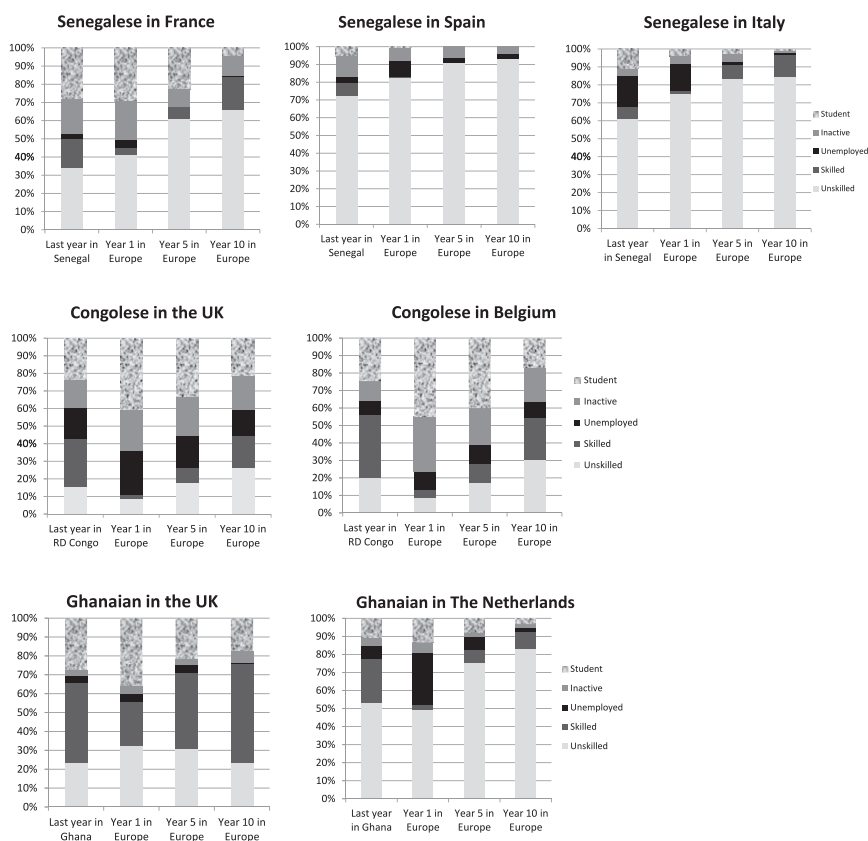
occupations in the year prior to departure. Among Senegalese in France, Congolese in Belgium and Ghanaians in the UK between 25 and 28 percent were students immediately before leaving. Colonial links thus seem to be a crucial factor in determining the composition of migration flows, particularly through affecting opportunity structures for citizens from former colonies in terms of linguistic commonalities, similar educational systems and easier access to formal education in receiving countries by recognition of educational credentials obtained by citizens of former colonies and availability of grants (often associated to other facilities such as students' residences, documents, housing, and economic support). Furthermore, colonial powers have always favored the migration of students from former colonies as part of the global package of foreign aid, and higher education provided to foreign students has been one important channel allowing host countries to diffuse cultural, economic, and political norms abroad (Beine and Romain Lionel 2013). Established networks of highly skilled workers and students can also play a crucial role in these destinations, with people from the origin country already settled at destination. Students and the highly skilled are thus more incline to prefer former colonial countries as their destinations. Net of the characteristics of migrants, the structural opportunities offered by the receiving countries can also be expected to positively impact the employment careers of students, shaping their subsequent integration into the labor market at destination.

POST-ARRIVAL LABOR MARKET TRAJECTORIES IN EUROPE

Given the composition by employment profile of the subflows heading to different destination countries, with Congolese and Ghanaian migrants more often employed in higher skilled occupations prior to departure compared to Senegalese migrants, Table 3 and Figures I and II analyze how migrants' careers unfold after arrival and to what extent migrants' experiences differ across destination countries.

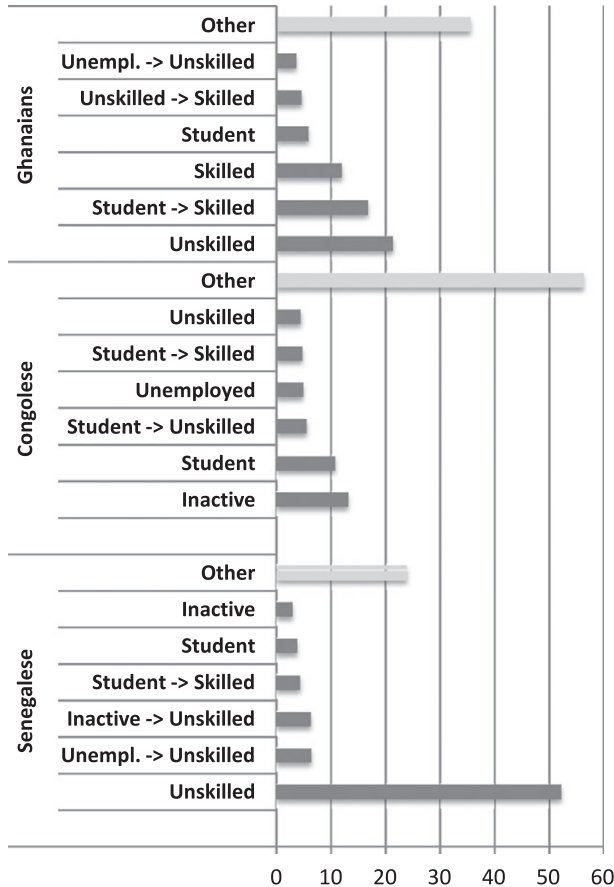
Table 3 shows the transition matrix between the last occupational status before departure, and the corresponding occupational status for the three groups of migrants, upon their first arrival in Europe. With regard to occupational status, it is first to note the much higher proportion of Congolese who enter education at destination: only 17 percent of the formerly employed are still so upon entry in Europe, while 39 percent of them are now studying; have also begun studying –again– 48.5 of the unemployed before migration and 58.8 percent of formerly other inactive (*see* Table 3).

Figure I. Occupational Status in the Last Year in Africa, at the First, Fifth, and Tenth Year of Stay in Europe, by Country of Origin and of Destination



These Congolese going back to education in Europe (after employment, unemployment, or inactivity before departure) add to similar proportions of students pursuing their further studies in Europe among Senegalese or Ghanaians (over half of the Senegalese and of the Ghanaian former students are still studying the subsequent year in Europe). This is linked to the singular case of Congolese migrants, who have moved as asylum seekers in much larger shares. Aside the exceptionality of the Congolese group, and beside students and other inactive (around one-third of which is found employed at arrival in Europe), at least two-thirds of both employed and unemployed individuals are successfully employed again on their first year at destination. Looking at the overall profile of statuses (those at origin in

Figure II. Six Most Frequent Sequences of Migrant's Occupational Status While in Europe, by Country of Residence (Possible States: Unskilled, Skilled, Unemployed, Inactive, Student). Percentages (Weighted Data)



brackets next to the labels, those at destination in the rows "Total"), Senegalese migrants show equivalent proportions in each status (although partly occupied by different persons due to transitions between states), while Ghanaians seem to have decreased the share of employed people in favor of an increased proportion of students (8–9%).

Results on long-term outcomes by destination country within each flow suggest again contrasting patterns of integration into the labor market between new and old host countries (again, with an exception for migrants from DRC). Most Ghanaians in the Netherlands and Senegalese

migrants in Spain and Italy enter and stay in the labor market in unskilled positions (see rates of occupational status at year 1 and 5 in Figure I and labor trajectories in Figure II). Such steady “unskilled” patterns may indicate the permanence in the same non-qualified job, but also lateral labor mobility, with job changes at the same occupational level, implying anyway a persistent stagnation in the lower segments of the labor market.

As for migrants who used to be employed in skilled occupations before migrating, the overwhelming majority experienced a drastic downgrading upon entry in the European labor market, as shown in Table 2 and Figure I in all the sampled European countries, where the share of African workers in qualified positions systematically decreases in the first year of stay in Europe, but tends to restore to pre-migration levels over time, with different speed and strength across destination countries.

For Congolese in the United Kingdom and for Ghanaians in the Netherlands, the share of highly skilled workers subsequently increases over time, without reaching the rate witnessed before departure. Senegalese in France and in Italy, Ghanaians in the UK, and Congolese in Belgium show instead increasing rates of migrants in skilled occupations, compared to the initial share before arrival in Europe that allow for an almost complete catch up over time (see rate of skilled workers among employed individuals before departure, at arrival in Europe, and at survey time in Table 2 and the proportions of skilled workers among migrants before departure and after 5 years of stay in Europe in Figure I).

The UK seems to offer a better labor market integration to skilled migrants than other destinations. Skilled migrants in the UK from Ghana, in particular, experience a lower downgrading upon their arrival in Europe and in the following years even exceed the original distribution across occupational statuses. For Congolese migrants, we see again the colonialist legacy playing a role and the favorable integration environment of the UK: While migrants to Belgium seem to enter better, more qualified jobs upon arrival than those in the UK (which represents a more recent destination, with stronger linguistic barriers and weaker networks), the latter shows a faster catch up over time.

However, albeit we found some evidence of upward mobility trajectories taking place in the destination countries (sequences *Unskilled-Skilled* in Figure II), the increase in the share of employed highly skilled occupations across the destination countries is only partly accounted for by a progressive reduction of skills mismatch and mainly explained by

students' post-study entry into the labor market in qualified positions, compensating for the rather persistent skill mismatch of the highly educated. In other words, migrants have a higher probability of obtaining a qualified occupation if they have studied in the destination country (sequences: *Student-Skilled*), instead of entering as formerly skilled workers or by experiencing upward mobility (sequences: *Skilled-Skilled* or *Unskilled-Skilled*).

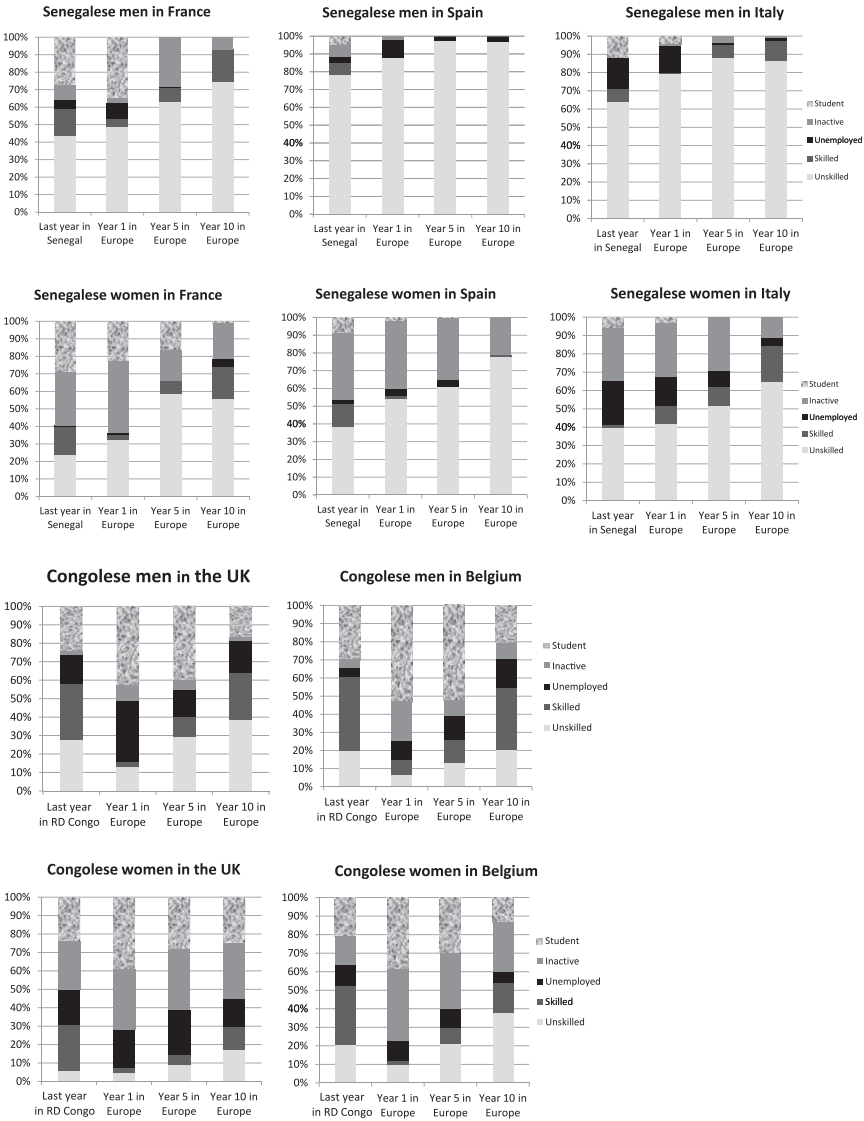
Nevertheless, the data also show that a certain proportion of students does not always achieve a straightforward upward occupation mobility, but joins the labor market in unskilled occupations, or falls first into unemployment or inactivity (sequences: *Student-Unskilled*; *Student-Inactive*; *Student-Unemployed*), at least for a period.

Altogether, although not every destination offers migrants fair chances of matching employment with their qualifications, they all seem to allow migrants with the opportunity to become assets owners in the countries of origin and to send remittances over time, while favoring an increasing regularization of their circumstances. Table 2 shows that the shares of individuals owning assets at origin increase from around 14–20 percent at first arrival in Europe, to 32–55 percent at time of the surveys, with the better performing groups being the Senegalese in France and the Ghanaians in both destinations. In the same direction are also the money transfers that pertain 36–43 percent of migrants upon first arrival in Europe, rising up to 64–83 percent by the surveys time; again, the Senegalese (especially in France) and Ghanaians in both destinations show the highest scores in this respect. Lastly, the residence legal status of migrants also largely improves over time, with increasing proportions not required to have a residence permit (with the exception of Senegalese in Spain and Italy) or having obtained one. Here, the former colonies distinguish again for their higher proportions of entrants with residence permit (or not required to have one), with over 90 percent of documented Senegalese migrants at arrival in France, over 85 percent Congolese in Belgium, and over 95 percent Ghanaians in the United Kingdom.

Gendered Trajectories of Activity and Employment

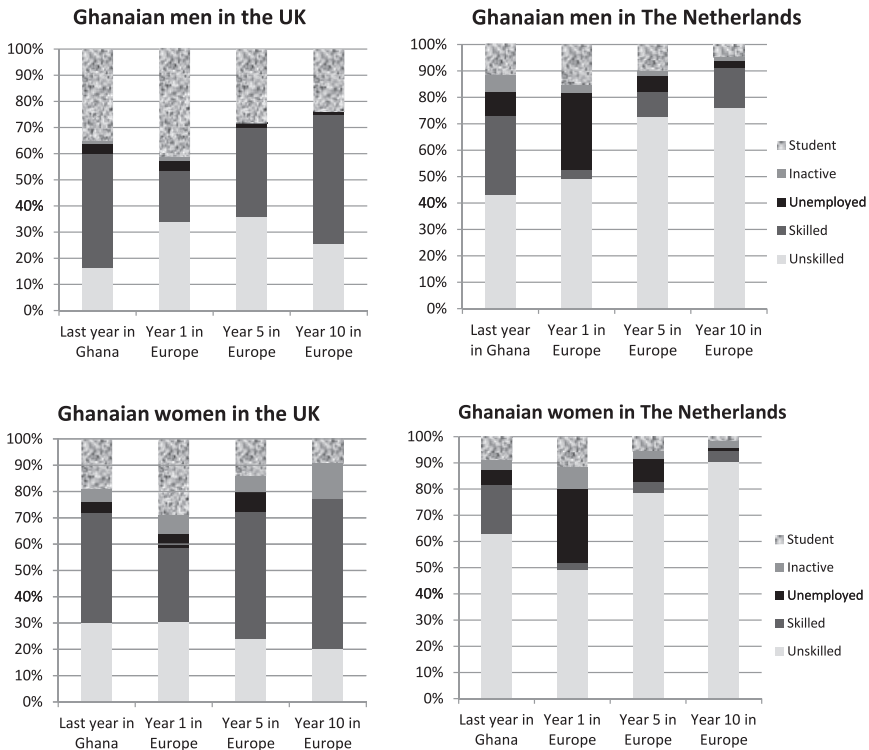
To better grasp the dynamics of economic integration at destination, it is important to understand how gender deeply affects migratory paths and labor market participation, starting from gender differences in the main

Figure III. Occupational Status in the Last Year in Africa and at Each Year of Stay in Europe (for the First 10 years), by Gender



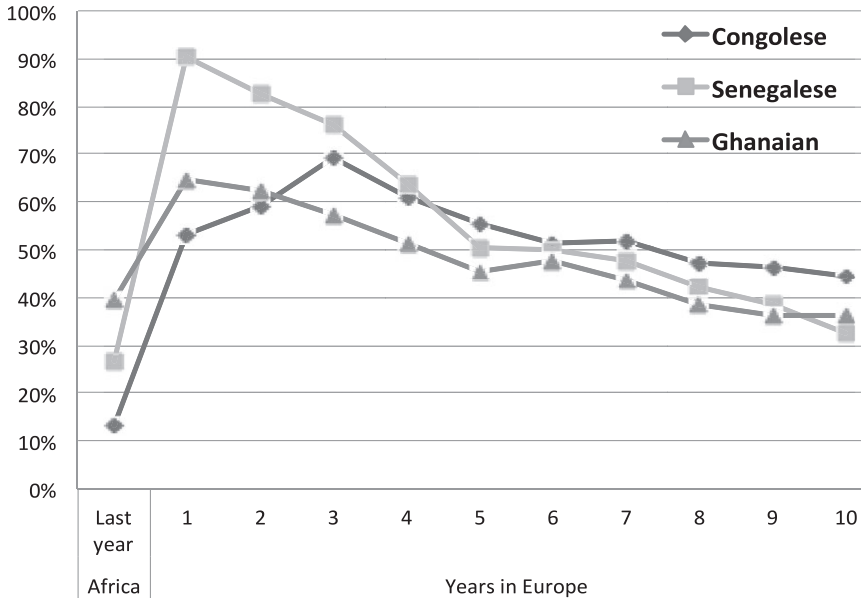
occupational status before migration. Although this may be partially explained by the type of occupations more frequent among women (self-employed in small trading activities, frequent but not continuous activities

Figure III. Continued



throughout a year), male migrants are much more likely to be involved in waged labor than their female counterparts before leaving, especially among Senegalese and Congolese. As indicated in the first columns on the left of Figure III, rates of inactivity in the year prior to departure are of 31 percent for women versus 4 percent for men among Senegalese, and of 20 percent for women, versus 3 percent for men among Congolese. Within the Ghanaian subsample, instead, inactivity rates for women (5%) are similar to those for men (2%), reflecting the different organization of gender relations and family life in the three countries of origin and indicating possible selection effect across countries among migrant women, whereby Ghanaian women are less likely than Congolese and Senegalese to come through family reunification and more likely to come as students to the UK (not shown). Overall, Ghanaian migration has become increasingly feminized with more women migrating independently of men to fulfill their own economic needs or aspirations, with professional women,

Figure IV. Proportion of Individuals with Higher Education (11+ Years/Secondary Education) Working in Unskilled Occupations in the Last Year Before Migration and in the First 10 years in Europe. Weighted Data

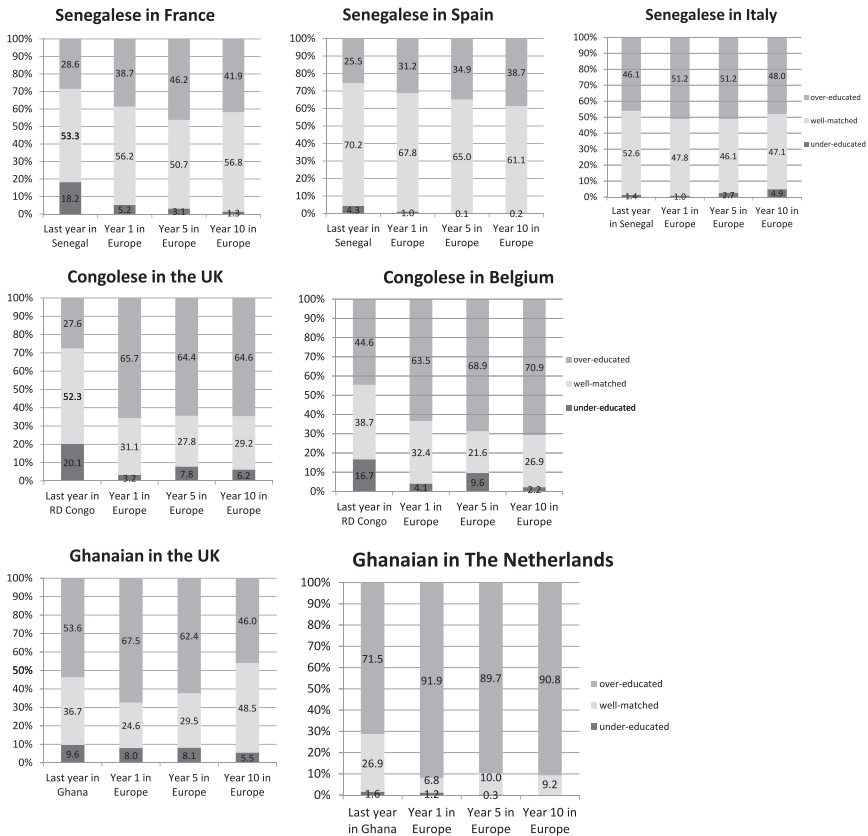


especially female nurses and doctors, becoming increasingly engaged in international migration. Also in terms of labor outcomes at destination, the Ghanaian migrant population is far more gender-balanced in contrast to the Senegalese and Congolese, with men and women experiencing more similar paths.

In Senegal, women are less educated and less involved in the formal labor market, while being more engaged in informal activities and in non-waged labor, compared to men (Fall 2010). While migration among Senegalese is undergoing a slow but growing process of feminization, it is still prevalently undertaken by men, with women more often following family reunification or relying on families to determine and organize their migration plans, with clear spillovers on their subsequent labor trajectories in Europe.

Congolese women show higher labor market participation and an increased propensity to migrate autonomously (Toma and Vause 2011). Among this group, however, differently from the Ghanaians and the Senegalese, inactivity also significantly affects men. This outcome may reflect the circumstances of arrival of this group, which is a large extent, composed of

Figure V. Occupational Mismatch in the Last Year in Africa, at the First, Fifth, and Tenth Year of Stay in Europe, by Countries of Origin and of Destination



asylum seekers and students, and often translates in further spells of education in the destination countries (Table 3).

At the immediate entry in Europe, female inactivity rate registers an increase for all the three subsamples, reflecting the more frequent migration through family reunification among women. After first entry, however, trends in inactivity differentiate over time, declining in the case of Senegalese women in favor of increasing rates of employment, remaining constant for Congolese and even slightly increasing for Ghanaian women in the UK. With regard to educational investments, there is no statistically significant gender difference in the probability to come as students and/or to engage in further periods of education abroad.

Education and Occupation in Europe

The above analyses already showed a systematic and persistent downgrading in the European labor market for skilled migrants. To further investigate this issue, Figure IV shows the extent to which the educational level of migrant working populations from the three surveyed groups is matched by their employment position, in the year prior to migration and across their first 10 years of stay in Europe.

The incidence of mismatch rises dramatically upon entry in the host country, mirroring the occupational downgrading shown in Table 2 and Figure I, reaching the highest peaks in the first year of stay for the Senegalese (91%) and the Congolese (64%), and in the third year for the Ghanaians (69%).

In the following years, the incidence of the educational-occupational mismatch decreases rapidly until the 6th year of stay in Europe (around 50% for the three groups), while subsequently it continues declining but at a slower pace. This means that after an initial downgrading, the re-placement into the labor market at a level equivalent to the owned skills takes place mainly within the first 5–6 year of stay in Europe, while those who did not manage to upgrade their occupational level in the labor market within this period will have lower possibilities to do so in the following years of stay abroad.

The comparison of the longitudinal trends for the three groups finally reveals that globally migration has not been rewarding in terms of job match for skilled individuals (11+ years of schooling/secondary education). If we compare the two ends of the trajectories taken in consideration, that is, the status before leaving and after 10 years of residence abroad (for those observed this long), we do not find a clear gain in terms of match between the educational investment achieved and the skills requested by the job. Mismatch in origin country and at destination after 10 years of stay is in fact similar for Senegalese and Ghanaians, with a slow increase for the first group (27% prior to migration and 32% after 10 years abroad) and a slight decrease for the second one (39% before leaving and 36% after 10 years of migration). Congolese more educated workers, who showed the lowest mismatch in the country of origin, are instead the ones who experienced the highest downgrading over time (from 13% overqualified to 45% after 10 years of stay). This counterintuitive performance is explained by the strong non-economic-driven component (asylum seekers) of this group and by their much more fre-

quent pursue of further studies in the destination countries (Table 3), which translates into a higher potential for occupational mismatch.

Figure V illustrates the degree of occupational mismatch for employed individuals along different stages of their migratory experience. These figures must be interpreted bearing in mind the different proportions of highly skilled individuals across destination countries (Table 2 and Figure III), which translates into a different risk of mismatch, even despite a similar integration into the lower segment of the labor force (not resulting in mismatch for lower educated). The lower degree of over-education shown by Senegalese, as compared to the other groups, is to be interpreted in this light (especially in the Spanish and Italian labor markets). Overall, migrants seem to suffer from poor occupational returns of their educational investments already in their countries of origin, a feature that worsens for all groups with migration and with no signs of recovery over time. Educational investments seem not to payoff in terms of achieving a better occupational status, especially accounting for the rate of migrants who undertake further training in the destination countries. The analyses suggest that while there is a certain occupational upward mobility or a better match for highly educated in the destination countries (at least for some), the integration of migrants in (correspondingly) higher strata of the labor markets does neither allow for a fair placement according to educational achievements nor keeps the pace with migrants' up skilling educational investments and credentials. Here again, the UK and former colonies seem to impose on migrants a slightly lower price in terms of wasted capacity and lower returns from migration.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper considered the long-term effects of migration on labor market outcomes of Africans in selected European destinations, by considering their overall transnational labor trajectories before leaving and during their migration experience. The analyses presented in the paper yielded the following main key findings with respect to our research questions.

First, the educational composition of migrants varies significantly across origin countries. This is reflected in employment profiles, with Congolese and Ghanaian migrants being more often employed in skilled occupations compared to Senegalese migrants. A strong pattern of selection across destination countries is found, which is clearly linked to colonial links. While migration directed to "traditional" destinations –

that is, France, Belgium and the UK – involved much higher proportions of students and medium/high skilled workers, flows to “new” immigration countries, such as Italy and Spain for Senegalese, but also the UK for Congolese and the Netherlands for Ghanaians, were characterized by lower educated individuals.

Beside structural factors that made former colonial countries more attractive to the migrants from their ancient colonies (such as the language commonalities, the common educational systems, specific opportunities offered to students, and easier access to a documented stay) are also historical, economic, political, and cultural relationships with the élites from the former colonies that have been maintained. As a result, a stratification process according to social class operated in selecting migrants toward the destination countries, channeled by a complex structure of relational, social, and cultural capitals, which translated in a framework of opportunities for the social and cultural élites from the countries of origin.

While most scholars acknowledge that highly educated individuals from regions in Africa are more likely to move toward former colonial powers (Constant and Tien 2009), very few studies have examined the strength of colonialism as a correlate of African migration to Europe. Our research contributes with new quantitative evidence on migration self-selection based on migrants’ trajectories of labor experience and educational investments, suggesting that the destination choice of the more highly educated has been strongly affected – at least until recent years – by colonial legacies, with a prolonged pulling effect exercised by the opportunities offered by former colonial countries to the highly skilled and the most achieving students.

However, the migratory patterns are rapidly changing. The old destination countries are receiving new flows, more heterogeneous with respect to the countries of origin and of socio-economic composition. In addition, the ability of labor markets to absorb and integrate foreign labor force has been varying over time (with a deep and long-lasting economic crisis hitting Europe as from 2008), as changes operate on the conditions of entry, admission, and access to the labor market for the different migrant groups (Cangiano 2012). The economic downturn experienced by most European countries since 2008 has strongly affected migrant workers’ participation to the labor markets, severely challenging their economic integration at destinations (Ponzo and Salis 2014). Migrants’ economic performances need therefore to be constantly monitored over time for different groups and different countries.

Second, the analysis indicated the common experience of downgrading (employment in occupational levels lower than the educational level achieved by the worker) experienced by a large proportion of African migrants upon entry into the European labor market. Newly arrived migrants are more likely to take up jobs below their formal educational level, as upon entry they often lack the specific human capital needed at destination (among others: language skills, functioning of the host labor market, and access to functional networks; *see* OECD 2012). While the literature suggests they would tend to move on from such jobs, as they become more integrated into the labor markets at destination, our data suggest that over-qualification may, or more often may not, decrease over time depending on the different groups (and related migration systems) and destination countries.

The incidence of educational–occupational mismatch among skilled workers increases dramatically upon entry in the host country, with mixed signs of recovery after several years only for Senegalese and Ghanaians, while Congolese are more hit by a persistent downgrading while abroad. While the overall share of migrants working in skilled jobs seems to increase over time, this is only partly the result of a “catch up” in their careers by overqualified workers downgraded at their entry through upward occupational mobility. It also reflects the effect of migrants’ pursue of (often) tertiary studies in the destination countries on their entry into the labor market upon studies completion. Prospects seem thus better for African students in Europe. Result suggests that pursuing education and training in destination countries is more likely to yield positive labor market outcomes than a direct accession of the medium and highly skilled in the labor markets of destination countries, with the exception of skilled Ghanaians in the UK, who appear to integrate more easily there. Foreign students in Europe seem more likely to overcome the problems that immigrants face upon arrival, as they are in a better position to acquire destination country-specific language skills, training, and/or experience, as well as more mixed social networks, all assets that the literature suggest to be more valued as compared to education acquired in the country of origin (Friedberg 2000). In addition and notwithstanding the recent efforts at the European Union level for the recognition of qualification acquired abroad (*see for example*, the European Directive 2005/36/EC), local employers better value and understand credentials acquired at destination than those of immigrants admitted through non-study immigration channels (Hawthorne 2008). We suggest that a more

systematic knowledge of previous credentials and labor employment attainments of immigrants before migration might help employers to better understand and trust the payoff of migrants' skills upon arrival and allow for a better economic integration in the medium–long term of their stay abroad.

However, the international student mobility, increasingly encouraged by EU and national policies for attracting highly qualified migrants, is not a skilled-migration panacea. International students are likely to stay and work in the host country once they have completed their studies (Rosenzweig 2008), but their flows are volatile. The growing competition among developed countries for international students and the possibility of returns to their origin countries or further migratory steps, make of international students a highly mobile population, next to draining of competences the countries of origin.

Third, evidence provided in this paper suggests that labor market participation in destination countries is strongly affected by gender and is primarily connected to the circumstances and reasons for departure of migrants. While unemployment for men is a residual phenomenon, women are much more likely to be out of the labor market than their male counterparts already when leaving their origin countries (especially among Senegalese and Congolese). The rate of female inactivity even increases further upon arrival with respect to men, with different subsequent outcomes for each of the three groups. Overall, female migrants are much more strongly exposed to the permanence in inactivity also later in Europe and are more at risk of falling back to inactivity after joining the labor market.

Fourth, overall, the most successful example of labor market integration from MAFE research comes from Ghanaian migration to the UK, where a majority of migrants who had been in the country for a decade or longer were found working in skilled occupations. By contrast, Ghanaians in the Netherlands were mainly occupied in unskilled positions, with increasing proportions over time. This comparison across receiving countries indicates a more favorable context in the UK in terms of successful labor market integration, but it also reflects selection of migrants by education and occupation to the two countries (colonial legacy). Further insights on UK capacity to successfully integrate migrants into its labor market come from the comparison between the Ghanaians and Congolese there. Despite having fairly high levels of education, Congolese show much poorer labor market outcomes than the

Ghanaians. Lack of recognition of their diplomas and language barriers may influence their integration in the labor market, as well as the condition of asylum seeker experienced by a large proportion of Congolese migrants, which translated into a disadvantage in accessing qualified jobs in Europe (Cangiano 2012). Further analyses are needed to disentangle the effect of the context (UK as an optimum in integrating labor migrants) from the effect of composition (the different characteristics of the population of interest).

Our work indicates that migration does not necessarily payoff for highly educated Africans in terms of labor market achievement at destination, unless considering also the gains in terms of wealth accumulation (investments at origin and/or in the host country and/or toward intergenerational social class mobility of future generations) and transnational transfer to their origin countries. This means that, despite the lower returns of education for migrants in occupational achievements, migration might still be a rational choice in terms of alternative forms of “gains”, both for the migrants themselves (access to more structured and generous welfare systems, granting also pension benefits; wealth accumulation; progressive status legalization over time, with increased entitlement to family reunification, among others) should they choose to return at a later point, and for their families in the origin countries (remittances, wealth accumulation, potential migration/reunification in the future).

Our results stress the importance of longitudinal (Levitt and Nadya Jaworsky 2007; Khagram and Levitt 2008), multi-sited (Marcus 1995), and comparative research (O'Reilly 2006; Arango 2012) in the study of the labor market integration of migrants in Europe. Unlike flow-specific case studies (based on the analysis of migration of single national groups in determined destination countries), the approach adopted by the MAFE project allows analyzing and comparing the economic outcomes of different groups in various destination countries. Comparison broadens the analytical perspective, revealing commonalities and differences among clusters of countries (old and new migrant-receiving countries, as in this case) and according to specific profiles of migrants (students, highly and lowly skilled, women and men, etc.), shedding light on migrants' labor market outcomes according to their different characteristics while observing the evolution of processes and their outcomes in the long run.

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