

Living apart together across borders : how Ghanaian couples form, transform, or dissolve in the context of international migration

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Propositions
accompanying the dissertation

Living Apart Together Across Borders
*How Ghanaian couples form, transform, or dissolve in the
context of international migration*

by Kim Caarls

1. Ghanaian couples and parents and children who live apart together across borders are a significant phenomenon in Ghana. Staying geographically separate is often a long-lasting arrangement.
2. Many of the Ghanaian migrants currently living in the Netherlands or the UK arrived before starting a family. This challenges the idea that family reunification is the way for most migrants to enter Europe.
3. There are important gender differences regarding the impact of migration on divorce. Migration does not generally result in higher divorce rates. Yet when women migrate without their husbands and when both partners migrate simultaneously migration is associated with higher divorce rates.
4. Both the migrant and the left-behind spouse influence a couples' probability of reunification. This stresses the importance of including data from both the sending and receiving country to analyse transnational couple reunification.
5. A transnational approach, which conceptualizes migrants as embedded in multiple nation-state contexts, is necessary in order to fully understand migrants' family life.
6. To further our understanding of the complex link between gender and migration, it is crucial to consider *who* in the couple migrates, to *where*, and *when*.
7. Both *de jure* and *de facto* reunification need to be taken in account, as well as the fact that reunification takes place in sending and receiving countries, in order to understand processes of reunification.
8. Migrant receiving countries should ease the conditions for eligibility for family reunification, in order to avoid further disadvantaging more vulnerable migrants, such as women or undocumented migrants.
9. Family reunification policies should include different notions of the 'family', such as transnational families or extended families, in order to acknowledge family practices that prevail in many sending countries.
10. Migration policies should facilitate migrants to actively engage in transnational family life, by implementing policies that facilitate travelling back and forth by lowering the costs of visas, or by issuing special visas for visiting family members.
11. *Anoma de ako-ne-aba, na enwene berebuw.* (By going and coming, a bird weaves its nest ~ Ghanaian proverb)