



Erasmus  
Mundus

**Resilience Among Ghanaian Migrants in Lisbon in Accessing Family  
Reunification and Learning of Portuguese Language**

**Rita Adoma Parry**

**Erasmus Mundus Master's in Social Work with Families and  
Children**

**Supervisors:**

**Supervisor: Ana Raquel Matias (PhD), Invited Assistant Professor and  
Integrated Researcher, Department of Sociology, ISCTE-Instituto Universitário  
de Lisboa**

**Co-supervisor: Olga Solovova (PhD), Research Associate, Center for  
Multilingualism in Society in Society across the Lifespan, Faculty of Humanities,  
University of Oslo, Norway**

**Instituto Universitário de Lisboa**

**November, 2020**



# Abstract

**Title:** Resilience among Ghanaian migrants in Lisbon in accessing family reunification and learning of Portuguese language.

**Author:** Rita Adoma Parry

**Keywords:** Ghanaians, Family reunification, transnational-parenting, resilience, language learning, Portugal

This study explores the resilience of Ghanaian migrants in their migration trajectories, their transnational parenting experiences, language learning practices and plans of reunification in Lisbon, Portugal. The resilience theory informed the theoretical and analytical base for the study. A non-probability (snowball technique) sampling was used for selecting migrants who had had intentions of reuniting with their families in Portugal. A qualitative orientation research approach was employed to investigate the phenomenon among seven respondents using in-depth interviews. Textual analysis of policy documents, participant observations (both on sites and online) were used as sources of data as well. The study identified the delay in their regularization processes and lack of financial resources to fulfill requirements as the main challenges Ghanaian migrants in Lisbon faced in the process of accessing family reunification in Portugal. Despite the challenges, Portugal's migration policies were perceived by migrants as friendly and benevolent to advance their future aspirations. Furthermore, transnational parenting practices including constant communication and sending of remittances played important roles in migrants' efforts in maintaining family ties across borders. Importantly, individual skills and support from migrant networks served as the participants' main resilience strategies during their migration trajectories and while they anticipated family reunification. Lastly, resilience in learning Portuguese language was demonstrated through migrant's self-determination to overcome language and communication barriers by adopting people-to-people strategies, technology-based language learning applications and accessing state provided language programs. In conclusion, due to the perceived permissive measures in Portugal's migration policies, Ghanaian migrants in Portugal are likely to opt for long term settling in the country. In this way, the gradually increasing numbers of Ghanaian migrants will contribute to the overall linguistic and cultural diversity in Portugal as they bring along their cultural baggage such as ways of engaging in transnational parenting, family models and practices and their language learning strategies.

# Contents

Abstract.....	i
List of tables.....	iv
List of figures.....	v
Acknowledgement .....	vi
Dedication.....	vii
1 CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Personal experience.....	1
1.2 Background to the study.....	1
1.3 Problem statement .....	3
1.4 Research objectives .....	4
1.5 Research questions .....	4
1.6 Rationale of study.....	5
1.7 Structure of the study .....	5
2 CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW .....	7
2.1 Introduction .....	7
2.2 Recent changes in Portugal’s immigration policies .....	7
2.3 Presence of foreigners in Portugal .....	10
2.4 Development of family reunification legal frameworks in Portugal.....	12
2.4.1 Requirements for family reunification in Portugal .....	14
2.4.2 Implementation of the family reunification law for Third Country Nationals .....	16
2.4.3 Comparison of Portugal’s family reunifications laws for TCNs and EU/EFTA citizens .....	17
2.5 Migrants’ remittances to Ghana .....	20
2.6 Language learning: challenges and opportunities for adult migrants .....	24
2.6.1 Language learning programs in Portugal.....	25
2.6.2 The case of Ghanaians .....	28
2.7 Migration, transnationalism, family reunification, and language learning ...	29
3 CHAPTER THREE - ANALYTICAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	31
3.1 Introduction .....	31
3.2 The top-down analytical framework .....	31
3.2.1 Macro level .....	32
3.2.2 Meso level.....	34
3.2.3 Micro level.....	35
3.3 Individual’s resilience strategies in migration and family reunification.....	36
3.4 Analytical Framework.....	38

3.5	Dimensions of analytical framework .....	40
3.6	Family compositions, dynamics and gender issues.....	40
3.7	Roles of social networks in migration trajectories .....	41
3.8	Language learning practices and strategies .....	42
3.9	Transnational family practices and parenting .....	43
3.9.1	Gender issues in transnational parenting .....	44
3.10	Resilience towards challenges of transnationalism and family reunification.....	45
3.11	Concluding remarks .....	45
4	CHAPTER FOUR – METHODOLOGY .....	46
4.1	Introduction .....	46
4.2	Motivation of the study .....	46
4.3	Research Design.....	47
4.4	Sampling procedures .....	49
4.5	Data collection techniques- qualitative interviews.....	49
4.6	Data processing of semi-structured interviews .....	51
4.7	Ethical considerations .....	52
4.7.1	Informed consent .....	52
4.7.2	Protection of privacy, confidentiality, and protection from harm and deception.....	53
4.8	Challenges and limitations .....	53
4.9	Self- reflections .....	54
5	CHAPTER FIVE - FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS.....	55
5.1	Introduction .....	55
5.2	Socio- demographics and family information.....	55
5.2.1	Participants’ general description.....	57
5.3	Dimensions of analysis.....	60
5.4	Discussion of findings.....	63
5.4.1	Reasons, processes and means of migration.....	63
5.4.2	The desire to explore better economic opportunities and further education.....	63
5.4.3	Processes and Means of Migration .....	65
5.5	Challenges and resilience during the migration process .....	68
5.5.1	Access to work.....	68
5.5.2	Access to regularization processes.....	69
5.5.3	Overcoming communication barriers .....	71
5.5.4	Overcoming accommodation challenges .....	72
5.6	Role of migrant support networks.....	73
5.6.1	The role of support networks before migration .....	73

5.6.2	The role of support networks across borders after migration .....	74
5.7	Language learning strategies and practices .....	76
5.7.1	Resources provided by the state.....	76
5.7.2	Use of new technologies in language learning .....	77
5.7.3	People-to-people strategy.....	78
5.8	Transnational parenting practices and gender considerations.....	79
5.8.1	Communication and virtual parenting within transnational families.....	80
5.8.2	The role of remittances in transnational parenting .....	81
5.8.3	Motherhood and fatherhood experiences in transnational parenting.....	82
5.9	Future plans and aspirations of migrants.....	84
5.9.1	Plans of family reunification and its challenges .....	84
5.9.2	Making Portugal their future home.....	86
5.10	Synthesis of analysis .....	88
6	CHAPTER SIX -SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS .....	89
6.1	Introduction .....	89
6.2	Summary of findings.....	89
6.3	Implications and recommendations.....	92
6.3.1	Implications for social work practice -MFamily .....	92
6.3.2	Implications for policy and practice .....	93
6.3.3	Future research.....	93
	REFERENCES .....	95
	APPENDICES .....	103
	Appendix I .....	103
	Appendix II.....	105
	Appendix III.....	109
	Appendix IV.....	148

## **List of tables**

Table 2-1: Requirements for family reunification in Portugal.....	17
Table 2-2: Representation of residence permits issued for family reunification in relation to the total number of permits granted to TCNs in 2019 ( In percentages)....	19
Table 2-3: Top 10 countries of cash remittances flow to Ghana in 2017 (in US\$).....	22
Table 2-4: Portuguese language programs for foreigners.....	26
Table 4-1: Themes and sub-themes identified from data analysis .....	52
Table 5-1: Main socio-demographic and family information.....	56
Table 5-2a and 5-2b: Main Dimensions of Analysis .....	61

## List of figures

Figure 2-1: Major countries sending the most of remittances to Ghana in 2015 (in US\$ million) .....	21
Figure 2-2: Cash remittance flows to Ghana between 2008-2015 (in US\$million) ....	23
Figure 3-1: Analytical Framework- Relevance of resilience theory in migrants' decision-making processes.....	39

## Acknowledgement

Ebenezer; thus far the Lord has brought me! To God be the glory now and forever!! First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the consortium of the Erasmus Mundus European Master's in Social Work with Families and Children for the opportunity to pursue this esteemed master program. I also thank the European Union Erasmus Mundus Plus Programs for providing the funding for this master's program. Without their support, it would have been impossible to study in this joint master with the Instituto Universitario de Lisboa (ISCTE-IUL), University of Stavanger, University of Gothenburg and Makerere University, and subsequently produce this research. I also thank the coordination team of ISCTE, especially Professor Pedro Vasconcelos, Professor Joana Azevedo, Professor Ana Raquel Matias and Eduardo Rodrigues for the practical support they provided for me during my final semester in Lisbon.

Further, I would like to acknowledge the immense role of my supervisors in providing advice and guidance on how to prepare and produce a quality dissertation. Professor Ana Raquel Matias, as the primary supervisor, provided constructive criticisms on methodology, academic writing, and the encouragement throughout the research process implanted a lasting memory I will forever cherish and appreciate. Equally deserving acknowledgement is my second supervisor Dr. Olga Solovova who provided thoughtful comments, criticisms, inputs and recommendations on this dissertation. You are deeply appreciated. I will always appreciate the knowledge gathered from the both of you through your supervision in this research experience. I am also thankful to my study participants, the *Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras* (SEF) Portugal, and the staff of the *Portuguese Para Todos* (PPT) program for their support, cooperation and participation in the research by providing me with data which was very valuable to my research.

My heartfelt appreciation goes to my parents; Mr. and Mrs. Parry, for the unconditional support and prayers in this intense academic work. Special mention goes to Lawrence Elorm Agbetsise for his constant support and encouragement throughout the research process. Many thanks to Cosmos Senyo Wemegah, James Kutu Obeng, Tabitha Addy and Mahmudul Hassan who have played very important roles in supporting the completion of this thesis. Further appreciation goes to my brothers, Fred Bonsu, Kofi Mante and Nana Kwesi for their generosity in supporting my stay in Portugal, Sweden and Norway.

Finally, throughout the program and writing of this dissertation, I have received a great deal of support and assistance from my colleagues in the MFamily program as well friends I made along the years in Portugal, Norway and Sweden that I will not be able to mention all their names. My appreciation goes to all of them and may God reward them wherever they are.

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this work to my adorable son Vava, whose birth has taught me to be strong and resilient in these challenging times; and to my wonderful partner, Lawrence and my beloved parents, Mr. and Mrs. Parry who gave me all their love and care from the beginning of this research until its completion. I appreciate you all.



# **1 CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Personal experience**

My experience as an international student in Portugal living many miles away from my family in Ghana has largely informed my interest in studying transnationalism and in the natural desire to live with one's family. As part of my regular practices, I engaged in communication with my family back home in Ghana and my two brothers in Canada through text messages, phone calls and video calls. I also sent remittances home as a token of appreciation to my parents when I received my monthly stipends. Even though I was not mandated to perform any of these activities, I perceived them as strategies to help me cope with the difficulties of living without them and to sustain family ties. I really wished to be reunited with them. In the wake of increased migration of people around the world, I believe my experience is similar to many migrants who live and work in destination countries without their families. This experience increased my curiosity about transnationalism as I listened to the stories of some of the Ghanaian migrants I had met in Lisbon during the first semester of my Master's program. It motivated me to explore the ways they managed their transnational lives and what strategies they used in coping with these separations. My interest in the resilience strategies and their efforts to reunite with their families was aroused as they shared their stories. Further, language learning caught my interest due to the differences in the extent of national language relevance in my semesters in Portugal, Norway and Sweden. Among the three countries where I studied for my Master's degree, it was in Portugal that I experienced most difficulties in learning the language for the purposes of settling into Portugal. These experiences informed my decision to study the various ways migrants overcome the hustle of learning the Portuguese language.

## **1.2 Background to the study**

Portugal, with its history of persistent emigration, witnessed a migration turnaround at the end of the 1980s, with an increase in immigrants coming from Brazil, Portuguese-speaking African countries and from other European countries (Peixoto and Sabino, 2009). There was also an influx of migrants from other countries (for example, China, Nepal, Bangladesh, etc.) in the early years of the 21st century. This resulted in many amendments to the Portuguese immigration laws to meet the needs of the ever so diversified migrant population. The amendments in Portugal's immigration laws focused on the conditions of entry and residence for European Union (EU) citizens and Third Country Nationals (TCNs) for seasonal work, labor migration (qualified and non-qualified), intra-company transfers, investments and for research, education, training, volunteering and for family reunification purposes. Strict or flexible border and migration policies inform the decision of migrants to emigrate to a particular destination. This decision is usually based on the economic situation in a particular country, and partly by a facilitated access to family reunification and long-term residence opportunities (Wilk, 1996).

Europe has been a top destination for migrants from different parts of the world who wish to get higher income jobs and decent wages (for example, in Germany, Switzerland, Netherlands, France, etc.). However, flexible migrant integration policies in countries like Portugal serve as an attraction for migrants to advance their aspirations, including family reunification and making these countries their future home despite the low economic status of Portugal in the EU. In the advent of the migration crisis in Europe since 2015, family reunification presents one of the alternatives for TCNs to migrate into EU countries. Family reunification is described as a process when family members migrate to join others who are the principal migrant(s), is/are legal resident(s) in a member state and who sponsor their family members' admission. Usually, the family relationship predates the arrival of the principal migrant (OECD, 2017). Indeed, as a result of the refugee crisis in 2015, 38% of all valid residence permits issued in the European

Union member-states were for the purposes of family reunification (European Migration Network, 2017). According to *Serviço Estrangeiros e Fronteiras* (SEF) migration report in 2019, family reunification accounted for the most relevant reason for granting new residence permits in Portugal. In 2019, the SEF reports issuing 38,204 permits for the purpose of family reunification, 31,511 for professional activity and 13,356 study permits. The residence permits issued for the purpose of family reunification include all permits for relatives of EU nationals (12,503) and remaining for TCNs, including family visas for investors (SEF Report, 2019, pp.24-25). However, family reunification is challenged by many requirements set by the host country, that sponsors need to fulfil. Most often, the income and accommodation requirements constrain sponsors when they seek to reunite with their family members in the host country. These restrictions have been a challenge for migrants even before the era of the refugee crises in 2015. For example, an analysis done by the SEF and received by the High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue<sup>1</sup>(ACIDI), from April 2008 to July 2011 shows that 1,011 applications for family reunification to Portugal were unsuccessful mainly because of income issues (European Commission, 2012).

Even though family-related migration has become the major source of new immigration to most European countries, increasing restrictions on family reunification make it difficult for migrants to live with their families in destination countries (King et al., 2010). This means that besides the individual motivations of migrants to travel without their families and the wishes of the family that stayed behind, state policies do influence decisions on reunification. Family migration policies regulate which family members are eligible for family-related admission and under which conditions. Legal aspects such as who is and who is not considered to be part of the family; who holds responsibility over whom, need to be repeatedly proven by migrants and their families. These conditions, as well as the restrictions placed on family-related migrants do not only constrain and define the choices and opportunities available for individuals and their families but also contribute to family separation and to the phenomenon of transnationalism.

Transnationalism as a concept hails from the late 20th century-beginning of the 21st century and counters earlier views of migration as a one-way process. It further incorporates the fact that international migrants maintain strong ties to the home society in an increasingly globalized world (Mazzucato, van Dijk, Horst and de Vries, 2004). Wimmer and Glick-Schiller (2002) highlighted that the ease of traveling long distances by plane, increase of money transfer technologies and institutions, and advances made in information and communication technologies have enabled migrants to maintain ties with countries of origin through regular visits, remittances, and computer-mediated and mobile communication. In recent times, there have been some developments, for instance, the introduction of visual technologies through applications that support video calls has further boosted interaction among transnational families as they are able to see each other, even though virtually, providing some sense of comfort for migrants and families back home.

Many times, when a family member migrates, they have the intention of bringing the rest of the family over, once they settled in the host country and there is enough economic returns to sponsor the admission of the family members into destination countries (Haagsman, 2015). Following international and regional (EU) standards aimed at family preservation for all, including TCNs, migrants in Portugal are able to reunite with their families once they fulfill the requirements set in the law. Within the period of the nine years (2011-2019), the SEF registered the following number of Ghanaians living in Portugal in the order of the years: 156, 147, 145, 143, 137, 141, 146, 142 and 173. Yet, a total number of 12 applications for family reunification from the year 2011 to 2018 has been made, which is significantly low.

---

<sup>1</sup> Alto-Comissariado-para-a-Imigração-e-Diálogo-Intercultural (ACIDI-IP)

The conditions set to be fulfilled in order to exercise the right to family reunification differ from country to country in the EU. These include financial competence on the part of the sponsor, proof of decent accommodation, proof of relation, and in most countries, (Portugal not included), pre-entry language requirements. The increased family migration to Europe has also put the question of integration and language learning at the heart of current political and public discourses. Learning the official state language is perceived vital for the assimilation into the host country by some authors (Burns and Roberts 2010). Isphording (2015) postulates that having relevant language skills in a host country allows immigrants to progress along the job ladder, increases their employment probability, and eases their access to better-paying jobs. On the contrary, Beacco et al. (2017) in their report on the integration of adult migrants in Europe conclude that there is no direct route from language learning to employment and integration. However, they argue that language learning may contribute to migrants' employment and integration even though not always. Recognizing the importance of having some knowledge of the language of the destination country, migrants adopt different language learning strategies which suit their language needs, either for the purposes of increasing their chances at exploring labor market opportunities and better wages, socialization, or in the application for citizenship. The strategies migrants use in learning languages may be formal or informal, with or without support of host country's language learning programs.

Departing from here, this study seeks to explore some of the reasons that may account for the little numbers of applications from Ghanaian migrants in Portugal by interrogating the logic and legitimacy of different selection mechanisms operating through family reunification policies. The essential question here is to try and understand why Ghanaians may feel prevented from enjoying their right to live together within one's family. I will approach this question in three ways: (1) by outlining the legal frameworks underlying the rights for family reunification in Portugal; (2) by investigating these migrants' challenges for reunification at the intersection of human rights and the practical implementation of immigration policies. Finally, I would also use the opportunity to explore the resilience strategies migrants used in their transnational experiences as well as individual strategies used in learning the Portuguese language.

### **1.3 Problem statement**

Recently, several researchers have sought to generate insights into the processes and complexities of family reunification, and its effects on transnational parenting (Riccio, 2008; González-Ferrer et al., 2012; Carls and Mazzucato, 2016). These complexities include laws and policies that promote or constrain the choices of migrants to reunite with their families or engage in transnational family practices. Most studies on transnational families have had its focus on the effects of transnational family life and the lived experiences of migrants and their families back home. This has exposed the gap in studies on struggles of migrants in destination countries to achieve family reunification in an era where African migration represents an increasingly significant flow of migration to Europe (Grillo and Mazzucato 2008).

Detouring from that focus, there is an emerging body of research which explores the agency of migrants in the decision-making processes for family reunification. Bede (2016) asserts that to understand the effects of policies and the driving forces behind family reunification, it is important to look beyond policies and include a migrant perspective encompassing the norms and desires that guide their decision-making process; they are the agents who determine how to arrange their family lives, within the given structure of opportunities and constraints. There should be a study that would present a way to understand the migrant's perspective on the resilience strategies they used throughout their migration trajectories with regards to their access to family reunification. Further, though research has been conducted on TCNs access to family reunification in the European Union and Portugal, it has mainly focused on countries with most application and the various barriers their nationals encounter during the application

process (see Oliveira et al., 2012; Schweitzer, 2015). This may account for the little or lack of literature on Ghanaian migrants on family reunification in Portugal.

In as much as language proficiency may or may not be a requirement for family reunification, the efforts of migrants in learning new languages of destination countries are often overlooked in cases of low achievement; migrants can be blamed for their non-interest in learning (Plutzer and Ritter, 2008). However, Kluzer, Ferrari, and Centeno (2011) have asserted that migrants' lack of motivation to attend language courses could be due to the fact that those are not tailored to meet learners' skills and background, their demands and pragmatic needs of language control. Busy or clashing work schedules, family commitments or responsibilities and the high mobility of migrants could also account for the low attendance of migrants in these language centers (Kluzer et al., 2011). Acquisition of the official languages of destination countries has often been portrayed as if a 'computer program' that could be downloaded into migrants, with a total disregard for their immediate and broader social context, including their cosmopolitan and transnational realities (Solovova, 2013). Migrants' challenges in learning new languages in destination countries have therefore called for a focus on "language learning practices" as an alternative that allows us to highlight the active role migrants play in their language learning process through strategies they devise, resources they choose, and the resulting organized linguistic environments.

#### **1.4 Research objectives**

The main objective was to explore the main challenges Ghanaian migrants face in accessing their right to live together with their families in Portugal. In trying to achieve the main objective of the study, the following specific objectives were pursued:

1. To outline the legal frameworks underlying the rights for family reunification in Portugal.
2. To investigate the challenges migrants encounter during the application for family reunification at the intersection of human rights.
3. To explore the practical implementation of immigration policies in Portugal.
4. To explore the practices and strategies Ghanaian migrants use in their transnational parenting experiences and language learning.
5. To explore Ghanaian migrants' future plans on family reunification.

#### **1.5 Research questions**

The main research questions underpinning this study were: What are the various resilience strategies in Ghanaian migrants' efforts in accessing family reunification and Portuguese language learning? Thus, the research questions sought to achieve the objective of exploring the challenges of Ghanaian migrants to reunite with their families in Portugal and how they overcome these challenges. To answer these questions, the following specific questions were used to guide the research process:

1. What are the legal frameworks underlying the rights for family reunification in Portugal?
2. What are the main challenges migrants encounter during the application for reunification at the intersection of human rights?

3. How are the immigration policies implemented practically?
4. What are the practices and strategies Ghanaian migrants use in their transnational parenting experiences and language learning?
5. What are the future plans and aspirations of Ghanaian migrants on family reunification?

## **1.6 Rationale of study**

The present study aims to contribute to the growing literature on migrants and their families in Portugal, by exploring the specific problems Ghanaian migrants in Portugal face while applying for family reunification. While anticipating reunification possibilities, the study traces the participants' migration trajectories and ways they mobilized their own individual resources and those of their environments as resilience strategies for transnational family practices. Focusing on migrants' future expectations of reuniting with families in Portugal, the study will explore how Ghanaian migrants perceive the implementation of Portugal's family reunification policy for Third Country Nationals (TCNs).

It is also important to examine the subtle ways in which the Portuguese language competence plays a role in advancing the welfare of migrants. Even though language learning is not a formal prerequisite for family reunification in Portugal, it is required in order to access permanent residence as well as education and jobs in certain sectors. Therefore, learning Portuguese ends up playing some role in migrants' decision to apply for family reunification considering both their sociocultural integration and access to economic opportunities. Given the challenge of learning new languages in migration contexts, it is necessary to explore the strategies Ghanaian migrants have employed and practices they have engaged in to learn the Portuguese language. Further, it is important to understand whether the Ghanaian migrants have been able to rely on their knowledge of English or other previous language experiences while settling/living in Portugal, considering their integration process and access to economic opportunities.

## **1.7 Structure of the study**

The study is structured in six chapters. Chapter one introduces the study with my personal experiences on the relevance of this topic, the background which provides the context of the study, briefly introducing the main concepts and phenomenon to be researched. It also presents the research problem, justification of the study as well as research objectives, questions, and addresses the purpose of the study.

Chapter two presents the review of literature on legal frameworks, i.e. books, journals, reports, and digital resources that provide relevant information on the study's focus. The main aim of this chapter is to discuss the recent changes in Portugal's immigration laws and policies. Further, the presence of foreigners in Portugal including Ghanaians is discussed. Laws on family reunification for EU/EFTA citizens and for TCNs are compared. It also discusses the role of remittances in migrants' transnational lives and the Ghanaian economy. The chapter also reviews state-provided language learning programs for adult migrants in Portugal.

Chapter three presents the analytical and theoretical framework which underpins the study. Using an analytical framework informed by the resilience theory, this chapter explains how macro, meso and micro level indicators play important roles in informing migration decisions, destination choices, opportunities and challenges that migrants encounter in their journeys. The roles of family structures available to migrants in arranging alternative care for children before migration and their transnational parenting experiences are also discussed in this chapter. The chapter further informs about the roles of support networks in migration trajectories,

highlighting the parts played by both strong and weak ties in advancing the aspirations of migrants before, during and after migration. The themes discussed in this chapter provide the basis and context for the discussion of the findings and analysis in chapter five of the study.

The methodology of the study is discussed in the fourth chapter. My motivation for choosing family reunification challenges and language learning strategies as research topics, as well as my expectations for the study are mentioned in the introduction to the chapter. The chapter further presents/ describes the methods and strategies used in conducting the research. The research design acknowledges the sampling procedures, data collection techniques, data processing and analysis, the underlying ethical considerations and limitations of the study. My individual reflection on the entire research process as a student in the MFamily program and as a Ghanaian, and on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the research process, is shared in the concluding part of the chapter.

The fifth chapter presents the discussion and analysis of the study's findings. The chapter begins with a table on the socio-demographic details of the participants showing their general description and their family information. The next section gives a summary profile for each participant's interview and a table on the main dimensions of the analysis for the study. Section three discusses the themes generated from the data analysis process in the methodology chapter. The findings are explained and discussed alongside theory, the analytical framework (macro-meso-micro levels) and with reference to earlier studies. Excerpts from the interviews are used to support the discussions; the chapter ends with a synthesis of the main themes in the findings.

The concluding section of the study, chapter six, summarizes the main research findings. It presents the major findings concisely, recalling the study's objectives of exploring the legal frameworks on family reunification for migrants, relevant for Ghanaians in Portugal. It briefly outlines how the Ghanaians managed/shaped their Portuguese language learning processes within their particular individual, familiar and societal contexts. The summary highlights the main challenges a group of Ghanaian migrants in Lisbon faced in the process of accessing family reunification in Portugal, participants' transnational practices, relevance of support networks in their migration trajectories and their individual adaptation skills in language learning as answers to the research questions posed in chapter one (1.5). It further discusses the implications of the findings for my Master's program (MFamily), for the research community, as well as for policy and practice. A final and broader conclusion remarks are made at the end of the chapter, giving a reflection on the entire study, summarizing the aims, findings and implications of the study.

## **2 CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a review of existing literature with the aim of conceptualizing this study within the context of international migration issues in the EU and Portugal. It will further outline the contribution of the present study to the research topic/area. First, the review explores recent changes in Portugal's immigration policies and the presence of foreigners (including Ghanaians) in the country. Identification and implementation of legal frameworks on family reunification among TCNs (with a focus on Ghanaians) and EU/EFTA citizens in Portugal is covered in the review. The practice of sending remittances and its contribution to Ghana's economy and transnational families is discussed in this chapter as well. Finally, migrants' access to language learning programs within the EU and Portugal is explored, with focus on the opportunities and challenges Ghanaian migrants encounter in the language learning process. The chapter concludes with a summary of how these laws, policies, practices and programs provide context to the study.

### **2.2 Recent changes in Portugal's immigration policies**

Portugal, like many other European countries is experiencing the inflow of migrants from many parts of the world due to changing demographic trends and political frameworks. Characterized by reactive rather than proactive migration policies, the Portuguese consecutive governments have introduced numerous policy initiatives aimed at regulating immigration and to promote migrants' integration. Portugal's immigration policy has undergone a few changes over the years, which Peixoto et al. (2009, p.180) describes as "tentative and sometimes problematic" as it resulted in a lot of outdated researches due to changes in the profile description of migrants living in Portugal. For example, the entry of the country into the EU attracted many migrants from Western Europe, and also the arrival of significant number of migrants from Brazil and PALOP countries, and later from Asian countries, changed the frequency and characteristics of immigrants' inflows in Portugal. The first immigration law in Portugal dates back to 1981 (Law-Decree no 264- B/81, September 3) and has since undergone several changes. The most recent changes made to Portuguese immigration law in 2017 were promulgated on 28 August 2017; 5 July 2018 and 29 March 2019.

The amendments in the Immigration Act 23/2007 of July 4 by Act 29/2012 of August 9, focused on the conditions of entry and residence for foreigners including EU citizens, citizens from the European Free Trade Association<sup>2</sup> (EFTA) and TCNs for seasonal work, labor migrants (both non-qualified and qualified), intra-company transfers, and for research, education, training, volunteering and for family reunification purposes. The amendment simplifies the residence scheme for labor workers with a new regime for workers transferred from other Member States, provided they are integrated within the company staff. Also, the amendment allows irregular labor migrants to regularize their situation once they submit an evidence of the existence of integration into the labor market with discounts for social security for a period over one year<sup>3</sup>. Citizens from EU and EFTA countries by virtue of being a part of the European Economic Area<sup>4</sup> (EEA) do not require visas to enter Portugal and can live and work in the country for 90

---

<sup>2</sup> EFTA Member States include Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. The EFTA convention regulates economic relations between the four States.

<sup>3</sup> New Legal Regulations for Immigration Act of 2007 <https://imigrante.sef.pt/en/novo-regulamento/>

<sup>4</sup> The EEA Agreement brings together the Member States of the European Union and three of the EFTA States – Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway – in a single market, also referred to as the "Internal Market".

days without applying for resident permits as stated by the EU / Schengen agreements<sup>5</sup>. Aside them, migrants from visa exempt countries, (for example, citizens of Brazil, the United States of America, Australia, etc.) are allowed to enter the Portuguese national territory without a visa but are required to apply for residence permits if they intend to live in Portugal for more than the 90 days stipulated time according to Law 23/2007, article.72. However, migrants from other countries without visa waivers, including citizens of African countries, like the Ghanaians in this study, require visas to enter Portugal. This visa, in principle, allows its holder to remain in Portugal from 60 to 120 days, depending on the type of visa acquired (for the purposes of study, short-stay, reunification, health-related, or on humanitarian grounds). According to the law 23/2007, of July 4th and regulatory decree 84/2007, of November 5th, non-nationals from EU or the EFTA who wish to stay longer need to apply for a long-term visa or Portuguese residency visa before arriving, which allows them to submit documents for a Portuguese residence permit after arrival. This category includes those who work for someone else, the self-employed, those intending to live off their savings, non-active labor market dependents (e.g. students, retired people) and their family members.

EU and EFTA nationals are allowed to enter the country with the aim of finding a job or setting up a business. Once hired, EU nationals have the same rights as Portuguese workers. While EU/EFTA citizens have the right to freely move to Portugal, they must request a registration certificate if they stay for longer than three months. EU citizens can also request a permanent residence certificate after five years. TCNs with no special agreements, such as African migrants, including Ghanaians, usually enter Portugal with short stay visas or tourism visas (Peixoto et al. (2009: p.181). Non-EU/EFTA migrants who enter Portugal and wish to remain for a longer time than that offered on entry must request an extension of stay, which will only be granted approval by the *Serviço Estrangeiros e Fronteiras*<sup>6</sup>(SEF) if the conditions that allowed the admission of foreign nationals still apply. In the case of work visas, it is necessary to maintain an employment contract.

Depending on their period of validity<sup>7</sup>, a residence permit may be temporary residence or a permanent. The temporary residence permit allows non-EU/EFTA citizens to reside in Portugal for a certain period of time and is normally valid for one year from the date of issue, renewable for successive periods of two years or whenever there is any change in the identification information recorded therein. The permanent residence permit on the other hand allows all foreign citizens (both EU/ EFTA and non-EU/EFTA) to reside in Portugal for an indefinite period and is characterized mainly by not having an expiry date. However, it must be renewed every five years or whenever there is a change of personal identification details. Moreover, the law distinguishes between various types of residence permit according to their purpose, to do wage-earning work, to engage in self-employment, to exercise research or other highly qualified activity, to study or to attend an unpaid job internship, to do voluntary work and for family reunification purposes. Language criteria provide the difference between a temporary and a permanent residence permit where a proof of basic knowledge of Portuguese (A2) is a requirement for the permanent one.

---

<sup>5</sup> An agreement signed on June 14, 1985, a treaty that led most of the European countries towards abolishment of their national borders, to build a Europe without borders known as “Schengen Area”. This agreement allows free movement of citizens and foreigners with legal documentation within member countries without visa checks.

<sup>6</sup> The Portuguese National immigration and Borders Services

<sup>7</sup>Types of visas and permits granted by SEF in Portugal

[http://www.cgtp.pt/images/stories/imagens/2011/07/projecto\\_imigracao/guia/Guia\\_juridico\\_ingles.pdf](http://www.cgtp.pt/images/stories/imagens/2011/07/projecto_imigracao/guia/Guia_juridico_ingles.pdf)



Portugal has a significant number of migrants living in irregular situations, as many who entered the country with short stay visas sometimes stay longer than their visas allow or through unapproved means; leading to the country undertaking many regulation actions within the last two decades (Peixoto et al., 2009). Notable among them is the launch of the first wave of extraordinary regularization in 1992–93 with the Law-Decree no 212/92, October 12. As presented by Peixoto et al. (2009, pp.179-186), the first and subsequent regularization exercises were undertaken to curb the rising number of irregular migrants living in Portugal, whereas the majority of applicants in the first wave had come from PALOP countries because many of them were counting on the possibilities of getting a Portuguese citizenship automatically in the postcolonial period. In 1996, a second regularization process was introduced again for immigrants who had either missed the first one, lost their legal status or entered the country afterwards. Further, there was another regularization campaign between January and November 2001, tied to migrants' employment status, because the earlier regularization campaigns were not directly related to immigrants' participation in the labor market. Migrants ability to show proof of active labor market participation with valid work contracts was a key pre-condition for this regularization, and the condition was maintained in all subsequent regularizations.

In 2007, a new regularization law was introduced with provisions, which Peixoto et al. (2009) termed as a 'soft' regularization. The main change was seen in the introduction of Article 88, clause 2, the introduction of the interview with SEF, after which a decision is taken. Similar to law in 2001, undocumented migrants were allowed to regularize their status by having an employment contract or proving to be in a labor relation; having entered legally into Portugal; and being registered in the Portuguese tax system (with evidence of tax payment for at least one year). Those who fulfil these requirements may not be required to hold a residence visa, which was normally required for the issuing of a residence permit. In 2012, there was an amendment in the Immigration Act, 2007 which the OECD (2017) report highlights as a positive change made by the Portuguese government in their immigration law concerning the regularization process for undocumented migrants. The amendment in the Immigration Act of 2007, Article 123<sup>8</sup> allows irregular immigrants, already active in the labor market who could prove that they had paid social security contributions (taxes) for a minimum period of one year, to be regularized on humanitarian grounds. This is possible even if migrants are unable to show a proof of legal entry into the country, which was previously a requirement. By exceptionally waiving the requirement of having a residence visa, migrants who meet all the general conditions required to apply for a residence permit as foreign citizens are granted legal residence permits.

Another recent change in the Portuguese migration policy is the introduction of the Golden Visa. This type of visa is designed to encourage investment from citizens from non-EU and European Economic Area<sup>9</sup>(EEA) countries in Portugal. The Decree n. 305-A/2012, of 4 October,<sup>10</sup> governing the granting of Golden Visa (also known as the Resident Permit for Investment<sup>11</sup>) came into force from 8 October 2012. It enables TCNs to obtain a temporary residence permit to conduct business activities by investing a minimum amount as defined by law. The visa offers a fast-track to obtaining a residence permit in Portugal, visa waiver to enter national territory alongside other benefits including visa exemption for travelling within the

---

<sup>8</sup>Residence permits for employed workers without residence permits accessed from <https://imigrante.sef.pt/en/novo-regulamento/on> 18th July, 2020

<sup>9</sup>The European Economic Area (EEA) includes all the countries in the EU, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.

<sup>10</sup>Legal framework for foreign nations <https://www.sef.pt/en/pages/conteudo-detalhe.aspx?nID=39>

<sup>11</sup>Resident Permits for Investment Activity (IRI), accessed on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2020, from <https://www.sef.pt/en/pages/conteudo-detalhe.aspx?nID=21>

Schengen Area and family reunification. Portuguese golden visa holders receive a temporary residence permit for one year and subsequent visa renewals last for two-year periods. After five years, golden visa holders can then apply for permanent residence in Portugal or Portuguese citizenship after six years provided all other requirements set out by the Nationality Act number 37/81 of 3 October<sup>12</sup> are fulfilled. Available data on the number of beneficiaries of IRI visas by SEF indicates that since its introduction till present (2012-2020), a total of 8,584 residence permits have been issued for this purpose. The beneficiaries' breakdown is as follow: China (4688), Brazil (968), Turkey (437) South Africa (378) and Russia (350)<sup>13</sup>. There is however no record of Ghanaians who have applied for the golden visa in SEF statistics.

In conclusion, the decision of individuals to emigrate to particular destinations is usually informed by the migration policies, economic situation in the selected country, and partly by a facilitated access to family reunification and long-term residence opportunities (Wilk, 1996). In the last decade, Portugal had a history of economic recession that resulted in serious economic breakdown and high rates of unemployment, leading to the decline in immigration rates to the country (Pires, 2019). In an OECD international migration outlook report to the EU, the decline in regular labor migration flows to Portugal of about 9% was attributed to the economic crises in the country between 2008 and 2010, the years of the global financial crisis and economic recession (OECD, 2011, p.43). The effects of the economic recession of 2008-2013 on Portugal's migratory dynamics according to Pires (2019) have proven to be an interesting one as the same economic recession that triggered massive Portuguese emigration also hindered immigration due the absence of employment (Pires, 2019). Despite Portugal's position as one of the European Union countries with the lowest inflows of immigration and high rates of emigration, the country is known for its impressive policies and efforts to integrate migrants into the Portuguese society and to attract their emigrants to return home (Peixoto et al, 2009; Pires, 2019). The desire of migrants, including Ghanaians, to benefit from these benevolent laws to advance their plans may account for one of the reasons why they choose Portugal as a destination country, leading to the increase in migration flows despite the low economic opportunities available.

### **2.3 Presence of foreigners in Portugal**

Four main periods characterize the short history of immigration to Portugal since democracy came into force in 1974 (Peixoto et al, 2009). The first phase occurred between 1975 and the mid-1980s with the 1974 Carnation revolution<sup>14</sup> serving as a turning point for immigration. The collapse of the Portuguese domain in overseas territories brought Portuguese returnees and other immigrants from the former colonies with the majority of flows from Cape Verde (which had already started this movement in the late 1960s); other significant flows came from Angola and Guinea Bissau (Peixoto et al., 2009). The second phase started in 1986 with the entry of Portugal into the European Economic Community (EEC-currently known as EU). This resulted in the increased immigration of citizens from Western Europe, and their numbers continued to increase until the end of the 1990s. This development was also marked by an increase in immigration based on historical, linguistic, cultural and ex-colonial links from Portuguese-speaking African countries (PALOP) and Brazil.

The third period, which started in the late 1990s, was characterized by a massive influx of migrants with no previous cultural, historic or linguistic relations with Portugal, example, from Eastern European countries such as Ukraine, Russia, Moldova and Kazakhstan. The

---

<sup>12</sup> IRI-(Golden visa) in Portugal- <https://www.sef.pt/pt/pages/conteudo-detalhe.aspx?nID=62>

<sup>13</sup> Statistical Map for IRI visas from 2012-2020. Accessed on 18<sup>th</sup> August,2020 from [https://www.sef.pt/pt/Documents/AGO\\_ARI%20CUMULATIVO\\_2020.pdf](https://www.sef.pt/pt/Documents/AGO_ARI%20CUMULATIVO_2020.pdf)

<sup>14</sup>The Carnation Revolution was a military coup that took place on April 25, 1974. Famous for toppling an authoritarian government, ending fascism and introducing democracy in Portugal.

disbandment of the Warsaw Pact and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 led to the drop in gross domestic product (GDP) and to an economic crisis across the former socialist states resulting in mass emigration flows to Portugal and to Western European countries (Solovova, 2019). This period in Portugal was also characterized by a stronger and renewed immigration from Brazil, as well as a continuous immigration of people, particularly from Asia (e.g. with an Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi or Chinese background). To a lesser extent, there was the arrival of refugees and asylum seekers from Africa, and Central and South America that also led to the diversification of the migrant population in Portugal (Baganha, 2005; Peixoto et al., 2009; Padilla and Ortiz, 2012 and Santinho, 2012). Finally, a fourth phase, which began with the economic recession in Portugal since the first years of the 21st century, has continued until the present day, witnessing a drop in Eastern European migration to Portugal, African immigration, and the continuing Brazilian immigration (Peixoto and Sabino, 2006). Influx of new kinds of migrants (refugees) with majority from the Middle-East (Syria, Afghanistan Iraq, Iran, Pakistan) and Africa (e.g. Eritrea, Nigeria) (UNHCR, 2015) due to the migration crisis in 2015 can be observed.

Portugal has a mixed population of citizens from many countries from all over the world, including Ghana, even though few Ghanaian nationals are registered in the SEF statistics. According to the latest statistics available in the Borders and Asylum Report (RIFA, 2019), the number of foreigners living in Portugal was up by 22.9% with a total number of registered foreigners as 590,348. This increase is significant when compared to the number of registered foreigners in the previous year's (2018), totaling 480,300. This is the highest increase in figures (22.9%) recorded by SEF since the unprecedented increase of (69.04%) in 2001<sup>15</sup>.

The RIFA (2019) report further indicates an increase in citizens of more traditional migration, such as Brazil and Cape Verde, also the growth of immigrants from the United Kingdom, France and Italy, as well as from India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Venezuela. The list of the top 10 most represented nationalities of immigrants in Portugal includes Brazil (151,304), Cape Verde (37,436), Romania (31,065), Ukraine (29,718), United Kingdom (34,358), China (27,839), France (23,125), Italy (25,408), Angola (22,691) and Guinea Bissau (18,886). Brazilians continue to be one of the largest foreign communities in the country with the highest presence since 2012. The positioning of Brazilian and Cape Verdean nationalities has remained unchanged since 2013 with Brazil being the most represented and Cape Verde coming up after that.

Ghanaians do not have much presence among migrants in Portugal. According to the SEF's RIFA (2019, pp.84-90) statistics, out of the total of 119,039 African migrants, 81,389 are from the Portuguese-speaking African countries, mainly from Cape Verde, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe and Mozambique. Besides, 3,525 African migrants come from French-speaking African countries, mainly from Guinea and Senegal, and 2,935 from English-speaking African countries with the majority having migrated from South Africa and Nigeria. Only 173 Ghanaians were recorded in the SEF statistics in 2019. This number is quite small compared to the overall number of foreign or African nationals registered as living in Portugal so there is a possibility that not all of them reside legally in the country.

Presently, there are 173 Ghanaians registered in Portugal in the RIFA (2019) report, of which 125 are men and 48 women. The current year's report saw an increase in number (30) from 142 in 2018. A review of the dynamics of migration from Ghana into Portugal in SEF statistics over the last decade (2008-2019) shows the number of Ghanaians in Portugal was at its highest in 2008 (213 people: 153 men and 60 women - RIFA 2008). However, it started to decrease from 2009 until 2015. For example, in 2009, there were 197 Ghanaians (141 men and 56 women)

---

<sup>15</sup> RIFA,2019 (p.82-83). Accessed on 12 August, 2020 <https://sefstat.sef.pt/Docs/Rifa2019.pdf>

registered by SEF, and by 2015, a decrease of 60 in the number of registered Ghanaians in Portugal, leaving only 137 Ghanaians registered (79 men and 58 women). The numbers have been rising as evidenced in the SEF's data from 2015 till present.

In 2018, SEF statistics on spatial demographics revealed that more than two-thirds of foreigners (68.9 percent) preferred to reside in the districts of Lisbon (213,065), Faro (77,489) and Setúbal (40, 209). Consistent with this trend, the majority of registered Ghanaians are clustered in cities such as Lisbon (65) and Faro (43); Porto and Braga have an equal number of 17 in each. Very few Ghanaians (fewer than 10) live in the other regions of Portugal (SEF RIFA, 2019, pp.80-86).

## **2.4 Development of family reunification legal frameworks in Portugal**

Family reunification has been acknowledged by policymakers as an important aspect of immigrants' integration in the Portuguese society (Oliveira et al., 2012). The right of the family to be united is recognized and protected under international humanitarian laws. Prominent among them is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 that states that "the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State"<sup>16</sup>. International declarations and covenants usually influence state parties to make laws that follow the normative framework aimed at the preservation of families<sup>17</sup>. However, the universal right to family life is applied differently to foreigners in each territory. For example, most countries in the EU, including Portugal, have different laws regulating family reunification among citizens of the EU/EFTA and among TCNs, even if Portugal recognizes the importance of the family living together as a basic right and has enacted laws to promote the enjoyment of this right. The various changes in their family reunification laws from 1993 to 2012 are discussed below.

The change in the migration trends from Portugal being a country of emigration to becoming a migration destination has led to reframing of the family reunification legislation. This is because by the end of the 1990s, the existing legislation had proven to be inadequate and unfavorable to the diversified migratory profile of the country, especially among TCNs. These changes were necessary to promote the right to family life among the growing migrant population. There are occasional disagreements over some details and changes in the requirements and eligibility criteria set in these laws, including who qualifies as a family member, about the eligible age for reunification, the challenges of people obtaining family reunification through marriages of convenience, and the need to prove adequate housing conditions and income. There were also concerns about the rights to family reunification for residents holding temporary permits and student visas and their rights to enjoy the same status as their sponsors.

To begin with, the main change in Portugal's family reunification laws after 1993 happened with the passing of the decree-law n. 244/98 in 1998. This law is said to have established a new framework that regulated family reunification among migrants since the major legislative change in 1993 (Oliveira et al., 2012). The law (n. 244/98) explicitly established family reunification as a right, even though in practice family members of migrants were travelling to join them in Portugal (Peixoto et al., 2009). This law was further amended by decree laws n. 97/99, n. 4/2001, and n. 34/2003. The legal decree-law n. 34/2003 was used to regulate family reunification until the Act 23/2007 was passed, which removed the minimum duration of stay

---

<sup>16</sup> Article 16 (3) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDH)

<sup>17</sup> Family reunification-Global Compact Thematic paper. Accessed on 12<sup>th</sup> June,2020 from [https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/our\\_work/ODG/GCM/IOM-Thematic-Paper-Family-reunification.pdf](https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/our_work/ODG/GCM/IOM-Thematic-Paper-Family-reunification.pdf)

in Portugal as a requirement to apply for family reunification. The periodic review resulted in some changes in the laws that were enacted between 1998 and 2007. These include the change in the requirements and rights of migrants (sponsors and beneficiaries of family reunification) as well as the increase in variety of residency titles granted to foreigners living in Portugal.

The introduction of Decree-Law n. 4/2001 introduced the right to family reunification to include family members living outside Portugal, have lived with or depend on sponsors as stated in art. 56.1 of the law. This right was also extended, “in justified cases”, to family members already living in Portugal. As much as this law broadened the scope of eligibility for family reunification, it was said to be discriminatory because it did not grant the right to family reunification to all immigrants. Some residence title holders were excluded from applying (Oliveira et al., 2012), as TCNs holding the residence title “*Autorização de Permanência*”<sup>18</sup> (AP) “work stay visa” could only apply for a change in their visa status to a residence permit after 5 years (Peixoto et al., 2009). Considering the huge numbers of TCNs holding this title at the time (126,000 in 2001, reaching 183,833 in 2004), representing over 40% of regular immigrants living in Portugal, quite a huge number were prevented from living together with their families (Oliveira et al., 2012). The issuing of huge numbers of the AP was said to be a strategy to curb the increase in demand of labor between (2001-2004) especially in the construction sector for the construction of bridges, subways, railroads, roads, football stadiums in preparation of the EU Cup football tournament in 2004 (Oliveira et al., 2012). The critic of this Act was later addressed by Decree-Law n. 34/2003.

The Decree-Law 34/2003 is considered as an act that brought about some critical changes not just in the family reunification laws but also to Portugal’s migration policy as a whole (Oliveira et al., 2012). Highly noted among these changes is the inclusion of all migrants to apply for family reunification because for the first time in Portuguese reunification law, all immigrants (including AP title holders) with legal residence for a minimum of one year had the right to family reunification. However, in 2004, an amendment was made that established the condition that this right is only accessible if migrant residence holders are able to renew their permits after one year successfully (Oliveira et al., 2012). Another major change in this act was the reduction in the age requirements for dependent family members from 21 years in previous laws to 18 years and 25 years for adult children (not married) when a proof of dependency is established, except for persons with disability, to whom no age limits are applied. Under this act (DL 34/2003, 58.5), family members of temporary residence permit holders were granted the same permits as that of the sponsor, while family members of permanent residence permit holders were awarded a two-year residence permit, acquiring access to an autonomous permit afterwards.

The Art. 981 law (23/2007, July 4) is known in Portugal’s history as the first immigration law that was enacted after a parliamentary discussion, in opposition to the previous laws which were “Decree-Laws” issued by the government based on their political ideologies as leftist or rightist government (Oliveira et al., 2012). This new development was relevant because it introduced a democratic process where the views of the ruling government, opposition parties, civil societies and even non-Portuguese citizens were taken into consideration in enacting the new law. This law witnessed an active political discussion and inclusion of a diverse set of organizations (e.g. trade unions, immigrant associations) that could express their views during the process of public hearing (Oliveira et al., 2012). It also simplified the framework regulating reunification among TCNs and refugees by removing the minimum one-year legal residency condition for migrants

---

<sup>18</sup> These were one year work permits given to migrants and were renewable until 5 years for equal periods of 1 year. The holders of these permits were denied several rights, including family reunification, and perceived as temporary immigrants.

to access family reunification. This meant that migrants could apply to reunite with their families once they have legal residence (temporary or permanent). Also, adult children (above 18 years) of migrants who still are in the dependency of a couple or of one of the parents were eligible to reunite with their families, as long as they were single and studying in a Portuguese educational establishment. Further, it removed the condition that prevented spouses who joined their sponsors to engage in economic activities as well as granted the rights of partners of de facto unions for family reunification.

In 2012, there was a revision to the Art. 98 Law 23/2007, resulting in the amendment act Law no. 29/2012, 9 August. Without major changes in the previous act, this revision (in article 64<sup>19</sup>) increased the power given to Portuguese consulates, with regards to the level of discretion in granting visas after the SEF approves the family reunification application made by migrants. This change, according to Oliveira et al. (2012), may have contributed to the administrative challenges spouses and family members encountered with foreign delegations in sponsored destination countries, in terms of decision making in granting visas for them to join principal migrants. However, the removal of the two-years ban applying to former partners of convicted migrants before applying to an autonomous residence title is considered as a positive change in the new law, as it separates individual criminal registry from reunited family members (Oliveira et al., 2012).

In summary, some of the major obstacles resulting from previous legislations were addressed in the current law. These include the removal of the minimum period of staying in the country as a requirement as opposed to the minimum of one year stay requirement in the 2003 reunification act. Also, a time limit for the evaluation of each application was set, to prevent delays from the SEF in processing applications. Now applications taking longer than six months are considered implicitly approved. Considering the above, one can argue that the law currently in force is more generous towards family reunification of third country nationals than the previous reunification laws.

#### **2.4.1 Requirements for family reunification in Portugal**

Following the European Union's main directive on family reunification; Directive 2003/86/EC on family reunification, Strik, Hart, and Nissen (2013) in their study<sup>20</sup> describe four main requirements for family reunification in addition to sponsors holding legal residence in the destination country. They consist of a proof of family relation (including age requirement for some family members), a proof of adequate income, a pre-entry language test, and a proof of adequate housing. Usually, each country has its own specific conditions regarding income and housing requirements as well as age limits for some family members (children and dependent members) who qualify to reunite with migrants in destination countries. The pre-entry language requirement demands that family members take a language test in their countries of origin and pass these tests before their admission to countries of destination. This measure has been adopted in the Netherlands, Germany, Austria and other countries. Portugal's family reunification requirements are similar to the other five EU countries in the study, for example, in specifying who is eligible to be admitted as a family member and at what age (proof of relation), as well as housing requirements. However, Portugal stands out in terms of not requiring pre-entry language tests for family reunification and requirements to prove means of

---

<sup>19</sup>Whenever an application for purposes of family reunification is approved by SEF in accordance with the provisions of this Act, a residence visa allowing entry into national territory shall be issued to the applicants.

<sup>20</sup> The study examined the way in which family reunification policies have developed over the past decade regarding four main requirements: income, pre-entry test, age and housing in six EU Member States: Austria, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal and the United Kingdom.

subsistence. This can possibly explain why Portugal may be seen as an attractive destination for TCNs. The case of Portugal is discussed below using Oliveira et al. (2012) as a guide to explain the legal framework.

Portugal has simplified its law, the immigration Act 23/2007 of July 4, (amended by Act 29/2012) concerning the legal framework on family reunification that applies to TCNs and refugees (Oliveira et al., 2012). In the Act 23/2007 of July 4, amended by Act 29/2012, the process of family reunification falls under Article 98 and paragraph 1, and it specifies the right to family reunification of TCNs and refugees (as explained in the previous section). Four main requirements in addition to legal residence status are underlined in the Portuguese legal framework for family reunification among TCNs. These include providing a proof of family relationship, means of subsistence (stable and regular source of income) to cover the economic dependence for certain family members, adequate housing conditions (according to public health standards) and a lack of a criminal record (SEF/EMN (2020)).

According to the articles 2 and 9 of Portugal's Ordinance No. 1563/2007<sup>21</sup>, the definition of adequate means of subsistence requires a sponsor of family reunification to have an amount of money in the following percentages: (1) an amount equivalent to at least 100% of one year (14 months or not less than 12 months in Portugal) salary with reference to the minimum wage for themselves, (2) plus 50% (half of the amount) for each adult they want to admit and (3) thirty percent of the amount for each minor they wish to admit (Diário da República, No. 238/2007). Presently set at 635.0€<sup>22</sup>, proving adequate means of subsistence according to the law, in 2020 for example, will demand that sponsors have at least one year's total amount for these calculations, depending on the number of people a migrant is sponsoring. However, in 2009, the amount of proof of subsistence was reduced for unemployed and vulnerable migrants due to economic conditions in the country (Strik et al., 2013). With the enactment of the Ordinance (No.760/2009), sponsors requested family reunification or renewing their relatives' titles to prove lower levels of basic income. The amount requested from the principal sponsor was reduced to 50% of the minimum income and to 30% per each relative (Oliveira et al., 2012, p.13). This exception is only applied to sponsors who are involuntarily unemployed under the exceptional cases under the article 12 of the law, thus, unable to provide the minimum means of subsistence underlined in the 2007 Ordinance (Diário da República, No. 238/2007). Portugal is known as the only country that considers the effects of economic crises on migrants and gives due consideration to involuntary unemployed migrants in proving adequate income for reunification (Pascouau and Labayle 2011).

In order to make the right to reunification more accessible to migrants, the ACM's Action Plan for Immigrant Integration (2010-2013, p.13), measure 5, further simplified the process of family reunification. It introduced more flexible conditions in providing proof of relation for the children to be reunited with their parents; and also increased the range of documents that immigrants can produce as proof of income. Thus, the documents accepted as proof of means of subsistence are not strictly defined by the law. In practice, the most common sources are copies of job contracts with stipulated salaries and annual income tax receipts of the sponsor. Presently, the measure 76 of the current ACM Strategic Plan for Migration (2015-2020, p.48) highlights the government's commitment to promote effective streamlining, fast and safe processing of family reunification applications for migrants by reducing the average decision

---

<sup>21</sup> Diário da República Eletrónico - Diário da República No. 238/2007, Series I of 2007-12-11. Accessed on 20<sup>th</sup> June, 2020 from

<https://dre.pt/web/guest/pesquisa//search/628798/details/normal?q=1563%2F2007>

<sup>22</sup> Portugal's minimum wage in 2020. Accessed on October 20, 2020 from PORDATA- Employment and data wage; <https://www.pordata.pt/en/Portugal/National+minimum+wage-74>

time to a maximum of 6 months, after which all applications that have not received a response are automatically considered approved by SEF. The housing requirement on the other hand requires sponsors to show proof of adequate accommodation for the number of people they seek to admit and should be in accordance with local public health standards.

Even though international laws and the preamble to the EU Directive on family reunification recognize the obligation to protect the family and respect family life, it is still not easy for TCNs to achieve family reunification. For instance, Caarls and Mazzucato (2016, p. 591) presupposed that stricter family reunification rules may be actually applied to TCNs, making it hard for them to acquire family reunification. In as much as promoting the principle of non-discrimination and the value of family unity for both migrants and the receiving society, some of the requirements (proof of income) to achieve family reunification among TCNs in EU countries put them in a disadvantaged position compared to requirements for EU/EFTA country citizens (Schweitzer, 2015).

#### **2.4.2 Implementation of the family reunification law for Third Country Nationals**

The Law 29/2012 allows TCNs to invite their spouses and dependents including children (up to 18 years), parents, adopted children and siblings (up to 25 years if dependence on one or both parents is demonstrated) if the conditions discussed above (see section 2.4.1 ) are satisfied, to live with them in Portugal. The SEF has been tasked by Article 64 and 65 of law 29/2012 with the duty of making the decisions on applications for family reunification. When an application is approved, SEF informs the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as embassies or consulates in the home country of family members seeking to reunite in Portugal to process their residence visas. This process applies only to TCNs, as EU/EFTA citizens do not require a Portuguese family visa to join the family in Portugal, as stated in the EU directive Law 37/2006 (SEF, 2020). Oliveira et al. (2012) explain that the reunification law allows family members who join TCNs living in Portugal to acquire residence permits for the same duration of stay as that of their sponsor in the host country. Reunited family members of TCNs enjoy the same rights as their sponsor to participate in society including equal access to work and social benefits, such as education/training, social security and housing (Huddleston et al., 2015).

Though the Portuguese law does not explicitly deny TCNs the rights of family reunification, Oliveira et al. (2012) mention how the administrative implementation of the law contributes to the struggle of families to join their TCN sponsors in destination countries. These challenges usually came from migrants' ability to provide documents meeting the standards of the law. For example, there are many misunderstandings among migrants and SEF over the amount considered as adequate proof of income since the law is strictly applied to this effect. Especially, considering the fact that the 2007 Immigration Act does not define a minimum time of residency request to family reunification, and also the law on proof of income does not state that the stable source of income for the 12 months has to be past income. There is a possibility of a migrant wanting to request family reunification upon arrival with proof of future income using a work contract. If an application is refused based on the absence of adequate income (at least for 12 months) available at the time of application, the decision may not be acceptable for the migrant due to the lack of clarity on the law, usually left to the discretion of the SEF (Oliveira et al., 2012).

Other challenges in the implementation of the law is the requirement to documentary prove family relationships. This usually happens during the process of reviewing the documents submitted by TCNs; when the SEF authorities suspect cases of marriages of convenience or falsified documents for the purpose of travelling to live in Portugal, they may request for further documentation where cases of doubt have been established (Oliveira et al., 2012). The process of proving beyond reasonable doubt of an existing relationship with people they are sponsoring



make some TCNs believe that the process is a tiresome one. Especially, considering the fact that notarizing the supporting documents (marriage and birth certificates) in countries of origin may take longer processing times and sometimes are expensive (Oliveira et al., 2012). For example, in Ghana, the High Courts and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are tasked with notarizing documents (i.e. marriage and birth certificates) at a fee. Sometimes, certifying these documents takes a long period of time if express services are not paid for them, thus, going through this process twice can be exhausting. Further, the SEF inspecting migrants' homes after submitting a rental contract or certification of house property is another challenge of fulfilling the proof of adequate accommodation. The SEF determines which accommodation is accepted according to the public health standards by measuring it in square meters of the house and/or number of rooms. All these may lead to refusals in family reunification applications.

### 2.4.3 Comparison of Portugal's family reunifications laws for TCNs and EU/EFTA citizens

Most countries in the EU, including Portugal, have enacted separate laws with different requirements regulating family reunification among foreigners (TCNs) and the EU/EFTA citizens aimed at the preservation of families. For example, a comparative review of Portugal's laws for the two target groups shows how the law gives the latter group an advantage over the former in terms of accessing their rights to family life. The differences between the requirements for family reunification, rights and obligations applied to TCNs and to EU/EFTA citizens, including Portuguese nationals stand out in various areas as summarized below in table 2-1.

*Table 2-1: Requirements for family reunification in Portugal*

Category	Third country nationals (TCNs)	Refugees	EU/EFTA nationals, including Portuguese
Income	Proof of means of subsistence required	Not required	Required but no fixed amount stated
Accommodation	Proof of adequate accommodation required	Not required	Not required
Pre-entry language test	Not required	Not required	Not required
Age limits	Spouses- no age limit Children- until 18 years No age limit for dependents with disability Parents- No age specified in the law	No age limits stated	Spouses- no age limit Children- until 21 years No age limit for dependents with disability Parents- No age specified
Other requirements	Proof of family relationship Criminal registry Residence permit (temporary or permanent)	Residence permit (temporary or permanent)	Proof of family relationship Residence permit (temporary or permanent)

*Source: (SEF official website<sup>23</sup>)*

From the table above, the main differences in the law regulating reunification among TCNs and that of Portuguese and other EU nationals are as follows: Portuguese and EU citizens are not required to show proof of accommodation while it is a requirement for TCNs. Second, the age limit for children qualifying for reunification is set at 21 years for Portuguese and EU citizens and 18 years for TCNs. Also, TCNs are required to submit proof of criminal registry while EU nationals do not need to satisfy this requirement because the EU states have a common criminal registry base across its member countries. Refugees enjoy many privileges for humanitarian reasons due to their specific emergency needs as they are exempted from fulfilling all other requirements except for holding a valid temporary or permanent residence permit.

Aside the differences stated in the table above, there are some privileges and advantages that EU citizens have over TCNs in terms of reunification in Portugal. First, the free movement within the EU/Schengen area makes it easier for EU citizens to visit family members living in other parts of Europe without any restriction. This is not a privilege family member of TCNs are eligible to enjoy. Also, there is a difference in the duration of the residency title given to families of both groups. Families who join TCNs with permanent residence (subjected to renewal every 5 years) usually have short term permits (valid for two years, subjected to autonomous renewal, usually as a proof of the continuity of family relationship with sponsor). Meanwhile, families joining the union citizens with permanent residence receive same duration (5 years) as their sponsor. This places extra cost and burden on TCNs as they will have to pay extra money for permit renewals in a period of two years, while union citizens renew after five years; not forgetting the tiresome bureaucratic processes and time invested in the renewal of short term residence titles. Another difference according to Oliveira et al. (2012) lies in the strict administrative procedures which may require TCNs to prove family ties beyond the already submitted documents by undertaking medical or legal examinations.

In order to assess the effectiveness of the reunification law, data on number of permits issued to TCNs and EU/EFTA nationals, as well as the change in trend of nationalities with most applications for family reunification is discussed below. I have also situated it against the number of applications made by Africans, with a focus on the applications made by Ghanaians, and the gender composition of the beneficiaries. To begin with, there is a general trend regarding the country nationals who benefited most from family reunification permits in the years 2008- 2011 as presented by Oliveira et al., (2012, pp. 58-59. For example, in 2011, countries like Brazil (34.9%), Cape Verde (15.1%), São Tome and Principe (4.5%), Guinéa Bissau (5.3%) and Angola (5.2%) that have colonial, cultural or linguistic connections with Portugal recorded high numbers out of the total numbers of reunification visas issued. The second group of migrants with high numbers of reunited families were from China (7.9%), India (2.2%) and Pakistan (1.3%). Migrants from Eastern European countries like Ukraine (9.8) and Moldova (4%) also recorded high numbers of family reunification processes due to their sizeable presence in Portugal.

From the information in table 2-2 below, Nepal has emerged as the new group of migrants that most benefited from family reunification permits in 2019 rather Brazil. According to the SEF statistics (RIFA 2019, p.24-25), a total of 38, 204 residence permits were granted for the purpose of family reunification in 2019, out of 18, 392 were issued to TCNs. Nepal and Brazil represent the nationalities with the most applications for the purpose of family reunification with 32.1% and 26.9 %, respectively. A total of 12,503 permits were issued for family

---

<sup>23</sup> Article 98, paragraph 2 – Family reunification (Relative in national territory: Documentations required. Accessed on March, 2020 from <https://imigrante.sef.pt/en/solicitar/residir/ART98-2/>

reunification with EU/EFTA nationals. There is still an increase in the number of reunifications permits received by nationals from countries (Brazil, Cape Verde, Angola and Guinéa-Bissau) with linguistic, cultural and colonial connections with Portugal.

*Table 2-2: Representation of residence permits issued for family reunification in relation to the total number of permits granted to TCNs in 2019 ( In percentages)*

<b>Country</b>	<b>Reunification permits issued</b>
Nepal	32.1%
Brazil	26.9%
India	14.1%
Cape Verde	14.2%
Angola	12.2%
Guinéa-Bissau	8.4%

*Source: SEF RIFA 2019, p.24*

As far as migrants from African countries are concerned, they get to use the family reunification mechanism less effectively: Cape-Verde represents the African country with highest application with 16.2%, followed by Angola with 12%, and Guinéa-Bissau with 8% out of the total number of applications made (ibidem). Ghanaians, on the other hand, have a low record of requests for family reunification in Portugal. Available data from the SEF<sup>24</sup> shows that between the years 2011-2018, there were only twelve (12) applications made for the purpose of reunification to SEF. The gender representation of the few that have benefitted from reunification visas shows that eleven (11) out of twelve (12) visas issued were for women and only one to a male to join their spouses in Portugal. Three (3) visas were issued each year between 2011-2014 and one each year for the years 2015-2017.

In conclusion, if we were to critically analyze the rights of TCNs and EU/EFTA citizens to family reunification and requirements they have to fulfil, it appears to be more difficult for a section of TCNs and less difficult for nationals from the latter countries. Cholewinski (2002) and Schweitzer (2015), who are critics of the European policy on family reunification, have argued that the resources condition is incompatible and discriminatory with a right to family reunification, particularly when close family members are concerned. Schweitzer (2015) posits that it would be inappropriate to apply, for example, ‘adequate resources’ rules to deny entry to the ‘nuclear family’ members where no such rules apply to family members of [EU] nationals

---

<sup>24</sup> Data provided by the Head of Planning and Training Department, SEF, Portugal on 19<sup>th</sup> May, 2020. Data was made available directly to me by formal demand through Prof. Ana Raquel Matias.

and such persons form the core of family life. This has resulted in a very narrow understanding of family reunion for third-country nationals, hedged in by weighty conditions that are subject to the broad discretion of Member State authorities, and that entrenches the unequal treatment of TCNs vis-à-vis EU and EFTA citizens. In the case of Portugal, the obvious differences in the application of the reunification law towards TCNs and EU citizens in terms of increased requirements for TCNs make it harder to reunite with their families.

## 2.5 Migrants' remittances to Ghana

Increase in international migration has led to the development of transnational families and practice the of sending and receiving of remittances. Despite the fact that “arguments for and against the benefit of remittances as against the human resources lost to the developed countries are still ongoing in migration development discourse” (Awumbila et al., 2013), the importance of remittances cannot be overlooked in transnational studies. Migrants continually provide economic support to a considerable number of persons either related or unrelated to them through remittances in their countries of destination (Ahinful et al., 2013). There is an undeniably significant importance of remittances to the economic well-being of immigrant workers, their households, their sending communities, and receiving communities alike (Cohen, 2012). Migrants' remittances are usually referred to as cross-border, private, voluntary monetary transfers and non-monetary items (goods) sent by migrants in the diaspora, individually or collectively to their networks in destination countries (Keely and Tran 1989). The transfer of cash by international migrants to home countries, in recent years, has been accepted as an important source of income for the receiving developing countries (World Bank, 2014). Developing countries also known as lower-middle income economies refer to countries with a Gross National Income (GNI) between \$1,036 and \$4,045 per capita<sup>25</sup> (World Bank, 2019). Some countries under this category include Ghana, Kenya, Cape Verde, Angola, Ukraine, Tanzania, Philippines etc.

Remittances have an important place at the intersection of migration with finance and development. The practice of remitting is rooted in cultural traditions and social practices of different nations across the globe. They are borne out of the strengths and weaknesses and connections that drive individual migrants to move from one place to another (Cohen, 2012). Migrant remittances play an important role in economic development and the improvement of household welfare in Ghana (Adaawen and Owusu, 2013). Ghanaians moving abroad to find greener pastures are obliged to remit to their home families to sustain them. Remittances provide support to individual households in different ways, serve as a significant source of earnings and foreign exchange, help improve the economy and alleviate poverty on the national scale for many developing countries. Ghana as a country benefits from foreign exchange accrued from remittances received from migrants in the diaspora. This helps to reduce the current account deficit in the country (Teye et al., 2016). Further, remittances have an impact on the Ghanaian economy through investment in properties and infrastructural development by migrants and their families. For example, Riccio's study (2008) on Ghanaian and Senegalese transnational families in Italy mentions that Ghanaian families usually send remittances for investment in housing or entrepreneurial activities more than Senegalese families. Also, Quartey (2011) states that at the community level, remittances sent by associations of migrants from the same hometown and individual migrants are used to finance community development projects in their country of origin. Even though the major purpose of monies received from migrants in transnational households is to meet daily and life's basic needs, some people save towards capital accumulation for the purposes of investments.

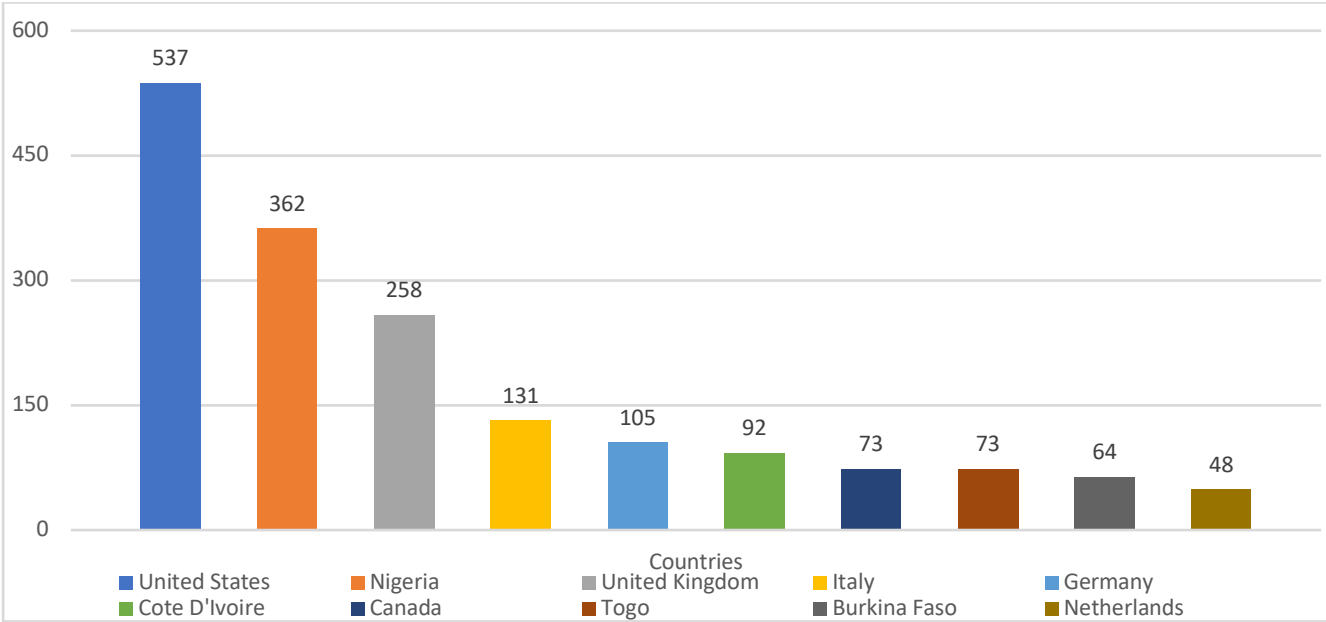
---

<sup>25</sup> World Bank data help desk-List of developing countries. Accessed on 15<sup>th</sup> August, 2020 from <https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519>

Due to the scarcity of data on the actual amount sent in remittances as a result of migrants using informal ways including sending money through friends and networks visiting Ghana, Teye et al. (2016) state how challenging it is to analyze the volume of international remittance flows to Ghana. For instance, while estimates by the World Bank indicate that total remittances to Ghana in 2015 was USD\$ 2.008 billion, the Bank of Ghana figures show that migrant remittances to Ghana increased from USD\$1.5 billion in 2005 to USD\$2.1 billion in 2010 and then almost USD\$5.0 billion in 2015 (Teye et al., 2018). More specifically, there is a special focus on remittances from Ghanaians living abroad in 2015 due to the rapid increase in the total amount received in 2010 from \$2.1billion to \$5.0 billion in 2015 (Teye et al. (2018). The bank of Ghana attributed this sudden change within the five years to the increasing use of formal remittance channels, efficient data collection on remittances by the Bank of Ghana and an increase in financial transfers by migrants as opposed to non-monetary items.

Data over the years have presented the USA and Europe as destinations where most remittances to Ghana come from. Despite the huge amounts received from these continents, the amount received from four African countries (Nigeria, Côte d’Ivoire, Togo and Burkina Faso) amongst the list of main source countries for remittances to Ghana in 2015 is worth mentioning. This is interesting because contrary to the assumption held by many Ghanaians, the amount of remittances received from these African countries proves otherwise (Teye et al., 2018). However, there is no data on the amount of remittances sent from Portugal to Ghana, may be, due to the small number of Ghanaians in Portugal, thus, do not appear to be significant as compared to the countries with larger Ghanaian migrant population. Countries like USA, Canada, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom with very appreciable presence of Ghanaian migrants living and working there, are usually represented in data on countries sending the most remittances in Ghana as shown below. Figure 2-1 and table 2-3 showing the inflows of remittances to Ghana from top 10 countries in the years 2015 and 2017.

Figure 2-1: Major countries sending the most of remittances to Ghana in 2015 (in US\$ million)



Source: (Teye et al, 2018, p.9)

Table 2-3: Top 10 countries of cash remittances flow to Ghana in 2017<sup>26</sup> (in US\$)

COUNTRY	AMOUNT RECEIVED
United States	609.9M.
Nigeria	412.1M.
United Kingdom	298.4M.
Italy	151.3M.
Germany	120.3M.
Togo	83.1M.
Canada	81.8M.
Burkina Faso	73.2M.
Netherlands	54.9M.
Spain	52.8M.

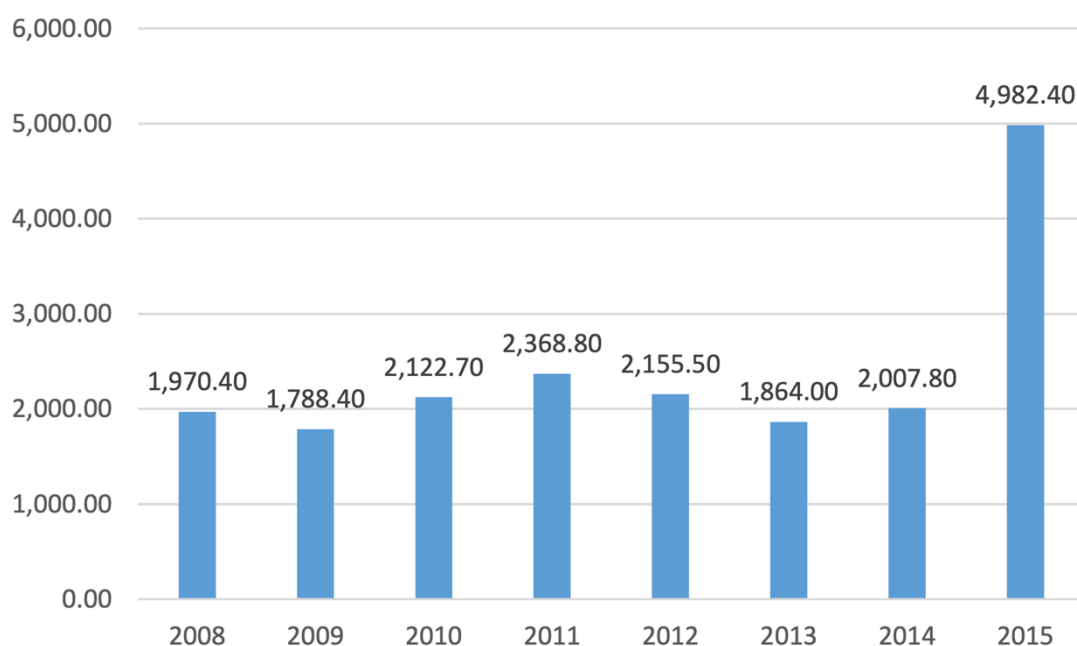
Source: <https://countryeconomy.com/demography/migration/remittance/ghana>

In 2017, the amount of cash flows in remittances to Ghana was almost the same except the replacement of Cote D'Ivoire with Spain in the list of top countries sending remittances to Ghana (as seen below in table 23). With most maintaining their positions, there is a steady increase in the amounts received when compared with the total amounts received in the year 2015 in figure 22.

Despite the developmental impacts of remittances, recent studies have also shown that several challenges come with mobilizing remittances for development in Ghana. For instance, as identified by Ahinful et al. (2013) and Teye (2016), a large proportion of international remittances to Ghana is transferred through informal channels. These channels include friends, relatives, self-carry when visiting home, and hiding money in letters being posted to families (Teye, 2016). The transfer of remittances through these informal channels tends to drain receiving countries of some of the benefits (e.g. savings and investments) that can accrue from migrant remittances. Figure 2-2 shows the remittance flows to Ghana between 2008-2015.

<sup>26</sup> Ghana remittances <https://countryeconomy.com/demography/migration/remittance/ghana>

Figure 2-2: Cash remittance flows to Ghana between 2008-2015 (in US\$million)



Source: (Teye et al, 2018, p.10)

On meso and micro levels, remittances received by families that stayed behind are mainly used to meet basic needs like food, education and healthcare. In most developing countries, as is the case of Ghana, living situations can become difficult for some families that may inform adults' decision to migrate to another country for better economic opportunities and remit for the family's wellbeing (George and Plaza, 2010). However, remittance-led migration often brings about traumatic separations of husbands and wives, children, and parents and leads to creating transnational households (Castaneda and Buck, 2011). Notwithstanding the challenges of transnationalism (to be discussed in chapter 3), remittances play a significant role in transnational families and parenting. It is crucial to keeping families together and also important in preventing household poverty in the absence of parents or an effective welfare state. Also, the accompanying sense of commitment that comes with sending and receiving remittances in these families has important consequences for the wellbeing and togetherness of the members of the families across space and time. Remittances hence become proof of sacrifices and serious commitment to the migrants' loved ones left behind (Castaneda and Buck, 2011). This is consistent with the study's findings which will be discussed further in the chapter (5.7.2). Aside from providing childcare to children left behind, funds remitted to the receiving families are also used for other projects such as establishing small businesses for the mothers left behind and providing shelter for the home families.

Migrants who plan on achieving stability in a destination country may include language learning (even if not a prerequisite for family reunification) to help settling-in, make communication and access to labor opportunities somewhat easier if they consider it necessary to advance their aspirations as discussed below.

## 2.6 Language learning: challenges and opportunities for adult migrants

Discourses on linguistic integration of migrants in Europe have received researchers' attention over the years. Learning the national language of member states is becoming a foundation of integration policy in the EU and the knowledge of the 'host' language used as a measurement of migrants' integration in a particular society (Ros i Solé, 2014). The importance of migrants' integration is enshrined in the revised European Social Charter<sup>27</sup> (1996) Article 19 that encourages all signatories to the charter to promote and facilitate the teaching of the national language of the receiving state to migrant workers and members of their families. Following the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for Languages, a large number of EU member countries have made policies about migrants' access to specific levels of linguistic skills. These national action plans and policies make language tests a compulsory requirement for acquisition of an entry visa (in some countries), settling in a country and the application for permanent residence or for citizenship (Wodak and Boukala, 2015). Ros i Solé (2014) posits that usually migrants' access to full rights and access to jobs, education and social life is closely linked to language proficiency in destination countries.

In 2010, a survey<sup>28</sup> was conducted by the Council of Europe on language requirements for adult migrants in their member states. The survey focused on the administrative requirements for the admission of migrants into each of the countries, as well as for the acquisition of permanent residence or citizenship. Results from the survey showed that countries in Western Europe (e.g. Germany, France, the Netherlands) usually have measures requiring foreigners who wish to enter for the purposes of family reunification, long term residence, and for citizenship acquisition to be proficient in the host country's language. Countries in Central and Southern Europe on the other hand (e.g. Spain, Hungary, Malta) have their language proficiency requirements linked to the acquisition of permanent residence and citizenship only. The main difference between the two groups of countries lies in the requirement to demonstrate adequate knowledge of language in order to be admitted into countries in the former, while this is not a requirement in the latter. There is a difference in the language requirement policy for countries in Central and Eastern Europe. In most of these countries (Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine, Armenia) language proficiency is required from foreigners for the purposes of acquiring citizenship rather than for permanent residence. The survey's report shows that only three countries (Estonia, Lithuania and the Czech Republic) have language proficiency as a condition to acquire permanent residence. Countries in Northern Europe (Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland) have their language proficiency requirements tied to the acquisition of permanent residence and citizenship. However, higher levels of proficiency (B1 as opposed to A1) is required in some cases for permanent residence, which the survey reports as a reflection of their stance on protecting the quality of their welfare states.

Despite these differences, language classes combined with knowledge-of-the-host-society are offered by most countries, making language a condition of migrant integration in them. For the purposes of acquiring permanent residence and citizenship, foreigners are expected to present certificates proving successful completion and their grades in these language courses. While it is compulsory to provide language test certificates, countries like Norway further require immigrants to prove attendance in these courses, at least 300 hours, with courses ranging between 300 and 3,000 hours. Also, some countries (Denmark, France, Luxembourg, Austria, Sweden, Liechtenstein) in order to increase migrants' access to social benefits, to jobs, to education, and to permanent residence, opted for level A1, and a literacy module which categorizes migrants into recognized learning profiles (learners with little education, having

---

<sup>27</sup> Council of Europe - STE no. 163 – European Social Charter. (Revised 1996) Article 19 par. 11

<sup>28</sup> Language requirements for adult migrants in Council of Europe member states: Report on a survey. Accessed from <https://rm.coe.int/16802fc1d9> on 8/07/2020



some education and full education) to help in language learning. The United Kingdom, on the other hand, assesses based on the desire to integrate by looking at the progress made by foreigners who have not reached B1 (progression from one level to the next, e.g. from A2 to B1), while the Netherlands make a distinction for language requirements between new arrivals (level A1/A2) and more established migrants (A2).

Portugal, however, was not a respondent to this survey, thus, these findings cannot be generalized to reflect its stance. Like many countries in the South of Europe, Portugal's language proficiency requirement is only linked to foreigners' acquisition of permanent residence and citizenship. Between the years 2010 to 2014, MIPEX (2015) reported that Portugal has maintained its investment in migration integration and even worked to increase its reach and effectiveness. This is evidenced in immigrants benefiting from a more realistic family reunification law with no requirement of pre-entry language proficiency tests. The Portuguese state through the High Commission for migration and the public education institutions provide language learning courses (*Português Para Todos*) for its foreign residents. Despite the good intention of the program to make Portuguese language learning accessible to its legal foreign residents (speakers of other languages), Matias, Oliveira and Ortiz (2016) argue that until 2016, there was no adequate programs for those with little or no schooling that recognizes the specific needs of this category of people in Portugal's language program for migrants.

### 2.6.1 Language learning programs in Portugal

Across the country, there are language courses of Portuguese as a foreign language with paid and free tuition. Portuguese government has implemented language programs for adult migrants which aim at achieving different purposes. These are Portugal Welcomes (PA)<sup>29</sup> and "Portuguese for All" (PPT<sup>30</sup>). Using Matias et al. (2016) on implementing training in Portuguese for Speakers of Other Languages in Portugal as a guide, the two main programs introduced for language learning for foreigners in Portugal are discussed and summarized in the table (2-4) below. It provides information on each program's duration, implementing body, and their main goals.

---

<sup>29</sup> Portugal Acolhe (PA)

<sup>30</sup> *Português Para Todos* (PPT)

Table 2-4: Portuguese language programs for foreigners

Name	Duration	Organization	Main Goals	Number of trainees
Portugal Welcomes (PA)	2001-2007	Ministry of Labor state The Institute of Employment and Professional Training IIEFP  High Commissioner for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities	Module for the acquisition of the Portuguese Language  Citizenship module- Acquisition of knowledge on labor rights and duties associated with active citizenship.	13, 152
Portuguese for All (PPT)	2008-ongoing	The High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue  Human Potential Operational Program (POPH) body	Module for the learning of the Portuguese language and expanding Portuguese learning  (Diversity as a paradigmatic concept of a governing model for the Portuguese policies)  Module to generate additional action to promote the acquisition of technical Portuguese in order to facilitate labor market access, according to the needs identified in strategic job sectors.  Language as integration tool by incorporating the CEFR for Languages established by the Council of Europe in 2001, to include proficiency levels A1 and B2	37,742 (in 2012)

Source: Matias et al. (2016), p.8

Detailing the table above, the PA program ran between 2001 and 2007 offering a “Basic Portuguese Module” without introducing the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for Languages established by the Council of Europe in 2001. The PA was designed for rapid incorporation into the job market by improving immigrants’ language skills to a minimum functional level. The training was divided into two modules with the first module (longer part) focusing on migrants’ acquisition of the Portuguese language, while the second module (shorter part) was dedicated to duties of active citizenship and labor rights. PA however had some shortcomings in attendance rate and was criticized for its lack of diversity of national and educational backgrounds. Matias et al. (2016) stated that PA was designed with a specific target population in mind, evidenced in the explicit mentioning in its principal official documents, as well as in the translation of its Welcome Manual into five languages (Ukrainian, Russian, Romanian, French and English). These shortcomings set in motion the development and setting up of the PPT in 2008.

Following the need for improvement of the “Portugal Welcomes” (PA) program, a new and currently existing program, *Português para Todos*<sup>31</sup>(PPT) was introduced as an opportunity for foreigners to learn the Portuguese language aimed at building an inclusive society. The PPT aims to develop Portuguese language courses for foreigners at no cost and to certify the levels A2-Elementary and B2-Independent users to obtain a qualification certificate that proves the understanding of the Portuguese language (according to Law-Decree 43/2013 of 1<sup>st</sup> April) and technical Portuguese<sup>32</sup>. The PPT program is implemented by the Ministry of Education and Science<sup>33</sup> (MEC), through public schools and by the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training, (IEFP)<sup>34</sup>. Usually information about this language learning opportunity is available at local residency offices<sup>35</sup>, National Centre for the Support of the Immigrant (CNAIM)<sup>36</sup> and the High Commission for Migration (HCM)<sup>37</sup> website.

The interested targeted population (speakers of other languages from different countries) are expected to contact the public schools in their area of residence for more information on learning centers, eligibility and groups of available levels of language. The language courses are usually for foreigners with legal residence in Portugal, i.e., nationals from third countries, communitarians, and descendants of Portuguese emigrants (when such is justified). There are no requisites of access with regards to the gender, age, job situation or nationality. However, the undocumented migrants - who represent a sizeable group of new arrivals residing and working in the country - cannot join the course for the lack of proof of legal residence. The Program provides certified Portuguese courses to the immigrant population thus facilitating their access to permanent residence, citizenship and/ or status of long-term residence<sup>38</sup>. There are also courses of technical Portuguese for the sectors of retail, hospitality, beauty care and civil construction that aim to boost access and integration in the labor market (ACM, I.P, 2020).

Recognizing that learning the language of the host country promotes the social and professional inclusion of the immigrants, the PPT program is expected to provide knowledge that generates a greater equality of opportunities for all, to promote active civic position and citizenship, and to increase enriching qualification to those that arrive and countries that host foreigners. But, according to Matias et al. (2016), this program does not impact the lives of everyone as it does not represent the full range of adult immigrants’ needs, especially, the less educated adult migrants. The authors argue that adult immigrants with little or no schooling do not receive adequate attention in policy measures, nor have they been considered in terms of the delivery of the program as it was done for different categories of migrants in other countries (e.g.

---

<sup>31</sup> The Portuguese language courses for foreigners (PPT) developed by the Ministry of Education and Science, Presidency of the Council of Ministers, and the Ministry of Solidarity, Employment and Social Security, the PPT language program for adult migrants was launched by the national Decree 1262/2009 of 15th October.

<sup>32</sup> The program is co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) and managed by the High Commission for Migration as an Intermediate Body of the Operational Program for Social Inclusion and Employment, as a public institute that intervenes in the implementation of public policies on migration

<sup>33</sup> Ministério da Educação e Ciência

<sup>34</sup> Instituto de Emprego e Formação Profissional related to the Ministry of Labour

<sup>35</sup> Junta de freguesia

<sup>36</sup> Centro Nacional de Apoio à Integração de Migrantes (CNAIM), a part of the current ACM

<sup>37</sup> O Alto Comissariado para as Migrações - Instituto Publico (ACM,I.P)The ACM, ACIME and ACIDI all refers to the institution in charge of migration issues in Portugal,whose structure has been changed over time leading to the change of.

<sup>38</sup> Portuguese language learning <https://www.acm.gov.pt/-/como-possa-frequentar-um-curso-de-lingua-portuguesa-para-estrangeiros->

Germany, Netherlands). Despite this critique of the program, it gives an opportunity to foreign speakers of other languages to acquire basic knowledge of Portuguese.

Targeting a more literate population, migrants who acquire knowledge of Portuguese may further enrol into the certified courses of technical Portuguese, which will allow a better access and integration in the work market in the areas of retail, hospitality, beauty care, civil construction. However, these courses are rare to come by, and the opening depends on the minimum number of participants. They are also open only for residents, which means that migrants who were unable to obtain documents to regularize their stay in Portugal, have no access to these courses (Solovova, 2020, personal communication).

PPT is also accessible via the Internet. The ACM, I.P. developed two electronic platforms<sup>39</sup>: online platform with resources for learners and another online platform with Pedagogic resources for teachers, to teach the Portuguese language to foreigners (speakers of other languages). The online platform serves as a tool that allows users to practice the Portuguese language in the linguistic activities of oral comprehension, reading comprehension, written production, as well as learning and expanding vocabulary and knowledge of grammar, useful for day-to-day activities. The contents are divided into two levels, namely “Portuguese for Speakers of Other Languages– the elementary user in the hosting country”, which corresponds to A1-A2 levels; and B1 level, “Portuguese for Speakers of Other Languages- The Independent User in the Host Country”. These are interpreted alongside the descriptions presented in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) produced by the Language Policy Unit of the Council of Europe. The access to the platform may be made through the ACM, I.P website and designed for people with computer literacy and a reliable access to the Internet. Consequently, the electronic version may not be the best alternative for adult migrants who do not possess the required technological skills nor have access to the Internet.

## 2.6.2 The case of Ghanaians

Learning the Portuguese language may present a major challenge to many Ghanaian migrants. Unlike the Lusophone countries, the official language spoken in Ghana is English. In addition to English, twenty Ghanaian languages are recognized as national languages, out of which 9-11 languages receive the state support of the Bureau of Ghana Languages. English language also serves as lingua franca, and Akan is most widely spoken: 40% of the population of Ghana speaks the Akan language as their mother tongue, and 60% use it as their second language. Despite being the official language and given the multilingual nature of Ghana, Obeng (1997, p.67) reported low competence in the English language even in places where it was spoken extensively. However, the situation with English proficiency is rapidly changing: Ethnologue (2019) cited 9,800,000 speakers of English in Ghana, which represent almost one third of the entire population. This may be due to the growing prestige of English language on the global markets or may indicate the differences in the competence criteria. Inferring from this linguistic description of Ghana, Ghanaian migrants upon arrival in Portugal may have to rely on the possible use of English language while they start navigating other language resources.

Ghanaian migrants in Portugal have benefited from the PPT-program, even though their number is very little, both compared to the number of migrants from other countries and to the number of officially registered Ghanaians in Portugal. While I did not have access to the number of Ghanaians that have benefitted from the in-person PPT language classes, data received from the Português center for Intercultural Dialogue<sup>40</sup> on Ghanaians enrolled in the

---

<sup>39</sup> The Portuguese Online Platform, available at <https://pptonline.acm.gov.pt/>

<sup>40</sup> The Centre for Intercultural Dialogue,– Aprendizagem da Língua Português (ALP) provided data on the number of Ghanaians enrolled on the online platform (data available on March 31, 2020). The data

PPT online modality training provided by IIEFP in the last 5 years (2015-2020) showed there were only five (four males and a female) registered on the platform as of March 31, 2020. The users are aged between 11-35 years and speak English as their first language. They also have different academic qualifications: three of them are holders of bachelor's degree, one has a master's degree and the youngest amongst them (a student) is in junior secondary school. The four adults engage in different professions including teaching, marketing and physiotherapy. From the information mentioned above, it is observable that the majority of Ghanaians who registered on PPT online platform have qualifications beyond secondary school and are qualified professionals. The relatively high level of education and their supposed knowledge in the use of technology, together with a reliable access to the internet allowed them to use the online platform.

However, not all migrants learn host languages within the established language programs, since the requirement of a valid residence permit to enroll in the government-provided program makes it hard for undocumented migrants to access it. Thus, migrants have to invest their time and energy in learning the new language through various means and using all possible resources. There are migrants who choose to acquire their language skills through informal language practices, using software applications like Duolingo<sup>41</sup> and Mangolanguages<sup>42</sup>, intensified interactions with local people, going to other private institutions like schools and language learning cafés, doing language learning tandems and other language learning services. Mobile language software applications assist with language learning with daily lessons on selected languages to boost proficiency. Private language schools are also alternatives for language learning where individuals pay to receive tuition, usually tailored to suit individual needs and schedules. Language cafés and learning tandems, on the other hand, provide foreigners with language learning opportunities in less formal environments and within a social context. They are usually flexible and interactive for new learners or people wanting to advance their progress in new languages. For example, Speak- language cafés (Lisbon, Leiria), Meetup among others, are some of the platforms that help people learn new languages in flexible settings. Even though they provide the chance for migrants to learn their new languages, these initiatives do not give the level certification required by the Portuguese authorities for the acquisition of permanent residence and citizenship.

## **2.7 Migration, transnationalism, family reunification, and language learning**

In concluding this section, it is important to reflect on how the recent changes in Portugal's migration laws and the profiles of migrants in-flows have led to the diversified presence of foreigners in Portugal. Also, a review of Portugal's family reunification law and language learning opportunities for foreigners (speakers of other languages) shows how flexible laws and availability of different language resources contribute to advancing migrants' plans and aspirations. Portugal's migration policies and laws have undergone some changes since 1974, from the policies of a country of emigration to those of a country of recent migration destination. Portugal has evolved as one of the countries with most flexible migrant integration policies in the OECD area according to MIPEX (2015) rankings. With family-related migration becoming one of the main entry gates for non-EU migrants into the European Union, reunification policies regulating entry of family members have consequently come under increased scrutiny of European governments as a way of restricting migration (Hărăguș, Földes and Savu, 2018). Notwithstanding the assertion above, Portugal's reunification stands out

---

was sent directly to me on 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2020, through a formal request made by Prof. Ana Raquel Matias to the institution.

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.duolingo.com/>

<sup>42</sup> <https://mangolanguages.com/>

among the OECD countries thanks to its relatively flexible reunification law which does not require pre-entry language tests for migrants to reunite with their families (OECD, 2019). Yet, not all migrants are able to fulfill other requirements of proof of financial capabilities and decent accommodation to sponsor admission of family members into countries of destination.

Despite this challenge for migrants to live together with their families in destination countries, transnational dimension of international migration means that families separated by national borders continually support each other through exchanges within kinship networks and their activities are not restricted to geographical proximity (Hărăguș, Földes and Savu, 2018). Sending and receiving of remittances from migrants to families that stayed behind in countries of origin usually characterizes transnational families. Further, the provision of access to language learning resources for foreigners by the Portuguese government demonstrates the efforts of the government to welcome migrants (albeit particular kind of) and increase their chances to access better wages, education, employment and language proficiency which contributes to migrants' integration projection. Even though language proficiency is not a requirement to access family reunification in Portugal, it is important to advance migrants' chances of employment in fields that do require the use of Portuguese language, which are characterized by relative financial stability. Increase in earnings and wages plays a vital role in the preparations to meet these conditions set under the family reunification laws, which otherwise will take a number of years to fulfill, so that family reunification is delayed.

In relation to the discussion above, the next chapter (3) will explain how migrants navigate through migration policies and their transnational lives in destination countries using an analytical framework informed by the resilience theory.

## **3 CHAPTER THREE - ANALYTICAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the analytical and theoretical frameworks that underpin the study. Informed by the resilience theory, the analytical framework conceptualizes the study in a broader context by linking research goals and questions to empirical analysis. This was done by summarizing what is known about the phenomena of transnationalism and language learning. Transnationalism and language learning forms the base of the analytical framework because immigration policies combined with language spoken and the performance of a country's economy contributes in determining migrant's destinations. Migrants ability to sustain their family ties across borders, the availability of opportunities in destination country (labor, chances of regularization and family reunification) and costs and or motivations to learn a foreign language are some of the conditions that characterize the concepts of transnationalism and language learning. These conditions can be arranged in macro- meso-micro level factors. Inspired by the research of Katharina Brizic (2006) and Goldin et al. (2011), whose studies approached migrant integration from the macro, meso and micro-levels, I have developed a top-down analytical framework to identify the specific problems Ghanaians in Portugal face during their migration trajectories, when considering family reunification and how they managed their practices and strategies for effectively learning the Portuguese language.

### **3.2 The top-down analytical framework**

The common trend in international migration and especially labor migration is that migrants arrive with the intention to seek employment opportunities while leaving their families back home. When they are well settled, they bring their spouses and children into destination countries. Sometimes, they invite along other family members, relatives, friends or neighbors using their social networks. This dissertation attempts to investigate this family reunification process for Ghanaians in Portugal.

Migrants' decision to travel while leaving their family or children in the country of origin is dependent on several factors in both the country of origin and the destination. Haagsman (2015) broadly discussed the major factors which include migrants' economic situation before migration, the expected economic advantages in the country of destination, social capital and human resources such as family structures and support networks in both countries, border policies in both countries, and access to migration status as regular or irregular migrants in the country of settlement<sup>43</sup>.

The reasons and motivations for migration decisions remain important to migration studies. People migrate for different reasons, and at the heart of their decision is a fundamental desire to change one's life, the search for freedom, security or a better income (BIPD 2020). The Berlin Institute for Population and Development (BIPD 2020) in its key findings on "Destination Europe" posits that some people migrate out of pure necessity or are fleeing from war, others because they expect a higher quality of life elsewhere and later consider family reunification as an alternative when they settle in destination countries. Most people migrate only over short distances, often within their own country or into neighboring states, while a fraction of migrants who move to another world region, such as Europe as a destination, have to deal with national and transnational policies, since they are crossing different countries and changing continents.

---

<sup>43</sup> See Haagsman (2015, pp.27- 29) for more detailed discussion.

These in turn influence how many people with different socio-economic characteristics are able to migrate and settle successfully in new countries.

The analytical framework of this study is inspired by the research of Katharina Brizic (2006) and Goldin et al. (2011), whose studies approached migrant integration from the macro, meso and micro-levels. Goldin et al. (2011) focus on migration decisions and processes about leaving home, by examining how the three levels influence decision making in the migration process. Also, the present analysis has considered the Linguistic Capital Model (LCM) proposed by Katharina Brizic (2006) in her study on migrant integration with reference to the two largest immigrant groups in Austria: those from former Yugoslavia and from Turkey. The LCM model highlights the importance of transnational linguistic capital (migrant's reservoir of language of their country of origin as well as their language policy) and how it affects their ability to learn foreign languages in destination countries. The frameworks used in the studies above provided guidelines in the development of my analytical framework to explain how each level (micro, meso, macro) informs migration decisions, the cost and motivation to invest in a Portuguese language, how previous language learning experiences contribute to the learning of Portuguese language, and possible future reunification of transnational families. The macro analysis enables one to understand how international border regulations, migration policies, economic conditions of both countries of origin and of destination constrain or promote migration decisions. Meso and micro level analysis also discusses the roles of support networks or family structures, and individual ambitions in influencing migration decisions, as well as which constraints and possibilities are related to these decisions at several steps and dimensions.

In this framework, the macro level deals first with Ghanaian border policies and international relations in terms of border policies with European countries such as Portugal. It also covers discussions on how European (Portuguese included) migration policies, the discursive construct of Europe as a migration destination and Portugal as a "haven" for family reunification inform people's decision to migrate to Portugal. Further, the socio-economic structures such as housing and the country's labor market performance (especially its migrants' absorption rates on the international level) play significant roles in migration decisions. The meso level represents supportive informal networks, the role of helpers for migration possibilities, family structures, and labor and city contexts available to migrants in their migration trajectories. As the decision to move is made at the individual level, micro level analysis focuses on migrant's agency and voice as well as influential role models including family members, friends and working colleagues. This is where the cost and benefits analysis is made before an individual makes a decision to migrate during the migration cycle.

### **3.2.1 Macro level**

To begin with, it is important to acknowledge that macro level policies shape the context within which potential migrants make their decisions about whether to move, where to go, and for how long (Goldin et al., 2011). Usually, government policies shape the opportunity structure within which migration decisions are taken and social networks develop. Massey et al. (2011) cited in (Goldin et al., 2011) call these government policies the "intervening factors" between other macro-level influences such as the economy, domestic politics and demography. To further explain how macro level policies constrain migrants' decisions, Cohen (2006) points out how the world has become a global village yet "the barriers erected by governments are large, and the latter have become the principal factor determining the size and character of contemporary labor flows" (Cohen, 2006, p.46). That is to say, government and intergovernmental policies such as EU directives may or may not create opportunities for migrants to advance their plans of migration and ultimately plans of family reunification.



Discussing migration decisions and chances of reunification for migrants in Portugal on the macro level involves taking into consideration Ghanaian border policies, how those are situated within the Ghanaian state international relations and linked to border policies with European countries. This means that Ghanaians who have intentions to migrate need to know and understand the processes involved in securing appropriate documentation for the planned travel in relation to Ghanaian laws for the purposes of work and/or to live in another country, and particularly in an European country. Knowledge of what forms of international relations exist between a country and Ghana will inform visa requirement. For example, Ghanaians who intend to travel to Portugal or any other European country will require a valid visa from the embassy of country they intend to travel to in the European Union. However, the Schengen agreement allows TCNs holding valid Schengen/EEA visa to enter and live in its member countries for a period of 90 days. It must be noted that the visa only permits foreigners to stay in the EU countries but does not operate as a work permit for the duration the visas were acquired. Thus, migrants who stay beyond the valid period of his/her visa without requesting their residence permit, or work on a short-term visa, or fail to produce a proof of entry at the border, find themselves living in an irregular situation. In order to regulate immigration, European and Portuguese governments put in place a set of control measures that serves as a means of regulating/curbing this migration. For example, the request to provide a proof of legal entry into a country during an application of a residence permit is one of the regulations that may inhibit the migrants' who are unable to provide it from achieving their rights for settling or reuniting with their families.

Providing a comprehensive tool which can be used to access, compare and improve integration policy, the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX)<sup>44</sup> rankings help to create a rich, multi-dimensional picture of migrants' opportunities to participate in society. It also serves as a useful tool for researchers, politicians and policy makers to evaluate and compare which policies governments are enacting to promote the integration of migrants in all the countries analyzed. In the case of Portugal, having been ranked by MIPEX (2015) report as second out of thirty eight countries for having flexible migrant integration policies may have given an image of a safe haven for migrants who seek to advance their plans of better opportunities in Europe. Even though these rankings are not accessed by migrants directly, its implications are made known to the ordinary citizen through news outlets (prints; Daily Graphic and media; Ghanaweb.com). An example of how the media can make a destination country attractive for prospective migrants is the case of Portugal. On March, 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the Portuguese government<sup>45</sup> introduced a new directive to grant temporary citizenship rights to all migrants and asylum seekers who had pending residency applications with the SEF until the end of June, 2020, granting them access to the same rights and supports, including health, social support, employment and housing, as permanent residents. The news was reported in many international news outlets (Schengenvisainfonews, Euronews, UNAIDS website), resulting in personal inquiries for verification of the news from friends in Ghana, who misunderstood it for free citizenship access for all migrants in Portugal. In such a situation, prospective migrants are likely to make the decision to make Portugal their destination based on the assumption of having access to flexible laws that allow easy regularization procedures and family reunification opportunities.

---

<sup>44</sup> Migrant Integration Policy Index (includes information on 38 countries: all EU Member States, Australia, Canada, Iceland, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey and the USA.) It analyzes 8 policy areas of integration: labor market mobility, education of children, political participation, family reunion, access to nationality, health (new policy area), permanent residence and anti-discrimination. (MIPEX, 2015, p.7)

<sup>45</sup> COVID-19: Government grants residence to immigrants and asylum seekers. Accessed on 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2020 from <https://www.acm.gov.pt/-/covid-19-governo-regulariza-imigrantes-e-requerentes-de-asilo>

Further, a country's global market performance and migrants' absorption rate in the labor market may also serve as macro level indicator when people are making migration decisions. For example, Cabral and Duarte (2011) mention that Portugal has one of the highest employment rates for migrants in the OECD countries. This is evidenced in the number of migrants who own businesses in the country even though Portugal has a smaller economy in terms of high income jobs and decent wages. Peixoto and Sabino (2009) describe the labor market integration of the migrants in Portugal as one with favorable conditions when compared to other European countries.

### 3.2.2 Meso level

Meso-level analysis draws attention to the "social capital, relationships, and intermediaries that connect potential migrants with opportunities in destination countries" (Goldin et al., 2011, p.103). Discussions will focus on support from informal networks of migrants, family structures and remittances, and local labor market structures available in country of destination.

Provision of support to migrants by informal networks before, during and after the settling in countries of destination plays an important role in shaping of migration trajectories. The networks' information flows between migrants and their families, friends and acquaintances in their countries of origin, and promotes further migration aside individual motivations by "relaying information and resources that lower the risks for others to migrate" (Goldin et al 2011, p.105). Besides, middlemen, smugglers or helpers provide paid services for migrants in terms of handling documentation, visa applications and, in some cases, access to job opportunities in destination countries. When individuals have difficulty accessing visas to enter international territories, some migrants rely on middlemen and smugglers to enter countries sometimes without much knowledge of their plans or actions. Such instances are likely to result in migrants being stranded without documentation.

Migrant's family structures also contribute to migrant's decision-making at the meso level. Pasley and Petren (2015) describe "family structure" as the situation where people living in a household are linked by marriage or bloodline and usually have at least one child residing in the home. These structures include nuclear families, single-parents' households, adoptive families, extended families, foster care families and institutionalized children (Pasley and Petren, 2015). In this way, an adult's decision to migrate from within this structure is dependent on which of these family structures are available to them and who is available to take over their roles in their absence. The new economics of labor migration approach (NELM) presented in Goldin et al., (2011) proposes that the family, not the individual, is the primary unit of migration decision-making. The approach argues that even though "migration is still treated as a rational response to wage disparities, family structure approach accounts for relationships and duties such as sending remittances that characterize transnational migrant experiences" (Goldin et al., 2011, p.102). It is therefore important to see/examine how different family structures play a role in adults' decision to migrate as the migration of one family member needs a group response in the absence of a comprehensive welfare state. Stark and Bloom (1985, cited in Goldin et al., 2011, p.102) posit that "migration decisions are often made jointly by the migrant and by some group of non-migrants, a situation where the costs and returns are shared, with the rule governing the distribution of both spelled out in an implicit contractual arrangement between the two parties". Taking this position into consideration, one can say that decisions and agreements made between family members prior to migration, the type of family system practiced in migrant's country, the available people who can assume roles they play in their absence, altogether deserve important considerations in the migrant's decision making process.

In reference to the decision of a family member to migrate as an attempt to better the familial economic situation, remittances from the diaspora represent an essential source of finance for families who stayed behind in the countries of origin. The responsibility to improve family situation serves as a motivation for family members to work abroad and send money home to help to keep the family out of poverty during periods of hardship. It also provides an opportunity to build properties for the families' wealth and future generations.

Lastly, labor options in cities further inform where and what form of work migrants engage in countries of destination. Similar to labor market consideration in the macro level, the meso level labor considerations refer to decisions made on where to find economic opportunities when migrants arrive in destination countries. Migrants are more likely to reside in areas where they will have the opportunity to explore labor opportunities to advance their economic situations. The diversification of Portugal's labor market can also be attributed to external structural factors. These include the expansion of members of the EU and Portugal's adherence to the EU regulation on the free circulation of both European and non-European citizens within the EU/EEA to find work, and Portugal becoming a recent destination country for migrants from different parts of the world (Dias et al., (2002). Migrants are typically employed in four main working sectors: construction, hotels and restaurants, real estate and business services, and wholesale and retail trade (for the self-employed). However, those employed in the services (except the self-employed) have shorter tenure of employment contracts and are paid below the wages of native workers (Cabral and Duarte, 2011).

In recent times, the High Commission for Immigration in their 2015-2020 strategic plan reported increasing numbers of immigrant self-employment rates. They mentioned how migrants contribute positively to the national economy, not only in fiscal terms, but also in the net creation of jobs, goods and services. Referring to data from the 2011 Census, between 1981 and 2011, the report highlights the importance of foreign employers as the employment rate in the country increased from 1.4% to 5.2% for all residents in Portugal. The report said: "This growth is even more relevant if we consider that, from 1981 to 2011, the rate of variation of foreign employers was six times higher than that recorded for Portuguese citizens (2015-2020 Strategic Plan for Migration, p.19). This suggests that the high rates of employment among migrants may be linked to the strong labor market orientation of immigration flows and their easy absorption by the labor market. Also, there are changes in Portugal's labor market in terms of the increase in number of enterprises established by migrants. This can be attributed to inadequate employment opportunities/high paid jobs available to migrants, but most importantly, the support immigrants receive from the Portuguese government has led to the increase in number of self-employed people in the labor market. The mechanisms that are facilitating the change include the flexibility in registering new businesses and the possibility of foreigners to obtain fast-tracked residence permits and family reunification alternatives when they invest in businesses or are self-employed in Portugal as benefits of the Golden Visa scheme.

### 3.2.3 Micro level

The micro level "involves a decision to move made at the individual or household level, when the risk and uncertainty of migration is weighed against the opportunities and benefits it promises" (Goldin et al., 2011, p.99). It focuses on the individual's motivations to migrate, their personal aspirations that preceded their journeys, decisions they made while in transit in some countries, and plans to which they took certain steps to achieve. Goldin et al. (2011) suggest that usually individuals would seek their highest advantage, or economic well-being by pursuing higher wages through migration. This involves people assuming the financial and psychological outlays of migration in order to achieve the utmost return on their skills and

professions. Migration decisions made at the micro level by individuals to move from low-wage to high-wage countries stems from the wage differences between Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries and low-wage countries which create pressure to pursue jobs with higher wages. It also includes decisions made by individuals due to influences from certain people they look up to, influential people or family members, colleagues whose life stories, lifestyles, and advice have motivated them to embark on migratory journeys. These people usually play the roles of migrant support networks who aid migration processes for individuals.

### **3.3 Individual's resilience strategies in migration and family reunification**

The development of the analytical framework is informed by the resilience theory. Resilience is a complex construct that can have a different meaning between people, companies, cultures, and society, but it is mostly concerned with people's "ability to bounce back from adversity, frustration, and misfortunes" (Ledesma, 2014, p.1). Resilience theorists like Van Brenda (2018) argue that, it is usually not the nature of difficulties that is the most important, but rather, it is how people deal with it. According to her, studying resilience involves focusing on the scope and nature of what people define as adversity and better outcomes in their individual situations. Resilience theory also highlight the importance of social ecology. Derived from the works of Murray Bookchin, social ecology places emphasis on the frameworks that shows the interrelations between environmental and personal factors that help people overcome hard times.

The social ecological approaches to the resilience theory are more focused on adaptability and in overcoming the odds, which at a superficial level fits the objective of this analysis. For example, the works of Masten (1990) and Butler (2007) focused on an individual's capacity to adapt and bounce back to baseline functioning following challenging or threatening circumstances. Estêvão, Calado and Capucha (2017) also offer a different approach on the concept of resilience from a sociological perspective, which I have adopted in this analysis. Their approach provides a better understanding of the processes, practices, the resources used as well as the cost and benefits of migration as a social phenomenon. In the area of my research and its aims, resilience theory helps explain what the participants define as their difficulties in the process of accessing family reunification as a right, living apart from their families for longer periods of time and the process of language learning in Portugal. It also highlights the role of relationships between participants and their environment, in terms of their dependence on people in their immediate environment, networks and institutions to achieve the "better" outcomes and their future aspirations as discussed in the findings chapter. The ability of migrants to navigate through difficult experiences and gain relevant knowledge and skills to overcome those difficulties or even to prevent them from happening in the future allowed them to gain stability in countries of destination and therefore can be considered as a display of resilience. In this case, the decisions of migrants, whether to bring or not to bring their family into countries of destination is dependent on policies, networks, information and individual resources available. Strict migration regulations, available human support systems, communication barriers or complicated reunification policies may lead to difficult experience sin the forms of delayed regularization or long separation of families.

Estêvão et al. (2017) argue that resilience practices are neither created nor operate in isolation from social structures or environmental factors, but rather shaped by both the social structure and the people in the environment. In this study, resilience is examined from an individual perspective, analyzing migrants' subjective reports and narratives on their own migratory experiences and the meanings they attach to them. These realities include: (1) their chances of entering a foreign country; (2) accessing socio-economic opportunities; (3) benefitting from regularization processes; (4) finding decent and affordable accommodation, and (5) chances of

living together with their families in destination countries. In accessing each of the opportunities listed above, the three levels discussed above overlap with each other to condition migrants' situations, which influences the process of making decisions in their entire migration cycle as discussed below.

Macro level indicators condition the migration situation for individual migrants. These conditions include, for instance, visa application processes and border policies. In some particularly hard situations, when individuals are faced with difficult and complicated application processes, it may trigger migrant's resilience decisions to engage the services of middlemen or smugglers to enter the country irregularly. Such instances are a result of the impossibility of counting on macro level policies and choked systems. Relating these macro indicators and its impact on the migrant participants' decisions in the study, family reunification is not yet accomplished but a feat they strive to achieve through gathering of all the documents and requirements needed for the process. Strict or flexible policies frame migrant's life situations affecting individual decisions to access family reunification. Strict policies may inform migrants' decisions to move from one country to another with much flexible policies for both regularization and reunification.

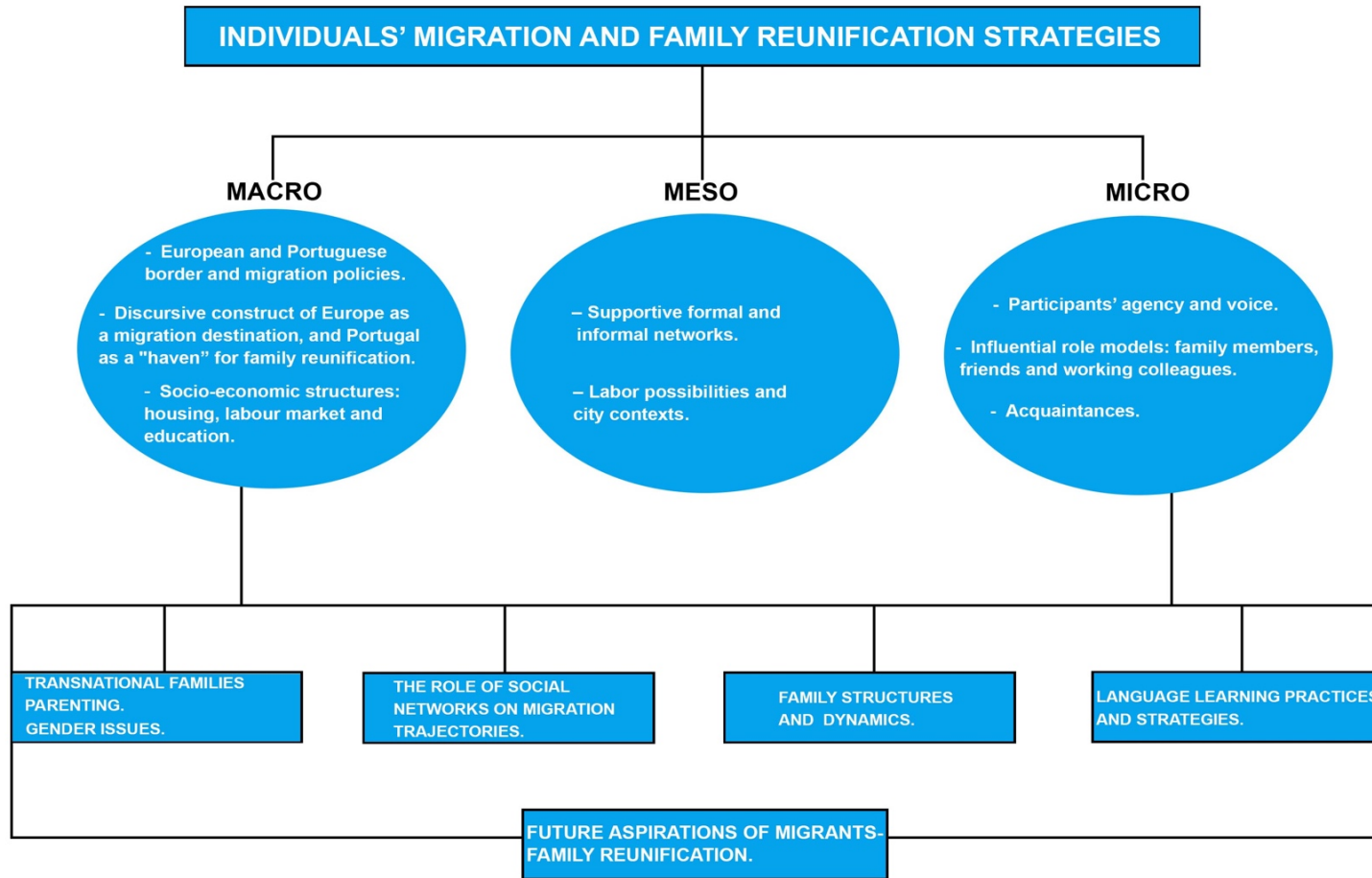
On the meso level, resilience plays on family structure and dynamics with strategies including sending family members abroad to overcome family poverty, have access to property, and to raise the standard of living for their families and children. Migrants' family structures also play an important role in terms of arranging care in their absence and which responsibilities to assume when they migrate. Deciding on these strategies during early stages of intended migration depends on what family structure one is dealing with, either a nuclear family or single parenting with few people to consult, or an extended family with many interests at hand and the relationships between them. Gender role expectations are also implicated in these structures, as there are expected roles of men and women that are considered during plans of migration. The presence of children in a family also influences migration decisions of adults as they should consider care arrangement alternatives in their absence. So, the actual composition of the family structure ends up having a great impact in both the decision to migrate and to reunite upon the migration. Decisions about labor markets opportunities considering cost and benefits to migrate are made at this stage. Further, migrants take advantage of the information about migration destinations and various forms of help from support networks to "lower the costs associated with leaving home, such as financial uncertainty and feelings of alienation and loneliness" (Goldin et al., 2011, p.106). The use of these network connections for information and support may change overtime once migrants have settled in countries of destination, leading to changes in their networks or reduction of their dependency on them.

At the micro level of migrant's resilience strategies, I consider individual decisions that define the migrant's attempts to adapt or survive situations using available information and material resources on what is the best way to overcome challenges. Successful actions such as plans to immigrate, assessing the wage gaps between countries, means and processes of entering the borders of a country, access to accommodation and regularization processes, getting residence permit, exploring labor opportunities in destination countries, language learning practices and, finally, working to reunite with family - altogether reflect resilience strategies migrants engage in to advance their future aspirations. These strategies include use of support networks to access information before and during the migration process to access work and basic support, entering the country's borders through unconventional/unofficial routes, learning the host country language(s) and transfer of skills and knowledge for survival.

### **3.4 Analytical Framework**

The macro-meso-micro levels overlap in their impact on the migrant's decision. Resilience strategies unravel the next dimension of the analytical framework in this study, as they also included the migrants' aspirations for the future. Family reunification has not been considered yet across the three levels but is enabled by the information, constraints and decisions taken on the micro, meso and macro levels. In this way, the micro-meso-macro levels correspond to the past and present migrant trajectory, whereas the last dimension represents a qualitative change projected into the future. Family reunification here refers to a migrant's future intention, as the reunification with their family members means a change in the quality of life of the migrants and members of their extended families. The four dimensions (see figure 3-1) take into consideration Ghanaian migrants' family composition referring to their family structure and parenting styles (single parenting or co-parenting, parenting in marriages), gender issues, role of social networks in migration trajectories, the various language learning strategies and practices the migrants adopted to help them navigate social spaces dominated by the Portuguese language, as well as their transnational family practices and gender aspects of transnational parenting. The last dimension of the analytical framework focuses on their future plans and aspirations.

Figure 3-1: Analytical Framework- Relevance of resilience theory in migrants' decision-making processes



### 3.5 Dimensions of analytical framework

We will now discuss in detail the dimensions of the analytical framework on how each of the dimensions affects individual decisions to migrate and the future aspirations of migrants. The four dimensions are: family structure and dynamics including gender issues, roles of social networks in migration trajectories, language learning strategies and transnational families, parenting and gender issues.

### 3.6 Family compositions, dynamics and gender issues

This dimension focuses on family composition and dynamics as well as handling parental responsibilities in the face of migration. Murdock (1949) as cited in Tischler (2010, p.268) defined family as “a social group residing in the same residence, engaged in economic cooperation and reproduction”. According to this author, families were usually made up of adults of both sexes, at least two, who maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, owned or adopted, by the adults. By the 2010s, this definition, according to Tischler (2010), had proven to be inadequate as it excludes other forms of social groups that serve as a family based on the functions they undertake. Tischler (2010) defines the nuclear family as “the most basic family form” which is “made up of a married couple and their biological or adopted children” (Tischler, 2010, p.269). He believes the nuclear family is found in all societies and all other forms of compositions are derived from the nuclear family, including polygamous and extended families. Extended families, in their turn, are made up of nuclear families yet include cousins, uncles, aunties, in-laws, nieces, nephews and grandparents living close to each other and forming one cooperative unit. Even though Tischler goes a step further not to include cohabitation as a prerequisite to define familial relations, he ignores other forms of family structures including single parents, homosexual couples or separated parents who are not bounded in any marriage relationship. It is in this regard that the Oxford English Dictionary defines ‘the family’ as “a group consisting of one or two parents and their children” to include the single parent family with one adult with one or more children living in one household or shared parenting due to separation of partners or couples.

Family structures in Ghana until the 1970’s were mostly extended families where people related through marriage or birth resided together, engaged in economic cooperation and inclusive child rearing responsibilities (Annim, Awusabo-Asare, and Amo-Adjei, 2015). There are polygynous marriages (past and present times in Ghana) made up of a husband, two or more wives and their children living together in the same household as another form of extended family (Tischler, 2010). Annim et al. (2015) mention that families in Ghana have transformed from the extended family system towards nucleation due to the movement of people in search of jobs in larger cities. They define nucleation as the changing structure and composition of household living arrangements, from highly extended family systems to single-family households, made up of a husband and wife and their children alone (Annim et al., 2015). Other forms of structures, also common in Ghana in contemporary times, include single parenting or co-parenting situations, where parents single-handedly raise children or share parenting responsibilities without being bound in marriages. These structures all have implications for adults who decide to migrate. As much as families are moving towards the concept of nucleation and other forms of family structures, the gender of those who migrate and those who stay, as well as the roles played by some members of the extended family are still important in a migration decision.

For example, a migratory decision in a nuclear family with both couples living together has a different implication than that of a single or separated parent considering who is available to provide care to children when an adult migrates. A single or separated parent is more likely to



rely on the help of members from their extended families to provide care for children staying behind in the country of origin, while married couples may decide internally who should migrate and weigh all the implications on their family life. In some cases among married couples, the extended family still provides support to the children and wife/husband that stay behind. In both cases, an adult's decision to migrate involves discussing the challenges and opportunities, which forms of family structures exist to support these decisions and its implications with their families. An agreement is reached between adult migrants and family members to arrange caregiving alternatives to help reduce the anxieties of migration, with an assurance of someone performing these responsibilities in the absence of the adult migrant.

Gender issues come up while discussing the role of family structures in migration decisions, because they are situated in the common expectations of one culture or another regarding the distribution of role in parenting. One thing is always evident, is that when an adult migrates, there are changes in care arrangement for children who stay behind, except that it differs with who migrates (Carling et al., 2012). Asis (2006) and Parreñas (2005) cited in Carling et al. (2012) posit that "when fathers migrate to work abroad, children feel the emotional displacement, but care-giving activities are not altered as mothers are usually able to combine the role of a father in addition to their caregiving roles in their absence. However, this is different when mothers migrate, as "care arrangements are markedly reorganized" to ensure that the children that stay behind are well catered for (Carling et al., 2012, p.196). This follows the argument that in most situations the caregiving roles of mothers is transferred onto other female members of the family in their absence. This may not be the case for the different family structures and compositions in other countries and regions of the world. There may be exceptions where fathers still provide care for their children when mothers migrate, with support from their family members.

### **3.7 Roles of social networks in migration trajectories**

The second dimension of the framework addresses the role of social networks on migration trajectories of migrants. Support networks play vital roles in individuals' decision to migrate through many ways of information dissemination. Wellman (2002) states that social networks could be dispersed far beyond neighborhoods, local communities and national borders. With focus on key characteristics of networks, Wellman (2002) explains that there are different types of social networks based on their function, composition and geographical location. He argues that rather than employing a generalized notion of social capital and assuming that all social networks play similar functions, it may be more helpful to distinguish between the different types and levels of social support and resources that networks provide. The different types of support may be provided by diverse people in varied ways and at different times. In destination countries, networks may provide support in access to information and physical help that reduces the costs and burdens of migration (Goldin et al., 2011). These include provision of accommodation, access to employment opportunities, providing sense of belongingness and relaying of anxiety of the unknown. In another example, support across borders may be in the form of emotional support in combating homesickness and loneliness provided by close relatives, a partner, friends from the country of destination or from friends who live outside one's immediate environment via regular telecommunications (Wellman, 2002). As much as networks provide help to ease the struggles of migration, some contribute to making migrants' lives difficult if they don't have any network or have a closed network to benefit from these opportunities. For example, middlemen or smugglers may extort huge sums of money from migrants' in exchange of travel opportunities, leave them halfway on the route or fail to fulfill all promises (Budal, 2018).

Referring to Mark Granovetter's concepts of weak and strong ties (1983) and adapting these concepts to the migration decision process, one can argue that the analysis of interpersonal

networks may provide the most fruitful micro-macro bridge to social relations. Granovetter believes it is through these networks that small-scale interaction becomes translated into large-scale patterns, and that these, in turn, feed back into small groups. The strength of interpersonal ties shows how it can be applied to migrant networks and the forms of support they provide to help migrants' experiences. These forms of support can be received from old friends or relatives of migrants who have migrated themselves, with whom they keep in touch and form a densely knit clump of social structure. Granovetter (1983) describes such relationships as strong ties, while describing weak ties as the relationships that form between acquaintances of one's strong ties, serving as a bridge between two groups of friends. Weak ties may provide information that the strong ties do not dispose of, thus, migrants who have limited or segregated strong ties may benefit from weak ties with persons who have more influential networks and information themselves. These connections are what Granovetter (1983) posits can be an important resource in making possible mobility opportunities through the provision of useful information and opportunities to help trace/plan the migrant's trajectory.

The information or help received from weak ties, for example, travel agents or middlemen can be costly (for a fee or not) as the services and information they provide sometimes open channels that were otherwise closed or could not be provided by strong ties. The roles played by strong ties on the other hand, according to Goldin et al., (2011) and Granovetter (1983), lower the risks of migrating, as well as resources that diminish the financial burden of moving, and lead to contacts that provide job opportunities in countries of destination. These may include providing information about economic and social mobility opportunities in destination countries. Some unintended ways in which support networks may inform migrants' decision to migrate include the display of "good life" in the cars visiting migrants ride in and the show of wealth when they return/visit, posts of pictures made by networks taken at beautiful locations and events in destination countries on social media, as well as testimonies of how remittances from networks are improving families' conditions in the home country. These can influence migration processes by triggering individual's decision to migrate to a "supposed haven" where they can have an equally/similarly good life. Independently from the fact that this may not always be the reality, but a construction by others, it contributes to migrants' motivation to travel in search of better life opportunities. Aside influencing the decision to migrate, support networks may continually provide support to migrants throughout their migration trajectories. This includes support in terms of settling into new destinations, to access economic opportunities, accommodation and information about countries with favorable policies which may help in advancing migrants' future aspiration and leading to further migrations from first destination countries to new destinations.

### **3.8 Language learning practices and strategies**

Language learning strategies and practices play an important role in migrant's integration process in a country of migration. They represent an outcome of a long process of settlement depending on the social, economic, cultural, and political structure of the receiving society (Lima 2010). One way through which migrants achieve social and cultural integration is through investment in new languages in destination countries, using different language learning practices and strategies. Heath (2015) and Cohen (2011) have explained language learning strategies as the processes and actions that are consciously deployed by learners to help them to learn or use a language more effectively.

Discussing language learning practices and strategies for Ghanaian migrants in Portugal focuses on the processes and tools which migrants adopt to enable them to learn Portuguese as a new language. These may include enrolling in government provided or private language schools, for example as those discussed in the contextualization chapter (2.8) under the *Português Para Todos* (PPT) program; individual learning efforts alongside work colleagues,

fellowship and association with Portuguese nationals. Migrants also use language learning mobile applications as well as individual decisions to adopt a language of communication at home to increase one's proficiency in a language through constant practice. In other words, migrants have several ways to manage, control and organize their own language learning environment.

Investment in a country's official language is often believed to help translate migration ambitions into actions that provide individuals with increased chances of labor market inclusion or mobility, enrolling in educational and training programs (formal and informal). Kluzer et al. (2011), however, present a number of factors that may keep migrants from language learning, including having no financial resources to pay for the language tuition, lack of childminders for little children in care while their parents are away learning languages. The language teaching system may be experienced as unfamiliar or completely alien, especially to migrants with little schooling. There is a chance that language classes may trigger an old trauma or bad memories from the previous schooling experiences. Finally, migrants may feel tired from their daily jobs to come in for a language class, and so have no spare time for language classes. These practices and strategies require optimistic motivation, especially for immigrants who decide to invest in learning the languages of the destination country despite the challenges including linguistic differences between their original languages and languages of destination countries, possible gaps in levels of education and schooling practices, difficulties in accessing language learning programs, their actual quality as well as their (in)adequacy. These help migrants to adapt their human capital to the new situation in a host country for earnings and employment (Beenstock, 1993).

### **3.9 Transnational family practices and parenting**

The fourth dimension of discussion is the focus on transnational families and gender considerations in contemporary times. Immigrant transnationalism may be defined as “the regular engagement in activities that span national borders by foreign-born residents as part of their daily routines” (Lima, 2010, p.1). Maintaining transnational families involves sustaining ties of family members and kinship networks across the borders of multiple nation states (McCarthy and Edwards, 2011). They further explain that migration is not necessarily unidirectional, with the permanent resettlement of families, or parts of families, in a country of destination, but more often involves fluid relationships between family members in two or more countries. Understanding transnational parenthood involves analyzing how the parent child relationship is practiced and experienced within the constraints of physical separation (Carling et al., 2012). This includes all the efforts and activities that parents undertake to perform their responsibilities towards their children who stayed behind when parents migrated.

Transnationalism among migrants in present-day societies can take many forms, be it the regular phone calls to relatives and loved ones in their native country, the daily or monthly transactions of an immigrant who continues to manage business endeavors back home, remittance transfers, or one of many other forms (Lima, 2010). Transnational practices among families have been much easier due to the impact of remittances that provides financial support to families in countries of origin, and the development of technologies that have made communication considerably more accessible and affordable, resulting in the change in the ways relationships between people and places are maintained over time. Presently, it is possible for immigrants to maintain more frequent and closer contact with their home societies than they did before the advancement of technology in the 21<sup>st</sup> century through the development of information communication technology. This supports the conceptualization of transnationalism as the continuation of cross-border economic, political, and social-cultural activities which Lima (2010) explains as *being here and there*, a situation where even after the initial movement, migrants continue to maintain ties with their country of origin.

At the same time, it is important to acknowledge the changes that characterize transnational relations and emphasize the many challenges and limitations that exist in relation to maintaining family across borders. Transnational family scholars including Dreby (2016) have argued that even though transnational parents provide more monetary security to their families, the separation between parents and children can have adverse consequences for both parents and children. Budal (2018) adds that parents suffer from emotions of loneliness and missing out on some experiences and occasions while children grow up, while the separation may also cause similar or worse effects on families that stayed behind.

### 3.9.1 Gender issues in transnational parenting

The gender consideration in transnational family's studies cannot be overlooked because transnational parenthood is affected in gender-specific ways: "Parenting roles across borders are strongly gendered, meaning that transnational motherhood and transnational fatherhood are distinct phenomena" (Carling et al., 2012 p.194). Though their actual parenting activities may be similar, Dreby (2006) in her study on the experiences of Mexican transnational parents in New Jersey mentions how mothers and fathers who migrate to help sustain their children back home face different experiences both in the host country and with respect to their children left behind. Further, Haagsman (2015) has shown that even though both mothers and fathers send gifts and remittances and maintain communication, society usually has higher expectations for women to continue providing emotional care to their children even across borders. Haagsman mentions that mothers are still haunted by the thoughts of neglect of their care-giving expectations and responsibilities, which encourages migrant mothers to develop strategies for providing care from a distance. These mothers are often said to "express feelings of hopelessness, distress and guilt about 'abandoning' their children and their inability to live up to traditional gender and family norms even if their migration journeys were made in order to provide their children with education, food, clothing and a lifestyle they could not otherwise have afforded" (Carling et al., 2012, p.194). This is to say that, even though women migrate for the sake of economic upliftment of their families, they still suffer emotionally from the separation and from societal prejudices as well as judgement about living up to the standards of being mothers to their children.

In another study by Schmalzbauer (2005), transnational mothers and fathers are shown to have different ways of negotiating their families' caretaking responsibilities, both financially and emotionally. She posits that fathers are less likely to live up to gender expectations and their roles usually tied to financial provision while mothers have higher expectations to continue providing emotional care in addition to financial responsibilities for families back home. In terms of experiencing feelings of abandonment and sadness, she mentions it is not uncommon among both sexes, even though they may vary for specific causes. This view is usually evident even in the ways children perceive the news of each gender migrating, just as Graham (2012) has mentioned that when fathers drift away from 'home' for work, children distinguish it to be an extension of their breadwinner role, while they view their mothers as being compelled to work abroad because of poverty (Budal, 2018, pp.39-40). Thus, for children, a change in these role expectations means there is a challenge which requires mothers to help with the breadwinning roles. This flexibility in social expectations of fathers to continue providing care after migration according to Carling et al. (2012) does not mean that fathers are unaffected by the process of separation. They suggest the reason being that research on migrant women experiences exploring the emotional consequences for mothers living apart from their children have been done to a greater extent than research on male migrant's experiences. Even though the emotions of fathers are not commonly mentioned, migrant fathers equally suffer from the separation (Carling et al., 2012). A study by Budal (2018) on the experiences of transnational parenting among Nepalese migrants in Portugal supports the claim that it is not just the family

that stayed behind that is affected by this lengthy absence but also the fathers themselves. The fathers in the study revealed challenges and vulnerability of being separated from their families. These findings by Carling et al. (2012) and Budal (2018) challenge the conception that migrant mothers only experience unpleasant feelings of hopelessness, guilt and distress when they leave their children behind. Their findings support the opinion that transnational fathers suffer as well except that gender issues on transnational parenting are more studied in cases of mothers and less on fathers.

### **3.10 Resilience towards challenges of transnationalism and family reunification**

Transnational scholars like Portes, Guarnizo, and Landolt (1999, p. 219) cited in Haagsman (2015, p. 28) emphasize that there are certain conditions for transnationalism which include a “significant proportion of persons”, and transnational activities should “possess certain stability and resilience over time”. This means that for transnationalism to be maintained, family members living apart must be able to withstand both the difficulties of not being physically present with loved ones and those of settling in the host country. As many migrants keep in touch with their families in other countries, they deal with many challenges. Working to overcome the challenges of transnational family practices includes taking advantage of modern technologies using social media and mobile networks in promoting virtual and in-person family reunification. The existence of social media and mobile network applications provides an easy way of keeping in touch with families across borders. Communication has been made easier and better with platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, Facetime, Snapchat, among others, which provide messaging, audio and video communication mediums among people, far and near. These opportunities promote virtual reunification of family members across borders, until in-person family reunification is possible for some people. While migrants work hard in anticipation of potential reunification, they demonstrate resilience in dealing with feelings, challenging migration situations of accessing work opportunities and regularization processes with possible emotional support from family while separated from them. The migrants work hard in achieving stability in the host country, in this case Portugal, which may also lead to investing in the Portuguese language. This further shows the important role played by the migrant as a mediator between arriving family members and the host society in case of potential, future or forthcoming family reunification of their families.

### **3.11 Concluding remarks**

In concluding this chapter, it is important to highlight how resilience practices are exhibited by migrants over time in the ways they mobilize human and social resources (family structures and support networks) in their migration cycles. Also, there is a focus on the configuration of the practices in transnationalism that help sustain family ties and relationships and the strategies migrants employ to learn new languages of destination countries to advance their future plans and aspirations. In the context of this study, the future aspiration of migrants is to be able to navigate their ways through the macro level legal framework on family reunification and its requirements which will grant them the right to live with their families in Portugal, which in one way or another also depends on meso and micro level indicators. These indicators include the individuals’ decision or interest in wanting to access this right as well as access to labor market opportunities and financial stability, which translates directly into their abilities to fulfill the requirements of achieving family reunification, which is the main goal in the present research.

## **4 CHAPTER FOUR – METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter explains how the study was conducted by describing the research design and the methodology adopted. The study was done in Lisbon through a qualitative research approach because the number of Ghanaian migrants in Portugal are small for a quantitative study and majority of Ghanaians in Portugal live in the Greater Lisbon. Using a purposive sampling (snowballing) technique in selecting the seven participants, I conducted individual semi-structured interviews using an interview guide as the primary data for the study because I wanted to get an in-depth and participant perspective of my research topic. For example, exploring resilience strategies of the participants are more likely to be outlined in an interview rather than in a survey. Also, in interviewing participants, I will be able to use my own experiences to create a rapport with participants that otherwise would not be achieved in a quantitative study. The interviews were done via telephone calls due to Covid-19 restrictions. Further, I used secondary sources including existing academic literature, Portuguese legal frameworks, government reports, data from official websites and institutions and digital ethnography. This chapter provides information on the key steps involved in carrying out the entire research. These include selecting the participants, methods used in collecting the data, the ethical considerations employed, and the challenges and limitations of the study. The data collected (primary and secondary) covered the areas related to migrant's access to the legal frameworks on family reunification, regularization processes, transnationalism and its associated practices and language learning practices among foreigners. I also engaged in virtual online observation on Facebook of migrant support networks interaction as exploratory sources of data collection. The chapter ends with a self-reflection on my role as a Ghanaian citizen with experience of migration as a student in the MFamily Master's program, currently living in Portugal, and deciding on a study involving other Ghanaians with different social profiles.

### **4.2 Motivation of the study**

During my Master's in social work with families and children, one major thing that had caught my attention was the concept of family practices (doing and displaying) presented by Finch (2007) in sociology of the family. With focus on family reunification, I began thinking about the consequences of the separation experienced by migrants and their families back home as well as their desires to live with their families in new destination countries. I was also motivated by the story of one participant whom I met in the first semester, who had migrated to Portugal from Ghana in 1997 and had since not been able to visit his family nor reunite with them in Portugal. It raised my curiosity to investigate why he had not tried to reunite with his family for almost 23 years and the possible challenges to realizing the right to live with his family, even in a different country.

My interest in exploring the concept of language learning practices and strategies as well as their effect on migrants' welfare stemmed from my personal experience with the Portuguese language and the important role it played in everyday life in Portugal. In the first semester, while beginning my studies in the MFamily program in Lisbon, I had experienced the difficulty of settling in for about two months because of the language barrier. This challenge was specific to my semester in Lisbon because I had not had such challenges in my second and third semesters in Stavanger, Norway and Gothenburg, Sweden as English language is more widely used in those countries than in Portugal. Coming from an English-speaking country, Ghana, getting around in Norway and Sweden was much easier compared to Portugal. My experience in Lisbon was particularly unsettling because finding my way around the city was a challenge as I could not receive much help from people who did not speak English and I was unable to speak Portuguese either. I got lost a couple of times, spent much money on taxi fares during

other dreadful moments because I still could not get myself to be understood or to communicate efficiently in Portuguese despite my Master's program's efforts to introduce my class to basic Portuguese. From my experience, I deduced that, even though language practices may not be directly linked with the requirements of family reunification, they may play a vital role in increasing migrant's access to social and economic opportunities. Being able to communicate in the language of the destination country could enhance their chances of economic and social mobility, as well as aid/facilitate going through the process of reuniting reunification requirements, taking into consideration social class, schooling, the sociocultural context, the prevalent language context, among others.

Further, I was motivated to apply the theoretical knowledge gained from the various theories, including resilience theory which underpins family life studies as well as new language learning practices. To achieve this, I decided to conduct a study on the resilience of Ghanaian migrants in Lisbon in accessing family reunification and in learning the Portuguese language. With reference to the study on transnational parenting and family reunification, the concept of resilience as a process of mobilizing their own individual resources as well as resources in their environment to overcome the challenges of migration and living apart as a family becomes relevant. Transnationalism involves the various regular activities that connect immigrants in their current place of residence to their countries of origin (Haagsman, 2015). The present study, therefore, explores the resilience of Ghanaian migrants throughout their migration cycles and their transnational family practices over a period of time. Resilience in language practices and strategies is important as the process of learning a new language requires a lot of flexibility and initiative (Jasso and Rosenzweig, 1989).

While deciding to study this topic, I had expectations of having an easy access to the study participants since it was a small and a quite close-knit population. According to the SEF's 2019 technical data sheet<sup>46</sup> a total of 173 Ghanaians reside in Portugal, from which 65 live in Lisbon, making Lisbon a potentially relevant district to sample participants. However, the reality was that it was difficult to find participants because most of the Ghanaians who used to reside in Lisbon had relocated to other districts to find work. Also, later I realized it would have been easier to access participants if I had a larger population to choose from, as many among the small population did not have the intentions of reuniting with their families. Nonetheless, I was still motivated to continue the study, working through the challenges using a small sample size and in-depth qualitative interviews to gather data for the study.

### 4.3 Research Design

The study adopted a qualitative orientation which employed the strategy of emphasizing words and individuals' reports rather than numbers (Bryman, 2012). I used this method because I was interested in getting an in-depth account of participants' migratory experiences; their settling-in and coping mechanisms, as well as their hopes of family reunification in the country of destination, Portugal. As such, the deep and exploratory accounts of these individual cases done within a short period of time (5 months) could best be achieved using a qualitative research design. The sources of data collection used for the study can be divided into primary and secondary data sources. The primary source was gathered through individual interviews (via the telephone) and virtual observation of Ghanaian migrants' support networks on Facebook, while the secondary sources were gathered through desktop review of literature on transnationalism (families and parenting), family reunification, legal frameworks on family

---

<sup>46</sup> SEF 2018 technical sheet working paper -Number of Ghanaians living in Portugal. Accessed from <https://sefstat.sef.pt/forms/distritos.aspx>; Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras (SEF) . Relatório de Imigração, Fronteiras e Asilo 2018, pp. 80-86, Ficha Técnica, Portugal. <https://sefstat.sef.pt/Docs/Rifa2018.pdf>

reunification and access to Portuguese language resources for adult migrants. This study was originally meant to be more participatory, in the sense that I sought to embark on a field participant observation as part of the data collection technique. Initially, I planned to do participant observation at one African Pentecostal church in Lisbon, which had become a site regularly frequented by Ghanaians and other African migrants for church services. By going to the same church as potential participants for my study, I was hoping to observe their church activities and personal interactions and how those reflected their migratory journey in Portugal. However, the participatory research through the adoption of participant observation and face-to-face interviewing methods of data collection turned out not to be feasible due to the breakout of the Covid-19 pandemic, limiting both my access to the previous chosen observation community and physical presence with participants during interviews. The church did not have an online platform or website that could be observed during the lockdown. New strategies had to be adopted (virtual observation of Ghanaians in Portugal Facebook page) to compensate for the lack of my physical presence in the places regularly frequented by the potential participants and for the impossibility of face-to-face communication.

I engaged in a desk review of existing documents as secondary sources of data. The reviewed documents provided a description of the legal frameworks for the type of visas held by the study population; family reunification procedures in Portugal and existing Portuguese language courses for adult foreigners. These resources enabled me to understand the legal constraints/possibilities as well as resources available to the Ghanaian/African migrants in Portugal. I had some difficulties in finding information particularly on Ghanaian migrants in documents, literature, and reports on family reunification because most studies had focused on immigrant population with high numbers of family reunification applications. However, with the help of my research supervisor who had contacted the Portuguese immigration, *Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras* (SEF) officials and the coordinators of the *Português Para Todos* (PPT) program, I was able to collect more recent secondary data concerning Ghanaians in Portugal, namely the recent data on the number of family reunification applications submitted and the number of Ghanaian beneficiaries of the PPT program (see chapter two, section 2.4.4 and table 2.5 under section 2.6.2. I also did an extensive literature review on transnationalism and the practices that characterizes the phenomenon that was relevant in the formulation of the study's analytical framework for the theoretical chapter 3, sections 3.7 to 3.10 and the fifth chapter where findings of the study are discussed.

Further, I engaged in a virtual observation of Ghanaian migrant networks on Facebook. The purpose of the virtual observation was to identify the forms of support migrant networks that can be provided to its members online and across borders. The networks observed involved Ghanaian migrants in Portugal in particular and in Europe as a whole, including students' groups, groups in individual European countries and bigger platforms for migrants within all countries in the EU. During the observation, I focused on the type of groups, whether open or closed, the number of members, main languages used in posts, the content posted and ways of information dissemination to members. This enabled me to find out how migrant support networks reached out to each other in kind and with information to sustain their lives in the diaspora. The notes I made from this observation were used to supplement the discussions on the role of migrant support networks in the lives of Ghanaians abroad, especially in Portugal in the theoretical chapter three, section 3.4.2. The analysis showed how social networks could reach far beyond neighborhoods and local communities. With focus on key characteristics of networks, it showed that support networks could still play their roles even in the virtual space as demonstrated in some groups (Ghanaians in Italy) providing relief supplies for members in need during the lockdown. Also, the Ghana Association in Portugal aiming to provide information and support for Ghanaian migrants was a result of the creation of the Facebook page "Ghanaians in Portugal", bringing together members who had previously been inactive. During the observation of these two groups (Ghanaians in Italy and Portugal), I noticed that



English was the language that was mostly used in making posts; and the activities were similar to each other in terms of the content, mostly religious posts and property advertisements. Some of the observed differences include the number of participants in each group. For example, Ghanaians in Italy has more participants (over 500) than that of Ghanaians in Portugal. This can be attributed to the large number of Ghanaians in Italy compared to Portugal, and also because the Ghanaians in Portugal page is a relatively new platform (since 2019). Presently, there are almost twenty nationals formally registered with the Ghana association, with the majority of them studying (Master's and PhD students) in Lisbon that helped me confirm that interviewing in Lisbon was a relevant research procedure.

#### **4.4 Sampling procedures**

The sample population of the study were Ghanaians living in Lisbon, and in order to be selected for the study, the participants had to fulfil two criteria: a) being a Ghanaian citizen living in Lisbon, Portugal, and b) having considered family reunification possibilities. Purposive sampling method was used as I did not seek to sample research participants on a random basis. The goal of purposive sampling was to select participants in a strategic way, so that those sampled are relevant to the research questions that are being posed (Bryman 2012). As I have indicated in the introduction to this chapter, I had an earlier encounter with a Ghanaian migrant who had wanted to apply for family reunification. The person agreed to become a participant in this study and later introduced me to other Ghanaians who were also seeking to apply for family reunification. Thus, I was able to find other participants through the snowball sampling technique. The final selected participants represent a diverse group of Ghanaian migrants in terms of age, schooling and migration experiences as presented in table 5.2 in Chapter five of the study. Relevant to the inclusion or exclusion of participants were their own accounts of lived experiences that could help me formulate and design my interview guide with questions that sought to explore the resilience of migrants who are seeking to live together in the destination country with their families. I placed priority on the criteria of being involved in transnational parenting and having considered family reunification because they were relevant to my Master's program aims and objectives. Thus, I had also to include participants with higher education but have considered reuniting with their families. Selection criteria like age were not important in the study (as long as they were adults with families back in Ghana). On the other hand, having participants from diverse educational backgrounds and from both sexes were significant because it helped me to examine their experiences in relation to the underlying gender influences on transnational parenting and family reunification.

#### **4.5 Data collection techniques- qualitative interviews**

I collected the primary source of data for the study through semi-structured qualitative interviews where I interviewed seven (7) participants - five (5) males and two (2) females - individually. The interviewees are individuals with families who stayed behind in Ghana while they themselves travelled abroad for the various economic reasons and/or to further their education. Some of the participants are still married to their partners in Ghana while others have separated from their partners in Ghana before migrating. Also, some participants had been able to visit their families since they migrated while others had not (see participants demographic information in table 5.1 in Chapter five). The participant profiles presented in dimensions of analysis take into consideration their migration challenges as well as preparation towards reuniting with their families, representing a diverse selection of Ghanaian migrants in terms of age, schooling and migration experiences.

Further, I conducted seven (7) semi-structured interviews over the telephone due to the inability to interview participants in person as a result of lockdown regulations during the Covid-19

pandemic. I interviewed three participants twice because during the preparation of the grid analysis, I realized I had missed some vital information from the first interviews. I had to call them back to get clarifications and additional information to fill in the gaps in their interviews. I interviewed 4 participants, three (3) males and one (1) female with little education (junior secondary education) and two (2) participants (male and female) with higher education (Master's degree) for the primary data collection. I also interviewed one male participant (with senior secondary school education) who gave valuable information on the forms of support the Ghanaian association provided for their members in relation to access to family reunification and the Portuguese language learning. His participation in the study was relevant to reveal the roles of migrant support networks in migration trajectories through his experiences before migration, as well as upon arriving and settling in the destination country.

Using the interview guide (see appendix II), I conducted the semi-structured interviews in Twi (Ghanaian Akan language). The Twi language is spoken and understood by majority of Ghanaians but it is not a lingua franca. This language was used to enable participants to express their thoughts and views in a language they are most comfortable in, rather than in English. The main research question that the study sought to answer is: What are the various challenges in Ghanaian migrants' efforts to enjoy their rights of living together with their families? To answer the question, the study sought to identify the specific problems Ghanaians in Portugal face when considering whether or not to bring their families to live with them in Portugal. It also sought to explore the mechanisms used by participants in learning the Portuguese language to overcome communication and language barriers. To address the above, I placed emphasis on participants' motivations to migrate and ways of settling in Portugal, especially with regards to language use and access to economic opportunities. In view of this, it was important to identify the legal frameworks, rules, norms, that motivate, constrain, and differentiate migrants' interests to achieve their future aims and aspirations, in this case, family reunification.

I used individual interviews rather than group interviews because my aim was to understand the individual experiences in their migratory journeys to Lisbon, their own perspectives on the laws of reunification, on access to adult migrant language resources and on difficulties felt in learning the Portuguese language. I used a voice-recording device during the telephone interviews to register their reports on perceptions and stories with their consent, which was helpful in preserving the accuracy of the data. I started each interview by providing brief information about the interviewer, the aims of the research being done, an outline of what the interview was all about and information on their participation rights. Participant oral consent was obtained and registered on record at this moment.

As far as the interview procedure is concerned, I adopted a relaxed style of interviewing which Bryman (2012) describes as flexible. This style of "qualitative interviewing allows researchers to depart significantly from any schedule or guide that is being used by asking questions that follow up interviewees' replies and can vary the order and even wording of questions" (Bryman 2012, p. 470). The interview guide was built around a range of core themes aimed at exploring participants migration trajectories focusing on their family composition information, educational background, working experience before migration, early motivation to migrate, existing migration experiences before Portugal, settling and working in Portugal, language uses and programs in Portugal and their Portuguese language learning strategies, their transnational parenting experiences, plans of family reunification and future aspirations. Even though the conversation took different paths for each interviewee, I used similar wording for all the interviews conducted. The semi-structured interviews lasted a minimum of forty minutes to a maximum of one hour.

## 4.6 Data processing of semi-structured interviews

Data analysis involves all the procedures and tools used to manage and make meaning out of the collected data. The study's data analysis processes included data translation and transcription, data coding, development of the grid analysis and generating themes.

I conducted the semi-structured interviews in one of the native languages of Ghana (Twi) and later translated them into English. I translated the interviews manually because most of the available language translation applications could not detect the "Twi" language. I transcribed the audio recordings using a denaturalized transcription approach since the study intended to only capture participants' migratory experiences, as such necessitating the presentation of clear data (Mero-Jaffe, 2011). The process of transcribing the recording gave me an additional chance to reflect on the conversations and opinions of the respondents. Aggregating the data collected, I analyzed the information against the research objectives and theoretical framework underpinning the study.

Thematic analysis was applied to the data to closely examine participants' reports and identify common themes, topics, and patterns of meaning that came up repeatedly (Caulfield, 2019). Using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework for doing a thematic analysis, I followed the following steps: becoming familiar with the data; generating initial codes; search for themes; review themes; define themes; and write-up. I chose thematic analysis for data analysis because it allows an amount of flexibility in interpreting the data breaking down large data sets more easily by sorting them into broad themes.

First, I familiarized myself with the data to get a thorough overview of all the data collected before the start of analyzing individual items. This was done during the transcribing of audio interviews from Twi into English. I further created codes for the data by highlighting sections of the text with short sentences to describe their content and to gain a summarized overview of the main points and common meanings that recur throughout the data. From the codes created, I identified patterns among them to generate themes. Themes were generally broader than codes and generated through the combination of several codes into single themes for review. For example, recurring information on issues such as role support networks, importance of language learning, immigration challenges guided how I developed the framework for the grid analysis and themes in the fourth phase.

In the fourth phase, I reviewed, modified and developed the preliminary themes that were identified. This was done by gathering all the data that is relevant to each theme, and by identifying sub-themes reading the data associated with each theme and considering whether or not the data really supported it. This was achieved through the use of a grid, which was an analysis of all the testimonies gathered during the interview under sections modelled along the interview guide to identify the themes that came up from the interviews (see grid analysis in appendix III). During the construction of the grid, I had to contact some interviewees for follow up questions on some aspects of the interview that lacked clarity.

The fifth stage was the final refinement of the themes with the aim of identifying the 'essence' of what each theme was about (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 92). A total of six themes and fourteen sub-themes were identified from the grid analysis. Below in table 4-1 are the themes and sub themes refined for discussing in the findings and analysis chapter of the study and used for the grid analysis in appendix (III).

*Table 4-1: Themes and sub-themes identified from data analysis*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
Reasons for migration	-Motivations for migration -Processes and means of migration
Challenges and resilience in settling during the migration process	-Access to work opportunities -Access to regularization processes - Communication barriers -Accommodation challenges
Role of migrant support networks	-Roles of support networks before migration -Roles of support networks in destination countries and across borders after migration
Language learning in Portugal	- Language resources provided by the state -Use of new technologies in language learning -People-to-people language learning practices and strategies
Transnational parenting practices and gender considerations	-Communication and virtual parenting within transnational families -Role of remittances in transnational parenting -Gender considerations in transnational parenting

The last stage was to write a comprehensive report on the analysis of identified themes making references to the theoretical and contextualization chapters in the findings and analysis chapter of the thesis.

## **4.7 Ethical considerations**

The study sought to bring attention to how migration and language policies can affect reunification of Ghanaian families in Portugal as a social work concern. At the core of the social work profession professional ethics is the responsibility of upholding the principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversity (IFSW, 2018). In recent times, ethical issues within social research have become a matter of grave importance by ethics committees of various research institutions. With intention to adhere to the ethics of research in mind, I worked to protect participants from harm, achieve maximum consent and to protect their privacy.

### **4.7.1 Informed consent**

Before each interview with the participants, I obtained the participant's informed oral consent by reading and explaining the purpose of the study to them in Twi, the language used during the interviews. This gave them a better understanding of the study, of the possible risks involved, and the right to the extent of participation before they would make the decision to be a part of the study. As a result of my inability to conduct interviews in person in accordance

with social distancing and lockdown regulations due to the Covid-19 pandemic, I was not able to get participants to sign consent forms. Rather, each of them made an oral declaration of consent to participate willingly in the study. The advantage of such a declaration is that it gave respondents the opportunity to be fully informed of the nature of the research and the implications of their participation at the outset. Further, the oral declaration made was audio recorded, thus, any concerns that are subsequently raised by participants or others about how consent was achieved in the method of interview used to collect data can be addressed by the researcher. The right to informed consent was upheld during the whole study process with participants making their decision based on comprehensive and accurate information provided about the study and that they were free to withdraw their consent at any time.

#### **4.7.2 Protection of privacy, confidentiality, and protection from harm and deception**

Hammersley et al. (2007) further raise the issues of invasion of privacy, deception, and harm to participants – all as key ethical principles that all researchers need to consider before, during, and after research is conducted. In terms of privacy, participants had the right to refuse divulging information during the interview and their views were respected. Also, the participants' names and personal information that can be used to trace their identity have been anonymized and protected from external parties. They were reassured that data collection was for research purposes only and would remain confidential.

The study did not employ any form of deception or cause any potential physical or medical harm to participants. In cases where the potential harm could have been emotional or traumatic, I aimed to be culturally sensitive and empathetic and avoided such topics in order to protect participants. Examples of such instances were avoiding probing too much into the validity of some responses relating to means of participants' entry into Portugal and means of regularizing their stay in the country. In some cases, I sensed that participants did not feel very comfortable with the follow-up questions, so I had to avoid too much probing into such sensitive topics.

### **4.8 Challenges and limitations**

One of the main challenges of the study was the time constraint. The study was conducted between January 2020 to June 2020, which can be considered as a short duration to conduct an entire research. The time limitation did not allow me to engage in extensive data collection and observation of the study population in that short while.

The sample size (7) of the study can be argued to be too small to make generalizations on the topic of family reunification among Ghanaian population in Portugal. However, the collected data can potentially provide relevant insights since the available participants were all eligible as having a transnational family and aiming for reunification. Access to participants under this categorization was hard and limited by *force majeure*, hence the small size of the study sample. To make up for this limitation, I made use of secondary data available to contextualize the situation of Ghanaians in Portugal.

Also, the sudden interruption of normal life activities due to Covid-19 pandemic and its lockdown regulations inhibited my access to more study participants and to have face to face interviews. That is, the African Pentecostal church where I could have recruited study participants was closed due to the lock down. Also, some Ghanaian migrants were busy working during the lockdown and could not make time to participate in the study at scheduled times. This resulted in a change of initial proposed data collection methods, that is, participant observation of sample population and to conduct more face-to-face interviews. Therefore, I relied on interviews via the telephone to collect data. Using this method to collect data was not without challenges. The challenges included delays in data collection due to participants' inability to comply with the scheduled interview times, mobile network transmission challenges

and the researcher's inability to observe the interviewees' moods, expressions, movements and body language as other forms of communication relevant for data analysis.

Another limitation of the study consists in the potential risk of losing information during the transcription of interviews. The interviews were conducted in the Twi language which I translated directly into the English language for the analysis. This process presents the risk of losing some information in the process of translation as some of the translated expressions might not provide the same depth and meaning as in the original language. Usually, transcribing from one language to another is a complex and challenging task as it may threaten the credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of research if data is not properly handled (Squires, 2008). However, I worked as much as possible to reduce such risks by translating to maintain the exact meaning of statements made by the interviewees.

Lack of data and literature on Ghanaian migrants in Portugal presented another challenge for the study as everything had to be built from the beginning. Due to the little numbers of Ghanaians in Portugal, access to data for literature review and contextualization for specific topics was difficult. However, this is a very pertinent opportunity to be able to contribute to the knowledge base about Ghanaians in Portugal.

#### **4.9 Self- reflections**

As a Ghanaian living in Portugal, and a student of the Master's in social work with families and children, my interaction with the few contacts I had made triggered my interest in studying this topic for my thesis. The focus on family reunification was also initiated by an interaction with two people who had lived in the same house with my friend from Ghana also studying in Lisbon. Both men had wives and children living back home, and they recounted the challenges of living abroad without their families as well as the coping mechanisms they employed to deal with those challenges. Also, the story of a participant who had lived in Portugal for 23 years without visiting his family due to regularization challenges and financial constraints was intriguing. These conversations had drawn my attention to the fact that all the Ghanaians I had met in Lisbon lived without their families, raising my curiosity to find out what their challenges were in reuniting with their families.

The experiences with the Ghanaian migrants sharing their transnational family experiences were rewarding and productive. They were very vocal about their experiences during those virtual interactions. It helped me to understand the general overview of lived experiences of the different types of Ghanaian migrants in Portugal.

Reflecting on my role as a student with the privilege of studying in an international Master's program and having a relatively easy migration and settling-in process in Portugal, there were potential hindrances in my interaction with the participants regarding my privilege and their disadvantage. For instance, some of the interviewees appeared to feel that the interviews were a bit intrusive into their lives and migratory experiences before their regularization process, therefore, they left out vital details of their narratives which could have made my understanding of their stories complete. In some cases, I had to call back to fill in some gaps in information provided earlier. This was an opportunity for me to think about how they saw my experience as different from theirs, considering that I am in a program that finances my stay abroad, thus, unable to relate to their experiences completely.

Some regrets were my inability to have physical contacts with the study participants through observation or to face-to-face interviews, which could help build the rapport with the participants. Nevertheless, I tried to make the telephone conversation as comfortable as possible. Also, I encouraged the participants' narratives to flow naturally in order to avoid the interviewees' overthinking on the replies for the questions and reproducing the expected outcomes.

## **5 CHAPTER FIVE - FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings and the analysis exploring the experiences of seven Ghanaian migrants (presented with pseudonyms) involved in transnational family practices while living in Portugal. It also explores their migration journeys and strategies undertaken to reunite with their families in Portugal. The chapter begins with the socio-demographics of the participants, their family information, summary profile for each interview and the main dimensions of the analysis for the study. The discussion follows with in-depth analysis and discussion along the seven main themes. Results are presented with excerpts of the participants' narratives from interviews conducted in Twi, a language spoken and understood by majority of Ghanaians, though not a lingua franca. The interviews were transcribed and translated into English for analysis to facilitate the data processing and analysis. The identified themes emerged from a process of thematic analysis (as explained in chapter 4). The identified themes include motivations for migrating, means of migration challenges and resilience in settling in Portugal, role of migrant support networks, language learning strategies, transnational practices and virtual parenting, as well as future plans of the migrant participants.

### **5.2 Socio- demographics and family information**

This section provides information on the interviewees and their family background, highlighting their transnational family setting and their migration trajectory. It conveys details on their marital status, information about their children, and previous professional occupation (see illustration of details in Table 5-1 below).

Interviewees were five males aged between 37-57 and two females aged 31 and 41. All have children, aged between 2 and 11, except for two interviewees, who had adult children aged 26 and 22. The 26 year-old man is the son of the oldest participant aged 57 while the 22 year-old twins are the children of the oldest female participant aged 41. The five male participants are married, whereas the two female participants are separated from their partners, though all have left their children behind in Ghana. The children who stayed behind were placed in the hands of caregivers, who are mainly their spouses, grandparents of their children or ex-partners. Five participants have lower secondary education (schooled for up to 9 years) and two of them are studying for their Master's degrees. Comparing their occupation based on their education status, one can say that migrating to Portugal was an alternative to securing better opportunities for themselves and their families. Even those with higher qualification see the move as an opportunity for mobility in their country or even in Portugal.

Table 5-1: Main socio-demographic and family information

Name	Sex /Age	Marital status	Edu. Level (ISCED level)	Occupation in Ghana	Current Occupation in Lisbon	Partner or (ex-partner): Education (ISCED level) and Occupation	Number of children left behind Age/ gender	Children's major care giver in Ghana
Kojo	Male, 37	Married	Lower secondary education in Ghana Languages used: English, Fante	Teaching assistant (formally contracted by the public sector)	Interior décor assistant with a formal contract	Community health assistant Level of education: short cycle tertiary education	Two children: son-11years daughter-9years	Wife & paternal grandparents
Akwesi	Male,57	Married	Lower secondary education in Ghana Languages used: English, Fante	Fisherman (independent worker, working informally with boat owners; Seasonal informal work in the mines	Barber Works independently with another person: with an informal contract	Fish monger Level of education: lower secondary education	One child: Son-26 years	Wife
Emman	Male, 38	Married	Lower secondary education in Ghana Language used: English, Fante	Secretary for fishermen (informally and on a private contract)	Bake factory labor assistant with contract	Petty trader Level of education: lower secondary education	One child: Daughter-5 years	Wife
Adomanko	Male,38	Married	Bachelor's degree in Ghana Master's degree in China and in Portugal Languages used: English, Twi	Education officer (Public servant)	Master's student Intends to find a job soon	English teaching-internship in China Level of education: Bachelor's degree	One child: Daughter 2 years	Wife
Esi	Female, 31	Separated	Bachelor's degree in Ghana Master's degree In Portugal Languages used: English, Twi	Film director (freelancer)	Master's student	Freelance Film editor Level of education: Bachelor's degree	One child: Son-6 years	Ex-partner & paternal grandparents
Eno	Female, 41	Separated	Lower secondary education in Ghana Languages used: English, Twi	Hair stylist Working for someone on contract	Cleaner and hairstylist (No contracts)	Farmer-subsistence basis Level of education: lower secondary education	Two children: Twins Son-22 years Daughter- 22 years	Auntie and maternal grandparents
Mintah	Male, 40	Married	Senior high school in Ghana Languages used: English Ga, Twi	Sanitary Factory Distribution agent	Post man with a formal contract	Works in a Pasteleria Level of education: Senior high school	Two children: Two Sons – 9 years and 3	Lives together with family in Lisbon, Portugal



### 5.2.1 Participants' general description

#### *Kojo*

Kojo is a 37 year-old man, married with two children, a boy and a girl, 11 and 9 years old respectively. His wife is a trained community nurse in a community health center in a town in the western part of Ghana. She provides care for their two children with the help of Kojo's mother, when she goes to work or for training. Before his travel, he lived together with his wife and two children in the central region of Ghana.

Kojo completed nine years of basic education in Ghana where the main languages of instruction through those years were Fante (Akan language) and English. He worked as a teacher assistant without qualification in a primary school. He taught citizenship education on the primary level (ISCED level 3).

He travelled from Ghana in 2017 to Dubai for two weeks, where he applied for a short-term Schengen visa from the Dutch embassy before finally travelling to Lisbon. He has been living in Lisbon since 2017, while his family stayed in Ghana. Presently, he works as a shop assistant for an interior décor company in Lisbon. He keeps constant communication with his family through phone and Internet calls.

He says his motivation to migrate was to seek better life opportunities for himself and his family, as he did not have job security in Ghana. He believes coming to Lisbon was a good decision because Portugal is a migrant friendly country and he would like to make Portugal his future home. Recently he has submitted his application for family reunification and is awaiting response from the *Serviço Estrangeiros e Fronteiras* (SEF).

#### *Akwesi*

He is a 57 year-old man, married with a son, who is currently 26. His wife works as a fishmonger in Ghana and has been providing care for their son with assistance from Akwesi's three younger sisters, even though they don't live in the same household.

He completed nine years of basic education in Ghana, where the main language of instruction was Fante (Akan language) and English. In Ghana, he worked as a fisherman, and occasionally as a worker in a mine, to raise money for his planned trip to Portugal. He had prior migration experience in Abidjan, Cote D'Ivoire for seven months in 1997, where he worked and saved to pay the middlemen who facilitated his entry into Europe, Portugal.

He arrived in Portugal in 1997. Presently, he works as a barber in an African salon in Lisbon. He has not visited or reunited with his family for 23 years since he left Ghana, and keeps in touch with them through phone calls, texts, and remittances.

Akwesi's desire to migrate mainly came from the search for better economic opportunities to enable him to perform his responsibility of providing support for his younger siblings as well as his family after the demise of his father. He does not have any plans of reuniting with his family, citing economic difficulty to fulfill requirements in the law to bring his wife and also an age limit for his son.

#### *Emman*

Emman is a 38-year-old man, with a wife and a daughter in Ghana. His wife is a petty trader in the central part of Ghana and provides care for their 5 year-old daughter in the absence of her husband. Emman attended school up to senior secondary school level, studying mainly in English and Fante. He did not complete his high school education. In Ghana, he worked as

secretary for the informal fishermen union in his community, supervising sales and savings at the rural bank.

He had had no migration experience until his travel to Lisbon in 2016, with a Schengen tourist visa from the Dutch embassy in Ghana. Currently, he works as a factory labor assistant for a bakery in Lisbon. He keeps in contact with his family regularly through daily WhatsApp texts and video calls, and since he migrated has been able to visit his family once last year, 2019.

Presently, he intends to bring his wife and daughter but is yet to begin the process this year (2020). He is very hopeful the reunification will be successful once he begins the process, as he has prepared the needed documents, including securing his residence permit. He looks forward to successful reunification with his family and making Portugal their future home.

#### *Adomanko*

Adomanko is a 38 year-old man, who has a wife and a 2 year-old daughter in Ghana. The wife provides care for their child in his absence. He had his studies at the senior secondary, undergraduate and Master's levels, all taught in English. The language of instruction for the basic education level was both English and Twi. He worked in Ghana as a civil servant in an education office.

His main motivation to migrate was to further his education both in China and in Portugal. His previous migrant experience in China for two years was for the purpose of study under the Chinese government scholarship, where he also worked as an intern English teacher.

He then relocated to Portugal in September 2019 for further studies, after his wife had been refused a study visa to equally pursue a Master's program in Porto, Portugal. He entered Portugal with a study permit from the Portuguese embassy in China. His current study is self-funded and he does not work, as he hasn't had the time to combine both schooling and work. He relies on technology to communicate with his family via WhatsApp and Facebook messaging and calls on a daily basis. He plans to bring his family to live with him for the duration of his study.

#### *Esi*

She is a 31 year-old woman, who has a six year-old son with her ex-partner who stayed in Ghana. The father provides care for their son with assistance from his parents (paternal grandparents) in the capital in Ghana. She had most of her studies until Master's level taught in English, and with Twi at the basic education level. Back in Ghana, she worked as a freelance film director.

Her decision to migrate was motivated by her desire to further her education and also to find better economic opportunities for herself and her son. She had had no prior migration experiences until she travelled on a study visa to Lisbon in 2018.

Her current Master's in filmmaking in Portugal is taught in English. She is currently unemployed and lives on her monthly stipends sponsored by the European Union but intends to find a job soon in Lisbon to sustain her life after her studies. She keeps in touch with her son at least 3 times a week on WhatsApp video calls through her ex-partner.

Esi has started the application process for the reunification with her son and has an appointment with the *Serviço Estrangeiros e Fronteiras* (SEF) to submit her documents. Even though the process is likely to be delayed due to the break of the Covid-19 pandemic, she is hoping for a successful application to enable her to live together with her son in Portugal.

### *Eno*

Eno is a 41 year-old woman who has twins (male and female) aged 22 years. She had separated from her partner before her first migration experience outside Ghana. In her absence, her children were raised by Eno's older sister with the help of her parents, with financial support from Eno's ex-partner. Eno has education up until the basic education level, with the language of instruction being mainly English and Ga. She worked in Ghana as a hairstylist.

She had her family support in her decision to migrate, especially to assume the primary caregiving roles for the children in her absence. Her ex-partner also agreed to her decision to migrate since Eno's family had always been supportive in raising the children.

She migrated to Norway in 2009 with a short stay Schengen tourist visa from the Norwegian Embassy in Ghana. There she worked as a hairstylist in African salons. Her main motivation to migrate to Norway had been to improve living conditions for her children and her family (parents and older sister). She arrived in Portugal in 2012 on a flight from Norway without valid documents.

She has not been able to visit her family for eleven years due to documentation issues, until she had her situation regularized in 2019, and is finally planning to visit the family in Ghana in December 2020. She however keeps in touch with her children and family constantly through phone calls and texts on WhatsApp. She does not have any hope of reunification as her children are above the age limit set in the law.

### *Mintah*

He is a 40-year-old Ghanaian-Portuguese who shares his experiences on the role of migrant's support networks through his migratory trajectory. He also shares how his marriage to a Portuguese woman informed their decision to adopt a family language practice to help him learn the Portuguese language.

He had had no wife or children prior to his migration, but his parents had been supportive of the process. He was educated up to senior secondary school level in Ghana, with the medium of instruction mainly being English, Twi, and Ga. He worked as a distribution agent for a company in Ghana.

Mintah's first migratory experience was when he travelled to live and work in Italy with the support of his friends who had already been living in Italy. Even though the Schengen tourist visa processing was facilitated by a middleman who operated a travel and tour agency, he relied heavily on the help of migrant networks who were visiting Ghana for holidays in terms of information. In Italy, he worked as an agricultural farm and construction work laborer in different cities.

He arrived from Italy to Portugal in 2006 without legal documents and worked in construction in different cities. Currently, he works as a postman in [...] and is married to a Portuguese woman with whom he has two children.

In an attempt to build a strong Ghanaian migrant association here in Lisbon, he plans to extend help in the forms of information sharing, physical or logistical help to its members. The aim of the association is to create a sense of community for other migrants as much as he had received during his migratory journeys in Europe.

### **5.3 Dimensions of analysis**

This section draws on the findings from the combination of data collected from the seven in-depth interviews, analyzed alongside research objectives and the analytical framework underpinning the study. The themes were categorized according to the topics that arose from the thematic analysis and provided answers to the main research questions which sought to identify the specific problems Ghanaians in Portugal face when they apply for family reunification, the strategies they employ in learning Portuguese language, and their implied resilience strategies. These themes motivated further focus on their challenges in settling in Portugal, roles played by migrant support networks, transnational parenting experiences, and their future expectations for their families. Table 5-2a and 5-2b below gives detailed information on the main dimensions along which the analysis of the study is done.

The six themes identified are: motivations for migration, challenges and resilience in settling during the migration process, role of migrant support networks, language learning in Portugal, transnational parenting practices and gender considerations, and the future plans and aspirations of migrants. The themes are further broken down into sub-themes to enhance a clearer analysis of the findings.

Table 5-2a and 5-2b: Main Dimensions of Analysis

ID	Family diaspora in	Reason for migrating to Portugal	Previous migration experience	Entry date & mode of entry into Portugal and duration of staying	Plans for family reunification	Language Learning strategies	Resilience strategy
Kojo	No	Economic reasons “... looking at my family needs and the amount I was earning, it wasn’t encouraging. So, I decided to travel to seek greener pasture”	No	2017, via a European country with Schengen tourist visa  Duration of staying: 3 years	Yes: intends to bring wife and two children. Has begun application, waiting for SEF response	The supportive role of the teacher from PPT-language school Duration: 3 months Motivations: Helpful in migrant’s access to work, uses language at work with clients, and staff at décor shop, and also in day-to-day regular activities and conversations	Ability to adapt quickly to situations.  Employing self -motivation and flexibility to learn Portuguese language  Mobilizing support among networks to advance his interest.
Akwesi	Yes: Brother- in Norway (12 years) Sister in Italy (7 years)	Economic reasons “So, in 1997, I left Ghana for Abidjan to look for greener pastures elsewhere, so I could help my siblings through school and have a better life”.	Yes (Abidjan-Cote D’Ivoire) 7 months- as transit country to migrate to Portugal	1997, Via a non-European country without visa (ship)  Duration of staying: 23 years	Not anymore Previous intentions of reuniting with family not realized due to irregular migrant situation. Unable to fulfil financial requirements of family reunification	Self-taught through work & church Help from work colleagues who spoke Portuguese  Duration: at least 1 year Motivations: very helpful in the migrant’s integration and access to work, uses language at work with clients at barbering shop, and also in day-to-day regular activities and conversations	Transfer of previous employment skills to situation in new countries to survive. Ability to adapt quickly to situations-learn new language to survive Employing self -motivation to learn Portuguese language Mobilizing support among networks to advance his interest.
Emman	Yes: Uncle in Germany (4 years)	Economic reasons “Life in Ghana wasn’t that stable too, considering the chances of getting jobs and opportunities to make it in life were very slim. So, when I got the opportunity to travel, I didn’t want to miss it”.	No	2016, via a European country with Schengen tourist visa Duration of staying: 4 years	Yes: Intends to bring wife and daughter Yet to begin process in 2020	PPT- language school and self-taught through work Duration: 2 months in PPT, everyday life since Motivations: very helpful in the migrant’s integration and access to work, uses language at work with bakery staff, and also in day-to-day regular activities and conversations	Ability to adapt quickly to situations Employing self -motivation to learn Portuguese language  Mobilizing support among networks to advance his interest.

ID	Family diaspora in	Reason for migrating to Portugal	Previous migration experience	Entry date & mode of entry into Portugal and duration of staying	Plans for family reunification	Language Learning strategies	Resilience strategy
Adomanko	No	Higher education reason <i>"I had the Chinese government scholarship, so I organized all my travel documents and myself for the master's."</i> <i>"Coming to Portugal was also for the purpose of study"</i>	Yes (China- 2 years) First migration destination for study	2019, via a European country with study visa Duration of staying: 1 year	Yes: Intends to bring wife and daughter Yet to begin process this year	Does not speak Portuguese at all Relies on google translate presently and plans on enrolling in language school Duration: not applicable Motivations: Recognizes the need to learn language.	Mobilizing support among networks to advance his interest. Using technology to resolve communication barriers. Plans of reapplying for family reunification despite first failure
Esi	No	Higher education reasons <i>"I have always wanted to travel and experience a lot of new things, so I took this opportunity to study for my master's in Europe"</i>	No	2018, via a European country with study visa Duration of staying: 2 years	Yes Intends to bring son Will begin process in June 2020	Uses mobile application (Duolingo), oral practice with landlord at home, and plans on enrolling in language school Duration: 2 months with app. Motivations: Recognizes the need to learn language to access employment opportunities and integration.	Employing self-motivation to learn Portuguese language  Adopting language learning practice at home to learn Portuguese Mobilizing support among networks to advance her interest.
Eno	Yes: Auntie in Norway (27 years)	Economic reasons and access to legal residence <i>"I worked in Norway for some time, yet no documents. I heard it was easy to work for it in Portugal, so I moved here"</i> <i>"I had to give my parents something small too, they were not working. I was struggling to make ends meet[...] That is where my motivation came from, because it sounded very promising"</i>	Yes (Norway-Oslo for 3 years) First migration destination for work	2012, via a European country without residence permit Duration of staying: 8 years	Not anymore Previous intentions of reuniting with family not realized due to irregular migrant situation and financial situation. Age limitation for dependents (children) to reunify with mother	Self-taught through work with the help of work colleagues from Mozambique and Cape Verde. Duration: 1 year Motivations: Helpful in the migrant's integration and access to work, uses language at work with clients, while working from home or in salons, and also in day-to-day regular activities.	Transfer of previous employment skills to situation in new countries to survive. Employing self-motivation to learn Portuguese language Mobilizing support among networks to advance her interest.
Mintah	Yes Wife and children in Portugal	Economic reasons <i>"As a young man growing, I wanted to live life comfortably"</i>	Yes (Italy (2 years) First country of migration for work	2006, via a European country without resident permit Duration of staying: 14 years	Not applicable (Portuguese wife and children)	Transfer of knowledge in Italia to learn Portuguese Self-taught through intermarriage with a Portuguese woman Duration: Motivations: Helpful in the migrant's integration, access to work, uses language at work with staff, and also in day-to-day regular activities. In addition, speaks Portuguese at home to wife and children.	Transfer of knowledge in Italian to learn Portuguese Adopting family language practice

## 5.4 Discussion of findings

In the subsequent sections, the study's main findings will be presented and discussed vis-a-vis literature, theoretical and analytical frameworks of the study. Recalling the research objectives of the study, the findings seek to answer the following questions: what are the legal frameworks on family reunification in Portugal? What are the specific problems Ghanaians in Portugal face when they apply for family reunification? What are the mechanisms Ghanaian migrants use in learning the Portuguese language? What are the resilience strategies Ghanaian migrants use in their migration trajectories and transnational parenting processes?

### 5.4.1 Reasons, processes and means of migration

This section focuses on the participants' motivations for migrating from Ghana, taking into consideration the reasons that underpinned the decision-making process, their migration trajectories and the means of entering into Europe. The World bank (2014) and Chukuma et al. (2017) have argued that the motivation for migration may be described as a combination of social, ethnic, and politically-related push and pull factors. Ozden and Schiff (2006) suggest that many international migrants embark on migration, which leads to significant flows of relatively low-skilled workers whose productivity and wages are far higher abroad than at home. This means that while higher wages for jobs, better healthcare, opportunities to pursue higher academic career etc., serve as attraction for migrants to travel abroad, poor socio-economic situation such as poverty, low wages, sub-standard education and unemployment also acts as some of the reasons that push individuals to migrate to achieve better socio-economic status. This section relates directly with discussions in the theoretical chapter about how the three-tier level of decision making, i.e. macro, meso and micro levels, influence migrants' decisions. It discusses the desire of participants to explore better economic opportunities and for further studies as their main motivations to migrate, using both regular and irregular means as to enter into countries in Europe.

### 5.4.2 The desire to explore better economic opportunities and further education

Participants of the study shared that their motivation to migrate was the search for economic prosperity, aiming to improve their lives and that of their families back home. These reasons include economic and demographic push factors at the macro level of poverty, unemployment, and low wages in the home country, and the desire to pursue higher education (for some of them). On the other hand, pull factors at the macro level, such as the prospect of higher wages, potential for an improved standard of living, personal or professional development, and the possibility of family reunification after migration also influenced greatly the motivation of migrants to travel to Europe.

At the micro level, some participants based their decision to migrate on their individual desires to improve living conditions through gainful employment opportunities after assessing the cost versus benefits of travelling abroad. Some of them evoked the desire to travel and see the world as a reason that made them migrate. Testimonies from networks about opportunities in Europe gave them the hope of achieving the transformation they looked for therefore increasing their motivation to migrate. For some, it remains the only lifeline to meaningful and gainful employment, as expressed in the excerpts below:

As a young man growing, I wanted to live life comfortably. Even though I had work, it was not paid much, I lived from "hand to mouth" where I couldn't save money from my wages after paying my bills. I would spend everything even sometimes a week before I

had been paid. I even borrowed foodstuffs sometimes and paid at the end of the month. Imagine, how could I have made life better living like this?

*(Mintah, Male, 40)*

The desire to travel had always been on my mind [...] Meanwhile, life in Ghana was not that stable too, considering the chances of getting jobs and opportunities to make it in life were very slim. So, when I got the opportunity to travel, I didn't want to miss it.

*(Emman, Male, 37)*

Life was hard at a point in time, especially after I gave birth to my children. You know how it is with twins, I buy everything in pairs, and I did not have enough support to perform all these duties.

*(Eno, Female, 41)*

I left Ghana for Abidjan to look for greener pastures elsewhere, so I could help my siblings through school and have a better life.

*(Akwesi, Male, 57)*

Participants' decision to migrate had, thus, some meso and macro level influences. The desires to improve their families' living conditions and the availability of favorable labor market conditions abroad motivated their decisions to migrate. For other participants, the success story of visiting Ghanaian emigrants in Ghana boosted their interest in travelling, to become successful likewise. Thus, the visiting Ghanaian migrants constituted a form of migrant support network for some participants through sharing vital information about their migration journeys and successful life routes. They believed there were better work opportunities that could help improve their family's life situations across the borders of Ghana. They said as follows:

I saw how some people who had gone abroad would come back to visit their families looking successful, some were my mates and it boosted my desire to travel. Their families were living well, I wanted my parents to enjoy life.

*(Mintah, Male, 40)*

People I knew from my town had travelled to Europe and came back with nice testimonies.

*(Emman, Male, 38)*

I had to give my parents something small too, they were not working. I was struggling to make ends meet [...] One day my maternal aunt in Norway called my parents [...]. She asked if I was interested in trying to work in Norway as an Afro hairstylist as it was very lucrative. That is where my motivation came from, because it sounded very promising.

*(Eno, Female, 41)*

Furthermore, some participants mentioned their desire to further their studies as motivation for migrating in the first place. Their decision was influenced by both micro and macro level indicators of personal decision to develop themselves professionally, and also the availability of education and labor opportunities in chosen destination countries. They took advantage of their admission and scholarships into schools in China and Portugal as an easy way to navigate their way through difficult visa processing, as they received all the supporting documents needed to complete their applications. In addition, they believed studying abroad could further serve as an alternative to achieve economic mobility after their studies.

I had only a bachelor's degree to work as a civil servant, as an administrative assistant in the education office. I had the desire to further my education for a Master's. I did everything by myself. Well, I had the Chinese government scholarship, so I organized



all the supporting documents sent to me and my travel documents for the Master's in China.

Coming to Portugal was also for the purpose of study. After completing my first Master's, I came across the Master's in International Relations, which could be a good qualification for better work opportunities both in Ghana and abroad, so I applied and got admission.

*(Adomanko, Male, 38)*

It was a personal decision. Like I said earlier, I have always wanted to travel and experience a lot of new things, so I took this opportunity to study in Europe. My son is also a factor. I wanted the best for him, so, I have decided to get a better job after school and provide the best for him. I applied for the program and scholarship online myself, I got admission and received all supporting documents needed for the application of visa processing.

*(Esi, Female, 31)*

### 5.4.3 Processes and Means of Migration

The study's participants fit in the definition of migrants by the International Organization of Migration (IOM), since they crossed many borders for different reasons and through different trajectories. Their choices of migration trajectories were based on macro level indicators on the forms of international level border agreements, visa processing systems for education and labor opportunities, and policies available for migrants to take advantage of during their migration. Some participants entered Portugal directly with legal documents while others entered irregularly, having transited through other European or African countries for months and/or years as discussed in the theoretical chapter (Section 3.1.2) about the different migration trajectories and means of entering the country.

The participants shared their experiences about their migration routes across different countries as transit or for temporary work for varying time periods and reasons. For one participant, Akwesi, the transit allowed him to save money to fund the cost of migration using an irregular route directly into Europe. He entered Portugal on a ship from Abidjan, Côte d' Ivoire. Thus, he transited through Cote d' Ivoire as part of his journey, stayed and lived there for some months before finally arriving in Portugal in an irregular way via a cargo ship as a "stowaway"<sup>47</sup>. He sneaked into the cargo ship with other migrants who were using the same irregular means to migrate. Considering the risks involved in the means of travelling used by Akwesi and his friends, especially at the point of risking their lives while transferring from smaller boat onto the ship on the ocean, it can be assumed they overcome their fears and survived the dangers of drowning during the process. Desperately holding on to the hope that they would arrive in Europe, the perceived "haven" to achieve better economic status, they took the adventure to enter Portugal without the required documents. He said:

I left Ghana in 1997 to Abidjan, Côte d' Ivoire. I stayed there for some time, about 7 months, trying to find a ship going to Portugal. I didn't plan to stay in Abidjan for long but because I had to save money for my journey [...] On the departure day, we used a local boat after arranging with a middleman on a ship heading to Portugal. We had to transfer from the boat onto the ship midway [...] on the Atlantic Ocean. [...]. I stayed in a hidden place on the ship until we arrived in Lisbon, Portugal without legal documents.

We had no idea or anything about the laws of the country. The only thing we knew was that there was a ship we managed to board and arrive in the western world. I only knew

---

<sup>47</sup> A term used to refer to the process of migrating to another country using a plane, boat or ship. It is often used as a way to enter a country without possessing legal documents.

I was coming to Portugal for a better life. We call it “stowaway” to arrive in a country through an illegal way. We just got on the ship and hoped to arrive in a foreign land for greener pastures.

*(Akwesi, Male, 57)*

Other two participants entered Portugal from different parts of Europe going through the European Union Schengen free border agreement, though without specific permits to live and work in Portugal. Even though they entered Europe through Italy and Norway with valid short-term visas, participants could not advance their plans of gaining legal residence after their visas had expired. Despite living and working there for some time, they did not have access to resident permits, so they stayed irregularly in those countries hoping to regularize their stay in Europe. The desire to avoid being sent back to Ghana triggered further movement from these countries to Portugal, after they both received information from their networks about flexibility to regularize their stay in Portugal. They entered Portugal without any visa or resident permits from any EU country to explore new alternatives.

Eno first travelled from Ghana in 2009 to Norway with a short stay Schengen tourist visa and was unable to regularize her stay during her three-year-stay in Oslo. In 2012, Eno’s Ghanaian friend and work colleague who was in the same irregular situation, received an invitation from the brother in Portugal informing them of a flexible migrant regularization process. She shared the information with Eno, who decided to take the opportunity to regularize her stay in Europe. Her friend, however, did not make the journey with Eno, as she had an alternative of regularizing her stay in Norway by marrying her Norwegian boyfriend. Eno arrived in Portugal from Oslo with a direct flight where nobody happened to check her permit before boarding the flight. Thus, she was fortunate not to be caught by the immigration officers and entered Portugal without the required documentation. Eno’s arrival in Portugal was made possible by the occasional lack of documents checks at the borders of EU/Schengen countries, which is a macro-level factor.

It is important to mention that, as much as the Schengen agreement allows anyone, whatever their nationality, to cross an internal border within the Schengen area without thorough checks for legal documents, its member states reserve the legal right to reintroduce restrictions on entering their respective territories initially for up to 30 days in the face of perceived threat to public policy or internal policy<sup>48</sup>. There have been situations during which Schengen states have closed their borders, and so the possibility remains of it happening again in the future. For example, during the 2015 migration crisis, during international sports events and recently, at the beginning of the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, Schengen states put in place measures to reduce threats of increased undocumented migrants entering their countries and also to curtail the spread of the pandemic. Eno’s decision to take this risk was also prompted by the perceived flexible migration policies in Portugal, where it has been possible to regularize her stay through exceptional legislative initiatives. Eno shares her experience of migrating from Norway to Portugal below:

My friend’s brother in Portugal told me they don’t check for visas when you travel from one country to another in Europe [...] In 2012, I bought a ticket to Lisbon, from Oslo. I was scared of being caught and sent to Ghana, but I was fortunate, they didn’t check for visas or permits at the airport, so I entered Lisbon without any permit.

*(Eno, Female, 41)*

---

<sup>48</sup>The Schengen area and cooperation. Accessed on 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2020 from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM%3A133020>

Mintah, on the other hand, was living and working irregularly in Italy for two years after his short-term tourist visa had expired. Fearing deportation, he travelled from Italy to Portugal after receiving information about flexible regularization policy for migrants from a Ghanaian friend in Lisbon. Just like in the case of Eno, his migrant network members from Portugal had suggested he explored the said opportunity. She had decided to take the chance and travelled to Portugal without the required documentation to live in the country. In such a way, a meso level factor like having contacts in the country of destination played a decisive role in Mintah's migration trajectory. He made the journey with another Ghanaian friend successfully in 2006 without being caught by Portuguese immigration officers.

We travelled to Portugal, we knew one guy who was "hustling" in Portugal here, so he was giving us information about the airlines that don't check for visas once it's within Europe. We travelled from Italy to Portugal without any document."

*(Mintah, Male, 40)*

Macro level international border policies informs migrants decisions on where they migrate as discussed in the theoretical chapter (see section 3.1.1). The practice of migrants entering any country within the EU/ EEA and Schengen agreement areas with short term Schengen visas as tourists is one of the means through which people travel to live and work in Europe. Participants who entered with the intention to work used these short-term visas to enter Portugal and only regularized their stay after some years spent in Portugal. In Ghana, the Portuguese consulate does provide short stay Schengen visas, except for study and family reunification visas that are processed through the Portuguese embassy in Abuja, Nigeria. Thus, all short stay visas are usually obtained from other EU embassies (German, Spanish, Dutch, Hungarian, French, Danish, Italian etc) in Ghana for travels to countries in the EU. Emman applied for his permit from the Dutch embassy in Ghana while Kojo applied from Dubai, even though he did not say why he got his visa from Dubai but only mentioned how he had received information about visa possibilities from his friend. They shared the means they used in entering Portugal as below:

I knew and wanted a genuine process to be safe and avoid problems for myself and the family, so I applied for a Schengen tourist visa through the Dutch embassy which would allow me travel to Portugal. So, I capitalized on the opportunity to secure my visa.

*(Kojo, Male, 37)*

I discussed the idea with my wife and prepared. Once I had saved enough money with the help of my wife and some family members, I applied for a Schengen tourist visa from the Dutch embassy in Ghana with the help of a friend who assisted in organizing the documents.

*(Emman, Male, 38)*

Other means of entering regularly include the purpose of studying in Europe. These participants entered Portugal with student visas and applied for resident permits upon arrival as mentioned in the contextualization chapter process (2) of the study on regularization processes in Portugal.

I applied for the visa through the Portuguese consulate in Ghana, but the visa was issued from Lagos, Nigeria. So, I travelled to Portugal with a Portuguese study visa.

*(Esi, Female, 31)*

I came here on 10th September for my second Master's in International Studies [...] I applied for my student visa from the Portuguese embassy in China.

*(Adomanko, Male 37)*

The above findings show that the inquired Ghanaian migrants in Portugal are motivated to migrate by several factors that reflect their human ecology, thus, their own personal desires (micro) and the influence of the environment on their life choices. Their environment, in this case, refers to their immediate family environment (meso) and the host country environment and opportunities (macro). Apart from the motivation to migrate, the migration processes also reflect migrants' social networks. The findings, therefore, indicate that a social process like migration is not only limited to individual motivations, but other variables like the network of families and friends and structural factors may intervene in migrants' motivations (O'Reilly, 2012).

## 5.5 Challenges and resilience during the migration process

This section explores the various forms of challenges participants encountered while navigating their migration routes and ways of settling in Portugal. The findings show how they harnessed resources within themselves and their environments as resilience strategies in the face of those challenging and stressful periods. The challenges they encountered included getting access to work, accommodation, to regularization process and overcoming communication barriers. Looking out for resilience practices, as discussed under the theoretical consideration in section (title 3.2), I focused on the various strategies and resources they pulled by themselves, and from within their social environments, including tapping into their repertoire of adaptation skills, previous life experiences, technology, and also using meaningfully the human resources available to help them overcome challenges they encountered during their migration process.

### 5.5.1 Access to work

The study's participants had different challenges in terms of accessing work opportunities when they arrived, mostly due to the general lack of information on labor market opportunities in their immediate networks. Nonetheless, one of the study participants got her job exactly (hairstyling) through her network. While some ended up getting their first jobs with the help of networks, others relied on their own efforts to find jobs upon arrival. Such opportunities were available in the construction sector, agriculture and beauty industry. They were able to take on these opportunities to survive due to their ability to adapt to new situations quickly and also apply knowledge from previous work experiences to new ones.

I will use the case of Akwesi and Eno as examples to illustrate how they quickly organized themselves to overcome challenges in accessing work in his migration. To begin with, Akwesi demonstrated his adaptive potential during his transit at Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire where, within a short time while waiting for an opportunity to continue his journey to Portugal, he had learnt to speak adequate French language to enable him to work at the seaport. Knowledge of French language was essential to his survival in his transit as it was the most used language for the purpose of work to save enough money to finance his trip. His ability to work in the port was also important to provide him with access to middlemen, who would help him get on the ship travelling to Portugal. Through this strategy, Akwesi was successful in working and financing his trip to his final destination. He shared his experience as below:

I had to work and save money for my journey. I was only offloading and loading goods to and from cargo ships to get some money. And selling petty stuff to people who came by boat and ship [...] I learnt French to help me work in the port to save money.

*(Akwesi, Male, 57)*

Further, upon arrival in Portugal, Akwesi mentions being aware that the readily available job he could do was a construction job, which most of Ghanaian migrant network he had met were

also doing for a living. Tapping into the skills of his past work experience in the mine back in Ghana, Akwesi could work under similar work conditions on the construction sites. Building on previous skills and applying those skills to the new environment, provided him with the opportunity to settle and sustain himself in Portugal. During the process of working on the construction sites, he took advantage of working with colleagues who spoke Portuguese to learn the language. Even though Akwesi can speak Portuguese now, he is also most likely to speak one of the creolised varieties of Portuguese he had learnt from his fellow Angola, Cape-Verdean and Guinean colleagues, with features acquired over the decades of language contact between African languages and Portuguese. This in a good way helped him to explore other career options, as he is currently a barber, and not working in the construction.

When we came, there were many construction sites, and it was mostly Africans who worked there. This is the kind of work that we could actually do, so most Ghanaians here engaged in these construction works for a living. So, we also joined, and it has helped us to settle well in.

*(Akwesi, Male, 57)*

Eno on the other was lucky to find exactly the same work as a hairstylist like she had in Ghana and in Norway. Even though she was using her knowledge of her previous job to earn a living in Portugal, she mentioned how she was cheated on her job wages by her employers because she was undocumented. She shared:

Just like in Oslo, I had the same issue with shop owners. They always wanted to pay very small for such a tiring job. I stood all day braiding hair and had to endure backache only for little money just because I didn't have documents. Yet, I could not report them to the trade union.

*(Eno, Female, 41)*

This flexibility and adaptability in work skills and language learning helped them live through all the challenging moments in Portugal until they regularized their stay and also gained legal employment. Thus, these attributes made Akwesi and Eno resilient.

### 5.5.2 Access to regularization processes

Migrants' access to regularization processes and flexible migration checks represent macro and meso level decisions and implications as discussed in the analytical framework in chapter three (section 3.1). Portugal is known for its flexible migrant policies as presented in the contextualization and theoretical chapters. Article 88 that describes the regularization processes for migrants makes it possible for migrants who are unable to provide proof of entry and residence to regularize their stay without being deported to their countries of origin. The law grants exceptional government humanitarian benefits to migrants to acquire a residence permit, even when they do not have the supporting evidence of legal entry in Portugal, but provided they fulfill all other requirements established in the law, including working in Portugal for over one year with contributions to social security. This is a macro level policy that influences migrants' decision of choosing Portugal as their country of destination, including migrants who had already settled in other EU/EEA countries without success of regularizing their stay.

Two participants, (Mintah and Eno), who had received this information from their networks, came to Portugal to achieve their aspirations, which was hard to do in Italy and Norway respectively. Both have been successful in regularizing their stay, even though they used different strategies. While Mintah achieved this through his marriage to a Portuguese woman, Eno regularized her stay under article 88:

We [with a Ghanaian friend] decided to leave Italy for Portugal as some of our friends in Portugal told us it was easy to get your papers [done] in Portugal. Even though we were surviving in Italy, we didn't want to be deported when caught, because it was common to be caught there and sent home if you don't have documents.

It wasn't hard for me to decide to settle with my wife because I didn't have any wife or family back home. It was also necessary for me because I still didn't have my documents, it was a way I could get papers. She decided to make our relationship legal and apply for reunification.

*(Mintah, Male, 40)*

Eno's decision to further migrate to Portugal was to have easy access to legal residence, which was hard to achieve in Norway after three years. With her migration from Oslo to Lisbon in 2012 without relevant legal documents, she still used her skills in the hairstyling in African shops receiving low wages for her dependent work. Currently, she has regularized her stay through the benefit of article 88 of the Portuguese immigration law. She said:

My friend and housemate had a brother in Lisbon, he had lived here for some time, so he told us it was less expensive to live here, easy to get papers because he had gotten his permit, so we should come to Portugal [...].

Now I have papers, I got my residence permit last year, 2019. Before my next appointment, I got a work contract as a stylist working in a salon and also, I had a social security number, I also paid tax for the previous 3 months before my appointment, I told them I couldn't find my boarding pass, but God was on my side that day. I have never been so relieved in a while now, I feel free and happy.

*(Eno, Female, 41)*

The practical/effective/actual implementation and enforcement of migration laws in Portugal by its immigration service (SEF) falls under the meso level of the analytical framework as presented in section (3.2.2) of the theoretical chapter. This takes into consideration how strict or flexible the immigration law enforcement is toward a particular group of migrants. In the study, Eno shares how she has been quite lucky so far not to be stopped by the police during random checks for documentation, and how she had managed to live in the country for a long time without documentation. This is because the EU national authorities reserve the right to carry out police spot-checks on individuals, either at the border or in border areas for required documents to travel or live in the country, depending on whether they are EU nationals, non-EU family members or non-EU citizens. This relates to the framework or strategy which the police in Portugal use in their work as a consequence of macro level policies available for migrants, which has earned Portugal its second position in MIPEX (2015) ranking of countries with flexible policies as stated in the contextualization chapter.

Eno shares how, despite all the challenges she had, including her expired passport, having neither a work contract nor a valid residence permit, she managed to survive and live in Portugal due to flexible migration checks and chances of working without a contract:

All these while I hadn't been able to get my documents because of many reasons; like my passport expired in 2014 and I was scared to go and renew as I didn't have a permit, I didn't have any work contract from the places I worked and later to the style I chose to work too, and the amount to apply for permits too was expensive. Since the police don't "control" much in this country, I was able to get by while surviving on my job. I didn't know I could get a residence permit without proof of entering [...] but I guess I was okay with living without documents.

*(Eno, Female, 41)*

In summary, these participants made use of existing favorable macro level policies, as well as meso level practices toward migrants in Portugal, to navigate their ways through their irregular situations in Portugal. The relevant macro level policies included the chances of travelling within the European Union (EU)/European Economic Area (EEA) without visa restrictions, as well as the legal provision under article 88 of the Portuguese immigration law that allows migrants to regularize their stay without proof of residence provided they fulfil the requirements set under this article, as discussed in the contextualization chapter. Macro level family reunification law also had a positive implication for the migrant who married a Portuguese national. This served as a strategy for the participant to regularize his stay in the country to avoid deportation to Ghana. Further, flexible enforcement of migration laws by the police also represents a meso level decision within the institution, as it provides some sort of a legal blind spot for migrants living in irregular situations to live, work and prepare themselves for regularization processes in Portugal. Participants' ability to regularize their situations help alleviate their psychological anxiety/fear of being caught and deported to Ghana by the immigration agents. It also gave them the opportunity to reorganize their personal and family lives, in terms of finding work, for example, Eno planning to visit her family back in Ghana, Mintah having started a new family in the new country.

### 5.5.3 Overcoming communication barriers

A language barrier was one of the challenges many of the participants encountered upon arrival in Portugal. Difficulties in communication, while they were settling in Portugal, had different implications for them ranging from difficulties in accessing information, in getting around the city to searching for accommodation. Portugal currently ranks the 12th on the English First (EF) English proficiency index in 2019<sup>49</sup> with a score of 63.14% (above Spain, Italy and France - where Ghanaians are more represented). This shows that quite a sizeable number of people understand, write or speak English in Portugal. However, some participants, while sharing their settling experiences and how they managed these stressful situations at the time their arrival to Portugal, mentioned how the places they worked (construction sites) and the people on the streets had little knowledge of English.

Strategies participants used in overcoming those challenges included the use of new technologies, like relying on Google maps and Google translator. They also transferred knowledge of similar languages (such as French and Italian) to bridge the communication barriers they encountered. For some participants, meeting people who could speak English was a great relief with getting around the city. Others had to rely on mobile applications which enabled them to get around the city without having to ask for directions. Whenever it was necessary to engage in a dialogue with non-English-speaking people, they used a mobile translator to communicate. Their knowledge of other Romance languages (like Italian, in case of Mintah's quotation below came in handy to help him learn and communicate in Portuguese:

We [other African migrants] would walk through casual working places, like construction sites for days without any success because we couldn't speak Portuguese; and it was during one of these walks that we met someone who could speak and understand English and directed us. It was very challenging since you could hardly meet someone who could understand or speak English.

*(Akwesi, Male, 57)*

---

<sup>49</sup> The EF Standard English Test is a standardized test of the English language designed for non-native English speakers. Proficiency Ranking for 2019 accessed on 12<sup>th</sup> October, 2020 from <https://www.ef.com/wwen/epi/>

The first week was really dreadful, so I had to rely on basic survival skills, Google and Google Translator, some people I met in the streets who speak English to help me get around the city. But in the subsequent week, I met a Ghanaian man in my Master's program who assisted me with the information, which was very helpful.

*(Adomanko, Male, 38)*

I learnt to speak Portuguese from my colleagues at work, most of them were from Cape Verde, Angola and Guinea. I realized if I wanted to live here for long, it was necessary to learn. Moreover, I had learnt some Italian, so I could understand since they have similar words. It had taken me a while, but I learnt it.

*(Mintah, Male, 40)*

In this way, the participants manifested resilience strategies in overcoming communication barriers by (1) using and recombining all the available resources from their previous language learning and migration experiences (for example, gestures, Italian and English words, etc.) to fit their communication goals; (2) actively seeking help of people who were more familiar with the new environment (colleagues and workmates), as well as (3) acquiring new skills and technologies (downloading and learning to use new applications). This indicates that the participants took an active stand in their migration experiences and worked on shaping independent migratory trajectories across new unfamiliar professional and linguistic contexts, despite being unable to use the existing state-run language courses for legal or personal reasons. This contradicts a stereotypical representation of the migrant who is passive and solely reliant on the state for resources, language programs and subsidies (Solovova, 2020, personal communication), but rather presents them as capable of assessing their own language needs and select practices that fit their immediate social context, and transnational realities in new destinations (Kluzer et al., 2011).

#### **5.5.4 Overcoming accommodation challenges**

Access to accommodation was one of the challenges participants encountered upon their migration to Portugal that was exacerbated by a communication barrier during the search and high cost of rooms. Participants who travelled to further their studies expressed their distress mainly from the failed expectations of support from their institutions before arrival, especially in their access to student accommodation which universities had little or no solution to. For some weeks upon their arrival in Lisbon, they had to move from one temporary accommodation to another, in search of cheaper options. They struggled to find permanent accommodation also due to the communication barrier between house owners and themselves. Participants who came to work also had challenges finding affordable homes before or immediately after they had arrived in Portugal.

The main strategy participants used in resolving this was employing the support network in destination countries, as discussed in the theoretical chapter in section (3.2) to relieve them of the costs and stresses of migration. Some participants relied on support network members (school administrators, Portuguese-speaking Ghanaians) to play the role of mediators to bridge the barrier in communication in finding accommodation, while other network members provided temporary accommodation for other participants while they looked for affordable places to live.

It was really difficult settling in, here the schools don't help at all. I got admission and my visa, yes I have my money yet no hope of accommodation. Even if I call them, there was no accommodation for me, how do I attend school then?

This is not so in China, where we secured our accommodation even before arrival. It was really a problem, as I had to sleep in three different hotels upon arrival, with all the hefty costs and the movements too for 10 days. Until after many emails, and calls to my



department coordinator, finally I got the school accommodation. The beginning was very hard. That was my main problem.

*(Adomanko, Male, 38)*

I did not know anyone, and to be honest, it was very tough at the beginning. When I first came, I settled in a hotel for long. At one point, I could not afford it so I had to look for accommodation while staying with a male course mate of mine from Lebanon, while I did the search. I was quite disturbed because a few of the landlords were hesitant because I was unable to speak Portuguese, and they couldn't speak English too. Eventually, I got an accommodation after I got introduced to two Ghanaian friends, who helped me find a place.

*(Esi, Female, 31)*

I didn't have anyone. Instead, my uncle contacted his Sierra Leonean friend here in Lisbon to host me at [...] a little bit outskirts of Lisbon, for some time, about a month. That was the time I organized myself to look for a job here to do.

*(Emman, Male, 37)*

I lived with my friend's brother for a month, and I got a cheaper but okay place in the city center, as I had to survive on my savings from Norway.

*(Eno, Female, 41)*

The theme discussed above has revealed that some migrants are exposed to additional challenges, due to the unconventional means through which they migrate and the difficulty in settling in the destination country. Since everyone has strengths and every environment is full of resources (Saleebey, 2012), the migrants were able to draw on their personal networks and to overcome their challenges.

## **5.6 Role of migrant support networks**

This section presents the discussions on the major contributions of support networks to participants' migratory journeys. Migrant support networks represent an important resource in the migratory cycle of migrants. The roles played by support networks, as discussed in the theoretical chapter, fall under the meso level of the analytical framework contributing to the migration decision making process. Even though some of these contributions have been mentioned in other sections on finding employment, accommodation and language learning opportunities, this section discusses other roles including ones that triggered migration decisions. Networks of the study participants served the purposes of dispelling their fears and anxieties before, during, or after migration, through the information and support they provided them. Reducing the stress of uncertainties and the cost of migration (even though sometimes they add to the cost of migration from the fees they charge for their services), the support comes in the form of providing accommodation, access to work opportunities, information about opportunities in destination countries. Support network members who influenced the participants' migration trajectories, were found in the country of arrival or across different geographical spaces yet provided support through their established networks in destination countries. These ties, either weak or strong, as explained in the theoretical chapter (section 3.3.4), became useful sources of information that helped advance the participants' opportunities in their migratory journey.

### **5.6.1 The role of support networks before migration**

Migrant support networks play an important role in the decision-making process for potential migrants to travel, through provision of information that motivates migration. In some cases, they go a step further to provide support in terms of preparation towards the journey, putting documents together and providing financial assistance to make the journey a success. The participants share their experiences on how their support networks played instrumental roles in

influencing their migration decisions through the provision of information on the process of application (sometimes at a fee), economic opportunities in destination countries and even financing the trip in some cases.

In Mintah's words, he shares his experience with support network and how he had to pay for the help he received:

I met my friend from Italy for a Christmas visit, he told me how he worked for his visa to Italy and introduced me to the man. He owned a travel and work agency, he explained the process to me and how much I needed to pay.

*(Mintah, Male, 40)*

Eno's migration journey from Ghana in 2009 to Norway, and subsequent migration to Portugal in 2012, was made easy with the help of support networks. Her aunt had played a vital role providing information on the economic opportunities in Norway and sponsoring her trip to Oslo, even though she refunded the amount upon arrival. She shares her experience as below:

I called my auntie again, this time round with much interest in the proposal. She told me I could apply to visit my relative in Oslo [...]. She was going to sponsor the trip with the money for the application, sponsor cover letter and proof of relation [...]. All this was on the condition that I will work and refund at least half of the cost of the travel when I arrive in Oslo. At the time, it sounded very good to me because I needed a way out of Ghana, and I didn't have the money for the cost of the journey too.

My aunt sent me all the documents I needed, and the money for the application process as well. [...] She sent my ticket through my uncle. She said she spent about 5,000 Ghana cedis for the whole process (application and my ticket), which is around 1,000 euros currently.

*(Eno, Female, 41)*

Kojo had no prior knowledge of migrant networks in Europe, except for his contact person in Dubai who had provided him information that led to his access to the Schengen visa to Europe. He said:

The Ghanaian friend who hosted me in Dubai told me about the opportunity to travel to Europe. He told me I could apply for a Schengen tourist visa from the Dutch embassy in Dubai.

*(Kojo, Male, 37)*

In summary, even though migrant's networks (relatives, acquaintances, and middlemen) can be helpful in easing the challenges of migration, they can as well be a source of stress for them. They sometimes provide help for free (where migrants' have existing networks) or charge exorbitant prices in exchange for services and information in the absence of close ties to provide these.

### **5.6.2 The role of support networks across borders after migration**

Migrant networks both in destination countries and across borders play important roles in the settling-in experiences of migrants. They provide help in terms of information to getting around the city, access to jobs and survival techniques, physical help in terms of accommodation, money, food, and also serving as links to other networks in a host country, all of these helping relieve new migrants of the troubles of navigating their way through unfamiliar systems. Each of the participants had their own experiences of how their support networks had contributed positively to their migration experiences. Some had received help with temporal

accommodation and companionship upon arrival, others - information on living in new cities, access to work opportunities, and still others had got the information that triggered migration from other countries (Norway and Italy) into Portugal.

Esi's experience with migrant support networks came in handy when she was in a challenging situation of finding accommodation and overcoming a communication barrier upon her arrival to Portugal. She did not have any network in Lisbon as the only person she knew had returned to Ghana after studies. She however had the opportunity to meet some people here, through the recommendation of her senior from her undergraduate program in Ghana:

Yes, definitely, and I think it is very important to have people help you settle when you go to a new place, because when I came, I did not know anyone. I met him through a friend, who had already done a course here in Portugal.[...] But he was in Ghana at the moment I arrived, so he called him to inform him I had arrived in Portugal and was experiencing some hardships, and we got connected and things became easy since then  
*(Esi, Female, 31)*

Eno further had received support from her networks, which helped reduce the uncertainties and cost of migration for her, as well as providing her a sense of family and comfort in Norway. Also, her friendship with a Ghanaian colleague from work, after she had moved from her aunt's house, further introduced her into Ghanaian's networks in Portugal when she moved to Lisbon in 2012. These contacts helped in her settling, and in her regularization process.

When I arrived in Oslo, it wasn't so hard because my auntie was there to meet me, she took me to her house where I was going to live. She used the first month to teach me how to survive in the city, how the transport system works, the currency, the options I had to work even without work documents, introduced me to some Ghanaians who lived in Oslo, and also how Norwegians relate with people. All this helped me as I didn't feel lost in such a big place.

When I arrived in Portugal, my friend's brother was there to pick me from the airport, he took me to his house. [...] He introduced me to a few Ghanaians in Lisbon and also assisted me find a salon to work because there are many shops that worked on Afro hair in Lisbon. I lived with him for a month and I got a cheaper but decent place in city center as I had to survive on my savings from Norway.[...] It was my friend's brother who continually checked up on me, asking me about my progress.

*(Eno, Female, 41)*

First travelling to Italy in 2004, and moving from Italy to Portugal in 2006, Mintah had support networks who welcomed him, and provided him with the necessary information on living and working in both countries, as well as linking him to employment opportunities. They provided him with a sense of comfort and company, which is important for migrant's survival in a new destination.

When I arrived in Italy, I didn't feel very lost because my friends knew I was coming, [...] They took me to their house [...] I didn't struggle at all, they were very nice, and they explained how they survived in Europe. For the first two months I wasn't working, as they said we had to wait for the season to start. But all that time, I ate and lived in their place for free.

My friends had already discussed my arrival with their boss, so I was introduced to him. I was hired to work on the tomato farms alongside my friends, that was my first job. Later, when I was paid, I found a place close to their house and moved in but spent most

times together at work and even at their home. They were all I had in strange land. They were very helpful.

(*Mintah, Male, 40*)

Related to the findings, Goldin et al. (2011, p.105) recall that migrant support networks as a meso-level factor constitutes the social capital from which pioneer migrants transmit knowledge, information and social norms to new migrants. In the present study, migrant support networks were not only influential in the migrants' decision to migrate, they also helped migrants to settle in the host country.

## 5.7 Language learning strategies and practices

This section presents data on the strategies and practices that the participants used and were engaged in while learning the Portuguese language. Language learning strategies and practices, as discussed in the theoretical chapter, represent individual decisions that people make to adopt some ways to learn a language, for instance, of a destination country. In this study, optimistic motivation was especially important for participants who were facing the problem of communication barrier in Portugal as their destination country. Their situation required a lot of flexibility and initiatives necessary for the investment in language learning, which for some participants had direct implications for earnings and employment. Participants adopted many ways that migrants learn languages of host countries, aside enrolling in language classes.

### 5.7.1 Resources provided by the state

Kojo had the opportunity to enroll in the state-run language school where he learnt Portuguese. For him, it seemed hard at first having to learn a different language at his age of 37 years old, but with lots of encouragement and guidance from his teacher, he was able to achieve success in learning Portuguese. The learning strategy Kojo used has an important connotation for the forms of resources available for foreign migrants in Portugal under the *Português Para Todos* (PPT) program. Kojo decided to take the opportunity to learn the language at no cost to help advance his migration ambitions of expanding chances of finding work without the language being a barrier. This decision was also to help him in his everyday experience. He shared:

This was not a language I had been trained with, educated and grown up with. It was all new to me, but after meeting my tutor in the language school, the language was made easy. My tutor advised me prior to the start of the language class to focus on Portuguese language only during the classes. I followed this advice and it helped me a lot to learn the language. Because it is their (Portuguese people's) language that they always use, so I don't feel isolated when I go out. It has become easy for me to mingle and interact with people.

(*Kojo, Male, 37*)

Emman, on the other hand, also enrolled in a similar language class, but did not complete the course because of the difficulties he encountered along the line. The challenges mainly stemmed from having to make tough decisions in relation to his documentation process, as well as navigating between the time for his work and attending classes during the learning process. However, recognizing the relevance of learning the language, he motivated himself to learn from his colleagues at work. Making a choice of learning the language at the workplace has also put Emman in a more active position in the language learning process and provided him with the specific terminology and linguistic resources that are essential for efficient work and spending free time. Time is a crucial resource for migrants, and they tend to invest it wisely. Emman explains having to choose between the time to do the essential things (like working and gathering documents) and learning a new language as follows:

I can speak a little, it is not like the earlier days [...] I went to the language school for almost two months for free, but my concentration was not there, so I stopped. I did not complete the course actually.

The fact is, it was not so difficult to learn it, I just did not have enough concentration to learn the language, I had a lot on my mind. I did not have much time between work and the school time. Also, I had some issues to resolve, like my documentation to live in Portugal, and other things. I did not have a stable mind to learn so I stopped.

*(Emman, Male, 38)*

Concluding on the importance of state language learning resources for migrants, it is seen from the above that while some migrants' take advantage of these opportunities to learn languages of destination countries, not all achieve the desired outcomes. This is because the existing resources do not always access migrant's language needs or take into consideration their work schedules and other responsibilities. Notwithstanding the challenges, state-provided resources help speakers of other languages access to language learning for free.

### 5.7.2 Use of new technologies in language learning

Developing individual strategies of learning the Portuguese language was another alternative for the participants who did not enroll in language classes. They resorted to Portuguese language learning using new technologies via mobile applications (such as Duolingo, Memrise, etc.).

Esi believes knowledge of the language will be beneficial for exploring some economic opportunities and improving living experiences in Lisbon. She decided to start learning Portuguese on her own using the "Duolingo"<sup>50</sup> mobile application. She also agreed with her Portuguese landlady to speak only Portuguese at home, to help put her lessons into practice and to speed up her progress in learning. She also intends to enroll in the *Português Para Todos* (PPT) program. These attempts to learn the Portuguese language demonstrate how she takes an active role in her language learning as she reassessed, planned and modeled her learning environment to fit her own individual purposes. She shares:

I did not learn the language earlier, I am now trying to learn the Portuguese using the Duolingo app, you know, I am learning, and I also try speaking Portuguese with my landlady which is making it better to practice with some of the words I learn. I am hoping that some years to come I will be able to speak fluent Portuguese. Because it will be helpful while I look for work after school[...] it is very important.

*(Esi, Female, 31)*

Without any access to free language classes in school, Adomanko resorted to the use of another online tool - Google Translator - to overcome the communication barriers he has been encountering since his arrival. Recognizing the importance of the Portuguese language for oral interactions with Portuguese-speaking interlocutors in institutions, shops and organizations, he is hoping for an opportunity to enroll in a free Portuguese language course since he cannot afford a private language class at the moment.

If the opportunity comes, I will learn it. If I have a free language school, I will learn because I can't afford it since I am a fee-paying student here. I haven't been here for a long time, so I

---

<sup>50</sup> Duolingo is the most popular language-learning platform and the most downloaded education app in the world, with more than 300 million users.

don't know much about such opportunities unless someone tells me where and how you can do it.

*(Adomanko, Male, 37)*

In summary, the development of technology-based language applications serve an important purpose of helping speakers of different languages bridge communication barriers. As seen from above, they provide people with the opportunity to learn new languages without necessarily having to attend classes and also with help effective communication with the help of its translation options.

### 5.7.3 People-to-people strategy

Through association with speakers of the language at home, workplaces and church fellowship, some participants learnt to speak the Portuguese language. These learning strategies were important to the participants because they attached some relevance to this investment as it boosted their contribution to workplace activity, access to employment opportunities, and its usefulness in everyday life activities, despite the difficulties to learn the language.

Eno's decision to learn the Portuguese language by interacting with her colleagues at work was underpinned by the relevance of this language to the success of her work in Lisbon, and the day-to-day living experiences, such as visits to government offices. Listening while others spoke and practicing with basic lines, she was gradually learning Portuguese.

I did not go to any language school to learn Portuguese but I learnt it at work from my colleagues from work. The people in the salon knew very little English, so I had to try to understand Portuguese and to speak, too. It was a bit hard at first, I always needed someone to explain what a client wanted exactly, I needed it to survive. I cannot tell the exact duration I used to learn Portuguese, but in a year, I could speak and understand Portuguese, I had to put in the effort to learn by picking up on common sentences, words and asking for help from my colleagues at work. They were helpful, both the native Portuguese and two others from Mozambique.

*(Eno, Female, 41)*

Akwesi used self-motivation as a language learning strategy where he decided to learn the Portuguese language by interacting with his work colleagues. He also attended a Portuguese church (Catholic), where he could practice reading and speaking. He said:

Through the construction work, we mingled with other people each and every day. This helped us to learn from them when we interact. So, the more we interacted with people, the more we did learn the Portuguese.

Even though we mingled and interacted a lot, I was not fluent until I learnt it well when I decided to get a fellowship with a Catholic church. It was through the fellowship that I realized I was becoming fluent. It was through my own effort while working and attending the Portuguese church.

*(Akwesi, Male, 57)*

Emman, recognizing the relevance of knowing the language, motivated himself to learn from his colleagues at work. He said:

I learnt it on my own from other work colleagues. The work I was doing had a lot of Africans working there too, mostly from former colonies like Cape Verde, São Tome, Guinéa

-Bissau and Angola. So, I learnt it from their daily interactions, and also because some of the Africans understood both Portuguese and English. When I did not understand something in Portuguese, they explained it to me. That is how I learnt the little I speak now.

*(Emman, Male, 38)*

Also, the strategy of adopting a family language practice to help language learning was identified in the study. This refers to the situation where a family makes a decision to use a language at home to enhance learning. Even though Mintah had started learning Portuguese by listening to his colleagues from work, he agreed to speak only Portuguese to his Portuguese wife and later with their children, even though they both understood and spoke English.

Also, when I met my wife, even though she understood some English, she suggested we speak Portuguese at home to make it better.

*(Mintah, Male, 40)*

This strategy helped him prepare for his language exams to acquire Portuguese citizenship, even though at the expense of not teaching any of his languages (Twi and Ga) to his children. According to Solovova (2013), this is a common strategy among migrants to extend the use of the powerful language of the destination country to practically all the domains of their lives, leaving their own languages to the private and intimate spaces.

In conclusion, resilience in learning Portuguese language was demonstrated through migrant's self-determination to overcome language and communication barriers as they were able to surmount their language learning challenges through a combination of factors that included their personal ingenuity at the micro level (e.g. by using new technologies, by relying on their previous experiences). They overcame challenging situations through interacting and mixing with people at the meso level. Some - but not so many - navigated the available state support at the macro level. Thus, making sure that the obtained linguistic repertoires meet their exact needs across their immediate and broader sociocultural contexts. The use of English language upon arrival in Portugal until they had access to language learning resources also served as a coping strategy for Ghanaian migrants.

## **5.8 Transnational parenting practices and gender considerations**

This section presents discussions on transnational family practices, virtual parenting as a way of parenting across borders, and also gender considerations in transnational parenting experiences. Transnational families thrive on and are made possible through virtual parenting, i.e. whose practices include frequent communication, sending of remittances and engaging in transnational parenting. Having discussed the concept of transnationalism in the contextualization chapter and theoretical framework (3.3), the study explored the various practices the participants undertake to keep/sustain close relationships with their families, a situation Lima (2010) describes as being parents here and there at the same time. Participants shared their experiences on the mechanisms they use in keeping their family ties strong despite the distance. The mentioned practices include constant communication with their families in Ghana and sending of remittances for their upkeep back home aimed at promoting transnational family relationships and virtual parenting. This section further discusses the gender aspect of transnational parenting, focusing on the experiences of participants in dealing with their own feelings and societal expectations of providing care for their children.

### 5.8.1 Communication and virtual parenting within transnational families

During the study, communication with the help of technology was seen to be an important factor in the participants' transnational lives. They relied on mobile phone applications providing services including texting, audio and video calling to connect with their families in their country of origin. Frequent communication helps strengthen family ties even when participants are not able to be present in Ghana, because thanks to them the parents can be present in their children's lives daily, and even momentarily. They shared their experiences as follows:

I make calls anytime I get the opportunity to reach them. Thanks to video calls on WhatsApp, I can see their faces and it gives me comfort. They have grown so beautifully.  
*(Eno, Female, 41)*

Oh yes, we communicate a lot. We hear from each other almost every day. We update each other based on what is going on, and this is on a daily basis. The only part I am missing is the physical contact with the family.  
*(Kojo, Male, 37)*

We chat sometimes on the phone and do WhatsApp video calls as well. Many times we talk and we keep in touch regularly. I have not seen them physically for 23 years now.  
*(Akwesi, Male, 57)*

Like I said earlier, I was with them in China until they went to Ghana, and I still get in touch with them every day. Everything is okay. [...] Now the major thing I do is to communicate with them often. Aside from that, I do not have a major role .  
*(Adomanko, Male, 38)*

My son's father and I are separated but we are on good cordial terms, so we talk from time to time, and he is a wonderful father and takes good care of my son. My son is always happy when I talk to him, and we communicate a lot - like three times a week.  
*(Esi, Female, 31)*

Virtual parenting among transnational families is made possible due to the advancement in the means of communication. This refers to the situation where frequent contact or communication enables parents to be psychologically and virtually present for their children to reinforce family ties. Even though this helps in parenting from afar, participants shared their experiences of virtual parenting and admitted it was not the same as physical presence and participation, despite the frequent communication and remittances for childcare. They still have feelings of guilt and non-contentment of not being physically present to raise their children. In their own words, they expressed their thoughts about virtual parenting as follows:

It won't be the same as I was in Ghana: in that situation, I am present and can supervise everything that goes on, but now I am here and can only communicate on the phone. With internet data cost and connectivity challenges in Ghana, and my busy work schedules here, it's hard to perform those responsibilities exactly how I did when I was in Ghana. Parenting is never the same, I am here, and she is there, I can't have total control over raising my daughter.  
*(Emman, Male, 38)*

Trying to be a parent from abroad is different, I have missed out on many important events in their lives because I am here. It's hard because sometimes when I am sad and lonely, I wish they were here, I feel bad for being away this long, but it is not my fault,



things just did not go well as I planned [...] I am working to save money so I can visit by Christmas this year. 11 years is a long time.

*(Eno, Female, 31)*

Even though research has shown that the virtual parenting is unable to replace physical presence (Carling et al., 2011), it reduces the feelings of neglect children may feel for growing up without one or both parents, as well as the pain and guilt parents may feel as it allows the migrant to be present in the important decisive moments and to accompany their children day-to-day. Besides this, the active use of new technologies allows the transnational parents to gain time for collecting the funds and documentation to prepare their family reunification, should they desire it. In this way, virtual parenting leads to more pondered, consolidated and conscientious family reunification decisions. However, the psychological burden in terms of experiencing emotions such as concern, anxiety, and depression still remains among transnational parents, though in varying levels between mothers and fathers (Dreby, 2006).

### 5.8.2 The role of remittances in transnational parenting

The decision of migrants to send remittances to countries of origin may be an independent decision or as a response to bargaining agreements between families or individuals during the migration decision-making process. As mentioned in the analytical framework of the study in chapter three (3.2.2), these decisions are made on the meso level among the family members who stay behind and migrants, after discussing the cost and benefits of an individual's migration to the family, and also as a family strategy to improve their life's situations. Individuals may be obliged to send money as their responsibility to take care of other members of the family or to replace resources invested in their migratory journeys. On the part of transnational parents, these monies and gifts are meant to provide care for children and partners that stayed behind to fulfil their part of the bargain for being absent in their lives.

The practice of sending remittances to their families in Ghana was common among participants, as a way of performing their transnational responsibilities. Thanks to the availability of many money-sending applications and services, it is easier for participants to send money to their families back in Ghana as fulfilment of their responsibilities. Not only limited to the nuclear family but including the extended family for some, participants highlighted how sending money home continually affirmed how responsible they were to their roles as caregivers or breadwinners for their families. They shared how they undertake their expected caretaking responsibilities as below:

I am very responsible as I take care of them financially, I make sure I send them money every month after I am paid from my work. I do everything well.

*(Emman, Male, 38)*

I totally provide everything for them. I am still the breadwinner for my family. Accommodation, feeding, everything. Once I receive my salary every month, I send them their money too, and even sometimes when an emergency comes up.

*(Kojo, Male, 37)*

Usually, they make demands when we chat, so in a monetary aspect, I send them some money through Western Union and Ghana Commercial Bank to cater for their needs. I send money often to make sure their needs are taken care of. You can bear witness to the fact that standard of living in Africa is not easy and we depend on each other for support in a family. So, we practice the extended family system a lot in Africa. We have a good bond and there is no problem between us as a big family, and equally support my nieces and nephews through school.

*(Akwesi, Male, 57)*

Thanks be to God that I am still able to work and support my family back in Ghana all these years [...] I send them money regularly through western union. I send money for their fees and school upkeep. Sometimes I send things through people going to Ghana, since I haven't been able to visit since 2009.

*(Esi, Female, 31)*

In summary, remittances play an important role in sustaining transnational family life. The ability of participants to send money and material gifts to their families that stayed behind in Ghana serves as compensation for the absence in their lives and also to improve their living situation.

### 5.8.3 Motherhood and fatherhood experiences in transnational parenting

Exploring the experiences of transnational mothers in the study focused on the two female participants in comparison to their male counterparts, on how they handled their parenting roles as mothers or fathers across borders. Gender considerations in transnational parenting, as discussed in the theoretical chapter with research works by Dreby (2006), Carling et al. (2012) and Haagsman (2015), center on the feelings and expectations of mothers to continue providing care for their children after migration, even though society does not appear to have similar expectations for fathers. The decisions of mothers to migrate usually requires putting in place additional caregiving arrangements, even when the children's fathers stay behind. This corresponds to meso level decision-making consideration, as presented in the analytical framework, where the forms of family structure available to these two female participants played an important role in their decisions to migrate in terms of caregiving arrangements for the children staying behind.

The male participants, on the other hand, did not appear to worry much about care arrangements as their partners (wives) were available to take care of their children in all the cases. They did not mention any expectations to perform emotional caregiving roles, except to provide for the needs of their families. The female participants only share how the separation is affecting them emotionally.

Esi's experiences with regards to societal expectations and feelings about her role as a mother to provide care for her 6-year old son in Ghana, and later leaving him behind to study in Portugal was interesting. This is because her gender role expectations dilemma pre-dated her migration experience and still continues when she is a transnational mother. She mentioned some ways society expected her to continue providing care for her child, especially when she separated from her partner and had to delegate care giving roles to the father even while she was in Ghana, due to economic challenges and later her decision to study abroad.

Some people in her neighborhood raised concerns about her decision to live without her son throughout the weekdays and having access to him only on weekends without knowing her challenges that had led to that decision. This highlights the notion of the mother being the primary caregiver and not the father, and how mothers have to explain themselves when the situation is the other way around. The family structure available to her and ex-partner also made it possible to have this caregiving arrangement, and subsequently her decision for migration. Her son's paternal grandparents had the resources and time to help raise the child, thus made it easier for her to be the secondary caregiver. She shares:

I had a very busy work schedule as I spent longer time on film sets, and his father had taken a break off work at that time, so it was convenient that he stayed with him [our son] while I had him over the weekend. My son's grandparents (ex-partner parents) owned a bigger house in the city, while I rented a single room after the separation, so it was comfortable for him to stay in his father's house. His grandmother helped a lot and

it has been the same since I left, except that I can't have him over on the weekends. I was not a good place to take care of him back then, and my family was in the Ashanti region, far from the city to help me raise him.

*(Esi, Female, 31)*

In her decision to migrate, though the secondary caregiver, she had to engage in a meso level decision making process with her ex-partner and family members. She bargained with her son's father about what her responsibilities as a transnational mother would be, especially considering the age of child before mother's migration, what roles her family would play in raising the son and the efforts she would make to visit him.

I told my son's father when I applied and got admission, but he did not have much of a problem as I explained I will still support financially. I also arranged with my family (mother and big brother) to pick him up for vacations. I also promised to go home in the summer to visit him. They were all understanding and supportive.

*(Esi, Female, 31)*

Esi had been separated from her son for two years since she arrived to pursue her MA in filmmaking in 2018 in Lisbon. She however plans on reuniting with him and shares her experience as a transnational mother, dealing with sad emotions. She mentions how people undermine her role as a mother because she travelled without her son, and how expectations do not change even when mothers migrate. Hoping to end all misunderstandings about her role as a mother, she is presently working to reunite with her son. She shares:

I am a single mother and it has not been easy to have physical contact with my son. What gives me joy and the peace of mind I have is knowing his father is also a wonderful man, and he takes a very good care of him in my absence. He sounds very happy anytime I talk to him, so it helps even though it is not easy.

I cannot do things every day for him like I would when I was in Ghana, so talking to him frequently and sending him money for his needs are the major roles I play. I am his mother and it's expected that he spends more time with me, but I am working on that.

I know people don't understand and assume I do not care about my son, but I really do care about him. That is why I need to work to bring him here, so they stop talking, yet they don't know the roles I play in raising him. I send his father money every month. I am really trying but I guess it is not enough. I miss him and cannot wait to live with him in Portugal.

*(Esi, Female, 31)*

Eno, on the other hand, had been separated from her twin children for eleven years since she migrated from Ghana, and had not been able to visit them due to regularization challenges. She shares emotions about missing out on many events in their lives due to her absence in Ghana. She mentions how her older sister and parents stepped in to take over her caregiving roles in her absence, with support from the children's father, reduced the negative feelings she had for being absent for a long time, and only hopes her children understand her decision.

I do my part of providing their needs, in addition to their father and my parents and sister's effort, I am forever grateful to them for raising the children well up till now. For now, all I do is to send some money, make calls anytime I get the opportunity to reach them. [...] I can see their faces and it gives me comfort. They have grown so beautifully.

*(Eno, Female, 41)*

The fathers, however, did not mention feelings and emotions but only mentioned their financial responsibility and communication as part of their transnational parenting experiences. In the

case of Kojo, rather than explicitly mentioning emotions, he mentioned the absence of physical contact as the only thing he missed out in his virtual parenting. He said:

Not all but I try to perform most of my responsibilities. The only part I am missing is the physical contact with the family. Aside from this, I render every single obligation and responsibility as a father to the family a hundred percent.

*(Kojo, male, 37)*

It is apparent from the discussions how societal expectations of a mother's caregiving role play into the feelings and emotions of the female participants about leaving their children in Ghana. It also shows how the different family structures available to migrants, especially women in Ghana, play important roles in the decision of some mothers to migrate while leaving their children behind. This meso level decision takes into consideration who is available to provide care in the absence of the mothers. From the excerpts above, one can argue that the focus on transnational mother's experiences in research (presented in the theoretical chapter, section 3.3.2) is biased towards the nuclear family model in which biological parents and children reside together, without giving much relevance to the roles played by extended family members in the situation where a different form of family structure exists, in cases of single parenting or separated couples. Alternative care for children from these families is usually provided by members of the extended families when their mothers decide to migrate. In addition, I placed more emphasis on exploring the emotions of the female participants than the men, even though it was not intentional. This is because the women mentioned these emotions on their own before I took the opportunity to inquire further into their experiences.

## **5.9 Future plans and aspirations of migrants**

Migrant's future plans and aspirations refer to the purposeful constructions on how participants want their future to evolve overtime. This section discusses the plans of participants, including their plans of family reunification and considerations about making Portugal their future home.

### **5.9.1 Plans of family reunification and its challenges**

Family reunification refers to the process where family members join other members who have the legal permit to live in a destination country. The right to family reunification is not absolute and can be limited in accordance to national law and international standards conditional on fulfilling requirements to access this right. The participants expressed their interests and preparation towards reuniting with their families. While some had begun the process awaiting response and appointment days, others were yet to begin the process. They recognize their right to live together as important to family and migrant life.

I had already started the process, but I had some more documents to add, which I recently received from Ghana. However, I could not go directly because of the corona restrictions, but I called the office to inform them I have the documents ready. I was told to post them because they are still working, and they will give feedback accordingly once the process is completed. I have done exactly as I was instructed, so I am waiting.

*(Kojo, Male, 37)*

Yes, I think it's better to live together as a family 100%. I am now about to start the process, I have been gathering the documents first. The documents are not too much and don't seem complicated at all, it is okay. Once I follow the SEF requirements, I can do it all by myself.

*(Emman, Male, 38).*

I have always wanted my son to come, at least for a visit, so I have plans of getting him a residence card so he can visit, and eventually move him to live with me.

*(Esi, Female, 31)*

Even though some participants had intended to reunite with their families, they encountered some challenges shattering their dreams, due to the complicated regularization processes and to providing documents required for the reunification process. Migrants' aspirations while in their country of origin may change over time when they encounter the realities in the countries of destination. Things may not always go as planned, and these circumstances end up altering the hopes and aspirations they had previously set. Akwesi and Eno's experiences of migration are important to the study as they present an opportunity to analyze the idea of the hope of migrants achieving their plans before migration, and how these plans change during the course of their journeys. Their accounts highlight how failed expectations of having easy access to the regularization process and financial resources affected their transnational lives and chances of reunification.

Eno and Akwesi explain how they missed out on the chance to reunite with their children, as they are now above the age that permits them to join them as dependent family members. This delay was a result of their previous lack of access to regularization processes and inadequate financial resources to meet reunification procedures at the time when their children qualified (until 18 years) for family reunification. Eno however hopes the children will be able to visit her in Portugal, and also frequent her visits to Ghana now that she has legal residence in Portugal. Akwesi, on the other hand, had regularized his stay in Portugal a few years back, but inadequate financial resources to meet reunification procedures made him give up the idea of reuniting with his family. They shared in their own words:

If I said I did not have this plan, I would be lying. I always had this plan when I was leaving Ghana, I was hoping I could work and get papers so my children would join me. Things did not work out that way, till I came to Lisbon. Even here, I recently got my permit, that is why it didn't happen.... Now, I am not sure I will apply for reunification because they are adults now, almost graduating as trained teachers, so I will wish that they will rather visit me sometime.

*(Eno, Female, 41)*

For what I know, you should have a working contract, an apartment, should be working, and at least should have an amount of 8,000 to 10,000 euros in your account. Again, you should earn about 1,000 euros a month. This can at least help you cater for the person when he/she comes. But with all these requirements about the finances and total commitment to take care of them, and considering how much I make every month, I don't have that ability to undertake that responsibility.

Now my son is 26 years and considered an adult. He does not qualify to come as someone I have to take care of. I think it is a good opportunity for him to stay and further his school, have a good job in Ghana, and also help take care of his mother.

*(Akwesi, Male, 57)*

Past experiences of settling in Portugal and the challenges from immigration laws further changed the minds of some participants about reuniting and settling in Portugal with their families. While it is a possibility to reunite with their families, Akwesi thinks it is necessary now, and wishes for his wife to stay in Ghana, because from his experience he believes travelling for greener pastures does not always work out as planned. He says:

Coming to Europe to be a casual worker is not easy. It is even more difficult if you have no or low-level education, finding a job and settling in well is very challenging. Even though now I am independent, have my documentation and can bring them, it is not easy for me, and I believe it will be for their own good to stay in Ghana and take the opportunities there.

No, I prefer my wife to stay back home to feel free and less stressed to handle things back home rather than bringing her to Portugal to go through the stressful life. She will have to be free. If I had that opportunity, travelling might not have been an option. I would have stayed home and helped my family. I will not advise any family member with such opportunities to travel here to stay. Life is hard here. And I don't have any plans of reuniting with my family yet.

*(Akwesi, Male, 57)*

Adomanko, on the other hand, was previously staying with his family (wife and daughter) in China. While trying to migrate with his family for studies in Portugal, he experienced some challenges with visa processing for the rest of his family. The challenge was due to lack of clarity on his part about the available alternatives to family reunification for his case. He shared how he and his wife had successfully gained admission in universities in Lisbon and Porto. Adomanko's study visa was approved while his wife's study visa was refused, leading to the separation of the family in China, with him coming to Lisbon and his wife and daughter returning to Ghana. He still has plans of living together with his family despite the failed attempt of studying together with his wife in Portugal as an alternative to family application. He shares the intent of applying for the reunification process while expressing his grievances:

I even had that plan in China, before I came. But unfortunately, my wife, who also wanted to pursue a Masters in Porto University, was refused a visa on the grounds that since we are a family, we needed to apply for a reunification visa and not a study permit. This was quite unfortunate because my main motive initially was for family reunification but using school as an alternative, but she was refused a visa. She could not come with me but had to return to Ghana.

Now I've received a message from the embassy stating that I should apply through the proper channel, which is family reunification. Meanwhile, if I had known this was the case, I'm sure she could have gotten the visa and would be here with me now. [...] Because I have all the required documents which I could use to apply for family reunification, financial statements and certificates.

For now, that's the only option I have, so if things settle down after the pandemic, I will consider the process and do but I will try regardless because it looks like the only viable way to reunite with my family here. Things happened contrary to my plan, if not I would have finished this process already.

*(Adomanko, Male, 38)*

In summary, while the desire and plans of some participants to reunify with their families in Portugal have been shattered by delayed access to residence permits and family reunification legislation age limitations, some of them are also in the process of bringing their family members to live with them. This shows that the right to live with one's family in a destination country is not without challenges because the process can be hindered by macro level policies and lack of financial resources to fulfil the requirements in the legislation.

### **5.9.2 Making Portugal their future home**

In the course of the study, one recurrent topic in relation to the future plans and aspirations of participants was the question of where they envisioned themselves in the future, in about 10 years' time. This question attracted answers which explored the extent of the participants' (dis)satisfaction with their stay in Portugal, which influenced their decisions to make Portugal their future home or migrate to other countries. Their statements were based on their experiences of the Portuguese policies for migrants, and how they perceived it to be friendly

and compatible with their life goals. These experiences include benefitting from regularization laws, reunification laws and ultimately Portuguese citizenship for one participant.

Some participants said:

Portugal has received me so well that I don't intend going anywhere, I am very sure I will be here with my family. [...] I wish to reunite with my family in Portugal since I have a better life here. In about 10 years, I hope to be well settled with my family in the long term. Portugal is where I would want us to live here. I like it here, Portugal is my new home and I don't have any problem staying here [...] for this place, their laws and attitude towards migrants is 100% perfect. Because you won't find many migrant friendly laws like this in many European countries like they have here in Portugal. Portugal is the best.

*(Emman, Male, 38)*

Oh, if by God's grace they are able to join me here, in 10 years I wish to be living with my family here in Portugal, well settled and living well. Even though I can't make a definite vision of where I will live, if it is the will of God, all my dreams will come true.

*(Kojo, Male, 37)*

In the future, I want to be able to get a better job, live in a better place and have the ability to let my family visit here too. [...] I think the laws here are a bit flexible compared to Norway, I lived here for a long time without issues even without documents, I have come to love Portugal, I think I will be here for a long time, things will get better for me in the future, I believe.

*(Eno, Female, 41)*

I have decided to work after school, and I am positive that once I provide the needed documents and go through the process it shall be fine [...] in the next ten years, I would like to settle somewhere in Europe, preferably Portugal, with my son and be able to work. I will find a partner to settle down with, and as I like to be happy, enjoy the rest of my life happily.

*(Esi, Female, 31)*

I met my wife in Braga while I was away working with my former company in 2009. She was an acquaintance [...] After we married, we applied for reunification and I got my residence permit too. After 3 years, I wrote the language certificate exams after I enrolled at the Luso language school, it is a private language school, to get my Portuguese citizenship.

*(Mintah, Male, 40)*

As many participants expressed interest in making Portugal their future home, one participant, Adomanko, was not sure of the idea of living in Portugal for long. Recounting his experience with the Portuguese visa and consular services, and also the economic situation of the country, he did not see himself or his family settling there for a long time. He did rather consider better opportunities back in Ghana or North America.

Maybe, I will get it, maybe they will be living here, or they will come and visit me and go back. Like I said, next year hopefully, let's see what happens. Because from what I have gathered, and the experience I have had, I am not sure I will want to live here for a longer period. Staying here will be difficult.

The kind of job and the salary I will expect, I don't think I will land some here [...]. After school I will go back home or move to another county. Currently, I only envision that after school or next year, I may be moving to some other country, maybe Canada. Not

Europe, but somewhere in North America. Yeah, that's why I said they will come for visits and go back.

*(Adomanko, Male, 38)*

Macro level policies for migrant's integration have contributed to the participants' interest in staying in Portugal and making it their future home. Participants expressed interest in living in Portugal for a long time due to favorable living conditions and laws for migrants, which will help in achieving their future aspirations. One participant, however, shared a different opinion about making Portugal his future due to a bad experience with the Portuguese embassy in China, the economic opportunities and low wages - all reasons why he would prefer other destinations outside Europe over Portugal as a future home.

In conclusion, the section on future aspirations of migrants discusses how macro level policies on family reunification inform participants plans and aspirations for themselves and their families. Migrant policies, as discussed earlier under family reunification laws in the contextualization chapter, encouraged the participants to consider reuniting with their families, even though some are unable to achieve this due to personal and policy limitations. Also, the existence of migrant inclusive legislations such as article 88 regulating regularization of migrants' situation, which some participants have benefited from, further informed participants' decisions to make Portugal their future home. There was, however, an exception of a participant who had a different feeling towards making Portugal his future home.

### **5.10 Synthesis of analysis**

This chapter presented the findings and analysis of data from seven individual qualitative interviews, discussed along theoretical framework considerations and contextualization. It sought to explore resilience strategies in the migration trajectories of Ghanaian migrants in Lisbon, navigating their transnational lives and plans of reunification. It also aimed to highlight the various language learning strategies they employed to learn the Portuguese language. Findings from the study were consistent with previous studies in the field of language and transnational family studies, with specific regard to transnational parenting practices, the use of resilience to achieve success in Portuguese language learning, and their plans and aspirations of family reunification. Caught in a multiplicity of challenges during their migratory cycles, participants were able to mobilize resources within themselves and their environment to overcome these challenges while anticipating a bright future hoping to reunite with their families in Portugal as their future home.



## **6 CHAPTER SIX -SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **6.1 Introduction**

Beginning with a recap of all the findings of the chapter five of the study, this final chapter concludes the study by highlighting the implications/recommendations of the study's findings on social work practice (including the MFamily program), future research and for social policy as well.

### **6.2 Summary of findings**

This qualitative study aimed at contributing to the growing literature on Ghanaian migrants in Portugal and their families back home. This was done by exploring the resilience of Ghanaian migrants in Lisbon in their access to family reunification processes and in learning the Portuguese language. Specifically, it navigated through the lives of participants and their migratory trajectories/routes, focusing on the opportunities and challenges that characterized their journeys and their transnational lives as parents. Defining their resilience from the perspective of Estêvão et al. (2017), the study attempted to enlighten the participants' own perspective, first, what they considered as the challenges they faced; second, the strategies or resources they mobilized within themselves, among their networks and environment to get through those hard times. The study identified six main conclusions, which have proved to be relevant yet should not be generalized to reflect the experiences of all Ghanaian migrants in Portugal.

First, the findings revealed macro and meso level policies related to regularization processes and labor market opportunities for financial stability as the main challenges Ghanaian migrants faced in the application for family reunification. As one of the objectives of the study - to find out the specific challenges Ghanaian migrants faced in accessing reunification - the findings identified access to regularization as a main barrier to the reunification with their families. As one of the major requirements of the reunification law, migrants need to show a proof of residence by having legal documents that allow them to stay in Portugal, in order to sponsor the admission of their families into Portugal. With reference to how macro level policies constrain or promote migrants' decision-making processes, those who lived in irregular situations despite having always worked, were unable to access the right to family reunification until their situations were regularized. Sometimes it took many years (an average of 1 to 5 years waiting for their regularization to be solved, but in two cases considerably more (5-10 years) to process their documentation into a successful process, leading to significant delays in decision making to reunite with families in Portugal.

In addition, the labor market opportunities and wages were identified as one of the reasons accounting for the low numbers of Ghanaian reunification applications. Upon arrival in Portugal, Ghanaian migrants in this study quickly mobilized previous skills acquired in Ghana and other countries in order to access job opportunities. The participants who travelled to Portugal without appropriate residence and work documentation, had limited labor options available to them, and some of these jobs are characterized by considerably low wages. Preparation towards fulfilling reunification requirements includes adequate financial resources,

which takes time for some migrants to achieve, accounting for the delay in applications even after they have secured their resident permits. The study found instances where participants mentioned how family members and friends had moved to other European countries after regularizing their stay. While some participants moved from other European countries to regularize their stay in Portugal, others intend to move to countries with better economies because of low wages in Portugal. Notwithstanding this, some participants prefer stability with the laws in Portugal even if wages are lower. In some of these situations, family reunification may not happen in Portugal as migrants as individuals do not think they will be able to meet the financial requirements while staying in the Portuguese labor market.

In an attempt to explore how participants felt about Portugal's reunification law, the study found out that migrants perceived the requirements of law to be flexible. The Ghanaian migrant participants have generally found Portugal's family reunification law for Third Country Nationals and its requirements quite flexible, and not a reason that accounts for their low number in the applications. This perception was consistent with all participants as they reiterated the requirements for proof of subsistence, relation, accommodation, work and proof of residence, without the need for pre-entry language test made the law flexible enough for them to access these rights. However, they need to pass the language test themselves in order to secure a permanent residence permit or apply for the Portuguese citizenship. Even though the family reunification procedure itself is not considered so problematic, the financial requirements are indeed harder to achieve because the available wages are low, and the regularization process takes a lot of time to be completed in Portugal.

Second, the study has found the Ghanaian migrants to engage in transnational practices as a resilience strategy while they worked on the chances of reunification with their families. Regular communication with their families through the help of technologies enabled them to keep strong ties with their families in Ghana. As discussed in the contextualization chapter (2.6), this finding was consistent with Wellman's (2002) assertion that communication with families that stayed behind in countries of origin provides emotional support for migrants while they are separated from them. Through constant communication with their children, they are able to continue performing their parental responsibilities across borders through virtual parenting, a phenomenon which Carling et al. (2012) believes to reduce the level of guilt parents may feel for being absent in the lives of their children, and also makes it possible to be present psychologically in children's lifeworlds. Not least important, sending remittances to families back home helps provide their family needs and serves the purpose of continuous parental role performance, which is important to sustaining ties with families while migrants work in countries of destination to access family reunification options. With these transnational practices, participants have sustained their family ties while they work on reunification processes in Portugal.

Thirdly, the study also revealed the participants' perception about Portugal's migration policy on regularization as favorable. Having experienced the reality of the regularization policy in the country, the participants believe Portuguese migration policies to be helpful in advancing their future aspirations of making it the future home for themselves and their families. The friendly law they refer to is article 88-2 of the Immigration Act which grants government's humanitarian and inclusive regularization for migrants who are undocumented and are unable to show proof of legal entrance into the country. This is implemented by waiving the proof of legal entry requirement if migrants fulfil the other requirements under the said article. The requirements include having a working contract, a proof of payment of tax for the last twelve (12) months before application, and adequate money for cost of living for the duration of application. With some of the participants (4) being beneficiaries of this process, they attested to the generosity of the law, which has granted them access to regularization and the chances

of reunification with their families. The assertion on the permitting nature of this article does not contradict the challenges related to accessing family reunification Law no. 29/2012. Despite its relatively permissive nature, article 88-2 has its own shortcomings. The problem about migrants regularizing their stay usually stems from challenges of raising adequate funds to fulfil the tax obligation requirements, and the long duration in processing requests for regularization despite the waiver of proof of legal entry requirement.

Furthermore, and fourth, the findings have revealed that the support that participants received from their networks had played instrumental roles in their migratory journeys. Participants' family networks and informal networks including friends and acquaintances had contributed to their migratory stories through the information flow that facilitated initial migration decisions, access to accommodation, employment and regularization opportunities. They also provided emotional support through the company they shared and by introducing migrants to acquaintances who could help in advancing their plans. With reference to Granovetter's concept of weak and strong ties, the findings demonstrated how sometimes strong ties (family and old acquaintances) were not enough to help migrants achieve their aspirations, requiring the activation of weak ties (new friends/ networks made through old acquaintances) in helping to complete the impact of strong ties. These forms of support according to Goldin et al. (2011) helped allay the fears and anxieties of migration to new destinations, as well as the settling in processes of migration.

The fifth finding highlights how the different family structures of participants have influenced participants' decisions on their migratory journeys, as well as the roles they play in preserving family ties in the event of migration while waiting for reunification. The participants' decision making was influenced by the type of family structure (nuclear and extended families, single/co-parenting) available to them in regard to who is available to provide care for their children in their absence. With support from ex-partners, and the extended and nuclear families, participants were able to maintain relationships with their families across space and time while waiting for reunification. Also, the practice of parenting across borders (further focus on the experiences of transnational mothers) and family reunification possibilities of migrants was explored in the study. The transnational parenting experiences of the two female participants were much different from those of the five male ones. While the women expressed emotions of sadness for leaving their children behind, as well as the burden of continued expectations to perform roles of motherhood even from abroad, the male participants did not explicitly mention emotions about the separation from their families. They only narrated/highlighted the performance of their breadwinner responsibility. This may have been attributed to the family structures they had; the males had their partners providing care for their children, while the women were both separated from their partners with alternative care arrangements from their extended family and ex-partners. These outcomes can also be attributed to the cultural stereotypes - both in terms of whose job it is perceived to take care for other family members (especially the elderly and minors) and in terms of expressing any kind of emotion to a woman-researcher in a context of a research interview (Solovova, 2020, personal communication). Further, reflecting on my position as a female interviewer, I focused more on exploring the emotions of my female participants than the male participants, hence, the lack of information in this regard.

Last but not least, the findings have highlighted the demonstration of individual strengths to overcome language and communication barriers in Portugal. Demonstrating their resilience in the face of the challenge of language and communication barriers, the participants adopted individual sociocultural practices to learn the Portuguese language. For the purposes of accessing labor market opportunities and mobility, as well as socialization into the Portuguese society, migrants were motivated to invest in the Portuguese language. These practices

included enrolling in language courses, relying on technology-based mobile applications, learning from colleagues at workplaces, transfer of knowledge of similar languages learnt along the migratory trajectory, and modeling new language environment within families and households to fit their learning purposes. Migrants manifested strong self-motivation to overcome this challenge. Besides this, the study found out that the use of English language at the higher level of education seemed correlated with a delay in efforts of migrant students to learn Portuguese, as they did not have an urgent need for the Portuguese language to achieve their aims. The existing state efforts on providing language courses for migrants online and offline were largely appreciated yet not accessed by most of the participants. Only one of the participants has finished a state-run language course, whereas the others resorted to their own devices. The participants who are enrolled in higher education institutions also mentioned the lack of Portuguese language orientation courses in their programs, especially because their courses are taught in English, as one of the reasons they have not learnt to speak Portuguese yet.

In summary, Ghanaians migrants' resilience in accessing family reunification and in learning Portuguese language has been demonstrated through individual adaptation skills, support from transnational families and networks, as well as flexible national migration policies that promote migrants' plans and aspirations. Even though the family reunification Law no. 29/2012 and the Article 88-2 (regularization law) are perceived by participants as flexible, migrants have challenges accessing these policies, mainly due to financial constraints and longer duration for processing applications in the latter law. Additionally, participants' family structures and gender issues have impacts on their migration decision-making, expectations of transnational parenting and possibilities of family reunification.

### **6.3 Implications and recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following implications and recommendations can be suggested for social work education and practice, policy and practice and future research.

#### **6.3.1 Implications for social work practice -MFamily**

This study on family reunification fits the frame of social work with families and children because of its focus on family as a fundamental aim of social work practice, especially in the area of children and family welfare. It contributes to the body of knowledge that explores the need to understand the process of family reunification as a complex phenomenon that can preserve or break down families. The study therefore implores social workers at the macro level practice to continually advocate for flexible policies on family reunification laws, and also in translating laws and policies into meaningful implementations to reduce family separations for long periods of time. Migrants suffer the consequences of strict bureaucratic processes and restrictions in accessing reunification visas as it becomes hard for them to reunite with families back home. In some cases when migrants are unable to visit countries of origin, they may not see their families for long periods of time (over 10 years).

Also, the study highlights the important theoretical concept of resilience among migrants. In the study, resilience was conceptualized to focus on the person-in-environment perspective where an individual's resilience was measured not only by strengths inherent in them but also to include the roles of people within their environment and network. This is an important aspect of social work practice at the meso and micro level as social workers are continually advised to place emphasis on the role of social environment and macro structures possibilities in people's efforts to overcome adversities or challenging moments.

Finally, the study is relevant to the aims of the MFamily program as it contributes to knowledge about different family structures and the roles they play in preserving family ties in the event

of migration. The distinctive roles played by family members that stay behind as well as migrants through their transnational practices highlight the diverse ways of doing and displaying families (Finch, 2007).

### **6.3.2 Implications for policy and practice**

Owing to this study's findings about the little numbers of Ghanaian migrants that have accessed language learning resources in Portugal, and the probable reasons for its low patronage for this study participants, policy makers in charge of designing these programs should consider reforming the language learning module implementation strategy. The reforms should consider the language needs of migrants to design courses by tailoring modules to meet specific learners' skills and background, busy work schedules, family commitments and responsibilities, and movements of many migrants. This will be helpful in translating intents of language resources for foreigners from inclusive rhetoric to achievable substantial results, as many previous researchers have been calling attention continuously. Despite the previous work done, changes are still to come.

Furthermore, the recent amendment to the reunification Law no. 29/2012 may leave the framework described for TCNs practically untouched in terms of main requirements. With the expectation that no major changes may occur in the administrative practice of the law discussed in the chapter two of the study, it will be in the best interest of migrants if policy makers review the low age limit of dependent children (18 years) eligible for family reunification or harmonize it as same age limit (21 years) as in the case of EU/EFTA citizens. This will enable migrants who take longer periods to regularize their stay or gather documentation for application and enjoy the right to live with their families without age restrictions even though delayed reunification. Further, a review of the high charges to obtain and authenticate required documentation, as well as SEF's application fees, will go a long way to reduce the financial constraints for the application of resident permits or family reunification. In addition, the financial resources demanded as proof of subsistence do not respect the right for all citizens to live with their family independently from their nationality and their economic resources.

### **6.3.3 Future research**

The results of this study may also have implications for future research in the area of migration. First, empirical studies should be undertaken to explore the role of family presence in promoting or hindering migrant's integration processes in countries of destination. Future studies can investigate the consequences of delays of family reunification on migrants' long-term integration outcomes, including access to wages, employment, and language proficiency in the Portuguese context. Even though studies have been done for other nationalities on the integration outcomes of both primary migrants and families who reunite in destination countries, much research has to be done among Ghanaian migrants in Portugal. This will be a good opportunity to explore this aspect of family reunification.

Future research can also explore the effect of age of arrival on the integration outcomes of Ghanaian children who have reunited with their families in Portugal. While the current study focused on adults and other projects on young people (those who have migrated, were born abroad, or remained in the country of origin) to understand their migration experiences as well their mobility patterns, a further study on age of reunification could be an opportunity to justify why it is important to avoid long delays in reunification. This will contribute to research on the integration predictions of migrant children in Europe. It will be an opportunity to add up to the limited knowledge and literature on Ghanaian migrants in Portugal as well as in migration studies.

Methodologically, digital ethnography and telephone interviews have proven to be useful as alternative data collection methods in times of restrictions on physical contacts with study participants. These options were used in place of face-to-face interviews with participants and community observation for the study due to the limitations placed on physical contact by the Covid-19 restrictions. They can be implemented as a good practice in conducting research during pandemics. Even though these methods have limitations of missing relevant information that can be gathered from the non-verbal communication patterns from researcher's observation notes, and possible challenges from transmission and connectivity, they were helpful in aiding the continuity of the research process.

Future studies can investigate to see whether the use of English language as a medium of instruction for foreign students can in fact delay their interest and introduction to the Portuguese language. This would be relevant in showing the growing role of English language in everyday communication in Portugal as one of the consequences of globalization processes. Further, future research that observes the modification of family language practices in marriages between persons of different cultures will be an interesting area to explore.

## REFERENCES

- Abend, G., (2008) 'The meaning of theory', *Sociological theory*, 26(2), pp.173-199.
- Action Plan for immigrant integration, (2010 - 2013) . Accessed on 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2020 from [https://www.acm.gov.pt/documents/10181/222357/PII\\_2010\\_2013\\_ing.pdf/2de54891-737b-4263-ba2c-16fb8538ba60](https://www.acm.gov.pt/documents/10181/222357/PII_2010_2013_ing.pdf/2de54891-737b-4263-ba2c-16fb8538ba60)
- Alto Comissariado para as Migrações, ACM, (2020). COVID-19: Government grants residence to immigrants and asylum seekers. Accessed on 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2020 from <https://www.acm.gov.pt/-/covid-19-governo-regulariza-imigrantes-e-requerentes-de-asilo>
- Ahinful, G., Boateng, F. and Oppong-Boakye, P., (2013) 'Remittances from abroad: The Ghanaian household perspective', *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 4(1).
- Åkesson, L., (2009) 'Remittances and inequality in Cape Verde: the impact of changing family organization', *Global networks*, 9(3), pp.381-398.
- Alto Comissariado Para Migracoes, (2020) 'PPT Program - Portuguese for AI'. Accessed on 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2020 from <https://www.acm.gov.pt/-/programa-ppt-portugues-para-todos>
- Annim, S.K., Awusabo-Asare, K. and Amo-Adjei, J., (2015) 'Household nucleation, dependency and child health outcomes in Ghana', *Journal of biosocial science*, 47(5), p.565. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021932014000340>
- Awumbila, M., Manuh, T., Quartey, P., Addoquaye T., and Antwi Bosiakoh, (2013). MIGRATION COUNTRY PAPER (GHANA).
- Baganha, M.I.( 2005) Immigration Policy: The regulation of flows” Política de Imigração: A Regulação dos Fluxos”, *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*, 73: 29– 44 (in Portuguese).
- Beacco, J., Krumm, H., Little, D. and Thalgott, P. 92017). The Linguistic Integration of Migrants. Council of Europe, published by Walter de Gruyter GmbH, Berlin/Boston The book is published with open access at [www.degruyter.com](http://www.degruyter.com)
- Bede, L., 2016. Family reunification-Do policies tell the whole story? The case of Ghanaian migrant parents in the UK and Netherlands.
- Beenstock, M. (1996). The Acquisition of Language Skills by Immigrants: The Case of Hebrew in Israel. First published: January 1996. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2435.1996.tb00178.x>
- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) 'Using thematic analysis in psychology', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77-101.
- Bryman, Alan (2012) 'Social Research Methods', Oxford: *Oxford University Press*. 550 p.
- Budal, A. (2018) 'Paperless reality: Transnational parenthood and undocumented Nepalese in Portugal', Master Dissertation submitted for European Master's in Social Work with Families

and Children, ISCTE-IUL, Lisbon, Portugal. [https://repositorio.iscte-iul.pt/bitstream/10071/17679/1/master\\_aashima\\_budal.pdf](https://repositorio.iscte-iul.pt/bitstream/10071/17679/1/master_aashima_budal.pdf)

Caarls, K. and Mazzucato, V., (2016) 'Transnational relationships and reunification: Ghanaian couples between Ghana and Europe', *Demographic Research*, 34, pp.587-614.

Cabral, S., and Duarte, C., (2011). Immigrants in the Portuguese labour market. Economic Bulletin and Financial Stability Report Articles.

Carling, J., Menjivar, C. and Schmalzbauer, L. (2012) 'Central Themes in the Study of Transnational Parenthood', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 38 (2), 191-217

Castañeda, E., and Buck, L. (2011). Remittances, transnational parenting, and the children left behind: Economic and psychological implications. *The Latin Americanist*, 55(4), 85-110.

Caulfield, J. (2019) 'How to do Thematic Analysis'. Accessed on 18<sup>th</sup> April, 2020 from <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/thematic-analysis/>

Chiswick, B. (1991) 'Reading and Earnings Among Low-Skilled Immigrants', *Journal of Labor Economics*, 9(2): 149– 170

Chiswick, B.R (2008) 'The Economics of Language: An Introduction and Overview', *Discussion Paper No. 3568*, University of Illinois at Chicago and IZA.

Chiswick, B.R., Lee, Y.L. and Miller, P.W., 2005. Family matters: the role of the family in immigrants' destination language acquisition. *Journal of Population Economics*, 18(4), pp.631-647.

Cholewinski, R. (2002) 'Family Reunification and Conditions Placed on Family Members: Dismantling a Fundamental Human Right', *European Journal of Migration and Law* 4: 271– 290.

Chukwuma, A., Orji, A. and Onodugo, V. (2017) 'Migration motivation, migrant characteristics and migration outcomes in Nigeria', *Evidence from survey data*. 14. 11-27.

Cogo, D. (2017) 'Communication, migration and gender: transnational families, activisms and ICT uses', *Intercom: Brazilian Journal of Communication Sciences Print version ISSN 1809-5844 On-line version ISSN 1980-3508 Intercom*

Cohen, A. (2011) 'Strategies in learning and using a second language', (2nd ed.). Longman.

Cohen, J. H. (2012). Migration, remittances, and household strategies. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 40, 103-114.

Council of Europe (2000) 'Project "Education for democratic citizenship". Basic concepts and core competencies for education for democratic citizenship'. Council of Europe - STE no. 163 – European Social Charter. (Revised 1996) Article 19 par. 11

Language requirements for adult migrants in Council of Europe member states (2011): Report on a survey. Accessed from <https://rm.coe.int/16802fc1d9> on 8/07/2020

Davidson, R. (2009) 'More than 'just coping': the antecedents and dynamics of resilience in a qualitative longitudinal study', *Social Policy and Society*, 8 (1), pp. 115-125.



Diário da República (2020a) ‘Portuguese Organic Law No. 2/2018’. Accessed on 27<sup>th</sup> march,2020 from <https://dre.pt/web/guest/pesquisa/-/search/115643970/details/maximized>

Diário da República Eletrónico (2020,b) - Diário da República No. 238/2007, Series I of 2007-12-11. Accessed on 20<sup>th</sup> June,2020 from <https://dre.pt/web/guest/pesquisa//search/628798/details/normal?q=1563%2F2007>

Dreby, J. (2006). Honor and Virtue: Mexican Parenting in the Transnational Context. *Gender & Society*, 20(1), 32–59. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243205282660>

Estêvão, P., Calado, A. and Capucha, L. (2017). Resilience: Moving from a “heroic” notion to a sociological concept. *Sociologia, Problemas and Practicas*, no. 85 (pp 9-25)

English Proficiency Index (2020). The EF Standard English Test is a standardized test of the English language designed for non-native English speakers. Proficiency Ranking for 2019 accessed on 12<sup>th</sup> October, 2020 from <https://www.ef.com/wwen/epi/>

European Commission Migration and home Affairs (2012) – unit b1: Immigration and Integration Ruedu Luxembourg 46 – LX46 02/178 – B1049 Brussels/Belgium, (December), 1–82.

European Commission Migration and Home Affairs. Family Reunification. Accessed on 10<sup>th</sup> February,2020 from [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/legal-migration/family-reunification\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/legal-migration/family-reunification_en)

European Migration Network. (2017). Family Reunification of Third-Country Nationals in the EU plus Norway: National Practices. Accessed on February,12,2020. Retrieved from [http://emn.ie/cat\\_publication\\_detail.jsp?clog=1&itemID=3017&t=6](http://emn.ie/cat_publication_detail.jsp?clog=1&itemID=3017&t=6)

EUR-Lex (2020). The Schengen area and cooperation. Accessed on 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2020 from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM%3A133020>

Garrett, P.M. (2016) ‘Questioning tales of ‘ordinary magic’: ‘resilience’ and neo- liberal reasoning’, *British Journal of Social Work*, 46:1909-1925. doi: 10.1093/bjsw/bcv017

Goldin, I., Cameron, G. and Blarajan, M. (2011) ‘Leaving Home: Migration decisions’, pp.97-120, *Princeton University Press*.

Goldin, I. and Reinert, K., (2012) ‘*Globalization for development: Meeting new challenges*’, OUP Oxford.

Goldin, I., Cameron, G. and Balarajan, M., (2012) ‘Exceptional people: How migration shaped our world and will define our future’, *Princeton University Press*, pp. 97-120 and 162-210

Goldstein, S. and Brooks, R.B. (eds) ‘*Handbook of resilience in children*’, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer.

González-Ferrer, A., Baizán, P. and Beauchemin, C., (2012) ‘Child-parent separations among Senegalese migrants to Europe: Migration strategies or cultural arrangements?’, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 643(1), pp.106-133.

Graham, E., Jordan, L.P., Yeoh, B.S., Lam, T., Asis, M. and Su-Kamdi, (2012) ‘Transnational families and the family nexus: perspectives of Indonesian and Filipino children left behind by migrant parent (s)’, *Environment and Planning A*, 44(4), pp.793-815. <https://doi.org/10.1068/a44445>

Granovetter, M. S. (1973) ‘The strength of weak ties’, *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 78, No. 6, pp. 1360-1380 Published by: The University of Chicago Press.

Grillo, R. and Mazzucato, V., (2008) 'Africa <math>\leftrightarrow</math> Europe: A double engagement', *Journal of ethnic and migration studies*, 34(2), pp.175-198.

Haagsman, R. K. (2015) 'Parenting across borders: effects of transnational parenting on the lives of Angolan and Nigerian migrant parents in The Netherlands' Datawyse / Universitaire Pers Maastricht.

Hammersley, M. and Atkinson, P. (2007) 'Ethnography: Principles in Practice: Ethics', Chapter 10.

Hardan, A. A, (2013) 'Language Learning Strategies: A General Overview', *Social and Behavioural Sciences* 106 (2013)1712-1726. University of Anbar, Ramadi, Iraq

Hawley, D. R., and De Haan, L. (1996) 'Toward a definition of family resilience: Integrating life-span and family perspectives', *Family Process*, 35(3), 283-298.

Heath, R. (2015) 'Researching language learning strategies' In Paltridge, Brian; Phakiti, Aek (eds.). *Research methods in applied linguistics*. Bloomsbury.

Huddleston, T., Bilgili, Ö., Joki, A., and Vankova, Z. (2015) 'Migrant Integration Policy Index 2015', Barcelona/ Brussels: CIDOB and MPG. Accessed from <http://www.mipex.eu/sites/default/files/downloads/pdf/files/custom/a4/2020.02.21-17.28.31-mipex-2015-custom-book-a4.pdf>

International Federation of Social Workers (2018) 'Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles'. retrieved from <https://www.ifsw.org/global-social-work-statement-of-ethical-principles/> on 16/01/2020

International Organisation for Migration-IOM, (2020) 'Key migratory terms. Accessed on 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2020 from <https://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms>

International Organisation for Migration-IOM, (2020). Family reunification-Global Compact Thematic paper. Accessed on 12<sup>th</sup> June,2020 from [https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/our\\_work/ODG/GCM/IOM-Thematic-Paper-Family-reunification.pdf](https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/our_work/ODG/GCM/IOM-Thematic-Paper-Family-reunification.pdf)

International Labour Organisation (ILO,1999) 'International Labour Conference, 59<sup>th</sup> Session, Migrant Workers', Report VII (1) (Geneva, at p. 27. Accessed from [http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/ilc/ilc87/r3-1b6.htm#N\\_13](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/ilc/ilc87/r3-1b6.htm#N_13)

International Labour Organisation (ILO), International, ILO Committee of Experts Report on Migrant Workers, above n. 5, at para. 473.

Isphording, I.E., (2015) What drives the language proficiency of immigrants?. *IZA World of Labor*.

Kluzer, S., Ferrari, A. and Centeno, C., 2011. Language learning by adult migrants: policy challenges and ICT responses. *Seville, Spain: Joint Research Centre Institute for Prospective Technological Studies*.

Legal guide to Immigration in Portugal for Trade Union Action. Accessed on 12<sup>th</sup> April,2020 from [http://www.cgtp.pt/images/stories/imagens/2011/07/projecto\\_imigracao/guia/Guia\\_juridico\\_ingles.pdf](http://www.cgtp.pt/images/stories/imagens/2011/07/projecto_imigracao/guia/Guia_juridico_ingles.pdf)

Ledesma, J. (2014). Conceptual frameworks and research models on resilience in leadership. *Sage Open*, 4(3), 1-8.

- Lima, A., (2010) 'Transnationalism: A new mode of immigrant integration', *The Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy*, 17.
- Maguire, M. and Delahunt, B., 2017. Doing a thematic analysis: A practical, step-by-step guide for learning and teaching scholars. *All Ireland Journal of Higher Education*, 9(3).
- Masten, A. S., Best, K. M., & Garmezy, N. (1990). Resilience and Development: Contributions from the Study of Children Who Overcome Adversity. *Development and Psychopathology*, 2, 425-444. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0954579400005812>
- Masten, A.S. (2011) 'Resilience in Children Threatened by Extreme Adversity: Frameworks for Research, Practice, And Translational Synergy', *Development and Psychopathology*, 23:493-506. Doi: 10.1017/S0954579411000198
- Masten, A. S. (2015) 'Ordinary magic: Resilience in development', New York: Guilford Publications.
- Matias, A. R., Nuno, O., and Ortiz A., (2016) 'Implementing training in Portuguese for Speakers of Other Languages in Portugal: the case of adult immigrants with little or no schooling', *Language and Intercultural Communication*, DOI: 10.1080/14708477.2015.1113754
- Mazzucato, V., (2013) 'Transnational families, research and scholarship', *The encyclopedia of global human migration*.10.1002/9781444351071.wbeghm541.
- Mero-Jaffe, I. (2011) 'Is that what I said? Interview transcript approval by participants: an aspect of ethics in qualitative research', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 10(3), 231-247.
- McCarthy, J. R. and Edwards, R. (2011) 'Transnational families' In *The SAGE Key Concepts Series: Key concepts in family studies* (pp. 188-190). London: SAGE Publications Ltd doi: 10.4135/9781446250990.n47
- Murdock, G. P. (1949) 'Social structure', Macmillan.
- Nyeadi, J.D. and Atiga, O., (2014) 'Remittances and economic growth: Empirical evidence from Ghana', *European Journal of Business and Management*, 6(25), pp.142-149.
- Obeng, S.G., (1997) 'An analysis of the linguistic situation in Ghana', *African Languages and Cultures*, 10(1), pp.63–81.
- OECD/AFDB. (2007) 'African economic outlook – Ghana country study'. Retrieved May 20, 2007 from <http://www.oecd.org.ezproxy.ub.gu.se/dataoecd/26/51/38562673.pdf>
- OECD. (2011). *International migration outlook 2011*. Paris: OECD Publishing. [https://doi-org.ezproxy.ub.gu.se/10.1787/migr\\_outlook-2011-en](https://doi-org.ezproxy.ub.gu.se/10.1787/migr_outlook-2011-en). CrossRefGoogle Scholar
- Oliveira, C. R., Cancela, J., and Fonseca, V., (2012) 'Country Report: Portugal ACIDI, IP Report done for the Project Family Reunification, A barrier or facilitator of integration?' (HOME/2010/EIFX/CA/1772– co-funded by the European Integration Fund Community Actions 2010)
- O'Reilly, K., (2012) 'International migration and social theory', Palgrave Macmillan pp. 39-64.

Padilla, B. & Ortiz, A. (2012). Fluxos migratórios em Portugal: do boom migratório à desaceleração no contexto de crise. Balanços e desafios. *Revista Interdisciplinar da Mobilidade Humana*. 20 (39), 159-184

Peixoto, J. and Sabino, C., (2009) 'Portugal: Immigration, the labour market and policy in Portugal: trends and prospects', *IDEA Working Paper*, 6.

Peixoto, Joao, Sabino, C., & Abreu, A. (2009). Immigration Policies in Portugal: Limits and Compromise in the Quest for Regulation Special Issue: Comparing the New Hosts of Southern Europe. *European Journal of Migration and Law*, 11, 179–198.

Pires R.P. (2019) Portuguese Emigration Today. In: Pereira C., Azevedo J. (eds) *New and Old Routes of Portuguese Emigration*. IMISCOE Research Series. Springer, Cham. [https://doi-org.ezproxy.ub.gu.se/10.1007/978-3-030-15134-8\\_2](https://doi-org.ezproxy.ub.gu.se/10.1007/978-3-030-15134-8_2)

PORDATA (2020) Portugal's minimum wage in 2020. Accessed on October 20, 2020 from <https://www.pordata.pt/en/Portugal/National+minimum+wage-74>  
Portuguese Online Platform, available at <https://pptonline.acm.gov.pt/>

Portuguese language learning for foreigners. Accessed on 12 April, 2020 from <https://www.acm.gov.pt/-/como-posso-frequentar-um-curso-de-lingua-portuguesa-para-estrangeiros->

Plutzer, V. and Ritter, M., (2008) 'Language learning in the context of migration and integration—Challenges and options for adult learners', In *Case studies: prepared for the linguistic integration of adult migrants seminar* (pp. 29-45).

Relatório de Imigração, Fronteiras e Asilo, RIFA (2018). Statistics on Migrants living in Portugal accessed from <https://sefstat.sef.pt/forms/distritos.aspx>

Relatório de Imigração, Fronteiras e Asilo, RIFA (2019). Ficha Técnica, Portugal (p.82-83). Accessed on 12 August, 2020 <https://sefstat.sef.pt/Docs/Rifa2019.pdf>

Riccio, B., 2008. West African transnationalisms compared: Ghanaians and Senegalese in Italy. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 34(2), pp.217-234.

Ros i Sole, C., (2014). The paradoxes of language learning and integration in the European context. In: David Mallows, ed. *Language issues in migration and integration: perspectives from teachers and learners*. London: British Council, pp. 55-78. ISBN 9780863557378 [Book Section].

Sagy, S., and Antonovsky, A. (1998) 'The family sense of coherence and the retirement transition', In H. I. McCubbin, E. A. Thompson, A. I. Thompson, and J. E. Fromer (Eds.), *Stress, coping, and health in families: Sense of Coherence and resiliency* (pp. 207-226). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Saleebey, D. (2012) 'Power in the people', In Saleebey, D (ed.) *The strengths perspective in social work practice*, Sixth edition, Boston, Pearson Education, p. 1-23.

Sampson, D., (2019) 'Portugal the country of choice for immigrants'. Accessed on 28th March, 2020 from <https://www.theportugalnews.com/news/portugal-the-country-of-choice-for-immigrants/51452>

Sardinha, J. (2009) 'Immigrant associations, integration and identity: Angolan, Brazilian and Eastern European communities in Portugal', Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Schmalzbauer, L. (2013). Striving and surviving: A daily life analysis of Honduran transnational families. *Striving and Surviving: A Daily Life Analysis of Honduran Transnational Families*. 1-131. 10.4324/9780203959534.

SEF/EMN (2020). Applying for residence in Portugal - For living in Portugal and Family Reunification - Article 98, paragraph 1 – family reunification. Accessed on 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2020 from <https://imigrante.sef.pt/en/solicitar/residir/art98-1/>

SEF/EMN (2020). Article 98, paragraph 2 – Family reunification (Relative in national territory: Documentations required. Accessed on March, 2020 from <https://imigrante.sef.pt/en/solicitar/residir/ART98-2/>

SEF/EMN (2020). IRI- Residence Permit for Investment Activity (Golden visa) in Portugal- Accessed on 18<sup>th</sup> July, 2020 from <https://www.sef.pt/pt/pages/conteudo-detalhe.aspx?nID=62>

SEF/EMN (2020). Statistical Map for IRI visas from 2012-2020. Accessed on 18<sup>th</sup> August, 2020 from [https://www.sef.pt/pt/Documents/AGO\\_ARI%20CUMULATIVO\\_2020.pdf](https://www.sef.pt/pt/Documents/AGO_ARI%20CUMULATIVO_2020.pdf)

SEF/EMN (2020). Residence permits for employed workers without residence permits accessed from <https://imigrante.sef.pt/en/novo-regulamento/on> 18th July, 2020

SEF/EMN (2020). Legal framework for foreign nationals in Portugal. Accessed on 12<sup>th</sup> April, 2020 from <https://www.sef.pt/en/pages/conteudo-detalhe.aspx?nID=39>

SEF/EMN (2020). New Legal Regulations for Immigration Act of 2007. Accessed on 16<sup>th</sup> May, 2020 from <https://imigrante.sef.pt/en/novo-regulamento/>

Schweitzer, R., (2015) 'A Stratified Right to Family Life? On the Logic(s) and Legitimacy of Granting Differential Access to Family Reunification for Third-country Nationals Living within the EU', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 41:13, 2130-2148, DOI: 10.1080/1369183X.2015.1037256

Solovova, O. (2013). (In)-Between a rock and a hard place: Notes for an ecology of language policies from a complementary school for Eastern European immigrant children in Portugal. PhD Thesis submitted to the University of Coimbra, Portugal.

Solovova, O. (2019). Opening up ideological spaces for multilingual literacies at the margins of the Portuguese education system? *Ethnographic insights from a Russian complementary school*. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, pp. 259: 161–190. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ijsl-2019-2043>.

Squires A. (2008). Language barriers and qualitative nursing research: methodological considerations. *International nursing review*, 55(3), 265–273. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1466-7657.2008.00652.x>

Strategic Plan for Migration, (2015 - 2020) . Accessed on 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2020 from [https://www.acm.gov.pt/documents/10181/222357/PEM\\_ACM\\_final.pdf/9ffb3799-7389-4820-83ba-6dcfe22c13fb](https://www.acm.gov.pt/documents/10181/222357/PEM_ACM_final.pdf/9ffb3799-7389-4820-83ba-6dcfe22c13fb)

Teye, J.K., Badasu, D. and Yeboah, C. (2017) 'Assessment of Remittances-Related Services and Practices of Financial Institutions in Ghana Report', Centre for Migration Studies, University of Ghana

The Berlin Institute for Population and Development (2020) 'Destination Europe? The Future of Global Migration' "Zuwanderer von morgen" (migrants of tomorrow), funded by Stiftung Mercator. Accessed at: <https://bit.ly/2RskpOo>

Tischler, H.L., (2010). 'Introduction to sociology', Marriage and Alternative Family Arrangements, Chapter 12. Cengage Advantage Book

UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2017) 'Literacy Rates Continue to Rise from One Generation to the Next', Fact Sheet No. 45. Accessed from [http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/fs45-literacy-rates-continue-rise-generation-to-next-en-2017\\_0.pdf](http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/fs45-literacy-rates-continue-rise-generation-to-next-en-2017_0.pdf)

Ungar, M. (2012) 'Social ecologies and their contribution to resilience', In: Ungar, M. (ed) 'The social ecology of resilience: A handbook of theory and practice.' New York: Springer.

United Nations High Commission for Refugees (2015). Press Coverage of the Refugee and Migrant Crisis in the EU: A Content Analysis of Five European Countries Report.

Van Breda, A. D. (2001) 'Resilience Theory: A Literature Review', Pretoria, South Africa: South African Military Health Service.

Van Breda, A.D. (2018) 'A Critical Review of Resilience Theory and Its Relevance for Social Work', *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk* 2018:54

Van Dijk, R.A., Mazzucato, V., Horst, C. and de Vries, P., (2004) 'Transcending the nation. Explorations of transnationalism as a concept and phenomenon', Kluwer.

Virkkula, E. and Nissilä, S. (2017) 'Towards Professionalism in Music: Self-assessed Learning Strategies of Conservatory Music Students'. *Center for Educational Policy Studies Journal*. 7. 113-135.

Walsh, F. (2006) 'Strengthening family resilience', New York: Guilford Publication.

Werner, E.E., (2013) 'What can we learn about resilience from large-scale longitudinal studies?'. In *Handbook of resilience in children* (pp. 87-102). Springer, Boston, MA.

Wellman B. (2002) *Little Boxes, Globalization, and Networked Individualism*. Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg. [https://doi-org.ezproxy.ub.gu.se/10.1007/3-540-45636-8\\_2](https://doi-org.ezproxy.ub.gu.se/10.1007/3-540-45636-8_2)

Wilding, Raelene. (2006) 'Virtual' Intimacies? Families Communicating Across Transnational Contexts', *Global Networks*. 6. 125 - 142. 10.1111/j.1471-0374.2006.00137.x.

Wilk, R. (1996) 'Economics and Cultures: Foundations of Economic Anthropology', Westview, Boulder, CO.

Wimmer, A. and Glick Schiller, N., (2002) 'Methodological nationalism and beyond: nation-state building, migration and the social sciences', *Global networks*, 2(4), pp.301-334.

Wodak, R., and Boukala, S. (2015). (Supra)National Identity and Language: Rethinking National and European Migration Policies and the Linguistic Integration of Migrants. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 35, 253-273. doi:10.1017/S0267190514000294

World Bank (2014). Migration and Development Brief Issue 23. World Bank: Washington.D.C.

World Bank data help desk-List of developing countries. Accessed on 15<sup>th</sup> August, 2020 from <https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519https://rm.coe.int/16802fc1d9> on 8/07/2020

# APPENDICES

## Appendix I

### CONSENT FORM

#### CONSENT TYPE: ORAL CONSENT

**STUDY TITLE:** Resilience among Ghanaian migrants in Lisbon in accessing family reunification and learning of Portuguese language.

**RESEARCHER:** RITA ADOMA PARRY

#### **Why are you being asked to participate?**

You are being asked to participate in this interview because you are a citizen from Ghana living in Portugal and trying to bring your family to this country.

This is a research project by me, Rita Parry, based at the University Institute of Lisbon (ISCTE-IUL) for the European Master in Family and Children Welfare. I am undertaking this research because I am interested in studying the specific problems Ghanaians in Portugal face while applying for family reunification.

#### **What does the participation entail/ mean for you?**

I will ask you a few questions; and the interview should not take longer than 1 hour. With your permission, I will audiotape the interview only for the purposes of accurately transcribing the conversation. The audiotapes as well as the transcriptions will be stored securely and not shared with anyone. I will discuss fragments of your interview, without divulging your name nor contact details/ anonymously, with the project supervisors Ana Raquel Matias and Olga Solovova; quotes from your interview may be used in public presentations without directly identifying you/leading to you.

#### **Are there any risks for you?**

There is no risk involved in the study. However, I will use other names and places to prevent any information to be traced back to you. You do not have to answer any questions or discuss any topics that make you feel uncomfortable.

#### **Can you decide to stop participating in the study?**

You can decide, at any time during the interview or discussion, that you no longer wish to participate. You may withdraw your consent. No measures will be taken against you; your data will not be used in the study.

#### **Are there any costs or benefits for you?**

There are no direct costs involved with participation, although you may miss an hour of work and possibly pay for that time. There are also no direct benefits to you. However, your participation will contribute to a greater awareness of the challenges Ghanaian migrants encounter when they exercise their rights to family reunification, - something that has not been captured in previous studies.

If participants agree, they will repeat after me the oral declaration of informed consent as below:

I, ....., confirm that the purpose of the research, the study procedures, the possible risks as well as benefits have been explained to me. All my questions have been answered. I agree to participate in the study and am aware that I can withdraw my participation at any given moment.

I, Rita Adoma Parry, confirm that the purpose of the research, the study procedures, the possible risks as well as benefits have been explained to the participant. All questions have been answered and the participant has agreed to participate in the study.

## CONSENT FORM IN TWI

### **Adɛn nti na ɛhia sɛ me de wo bɛka adesua yi ho?**

Me sɛ wo sɛ wo bɛka nsembusa adesua yi ho efi sɛ woyɛ Ghana ni a wote Portugal ana wopɛ sɛ daakye bi wotumi de w'abusua ba ɔman Portugal mu.

Me din de Rita Parry a mewɔ suapɔn a wɔfrɛ no "institute of Lisbon (ISCTE-IUL)" a ɛwɔ Europe. Meresua Abusua ne Mmofra yiehwe mu apɛ me suapɔn abɔdin a ɛtɔso ebien. Mereyɛ saa adesua ne nhwehwe mu yi, efise, mepɛ sɛ mehu ɔhaw pɔtee a Ghanafo a ɛwɔ Portugal no ɛfa mu emmere a wɔpɛ sɛ wɔne wɔn abusua bɛka abomu biom wɔ Portugal ɔman no mu.

### **Nneɛma bɛn na ɛwɔ mu fa woho sɛ wo de woho bɛhyɛ adesua yi mu?**

Mebusa wo nsemfua kakra nanso ɛnni donhwere baako. Sɛ wo ma me kwan a, mɛkye yen nkitaho no agu apaawa so na m'akyew mu nsem nso ato krataa so a me ne obiara ɛnkyɛ mu nsem anaa obiara ntumi ɛnfa ne nsa nka. Me ne m'akyerekɔfo a wɔn din de Ana Raquel Matias ɛna Olga Solovova bɛpensɛpɛsen yen nkitahodi no ho kakra nanso mennfa wo din anaa wo ho akade biara ɛnto gua. Wɔn na wɔ hwe m'adesua ne menhwehwe mu no so. Me de yen nkitaho no mu nsem kakra beyɛ nipa mu oyikyere nanso memmɔ wo din anaa menna wo ho adi nnkyere obi biara.

### **Nsunsuanso bɔne bi bɛba wo so esane yen nkitaho di yi ho anaa?**

Adesua wei ne nhwehwe mu a me ye yi ɛnni nsunsuanso bɔne bɛba. ɛnpɔ menfa wo din anaa bɛbi a wote ɛmma adesua yi mu sɛ nea ɛbeyɛ a obi ntumi ɛnfa wo ho nsem ɛnni w'akyi. Sɛ wonpɛ sɛ wo beyi nsembisa no bi ano na ɛhaw wo a, wotumi ka kyere me.

### **Wo bɛ tumi asi gyinae sɛ wonfa wo ho ɛnnhyɛ adesua yi mu?**

ɛmmere biara a wo dwene sɛ wonfa wo ho nnhyɛ saa adesua yi mu no, wotumi ka kyere me ɛna wotumi nso ɛtwe asem anaa nsem no san na megyae nsembusa no. Sɛ ɛba saa a, menfa wo ho asem nso ɛmma adesua no mu biom.

### **Wo benya nfaso bi anaa adesua no de ɛka bi bɛ brɛ wo?**

ɛka a ɛbetumi aba no ye sɛ wo bɛ hwere wo mere kakra beyɛ sɛ donhwere baako wei akyi no ɛka biara ɛnni mu. Afei nso nfaso bia ɛnshɛ da ɛnni mu. Nea ɛwɔ mu ne sɛ, sɛ wo de wo ho hyɛ adesua yi mu a, ɛbetumi ama ye hu ɔhaw a Ghanafo a ɛwɔ ɔman yi mu no ɛfa mu emmere a wɔ pɛ sɛ wɔ de won abusua ba ɔman yi mu. ɛyɛ adesua bi a obiara ɛnnye mu nhwehwɛmu da.

Sɛ wo gye nsem yi nyinaa to mu a, wo bɛka asi dua sɛ wo pɛ sɛ me de wo ka adesua yi ho. 3y3 me, ....., me si no pi sɛ, wɔn akyerekɔfo me botae a ɛwɔ adesua yi mu nhwehwɛmu no, ɔkwan a wɔ de ye nhwehwɛmu no, nhwehwɛmu no ho nfaso ne ɔhaw a ɛwɔ mu nnyinaa akyere me. Wɔn ayi me nsembusa a me wɔ fa nhwehwɛmu no ho ano ama me. Eyi nti, m'agye atomu sɛ me de meho bɛshe adesua yi mu na menim nso sɛ metumi atwe mennsem no asan.

ɛyɛ me, Rita Adoma Parry, me si no pi sɛ, m'akyerekɔfo no botae a ɛwɔ adesua yi mu nhwehwɛmu no, ɔkwan a me fa so de ye nhwehwɛmu no, nhwehwɛmu no ho nfaso ne ɔhaw a ɛwɔ mu nnyinaa akyere no. M'ayi me nsembusa a ɔwɔ fa nhwehwɛmu no ho ano. Eyi nti, w'agye atomu sɛ me de no bɛshe adesua yi um.



## **Appendix II**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE**

Date of Interview:

Mode of Interview:

Duration of Interview

Time of Interview:

#### **FAMILY INFORMATION**

1. Do you have any family in Ghana? Can you tell me how many close family members are there in Ghana?
2. Do you have a partner?
3. If yes, where does your partner live? Work?
4. Do you have any children? How old are they? Boys or girls? Are they in Ghana, Portugal or in another country?
5. If they are not in Portugal with you, who is responsible for providing care in your absence?
6. Are your children at the age of going to school? If yes, which kind of school do they attend? (government or private school)
7. Do you have family/relatives here in Portugal?

#### **EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND ASSESSMENT**

1. Have you attended school?
2. IF YES, until which year of education /how many years of schooling?
3. IF NO, can you read and write?
4. Which country and region did you attend school?
5. What type of school was it? (Public/ private)
6. What languages were used to teach in the school?

#### **EARLY MOTIVATIONS TO MIGRATE**

1. How was life in Ghana before you migrated?
2. Were you employed while in Ghana?
3. How did you arrive at a decision to migrate?
4. Who else helped you with the decision to migrate?
5. How did you organize yourself to travel?

#### **PREVIOUS MIGRATION EXPERIENCES**

1. When did you first leave Ghana?
2. Did you experience going to other countries before going to Portugal? or Was Portugal your first country of arrival?
  - How long did you stay there?
  - Did you work in those places?
  - Where you able to see the doctor if you were sick?

- Did you learn the language when you were in that country?

### **SETTLING AND WORKING IN PORTUGAL**

1. How did you decide to settle in Portugal?
2. How was the process of settling in when you arrived in Portugal?
  - Did you know about the laws and policies here in Portugal?
  - Who were the people that helped you when you arrived?
3. How did you go about learning the Portuguese language?
4. Were there any kind of organizations, schools or people you went to look for help to learn Portuguese?
5. Was it hard learning Portuguese?
6. Can you tell me how learning Portuguese helped you in your work? In your social life?
7. Do you currently work? Where?
8. In what ways is your work in Portugal different?
9. Do you need to speak Portuguese in your job? How well?
10. With whom do you speak Portuguese? Can you give an example of a situation where you have to speak Portuguese at your workplace?

### **TRANSNATIONAL PARENTING ROLES/ PLANS OF REUNIFICATION**

1. Could you describe the relationships you have with your family?
2. Tell me about your previous parenting roles when you were still in the Ghana?
3. Since you are in Portugal, are you able to maintain the same roles? How?
4. What do you think is the major role that helps your family now that you are here in Portugal?
5. Do you think you would be better with your family and kids living with you?
6. Have you considered living with your family here?
7. Do you know the Portuguese law on family reunification? If Yes, where did you access this information?
8. If No, how do you intend to bring them to Portugal?
9. If they are here, can you please tell me how you brought your family Portugal?  
(Subjected to separate follow up questions for each response-YES/NO)
10. If they are not here, what are some of the challenges you are facing to bring them here?
11. Was there anyone to help you with the process?
12. What was the most difficult part?
13. What were the easiest parts of the process?

### **FUTURE PROSPECTS**

1. What are your expectations to achieve family reunification in Portugal?
2. In about 10 years, where do you see your family living and what kind of future it will be?

## INTERVIEW GUIDE IN TWI

### Abusua mu nsem

1. Wo wɔ abusua wɔ Ghana? Abusuafo dodow sen na eɛn wo ɛwɔ Ghana?
2. Wo wɔ wohokani anaa?
3. Sɛ wo wɔ wohokani a, ɔte he, na ɔye adwuma wo he?
4. Wo wɔ ɛmma dodow sen? wɔn anaa w'adi mfe sen? mmarima anaa mmea? Wɔ te Ghana, Portugal anaa kurow fofro so?
5. Sɛ wonte wonkyɛn wɔ Portugal a, hena na ɔhwɛ won mmere a wonni hɔ?
6. Womma no, wɔ kɔ sukuu? ɛye aban sukuu anaa akorankoran sukuu?
7. Wo wɔ abusuani bi wɔ Portugal anaa?

### Wo Sukuu ho nsem?

1. W'akɔ sukuu pen?
2. Wo kɔ sukuu no duru mpenpen so ben?
3. Sɛ w'ankɔ sukuu a, wotumi kenkan kyerɛw anaa?
4. Oman ne mansini ben mu na wo kɔ sukuu?
5. Wo kɔ aban sukuu anaa ankorankoran sukuu?
6. Kasa ben na wɔ de kyere w'ade?

### ɛden na ɛkaa wo nti na wotu kwan

1. Na Ghana abrabɔ no e sen ansa na wotukwan?
2. Na wo ye adwuma wɔ Ghana?
3. Den na ɛmaa wo si gyinae se wo betukwan?
4. Henan a ɔboa wo wɔ gyina tu no ho?
5. Wo ye den na wɔboa wo ho ano tu kwan no?

### Akwan a w'atu mu nsem

1. Da ben na edikan a wo firi Ghana?
2. W'atu kwan akɔ kuro fofro so anaa Portugal ne oman a wo kɔ so a edikan?
  - a. Nna dodow sen na wo dii wɔ hɔ? (i) Wo kɔ ye adwuma wɔ saa nkurow no so anaa? (ii) Wo yare ma wo kɔ dɔkita pen?
  - b. Wo sua kurow no so kasa anaa?

### Portugal asetena ne adwuma ye mu

1. ɛnam den so nti na wo ye se wo betena Portugal?
2. Wo du Portugal no, na asetena so ashase no te sen?
  - a. Na wonim Portugal hɔ mmra ne akwan?

**b. Henan a aboa wo emmere a woduru Portugal?**

3. Wo yee den na wo sua Portuguese kasa no?
4. Wo pee mmoa firi sukuu anaa ndwuma kuw bi mu se wo bekyere wo Portuguese kasa no?
5. Portuguese kasa sua no na eye den anaa?
6. Wo betumi akyerere me se Portuguese kasa sua no aboa wo wo adwuma mu ne ayankofa ho nkitahodi mu?
7. Wo ye adwuma anaa, w'adwuma no wo he?
8. Okwan ben so na w'adwuma a ewo Portugal no dan nso?
9. Eho hia se wobeka Portuguese kasa wo w'adwuma mu?
10. Wo ne hena na eka Portuguese kasa no? wobetumi ama nfato ho emmere a na ewo see wo ka Portuguese kasa no wo w'adwuma mu?

**Awofa asede / Abusua nkaom ho adwen fa**

1. Wo betumi akyerere se nea wo ne w'abusua ete fa?
2. Mere a na wo wo Ghana no, Sen na wo ye w'asede see awofa?
3. Enti mprenpren a wo wo Portugal yi, wo tumi ye w'asede se awofa anaa, na sen na wo ye no fa?
4. Asede titriw ben na wo dwen see woye de boa w'abusua no mmere a wo wo Portugal?
5. Se w'abusua betena wo nkyen a, wo dwen se won hwe no mu beye yie?
6. W'adwene ho pen see wo de w'abusuafo beba oman Portugal mu?
7. Wonim nea Portugalso mmra no ka fa se wo de w'abusua beba oman no mu na wo ne won atena? Se wonim a, hefa na wo nyaa sa emu nsem no?
8. Se wonnim mmra no nso a, okwan ben na wo pe see wo fa so de won ba Portugal?
9. Se w'abusua no nso wo Portugal nso a, kyere me okwan a wo faa so de won ba oman no mu?
10. Se wonni ha nso a, kyere me ohaw a w'afa mu mmere wo ye ahoboa see wo de won beba?
11. Wo nyaa obi boa wo wo kwan a wo be fa so de w'abusua no aba?
12. Den na eyee den wo kwan na wo faa so no ho?
13. Den na eyee merew wo kwan naa wo faa so no?

**Daakye aniso / adehunu**

1. Den ne w'anidaso se wo ne w'abusua be san aka abomu wo Portugal oman no mu?
2. Mpenpenso ben na wo hu w'abusua no efi ene ko pem mfe du akyi na sen na wo pe se daakye no bete afa ama w'abusua no?

## Appendix III

### GRID ANALYSIS OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS

#### 1. Kojo (Pseudonym)

##### Socio-demographic Information

Name: Kojo

Sex: male

Age: 37

Education: basic education certificate (9 years)

Date of arrival in Portugal: 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 2016

Family situation: Wife and two (2) children in Ghana

##### Observation Notes

This participant is one of the respondents who was very swift to do the interview after the researcher approached him. He had the interview scheduled the next day after the request and was very open to participating in the study. The interview took place via a telephone call on Sunday, 12<sup>th</sup> April, 2020. We had to schedule a telephone call due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and its subsequent lockdown regulations. We had a pleasant conversation as we did not have any inconveniencing situations of finding a location for the interview as we were in the comfort of our homes. Even though the scheduled time, 13.00hrs was delayed as respondent did not pick up when I called, he returned the call about 50 minutes later and the interview started at about 13.52hr. The interview was conducted in “Twi” or Akan language. we also experienced some network failure in the call, thus had to call the participant back once when the line failed. He was also helpful in suggesting other participants whom I could contact to help the study. The duration of the interview was about 49minutes, 50 seconds. The first interview was successful.

##### Family information

The participant's name is Kojo, a 37 year- old man. Kojo is a married man with two children, a boy and a girl in Ghana. The children are 11 and 9 years old respectively. The interviewee has been away from his family since 2017 and had the opportunity to visit them in October 2019, after regularizing his stay in Portugal. His wife is a trained community nurse, with a diploma from a short tertiary program. She works in a community health center in a town in the western part of Ghana. She provides care for their two children with the help of Kojo’s mother, when she goes to work or for training. Both children go to the town’s private school. The boy is in primary year six and the girl, primary year four.

##### Interviewee educational background assessment

Kojo completed 9 years of basic education at a type of school in Ghana. The main language of instruction through those years was Fante (Akan language) and English.

##### Previous working experience before migrating

Kojo reports that life before migration was very challenging in Ghana in terms of job seeking, since there were more job seekers than the work available, so it is very difficult to secure a job in Ghana after school. Life was quite difficult. He worked as a teacher assistant without qualification as a trained teacher. He taught citizenship education in the primary level 3. Kojo got the job through political appointments where individuals who have helped an incumbent government during election campaigns get appointment to work in some government institutions, before he travelled.

### **Early motivations to migrate**

Even though he worked as a teacher assistant, he planned on travelling because where he worked was not in relation to his life plans which was to work in a big place and to earn a decent salary for his family's upkeep. Again, the teaching was an appointment purely based on political opportunity he got, so there was no assurance he could secure a permanent appointment especially when there is change in government. The probability of losing his job was 100%. And as a young guy and looking at his family needs and the amount he was earning was not encouraging. So, he was encouraged to travel to seek greener pastures. He mentions discussing the idea to travel with his wife, first, to Dubai, to work, and later about Portugal after receiving information from his friend in Dubai.

### **Previous migration experiences**

The interviewee first travelled to Dubai for work. While in Dubai, he was notified by the Ghanaian friend who hosted him there was a visa opportunity to Europe. He stated there were many ways to migrate legally or illegally, and ways that people use to process travel documents, but he got the information about the visa opportunity from the Ghanaian who hosted him in Dubai upon arrival.

While being grateful for the information on the visa application, he emphasized it is always advisable to know a Ghanaian in a new place when you travel to help you. He was his source of information about the opportunity. He said;

*“The Ghanaian friend who hosted me in Dubai told me about the opportunity to travel to Europe. He told me I could apply for a Schengen tourist visa from the Dutch embassy in Dubai. I knew and wanted a genuine process to be safe and avoid problems for myself and the family, so I applied for a visa to Portugal through the Dutch embassy. So, I capitalized on the opportunity to secure my visa”.*

He stayed in Dubai for two weeks until he obtained the visa to Europe. After which he went back to Ghana to prepare for his journey before coming to Lisbon.

### **Settling in Portugal**

The interviewee left Ghana on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2016 and arrived in Portugal on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2016 via the national airport with a short stay Schengen tourist visa. Upon arrival, he had no family nor contact person in Portugal, so he decided to seek international protection as a refugee when his visa expired. Explaining why he decided to apply for asylum, he said *“while exploring ways to stay in Portugal, I met a man from Sudan who advised me to also apply for asylum like he had done”*, so he did. While he was awaiting the decision of the migration agency, he said he made plans of finding work to do. His reason for the application was for support to resolve his economic crisis. He mentioned that there were lot of challenges in Ghana, in terms of employment after school, taking care of a family and the hardship that comes with it. So, he needed documentation to help him stay and work to cater for my family back in Ghana.

However, the request for international protection was not granted. The reason given was that international protection was only granted based on political and humanitarian issues at the time. And his reasons were based on economic issues which did not merit international protection.

While going through this process, he states that he started reading the laws of Portugal online from the SEF website and it became very helpful to understand the systems in Portugal. It was through the studying of the law that he discovered that even if the international protection was not granted, he could secure his residential documents if he worked and paid social security for

some time. He said; *“This was a provision in one of the articles so I had hope that I could stay if I capitalized on that opportunity provided in the law.*

### **Language learning in Portugal**

Also, in order to foster his integration, the interviewee mentioned how he took advantage of the language access the government provided, Portuguese Para Todos (PPT) and enrolled in a school to study the Portuguese language free for three months in a school at [...]. Now he can speak Portuguese and plans to enroll in the level B2 for certification.

Sharing his experience in the Portuguese language learning, he was very grateful to a kind teacher that helped him to understand the language very easily using the easiest way possible. This in his words boosted his confidence because he could communicate with people in Portuguese and also could go out to work and socialize with people.

He further mentioned that starting to learn the Portuguese language was difficult considering his age and life experience. He said: *“This was not a language I was trained with, educated and grew up with. It was all new to me but after meeting my tutor, the language was made easy. My tutor advised me prior to the start of the language class focus on only Portuguese during classes. I followed this advice and it helped me a lot to learn the language.”*

With the help of a good and supportive tutor, Kojo testifies how learning Portuguese has helped him a lot in many ways, including, work, social life, banking, market and all. He said; *“because it is their (Portuguese people) language that they always use, so I don’t feel isolated when I go out. It has become easy for me to mingle and interact with people”*, showing how relevant knowledge of a new language can foster easy integration into a new society.

### **Working in Portugal**

The interviewee recounts how he landed his first job when he arrived in Portugal. He said while waiting for the process that was going through to help him stay, he met other people who were also seeking international protection. He said, *“We all met at one time while searching for jobs and we all shared our ideas, problems and challenges”*. Through that process, they formed a network after realizing they were all unemployed. Through collaborative job search, they linked each other to job opportunities they came across. He mentions that a friend from Sierra Leone got employed before him and linked him up at where he also got employed and worked for the first time since his arrival. It was a construction site. Currently, he works with a company where they specialize in interior decorations, located in Lisbon.

Answering on how working in Portugal is different from working in Ghana, he said; *“Oh yes, there are a lot of differences and I do not regret coming to Portugal. I have job security here in Lisbon. The difference is that, even though my work is contract based, I feel much secure than when I was working in Ghana, where I could easily lose my job at the change of a government. Also, in terms of salary, I earn much better now. So, there is a huge difference”*.

This shows how happy he is with his current job and the sense of security he enjoys, compared to how he felt about his work while in Ghana. Better wages and the ability to remit his family back home made him feel he was doing better in Portugal than in Ghana. *“Providing for the family financially, for the children’s upkeep, feeding, school fees etc. I provide everything for them.”*

The interviewee also acknowledges how helpful learning Portuguese has helped him in his work. He mentions that Portuguese is the main language at his workplace, thus, it is important to really know the language as all his colleagues speak little or no English. He said; *“That is the only way we communicate, however, some colleagues who try to learn English from me*

*... speak it occasionally but that is more of an informal part of the work. But mostly and mainly you need Portuguese to survive in my work”.*

With the type of work this respondent does, it would be quite impossible to work without speaking Portuguese because they relied heavily on customer preferences and satisfaction. He has to understand their clients’ needs, follow instructions diligently and work to achieve desired results. He shared: *But in Portugal, you need to understand the language to make work and life easier. Without the knowledge of the language in my space of work, it will be hard to work because when my bosses ask me to fetch something for a client from the store and I don’t understand, it will be very inconveniencing. Communication at the workplace will be limited.”*

### **Transnational parenting roles**

The family of the interviewee can be described as transnational as they live across borders from each other. His wife and two children stayed back in Ghana since he travelled in 2017. Even though they live far from each other, they are able to keep in touch with the help of technology and remittances.

Talking about how he manages the role of a husband and father, he mentions it is a bit different from while he was in Ghana, except that he is still the breadwinner for his family. He said; *“Oh yes, we communicate a lot. We hear from each other almost every day. We update each other based on what is going on and this is on a daily basis. Yes, I can say I can still perform my roles. Not all but I try to perform most of my responsibilities. The only part I am missing is the physical contact with the family. Aside from this, I render every single obligation and responsibility as a father to the family a hundred percent.”*

Providing for the family financially through remittances remains one of the major characteristics of transnational families. This is no different for the interviewee, he still performs major responsibilities for his family, including the children’s upkeep, feeding, school fees etc. he proudly says; *“I provide everything for them. I am still the breadwinner for my family. Accommodation, feeding, everything. Once I receive my salary every month, I send them their money too, and even sometimes when an emergency comes up”*

### **Plans of reunification**

Kojo definitely had plans of reuniting with his family and considered it as a very important way of “doing family”. Having one’s family with them provide them with some sort of social and emotional support while they live in a different country. He said; *“Yes, it is far better to stay together as a family, so I am still working on that, to bring them here. I have planned on reuniting with my family. In fact, I already started the process to bring them here.”* Recounting his experience without his family here in Lisbon, he said it feels lonely to go home to an empty house and would be happy if the process goes through successfully.

Asking him if he has knowledge of the law on family reunification in Portugal, he answers in affirmative, and even gives a brief summary of what are the main requirements of third country nationals. He said; *“I am very familiar with the law that can help me with the process.”* This information according to him was accessed from the SEF website. In his own words he said, *“I got access to the information about how to bring in my family from the Immigration and Borders Service website. I noticed that it was easy to bring in my family because there is a provisional clause that allows me to bring in my family if I so wish they not stay away from me.”*

He further explained how some migrants perceive the process to be difficult based on what some of my immigrant friends have told them. This proved to him that what they know and what was the reality practically provided by the law is different.



Sharing his knowledge on the law on reunification and its requirements. He mentioned; *“The law states that if I seek to reunite with my family, I should be a worker and pay my taxes and social security and have no record of criminality. In addition to these, I should have an apartment or accommodation. These are the basis for the government to approve of your decision to reunite with your family in Portugal.”*

As he did not mention proof of relationships and a legal resident status, I probed further if he had the other documents nothing was said about it in his earlier statements. He responded that he has all supporting documents. He even went further to brag about how eligible he was to exercise the basic rights in Portugal, for instance, the right to work, have access to healthcare, even access to a lot of benefits including European Union health insurance through work while he travels in the EU.

Commenting on the difficulty or flexibility of the process of achieving family reunification in Portugal, he admits the process is not difficult if one knows the laws and follows the requirements. Also, he mentions access to support from SEF when he calls to verify the information and to get clarification on what he read. As he reports;

*“I called the customer care of the “immigration and borders service” to confirm if what I understand from their website is actually right and they confirmed and as well took me through the easiest process available. They were very helpful.”*

Sounding optimistic about his chances of having a successful application, the interviewee mentions he has already submitted the application including all supporting documents already in March,2020, but unfortunately the documents from Ghana arrived during the lockdown, even though the SEF confirmed receipt via mail. He expressed worry over the interruption of the process when he says

*“I however called the office to inform them I have the documents ready and I was told to post them because they are still working, and they will give feedback accordingly once the process is completed. I have done exactly as I was instructed, so I am waiting.”* Even though the exact waiting period was not mentioned, interviewee states that SEF is still working on the documents, hopefully within the six months processing time. He submitted his application in March,2020 and hopes for a response by September at most. Since he arrived in 2017, Kojo was able to regularize his stay in Portugal after his Schengen visa expired in February,2018 in September,2019, after which he made his first visit to Ghana since he arrived in Portugal. He could only apply for reunification after securing his residence permit and proof of family relations documents in 2020.

### **Future prospects**

With regards to his future plans, the interviewee was quite optimistic. He already had plans made to help his family settle once the process of reunification is successful. He says; *“I have already set down plans for my family’s arrival. First, I have told them of the differences in language here and I have decided to let them attend a school to learn the language since it is the way they could communicate well in this country. This will help them in their day to day activities in terms of school and work as well as social life.”* Living and making Portugal my new home was the dream of the interviewee.

His optimism for a bright future and admiration for Portugal could not be hidden when asked about what kind of future he envisages for himself and his family in about 10 years. *I wish to reunite with my family in Portugal since I have a better life here. In about 10 years, I hope to be well settled with my family in the long term. Portugal is where I would want us to live here. I like it here”.*

He proudly says; *“In 10 years by now, it shall be well with us because I have learnt a lot in Portugal, and this is not different from what I know and experienced in Ghana, so it makes life easy for me. Also, there is peace in this country and if you take absolute care of yourself and stay out of trouble, by doing what is required of you by the law, you will achieve the maximum best in life for you and your family in Portugal. This country has a lot to offer to immigrants and I will love to live here for a long time”*. He however does not mention any plans for furthering his education in the future, except reuniting with his family and living in Portugal.

## **2. Akwesi (Pseudonym)**

### **Socio-demographic Information**

Name: Akwasi

Sex: male

Age: 57

Education: basic education certificate

Date of arrival in Portugal: 1997

Family situation: Transnational with wife and son living in Ghana

### **Observation notes**

The participant is the oldest among all the participants and have stayed the longest in Portugal, for a period of 23 years. I identified this participant during my first semester in Lisbon when I escorted a friend to an African barber shop. He was very sincere with his experiences in Portugal and had a sad story of how he has not been able to see his son since he travelled in 1997. His story motivated my research in the area of family reunification among Ghanaians in Lisbon. He raised my interest in finding out if there were challenges Ghanaians faced in reuniting with their families. He was very receptive to the idea of the study when I called him asking him to participate. He scheduled an interview the next day, which was very impressive. We had the interview on Sunday April 7<sup>th</sup>,2020 at 13.30 via the telephone and in “Twi” or Akan language. He was very glad to share his story and wanted to use it as a medium to advise against illegal migration as it could complicate their plans if things don’t work out as expected. He also recommended other Ghanaians I could interview for my study. Aside from fluctuations in the volume of voice recording and some unclear statements, the interview was a success, and it lasted about 50 minutes.

### **Family information**

The interviewee has got a wife, Aseye, back in Ghana. They had had a boy together before he migrated in 1997. The son who is 26 years now completed the senior secondary school in 2012 in a town in the western part of Ghana. He has trained as a glassware technician and works in a shop in their hometown. Ever since he left Ghana, his wife performed basic caregiving duties, with support from Akwasi’s younger sisters and remittances from Portugal to raise their son. Even though his younger sisters don’t live in the same house as Aseye, they provided support in the form of supplying foodstuff from their farms to help sustain the family. They also visit them to provide emotional support to her for the long absence of her husband.

### **Interviewee educational background assessment**

The interviewee said he had received basic education as he schooled for 10 years at a village in the western region of Ghana. The school he went to was a public school. The basic language of instruction was English and Fante.

He says he could also speak both languages frequently but not very good with writing them. He said; *“Yes, I can read and write but not really well.”* As to why he didn’t have the

opportunity to further his education after the basic level he mentioned the death of his father right after basic school completion and absence of support from family as the reason he had left school to work. He mentioned he was the first child, thus, had to start working to support his four younger siblings while he gave up on education.

### **Previous working experience before migrating**

Before deciding to migrate, Akwasi used to go fishing with the local fishermen because he lived by the sea and that was an easy way to save some money to take care of his siblings. He also worked in the gold mining field in his community. The work in the mines was regarded as illegal because the individuals operating in the villages did not have the approved documents to engage in the mining activities, and it was usually done at the blind side of the government.

### **Early motivations to migrate**

After the interviewee completed junior secondary school, he did not further his education again but engaged in helping fishermen pull their fish nets when they returned from fishing. The fish rewards were sold, and money used for himself and his family. His father passed away, he recounts that he was 31 years and his siblings were young at the time of his father's demise in 1994, even though he just mentioned his mother was also not around, he did not specify if he was dead or in a different part of the country. He had to take up the challenge of providing care for the young ones in addition to his wife and son, till 1997 when he decided to look for better opportunities abroad. *“So, in 1997, I left Ghana for Abidjan to look for greener pastures elsewhere, so I could help my siblings through school and have a better life”.*

He narrates how he made preparations for the journey and described the process as an individual decision. In his own words, he said *“I did not seek advice or help; neither did I receive help from anyone. I worked to save some money.”* He said he was able to make all necessary preparations by working on illegal mining sites known as “Galamsey” at a suburb in the western region to save money. From the first site, he further went to another mining community to continue the “Galamsey” to save more money in addition to what he had saved previously. This was the money he used for his travel.

### **Previous migration experiences**

The western part of Ghana is quite known for illegal migration into Europe, usually to Spain, across the sea using boats and ships in a process popularly known as “Stowaway” [2] where they pay monies to some people working on boats to hide them and later transfer them onto ships heading towards Europe. The journey had different routes or costs from different destinations so usually people join boats directly from Ghana or from other transit places in Africa. It was one of these routes that the interviewee used to travel to Portugal. The interviewee even though did not have an idea how the laws worked in Portugal, he was determined to arrive in the country.

He said *“I left Ghana in 1997 to Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire.....I stayed there for some time trying to find a ship going to Portugal. I did not plan to stay in Abidjan for long but because I had to save money for my journey, I was only offloading and loading goods to and from ships to get some money. And selling petty stuff to people who came by boat and ship”.*

The interviewee tells how even though he used Cote D’Ivoire as a transit country for his trip to Portugal, he had to learn the French language for the time he stayed (7 months), to enable him survive business done in the port and to find agents for his upcoming trip. He said *“I learnt the language, but it is fading off with time since I came to Portugal. However, I understand when spoken to but hard for me to speak”.*

Knowledge of French language was essential to his survival at work as it was the most used language for the purpose of work at the port compared to the other local languages.

Within the same year in 1997, the interviewee was successful in his quest to find means to enter Europe. He mentions that he left Abidjan with a local boat after arranging with a middleman on a ship heading to Portugal. He said he had to transfer from the boat onto the ship midway through a process he described as dangerous, using a spring on the Atlantic Ocean. He said it was a matter of life and death as a miss in landing will require best swimming skills or an end to one's life, as not everyone survives the transit sometimes. He stayed in a hidden place on the ship until they arrived in Lisbon, Portugal without legal documentation.

### ***Settling in Portugal***

Upon arrival in 1997, the interviewee mentions that he came in a group with some other people, yet they did not know anyone. He recounts how difficult it was to access information and to receive help from people due to the language barrier. He shares his experiences with one Ivorian male friend he made while in Abidjan in these words; *"I came with one person, a friend from Abidjan. We asked people for help anytime we walked around but a lot of people could not speak English. It was very challenging since you could hardly meet someone who could understand or speak the English"*.

Settling in Portugal for him was hard according to how he described the process, in terms of finding accommodation, work and solace in a place he completely felt lost. He shared the process of finding work and support network as follows;

*"We would walk through casual working places like construction sites for days without any success; and it was during one of these walks that we met someone who could speak and understand English. It happened that he knew about Kwame Nkrumah and could tell where we came from. He then directed us to another place in Lisbon where we met an African. It was through our conversation that I realized he was a Ghanaian, an old friend we used to play draught/checkers game together when we were small. We also got to meet some other Ghanaians here to help us here and to settle in."*

This highlights the importance of support networks in helping reduce the complexities of settling in a different country or place in terms of providing material support (such as accommodation, money), information on where to access work and as a link to other networks in the community. It also shows how language helps identify networks to provide timely help to stranded migrants.

In his words, when asked if he knew anything about Portugal before arriving, the interviewee said:

*"No, no, no, we had no idea or anything about the laws of the country. The only thing we knew was a ship we managed to board and arrive in the western world. I only knew I was coming to Portugal for a better life, I had no idea the laws. We call it "stowaway" to arrive in the country through an unapproved route. We just got on the ship and hope to arrive in a foreign land for greener pastures. We definitely had no idea of Portugal. It was all new. The Ghanaians we met here helped us a lot because we did not know anything"*.

### ***Working in Portugal***

Through the identification of a migrant network, a Ghanaian old friend he met through another African, the interviewee landed his first job in Lisbon since he arrived after 5 weeks, despite his irregular situation. He got the opportunity to work alongside other Ghanaian who had arrived earlier in Lisbon and some other Africans from Cape Verde, Guinea, Sao Tome, Angola

worked in a construction place. He mentions how some parts of the city were now under construction and needed help with labor.

He said; *“when we came, there were many construction workers and it was mostly Africans who worked there. This is the kind of work that we could actually do so most Ghanaians here engaged in these construction works for a living. So, we also joined, and it has helped us to settle well in.”*

Currently, he works as a [...] in Lisbon for about 8 years now, after quitting work in the construction sites.

He agrees that understanding Portuguese really helps a lot. He explains how every day at work, he is able to communicate with people for you to understand each other. In his line of work, he said knowledge of Portuguese has really helped with his interaction with people, establishing a relationship especially customer relations and understanding each other.

### ***Language learning in Portugal***

When asked if not knowing the Portuguese language was a barrier to get work while trying to settle in, he said it was not much of a problem to get work in such places, but it was an opportunity to learn the language from his work colleagues. He reiterated; *“Like I said earlier, through the construction work, we mingled with other people each and every day. This helped us to learn from them when we interact. So, the more we interacted with people, the more we did learn the Portuguese.”*

This shows other ways that migrants learn languages of host countries, aside from enrolling in language schools. The interviewee aside learning the basic Portuguese from his work colleagues, found it necessary to socialize with the local Portuguese people also as a way of integrating into society. He mentions how beneficial that was, especially in getting much fluent in Portuguese. He said;

*“Even though we mingled and interacted a lot, I was not fluent until I learnt it well when I decided to get a fellowship with a catholic church. It was through the fellowship that I realized I was becoming fluent. It was through my own effort while working and attending the Portuguese church.”*

He never attended any language school/course to learn Portuguese language but through his own effort of learning from colleagues and socialization with local people at church helped him a lot. Akwasi mentions that the Portuguese language was a difficult language to learn as it is not a language you can easily understand and speak by interacting with people alone. He said *“You need to take your time just as I did from the beginning. You need to learn it all anew.” Despite all these difficulties, once one is able to communicate well, it makes access to different forms of work accessible, while no knowledge of the language could be a barrier for the migrant.”*

Therefore, supporting the government initiative of providing free schools for foreigners to learn, he describes it as a good opportunity to learn and understand the language.

Customer satisfaction depends on a clear understanding of their needs. The knowledge of the language is really necessary. He explains this by saying; *“Well, it is a requirement for my hair cutting work because communication is very important here. If there is a language barrier, you cannot understand each other. It therefore becomes very difficult working in an environment. Language barrier also slows down business. Since my work depends on customer satisfaction, it is very important for me to be able to speak and understand Portuguese.”*

He however mentions how language requirements for work here in Portugal differs from Ghana. *“Actually, it depends on some factors. Sometimes you are considered even though there is a language barrier, but the communication can be switched if both understand English. At other times, you lose an opportunity due to the language barrier, so communication plays an important role here. In Ghana, I didn’t have that challenge with communication at work. But if you happen to find yourself in the communication and hospitality section, it might not be a barrier since they require English speakers to work for them”*.

### **Transnational parenting roles**

The family relation between the interviewee and his family can be described as transnational as their main forms of contact have been across borders. Their main form of communication over all these years has been over telephone and no visits yet since he left Ghana 23 years ago. Describing how often they keep in touch with each other, he said; *“We do chat sometimes on the phone and do WhatsApp video as well. Many times, we talk, and we keep in touch regularly [...] I haven’t seen them physically for 23 years now.”*

He further mentioned how remittances played an important role in how he has maintained his role as a father and a husband over the years. For the interviewee the expectation to take care of his family extends beyond his nuclear family to include the extended family, including his nieces and nephews and his siblings who were the main motivation to look for greener pastures in Europe. He states;

*“Usually, they make demands when we chat, so in a monetary aspect, I send them some money through Western Union and Ghana Commercial Bank to cater for their needs. I send money often to make sure their needs are taken care of”*

*“You can bear witness to the fact that standard of living in Africa is not easy and we depend on each other for support in a family. So, we practice the extended family system a lot in Africa. We have a good bond and there is no problem between us as a big family and equally support my nieces and nephews through school”*

### **Plans of reunification**

One distinctive thing about this interviewee is the loss of interest in reuniting with his family, especially his son. This has been due to the age limitation for children or dependent relatives in the reunification laws. According to him, his only child is 26 years old now and even though he is still supporting him, he is too old to qualify for reunification as a dependent child. Asking why he had not applied for reunification all these years of staying here, he mentioned how his irregular situation in the country, coupled with his inability to reach the financial and accommodation requirements when his son was young. Even though he has stayed in Lisbon for a long time now, his situation on residence was only resolved in 2015 when he started paying social security from his work. In his words he described the process as too late now and will prefer that he stays in Ghana as he has a good job now, and also to look after his mother in his absence and does not mention the possibility of reuniting with his wife too. He said;

*“Well, I have not planned on that. Now he is 26 years and considered as an adult. He does not qualify to come as someone I have to take care of him now. I think it is a good opportunity for him to stay and further his school and have a good job in Ghana, and also help take care of his mother too”*

He maintained a strong stance about bringing his wife to Portugal;

*“I still think that staying in Ghana and getting a job can help and also develop the country. I travelled to Portugal because I could not further my education and I had a family to take care of with no help from anyone. If I had the opportunity to continue my education and subsequently get a job, I would have stayed, travelling could not have been an option. It is not easy surviving without a good qualification here. [...] and maybe if things change, I will bring in family member but not my wife, I will not bring in my wife, definitely not”*

In as much as the interviewee has no intention of reuniting with his family anytime soon, he was quite abreast with laws on family reunification. He said he had made inquiries sometime back when he wanted to bring his family to Portugal, and also for his cousin in Norway about chances of getting a similar opportunity for his family should he migrate to Portugal. He shares his idea about the law as;

*“For what I know, you should have a working contract, an apartment, should be working and at least should have an amount of 8,000 to 10,000 euros in your account. The person you are bringing in must have passed all necessary tests and checks that allow them to travel even before you proceed with the process. Again, you should earn about 1,000 euros a month. This can at least help you cater for the person when he/she comes. That is what I know. But with all these requirements about the finances and total commitment to take care of them, and considering how much I make every month, I don’t have that ability to undertake that responsibility”*

Akwasi mentions he got the updated information about family reunification from the immigrant’s center established by the Portuguese government to provide support and information to migrants. He further mentions how his cousin in Norway had shown interest in reuniting his family in Portugal rather than Norway, based on the speculation among the migrant community about the flexibility of laws on reunification in Portugal. For him, the reason for his inability to reunite with his family was not with the laws, but rather his own difficulties with regard to residence title and financial stability, which though has changed for the better now, made him lose interest in the process.

*“I got this information when I went to Centro Nacional de Apoio à Integração de Migrantes (CNAIM). I made some enquiries from the immigrants’ center about it. And also, for a brother in Norway who wanted to bring in his child to Portugal and got the information, which made me aware of the process more”.*

Even though the interviewee felt the requirements to achieve family reunification may be hard to meet for a below the average earning (less than 500 euros a month) migrant in Portugal, he thinks the process is quite clear and less difficult if you meet requirements. In his opinion, he says:

*“No, they are very simple, and one can achieve them with hard work and have all the required documents. You only hope for the process to go through smoothly; having your contract, work and apartment, family documents and all the basic requirements.”*

### **Future prospects**

Sadly, the interviewee was less enthusiastic about a future where he will reunite with family and rather seemed comfortable living as a transnational family. He believes there are equally good opportunities in Ghana if one has access to good education. Citing his situation as unfortunate which led him to migrate for greener pastures, he believes once he is able to provide the support for his family back home, they will have better outcomes than he did while in Ghana.

His pessimism could be traced back to all he has experienced in Portugal since he arrived 23 years ago, including the forms of work and the process of regularizing his stay in Portugal. He considered life abroad as stressful and may have regrets of migrating as he would not recommend migration to his son or wife when he said:

*“Coming to Europe to be a casual worker is not easy. It is even more difficult if you have no or low-level education, finding a job and settling in well is very challenging. Even though now*

*I am independent, have my documentation and can bring them, it is not easy for me, and I believe it will be for their own good to stay in Ghana and take the opportunities there.”*

*“No, I prefer she stays back home, feel free and feel less stressed, see things back home and settle the house rather than bringing her to Portugal to go through the stressful life. She will have to be free”.*

When asked about if he considers language barrier as one of the stresses of living here in Portugal, the interviewee answers in affirmative, coupled with the stress of finding a decent work and living a fulfilled life may not be easy to achieve here. He did not have any future aspiration in regard to making Portugal the future home for himself and his family, but only wished they made the best out of the opportunities they had back in Ghana. He ended the interview by envisioning a future where his family will live in Ghana, with a passionate advice saying;

*“Just as you have said, it is a factor, but I will prefer my family staying in Ghana, school, work and helping the country as well. Coming here is stressful, sometimes with the kind of work you will have to do no matter your level of education and your qualification. You can have a qualification and be employed here to practice your profession, but these are very few lucky ones.*

*“There are many Ghanaians who have better education that could have fetched some better jobs in Ghana, but they ended up at the construction site and other casual works like waiter and waitress in restaurants and hotels in Portugal. I was a good student, but I did not get the opportunity to continue my education like some of my mates did, and they have good jobs and are doing well in life, some are police inspectors, others are engineers. So, like I said early on, if I had had that opportunity, travelling might not have been an option. I would have stayed home and helped my family. I will not advise any family member with such opportunities to travel here to stay. Life is hard here. And I don't have any plans of reuniting with my family yet.”*

### **3. Emma (Pseudonym)**

#### **Socio-Demographic Information**

Name: Emman

Sex: Male

Age: 38

Education: Basic Education Certificate

Date of arrival in Portugal: 27th August,2016

Family situation: Transnational family- Wife and daughter living in Ghana

#### **Observation notes**

This participant was one of the first people I contacted, requesting his participation in my study. However, due to his busy work schedule, yet one the hardest to schedule a time for the interview. He kept postponing the interview until 3<sup>rd</sup> May,2020 he called saying he was now ready for the interview. I identified him through the recommendation of my first interviewee as they came from the same hometown and mentioned he would be relevant to my study. He shared the characteristics of my proposed sample group which is a Ghanaian living in Lisbon and having considered family reunification. He had an interesting story to share about his experiences in Lisbon since he arrived. The interview was conducted around 16.00hrs via the telephone from our homes, in “Twi” and lasted about 37 minutes in all.



## **Family information**

The interviewee has a small family back in Ghana, made up of a wife and one daughter. The wife lives with his daughter at his hometown in the central region of Ghana, quite far from the capital. The daughter is five years old and she started a private school some time ago. She is in primary year one now. His wife has basic education up to the junior secondary level. He mentions that his wife provides care for the child while she works as a petty trader in foodstuff. Here in Portugal, he has no family or relatives at the moment but he has an uncle who was previously living in Portugal and served as the main source of information about migrating to Lisbon. He moved to Germany before the arrival of the interviewee in Lisbon.

## **Interviewee educational background assessment**

In terms of his education, the interviewee stated he completed basic education of nine years in the public school in his town and proceeded to the secondary school in another town close to his town. He snaps in sharply when questioned about his educational background and says; *“I ended the secondary school, just that! I went to [...] secondary school”*. He however said he did not complete his secondary school education. *“No, I dropped out along the line, because I lost interest. After the first year”*

The interviewee is able to read, speak and write English averagely, as they used English as the medium of instruction in school but is very proficient in speaking the local language, Fante but not in writing he said *“Teaching was done mostly in English and sometimes Fante [...] Well, yes, I can speak Fante perfectly but not the writing. As for the English, I am not perfect but I get by.”*

## **Previous working experience before migrating**

Emman shares his working experience and living condition before migration. He mentions that before travelling to Portugal life was not so rosy, even when he had a job. In these words, *“well, before I came to Lisbon, life was not so easy, but it was okay a little bit. I used to work by the sea shore as a secretary. He tells how he worked at the sea shore as a local secretary for the local fishermen, engaging mainly in the administrative roles of book keeping on sales and savings at the bank.*

*“No, I did not go fishing but worked as a secretary for the fishermen. Usually, I stayed back and waited for them to arrive, I supervised the quantity of fish on the shore, took stock before selling to the fishmongers. I was also in charge of the accounts for monies I got from selling the fish. Managed the financial movements of money to the banks for savings”*.

## **Early motivations to migrate**

The interviewee does not attribute the motivation to move to a particular reason, except that he had always dreamt of migrating. The desire was sparked by returnees from Europe who tell beautiful stories about the work opportunities across Europe. He says *“Oh, nothing really pushed me except that the desire to travel had always been on my mind. It was way back, and people I knew from my town had travelled to Europe and came back with nice testimonies. Meanwhile, life in Ghana was not that stable too, considering the chances of getting jobs and opportunities to make it in life were very slim. So, when I got the opportunity to travel, I did not want to miss it”*.

Asking further about which opportunity came for him, he mentions receiving information on details of the migratory process, clearly demonstrating roles played by migrant networks in spreading information of prosperity and hope to colleagues back home. He shares; *“actually, I had friends who had travelled to Spain and also an uncle who was in Portugal earlier, they gave me information about ways to acquire a visa to travel. I only had to prepare financially through savings and contact him when I was ready”*

These support networks do not only provide information, sometimes they go a step further to provide support in terms of preparation towards the journey, putting documents together and providing assistance through whichever means they may be using to migrate. In some cases, if they are capable, they sponsor the trip for a refund or for free, depending on the existing relationship among them.

*“I discussed the idea with my wife and made preparations to travel. Once I had enough money saved with the help of my wife, and some family members, I applied for a Schengen tourist visa from the Netherlands embassy in Ghana with the help with a friend who assisted in organizing the documents”.*

### **Previous migration experiences**

The interviewee had had not any previous migration experience as the first time he left Ghana was 27th August, 2016 and came from Ghana to Portugal directly. He said he did not go to any other country before arriving in Portugal with what he describes as a “genuine Schengen tourist visa” to say he had legal permit to enter Portugal.

### **Settling in Portugal**

In as much the interviewee had a valid visa, the visa was only short term thus he had to strategize in terms of settling in Lisbon. He shares that the only contact he had here, his uncle who served as the main source of information about his travel to Portugal, had moved to Germany after obtaining his permanent residence permit to explore better economic opportunities. He had to rely on the help of another contact person whom he met through his uncle’s support the first few weeks upon arrival.

He said: *“When I got here first, I did not have any contact person like that, because my uncle who was here had moved to Germany after getting his papers to work there, so I did not have anyone. Instead, my uncle contacted his Sierra Leonean friend here in Lisbon to host me at [...], a little bit outskirts of Lisbon, for a sometime, about a month. That was the time I organized myself to look for a job here to do”.*

The gesture from his uncle further highlights another important role played by migrants’ support networks, not only before migrating but also serving as links to other networks in a host country that helps relieve new migrants of the troubles of navigating their way through unfamiliar systems.

*“I came alone.... he was helpful really much, especially with ways to get around the city, what to do, basically, the dos and don’ts of Portugal”.*

### **Working in Portugal**

The interviewee shares his experience of landing his first work in Lisbon, he said: *“The man who hosted me when I arrived actually did not have any information on exact places for getting a job. Mostly, it was through my own efforts of walking around to explore opportunities. I did all this with a Ghanaian friend I made here, and through recommendation of some other migrants from Angola and Cape Verde, until we got a job to work in an agricultural field. We registered and started work there, that was the first job I did when I came here. I worked there for almost two years as farm assistant, during cultivation and harvesting of food”.*

When the interviewee was asked if the work he had found had language restrictions, he said *“no, no, no, it was not a requirement at all, they showed us what to do and we just did the work, we did not need much communication on the field”.*

Now the interviewee says he has resolved his residency issues, very excited by the development, he boldly says; *“Yes, now I have resolved every issue with documentation, and*

*I have secured my stay here [...], now I have everything, I go everywhere, the hospital and all services and I have work ”.*

After his visa expired in 2017, he lived in an irregular situation until January, 2019 while working on the agriculture farms. He later changed to work in a construction company a bit out of the city while he registered for his national security and started paying taxes, he also got an employment contract which earned him the waiver when he applied for a residence permit.

The opportunity to regularize his stay in Portugal has brought him much confidence and opened the opportunity for him to access basic welfare in Portugal, including, work, healthcare and even the right to family reunification. Currently, the interviewee works as a factory assistant in a bakery in Lisbon and sounds much confident saying *“I work at [...], a big Portuguese Bakery”.*

### **Language Learning in Portugal**

The interviewee however got the opportunity to enroll in the free language school provided by the government to foster migrant integration in the country. Asked if he could speak Portuguese, he said he could speak and understand to a considerable amount but not proficient in the language. He said *“ The basic knowledge, one that allows me to work and get around the city. I can speak a little, it is not like the earlier days. I went to the language school for almost two months for free, but my concentration was not there, so I stopped. I did not complete the course actually [...]. The one I attended was in [...]. I don't know if it was a government school or private school”*

The interviewee did not complete the language school and dropped out after the second month. He attributed his inability to complete the language course to an unstable mental state at the time of enrolment. He had to deal with the issues of acquiring a residence permit after his six months Schengen visa had expired, deal with work shifts on the farm that clashed with class schedules, with other worries. He did not attribute it to his inability to grasp the course on the difficulty of the language but rather blamed his mental state while describing the learning of Portuguese not so difficult. He said:

*“The fact is, it was not so difficult to learn it, I just did not have enough concentration to learn the language, I had a lot on my mind. I did not have much time between work and the school time, and also, I had some issues to resolve, like my documentation to live in Portugal, and other things. I did not have a stable mind to learn so I stopped”*

Notwithstanding these challenges that made him dropout of language class, he recognized how important the language was to his survival in Portugal, thus, had to learn Portuguese while socializing with people who spoke the language, especially his work colleagues whom he mentioned were from Portuguese-speaking African countries. He had to rely on the help of those who could speak both Portuguese and English to help him not just listen but also understand, which formed the basic knowledge of Portuguese which he knows. Now he taps in that reserve to help him work in places he could not have worked years due to language barrier.

*“Yes, I learnt it on my own from other work colleagues. The work I was doing had a lot of Africans working there too, mostly from former colonies like Cape Verde, Sao Tome, Guinea and Angola. So, I learnt it from their daily interactions, and also because some of the Africans understood both Portuguese and English, when I did not understand something in Portuguese, they explained to me. That is how I learnt the little I speak now”.*

Emma shares his opinion on the relevance of language to working in Portugal, he says: *“It is very important to at least know basic Portuguese, maybe not in absolute terms. For example,*

*in my work it's mostly practical work in the factory so in case you don't understand what is said, you can observe and work. But it is much more convenient if you can speak and understand each other at work. It is not a strict criterion for the job [...]. Well, like I said, it is a factory, so we do not come into contact with our customers. I work inside where food is baked and packed for distribution to shops and café, so not too much of it is required. The basic knowledge is good to go”.*

In his opinion, even when it's not necessarily important to communicate so much as part of your work, it is good for one to understand and partake in work culture, even for one's own benefit.

### **Transnational parenting roles**

The family of the interviewee can also be described as transnational as they have been separated since Emma has travelled only to visit them once after taking a break from work, last year for about a month after he regularized his stay in Portugal. Aside from this visit back home last year, they keep in touch with each other through communication with the help of the Internet and technological applications like WhatsApp audio and video calls. He shows his effort in keeping the connection with his family when he says, *“oh yes, we keep in touch constantly, almost every day on WhatsApp”.*

Even though he admits that engaging in transnationalism is difficult, he admits it's the only alternative he has to be a part of their lives until a hopeful reunification. He explains by saying parenting across borders is different in terms of having much control of how to raise his daughter and also considering busy work schedules and data challenges including cost of data in Ghana and quality service provision by network providers.

He expresses himself in these words: *“It won't be the same as I was in Ghana, in that situation, I am present and can supervise everything that goes on, but now I am here and can only communicate on the phone. With data challenges and busy work schedules, it's hard to perform those responsibilities exactly how I did when I was in Ghana. Parenting is never the same, I am here, and she is there, I can't have total control over raising my daughter up”.*

Despite all these challenges, he still never gives up trying to be a responsible father and husband, even from afar and proudly says: *“I am very responsible as I take care of them financially, I make sure I send them money every month after I am paid from my work. I do everything well”.*

### **Plans of reunification**

When the interviewee was asked about his plans of reunification, he answered in affirmation with a very short but definite answer, *“Yes, I think it's better to live together as a family 100%”,* and later he added, *“I have thought about it, I want to bring them here. With a determined mind to reunite with his family, I asked him if he knew the laws on family reunification in Portugal and he said: “Yes, I do[...] the law says if you have papers and are married, have children, working with a contract, save some money, have accommodation for yourself and the person coming, you have the right to bring your family here to live with you.”*

I asked where he heard or read the information from and he responded; *“from the SEF website, and also the immigrant center, Centro Nacional de Apoio à Integração de Migrantes, (CNAIM), where they gave me a list of the documents I will need for family reunion”.*

The interviewee has not yet started with application for reunification yet but demonstrated adequate preparation for the process over the years, since he arrived in Portugal. Even though

he had not started the process, he shares his opinion about the requirements and the process of application not being too demanding and complicated. And this he attributed to the clear and laid down procedure by SEF, CNAIM and also the explanation done by some immigrant's associations for their citizens, to remove all misconceptions about the process and also assistance on how to collate documents for the family reunification process. He narrates his preparations:

*"I am now about to start the process, I was gathering the documents first [...]. Oh no, the documents are not too much and does not seem complicated at all, it is okay, once I follow the SEF requirements, I can do it all by myself."*

*"I know of many immigrant associations that provide this information to explain the process to people, and also help them with what documents to gather, but I only went to the immigrant's office (CNAIM) in Anjos For all inquiries and information confirmation. They will provide you with any help you need. I don't know their names specifically but only know there are many groups for the different migrants here"*.

The interviewee was hopeful and optimistic that once he submits the application, he was going to achieve reunification. He shared: *"oh, the process won't be difficult I guess, I haven't done it because I was not ready then. All you need to do is to qualify for the process, but this year, I will start soon after the pandemic. I went to Ghana to gather the documents so hopefully all goes well so they can join me"*.

### **Future prospects**

With regards to his future prospects, the interviewee was hopeful of achieving reunification with his family in Portugal and envisions a future where they will make Portugal their permanent home. He says: *"If by God's grace they are able to join me here, we will plan our lives. In 10 years I wish to be living with my family here in Portugal, well settled and living well. Even though I cannot make a definite vision of where I will be, if it is the will of God, all my dreams will come true. The children will go to school, and her mother will also find work to do with the right documents to support each other"*.

This vision to live with his family in Portugal according to Emma won't go without adequate preparation for his family's integration into the Portuguese society, especially, with regards to learning Portuguese: *"Yes, the language will be very necessary so I plan to enroll them in the language school to learn the basics that will enable my daughter to go to school and my wife also find work to do to keep the family going"*.

Expressing his appreciation for a generous migrant integration policy in Portugal, the interviewee expressed his desire to live here forever as he says: *"My lady, you know what, Portugal has received me so well that I don't intend going anywhere, I am very sure I will be here with my family. I don't have any problem here"*.

He was wondering why some migrants will leave Portugal for better lives in other countries because he believes it is the best destination for migrants. In his opinion, he says: *"well, that is them, it depends on the kind of experience they had while here but for me, Portugal is my new home and I don't have any problem staying here. As for this place, their laws and attitude towards migrants is 100% perfect. Because you won't find many migrant friendly laws like this in many European countries like they have here in Portugal. Portugal is the best"*.

Interestingly, the interviewee won't accept any challenge that Portugal is not the best destination for migrants who have future dreams of living in Europe and even makes a funny submission about how migrant networks discuss all the migrant policies in their respective countries and how Portuguese policies emerge as one of the best in Europe. He snaps in during

the challenge when I ask him on what grounds he makes such statement about Portugal having the best migrant policies and says:

*“Oh stop, we have heard about it and I have read about their laws online. We have friends, relatives and acquaintances in these countries, so I know what I am talking about. I know what they are experiencing there, and we also know what we have here . Yes, yes, I won’t even let you go further, my answer is yes, it is the best place.* The interview ended on this interesting note.

#### **4. Adomanko (Pseudonym)**

##### **Socio-demographic Information**

Name: Adomanko

Sex: Male

Age: 38

Education: Master’s in Project Management from China

Date of arrival in Portugal: September,2019

Family situation: Transnational family- wife and daughter in Ghana

##### **Observation Notes**

This respondent was identified through the recommendation of my colleague from Ghana after I shared my dilemma of accessing respondents due to the lockdown regulation. He is also studying for his master’s degree in International Studies at ISCTE. I contacted him, asking him if he could participate in my study, he asked for the study objectives and requested to read through my interview guide before agreeing to join. I explained the objectives to him and the main research questions, after which he scheduled a meeting over the next weekend. On the day of the interview, I contacted him some minutes to the scheduled time as it was supposed to take place over the phone, he was a bit occupied and delayed for an hour and half before I gained his permission to begin. The initial time schedule was 14.00 hrs but had to be moved to 15.30 hrs. His interview was quite interesting as he shared his failed attempt to achieve reunification and presented a different twist to the previous narratives. Even though his characteristics are different from the proposed sample population, he shared a similar interest in reuniting with his family, just only with prior experience.

The interview took place on Saturday May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020, over the phone in our homes, in twi and lasted about 40 minutes.

##### **Family information**

The interviewee has a family back in Ghana, consisting of a wife and a daughter, who is two years old. His wife has a bachelor’s degree in Sociology from the university of Ghana and worked as an intern teaching English in an English school in China. She does not work at the moment and their daughter is not in school yet as she is just two years old. In terms of caregiving, her mother stays home to provide care of their daughter. The family lives in the Ashanti region of Ghana, while he lives without any family here in Portugal.

##### **Interviewee educational background assessment**

The interviewee has a Master’s in project management from China and currently studying for a Master’s in International Studies now at ISCTE. All his studies until he travelled to china have been in Ghana and taught in English. Both masters are in English and he is fluent in English and Twi, both in speech and in writing.

##### **Previous working experience before migrating**

As stated earlier, the interviewee had experienced living in a different country before he moved to Portugal. He had previously travelled to China and lived there for two and half years to

pursue a Master's in Project Management. He mentions that life was quite good, and he had work and a comfortable life working in the education office at Asante Mampong.

### **Early motivations to migrate**

Answering on what motivated him to travel, the interviewee responded that it was mainly for the purpose of studying in China. While in Ghana, he had only a bachelor's degree to work as a civil servant, and he had the desire to further his education for a Masters. These trips are either self-funded, partial or fully funded by some scholarship boards. The interviewee was fortunate to have benefited from the Chinese government scholarship scheme which he applied for while working in Ghana, thus, planning for his journey was less complicated. He got his visa from the Chinese embassy in Ghana and organized the trip by himself once he had all supporting documents. He said: *"I did everything by myself. Well, I had the Chinese government scholarship, so I organized all my travel documents and myself for the Master's"*.

After completing his masters, the interviewee decided with his wife to pursue another Master while his wife also pursued her first master in Portugal. For the couple this was a decision to help their future plans and also to live together in the same country as a way of keeping the family together. While both interviewee and his wife got admission to ISCTE and university of Porto respectively, the embassy in china refused his wife's visa, resulting in the separation of the family with Adomanko coming to Portugal while his wife and daughter moved back to Ghana.

### **Previous migration experiences**

Sharing his previous migration experience, the interviewee mentioned how he lived and studied in China. He left Ghana for the first time in 2017 September to China for a 2- year-study period. Asked how he managed to live in relation to access to work, language learning opportunities and healthcare in China, he shares an interesting bit about how people with international students visas and permits are not allowed to work but rather engage in internships to sustain their lives. He was fortunate to have been covered with insurance from his scholarship, but other students had to pay for their own insurance cover.

*"Work in China? No, just an internship. You can't work in China as the Chinese government does not allow foreign students to work so I could only do an internship [...]. Also, all students have access to insurance (health), all students had insurance cover [...]. Hahaha, oh no, we pay but because I was on scholarship, I did not have to pay myself, it was covered by the Chinese government. Fee paying students paid themselves"*

While studying there, the interviewee mentions having access to a one-year free Chinese language course as part of their curriculum to facilitate their integration into the Chinese society but aside that, the study was in English. He shares: *"Well, I was using English during my internships, but we had a one-year compulsory study of Chinese to help with integration and life in China. It was part of the program, for instance, like they could incorporate a semester of learning Portuguese, even though my study is in English. We learnt for our own good, when I stepped out, I could communicate small to get by. (speaks some Chinese)"*.

### **Settling in Portugal**

Even though the interviewee had experienced living in a different country aside his home country, he still had some challenges when he arrived in Portugal. Sharing his settling experience, he mentions the lack of coordinated reception for new international students from the university. Ranging with issues of having accommodation before arrival into the country, the high costs of hotel accommodation and the inconveniences of having to move from one hotel to the other were the initial challenges he had with settling in Lisbon. Comparing his

experience as an international student in China and what he experienced here in Lisbon, he sounded very disappointed.

*“I came here on 10th September for my second Master’s in International Studies. But it was really difficult settling in, here the schools don’t help at all. I got admission and my visa, yes, I have my money yet no hope of accommodation. Even when I called them, there was no accommodation for me, how do I attend school then? This is not so in China where we secured our accommodation even before arrival. It was really a problem as I had to sleep in three different hotels upon arrival, with all the hefty costs and the movements too for 10 days. Until finally I got the school accommodation. The beginning was very hard. That was my main problem.”*

Another challenge the interviewee encountered includes language barrier and lack of support network. The interviewee described his first week in Portugal as dreadful due to these challenges and shares his experience in these words:

*“Well, the first week was really dreadful so I had to rely on basic survival skills, Google maps and some people I met in the streets who speak English to help me get around the city. But in the subsequent week, I met a Ghanaian man in my master’s program who assisted me with the information which was very helpful”*

Considering the fact that the interviewee lived with his family in China, living in Portugal without them was not a pleasant experience for him. Asking him if he had read about the laws of Portugal, his response shows he had read about his rights as a student and his chances of reunification. He shared: *“As a student, I read the basic rules about my rights as a student and what I can’t do, so I read small. For instance, how I will need a residence permit before I can work in Portugal. And also, laws on reunification since I have a family I wanted to bring here too”*.

Reflecting on his experiences about settling in Portugal, the interviewee mentions how his situation would have been different if he had any support network to help with settling in Lisbon. He says migrant networks are very important in many ways as they make life much easier. He cites the presence of such support networks in his previous migration experience: *“Definitely, even in China, same way, we depended on networks to help us, to know the easy way around the place, for your own safety, and to feel belonged in a new place. I say it is always important.*

### **Language learning in Portugal**

In terms of learning Portuguese language, the interviewee shares that he has not made an effort to learn Portuguese yet as he has not had the opportunity to enroll into a language school or course yet, either in his master program or the government established schools. He also expresses interest in learning but at the same time concerned about the cost of learning the language and is only ready to invest in it if it comes at no cost. He seemed not aware of the free language school for foreigners who want to learn Portuguese or any organized by the university for such purposes. He was ready to learn Portuguese for the purpose of integration and to explore more employment opportunities.

*“If the opportunity comes, I will learn it. If I have a free language school, I will learn because I can’t afford it since I am a fee-paying student here. Also, I haven’t been here for a long time, so, I don’t know much about such opportunities unless someone tells me where and how you can do it. If there is such an opportunity, I will take it. I am not aware of this, and my colleague is also ignorant of this too”*



*“Of course, it will help because when you go to a country, it is always necessary to know the language in order to access work opportunities, no one can cheat you too. So, if I’m living here for long, it is necessary to learn it but now I’m not enthused about it because I can’t afford it”*

### **Working in Portugal**

Interviewee did not have any work experience in Portugal as he has only been studying

### **Transnational parenting roles**

The interviewee only began a transnational parenting role when he moved to Portugal last year but seemed to be working at maintaining his previous roles while they lived together. He said: *“We have a very good relationship. Like I said earlier, I was with them in China until they went to Ghana, and I still get in touch with them every day. Everything is okay. In terms of feeding them, I am currently not responsible for that because I already gave them access to my previous savings bank account before I came here. You know I do things together with my wife, so I don’t have to remit them while I am here.”*

He explains the main role he performs as a transnational parent is to keep in touch with the family through communication since he doesn’t have the responsibility of remittances at the moment. He explains *“Now the major thing I do is to communicate with them often, aside from that, I don’t have a major role, especially in terms of financing since they already have access to the funds”*. Even though he communicates with them often, he still thinks it would have been far better living here with them.

### **Plans of reunification**

Commenting on his plans of reunification, the interviewee said he had the initial plan of moving with his family from China to Lisbon, but instead of applying for reunification visas for them, he wanted his wife to cease the opportunity to also pursue further studies. This plan was however shattered as his wife’s visa was refused and therefore could not move to Lisbon with her husband. He narrated his ordeal as follows:

*“I even had that plan in China before I came. But unfortunately, my wife who also wanted to pursue a Masters in Porto University was refused a visa on the grounds that since we are a family, we needed to apply for a reunification visa and not a study permit. This was quite unfortunate because my main motive initially was for family reunification but using school as alternative, but she was refused visa, thus, she could not come with me but had to return to Ghana”*

*“Yes, because if I knew that was my plan initially won’t work, I would not have bothered to apply for admission into a university for her and even proceeded to pay for her school fees. University of Porto pays fees monthly, thus, they requested a three-month-fee- payment, which I did, over 1,000 euros. Yet she was refused a visa, how is she supposed to attend school. Worse, the school refused to refund the paid fees, but rather offering a deferment of the study as an alternative, this is not fair at all”*

After his shattered plans, he had to come to Lisbon alone and strategize on how to reunite with his family, as according to the embassy he used the wrong process for his plan. The embassy preferred that he applied using the regular family reunification procedure, and not separate study visas. The interviewer seemed to have made a decision without a proper consultation from the consulate on his chances of achieving his aim. But with knowledge of family reunification requirements in Portugal, he plans on applying through the due process to bring his family here.

*"[...] I received a message from the embassy stating that I should apply through the proper channel, which is family reunification. Meanwhile, if I had known this was the case, I'm sure she could have gotten the visa and would be here with me now. Because in China, I just sent an invitation to her and she joined, but this time, I wanted her to enter as a student, that is why I paid for her fees. It is lot of money, with her visa, school refusing to refund my money and all. Because I have all the required documents which I could use to apply for family reunification, financial statement and certificates"*

*"For now, that is the only option I have so if things settle down after the pandemic, I will consider the process and do that. I have read some, the required documents and all that I will need for the process. I did that online, on the migration agency website or online portal"*

*"Looking at the turnout of events and with the pandemic stopping a lot of things, I think it will make sense that I wait for the coming year to be on a safe side. Like I told you, now I'm paying so much to survive here, 250 euros for rent, with no stipends and no job, they are surviving on my savings back home too, so, hopefully, I get something doing and everything settles down, next year"*

Considering his ordeal in his failed attempt to reunite with his family, when the interviewee was asked about his perception about the Portuguese law on reunification, he still felt it was considerably fair, taking into account the requirements. He only blamed his failed effort of misunderstanding the purpose of his strategy by the Portuguese consulate in China. He was quite adamant to accept blame for his failed attempt yet was ready to follow the reunification process while studying here in Lisbon since he had all the necessary documents. He however did not sound so optimistic about the process due to his past experience.

*"Well, I think it's okay, it is normal because I think you can't bring your partner without the marriage certification, or any proof of the relationship. That is why I told you that my plan was initially for reunification but also for her to study but her visa was refused. But I have read, and I know what they need so I will say it's okay"*

*"Well, I can still provide that because I have some savings back home, so that won't be a problem. Financing is not the problem; the only problem is to get her the visa. Because what I know is that in China, she would have gotten the visa already. I already spent so much on the first application, almost 2,000 euros for the school fees, advance payments and legalization of all the documents. So, I hope I don't spend so much again to be refused visa again"*

*"[...] because the reason for the first refusal did not make sense, that if I am studying here, my wife can't study here because she is married to me when she qualifies? but I will try regardless because it looks like the only viable way to reunite with my family here. Things happened contrary to my plan, if not I would have finished this process already"*

### **Future prospects**

With much pessimism, the interviewee does not seem to have future plans of making Portugal his future home for himself and his family. Not very sure of his chances of his family granted the right to reunification, he rather thinks his family's visit will be much more of a visit, rather than with the hope of living in Portugal forever. He says:

*"Maybe, I will get it, maybe they will be living here, or they will come and visit me and go back. Like I said, next year hopefully, let's see what happens. Because from what I have gathered, and the experience I have had, I am not sure I will want to live here for a longer period. Staying here will be difficult."*

Another reason he gives for not having a future goal of living long in Portugal is the economic situation in the country. He makes this assumption based on the kind of work he wants to do,

and the salary will be much lesser in Portugal, thus, he is targeting much flourishing economies in North America or a move back to Ghana with his family.

*“The kind of job and the salary I will expect, I don’t think I will land some here. Hahaha, so maybe they will come and visit me, after school I will go back home or move to another country. currently, I only envision that after school or next year, I may be moving to some other country, maybe Canada. Not Europe, but somewhere in North America. Yeah, that’s why I said they will come for visits and go back.*

## **5. Esi (Pseudonym)**

### **Socio-demographic information**

Name: Esi

Sex: Female

Age: 31

Education: Master’s in Filmmaking in Portugal

Date of arrival in Portugal: September,2018

Family situation: Co-parenting Mother with an ex-partner, son lives with father in Ghana

### **Observation notes**

This respondent was the first female who shared her experience on transnational family life and also her plans of reunification. She was very quick to offer to join the study after I had explained the purpose of study to her. Her perspective and experiences are quite different from the initial sample size, but she shares one thing in common with all the participants, which is, doing families across borders and in the process of family reunification. Her story about being separated from her partner yet co-parenting brings to light another aspect of reunification possibility when parents are even separated from each other, with one in transnational situation, yet each of them working to promote the interest of the child.

The interview took place over the phone due to lockdown laws, in our respective homes, on April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020, around 15.00hrs. We had some network challenges and I had to call participant back after the line dropped on one occasion. The interview lasted for 37 minutes, 20seconds and was the only interview conducted in English. We had a pleasant conversation.

### **Family information**

The interviewee reports having a son, who is five years old. Even though she has a child, she is not married to her partner as they separated before leaving Ghana. His partner is 32 years old and has a bachelor’s degree in Filmmaking. While in Ghana, she had shared custody of her son, but since she migrated to Lisbon, the father provides care for the child, with the support from his grandparents who live in the capital city, Accra. The son attends a private school and currently in a Kindergarten. She was a freelance film director and script supervisor before she travelled, while the boy’s father also works as a film editor in Ghana. She has no relatives in Lisbon or the diaspora at the moment.

### **Interviewee educational background assessment**

The interviewee is currently studying for her Master’s in Filmmaking at the Universidade Lusófona, Lisbon. She had all her education in Ghana and was taught English. Her current Master is also in English. She is proficient in English, Twi and Ewe languages.

### **Previous working experience before migrating**

Discussing her previous working experiences in Ghana before moving to Lisbon, she shares that her life was fairly okay, but she decided to pursue further studies when she got a fully funded scholarship to study in Portugal. She said:

*“I decided to take up this course to advance my knowledge in film making and I believe doing it in another country will be good because it will open me up to other cultures and experiences. So, life was ok in Ghana, I had no problem, I only wanted more experience”*

Prior to moving to Lisbon, the interviewee worked as a freelance film assistant director and script supervisor and had a stable professional life, while supporting to raise her son. *“Yes. I have always been in the film industry usually as an assistant director or script supervisor. That’s what I did to survive and also to take care of my child too”*

### **Early motivations to migrate**

Commenting on her motivation to migrate, the interviewee mentions it was a personal decision to pursue her Master’s after landing the opportunity to study on a scholarship abroad. She had the dream of travelling around the world, thus, she took advantage of the opportunity to achieve her dream. She also mentions the desire to land better work opportunities in her career after studying in the European Master’s in filmmaking which will further increase her capabilities in providing the best care for her son.

*“It was a personal decision. Like I said earlier, I have always wanted to travel and experience a lot of new things, so I took this opportunity to study in Europe.. My son is also a factor. I wanted the best for him, so, I decided to get a better job and provide for him”*

She further shares how she went about the planning of her journey, taking into consideration the caregiving arrangements for her son;

*“I applied for the program and scholarship online myself, I got admission and received all supporting documents needed for the application of a visa. I applied for the visa through the Portuguese consulate in Ghana, but the visa was issued from Lagos, Nigeria. I told my son’s father when I applied and got admission, but he did not have much of a problem as I explained I will still support financially. I also arranged with my family (mother and big brother) to pick him up for vacations. I also promised to go home in the summer to visit him. They were all understanding and supportive.*

### **Previous migration experiences**

The interviewee did not have any previous migration experience except when she travelled for the first time back in 2014 to Egypt for a film workshop for two weeks. Aside that, her first migration was when she left Ghana in September 2018 to Lisbon to study for her Master’s.

### **Settling in Portugal**

When asked to share her settling in Portugal experience, Esi mentions she had a tough welcome to Lisbon as she did not know anyone here initially and also did not have any accommodation because her university did not have student residence. She shares how much she had to spend on hotel accommodation because she did not have any idea how hostels worked in Europe. She had to move out at a point to live with a male course mate from Lebanon for some days when she had almost exhausted all her funds looking for accommodation. She also suffered the difficulty in getting accommodation due to the language barrier as most of the available homes she went to check preferred people who could speak Portuguese as the landlords/ladies could not speak English. These situations stressed her much until a friend in Ghana contacted a network in Lisbon to help her resolve the problem of accommodation. She narrated:

*“I did not know anyone and to be honest it was very tough at the beginning. When I first came, I stayed in a hotel for a long time. At one point, I could not afford it so I had to look for an alternate accommodation while staying with a male course mate of mine while I did the search. I was quite disturbed because a few of the landlords were hesitant because I was unable to speak Portuguese and they could not speak English too. Eventually, I got an accommodation after I got introduced to two Ghanaian friends who helped me find a place and also helped me with settling in, in terms of information about the transport system and general survival tips. I only had peace of mind after I met these Ghanaians”.*

Once again, the importance of migrant support networks came up in the interviewees settling in Portugal experience. The contact person who introduced her to the Ghanaians was somebody who lived in Portugal and had previously shared home with them. Only after sharing her difficulties with her friend in Ghana could she have received help in those distressing moments. This shows how support networks help could be useful even across borders.

*“Yes, definitely, and I think it is very important to have people help you settle when you go to a new place because when I came, I did not know anyone. I met him through a friend who already did a course here in Portugal and knew him, they lived in the same apartment. But he was in Ghana at the moment I arrived, so he called him to inform him I had arrived in Portugal and was experiencing some hardships, and we got connected and things became easy since then”*

### **Language learning in Portugal**

Even though the interviewee has been in Portugal for about two years now, she had not yet learnt to speak Portuguese. She shares that she is now making efforts to learn as the beginning semesters of the program was quite demanding, and in English too so the motivation to learn the language was not a priority then. She said she had plans of enrolling in the free language courses provided by the government once her semester ended in May, but with the incidence of the covid-19 pandemic, her plans are still pending. But in the meantime, she relies on mobile application, “Duolingo” to learn the basics.

*“No, I did not learn the language yet. The course is a full-time program as there was no time. I am now trying to learn the Portuguese using the Duolingo app. You know, I had plans of attending the free language courses after I was done with my master’s but with Corona in the system, the schools are closed I heard but I will enroll once they open. I saw it online. I asked about some Portuguese schools and I found out some were free for immigrants. I also realized from a friend I met who directed me to a place not far from where he lived.”*

*“I am learning, and I also try speaking Portuguese with my landlord which is making it better to practice with some of the words I learn. I am hoping that some years to come I will be able to speak fluent Portuguese. Because it will be helpful while I look for work after school, it is very important. Sometimes I wish I had the flair to learn or speak a lot of languages. Life here is better than in Ghana because the systems work well here than they do in Ghana. So, if I find work here, I will be happy”*

### **Working in Portugal**

Due to the busy school schedule of the interviewee, she has not had the opportunity to work in Portugal since her arrival. She had depended on the scholarship monthly stipend (1,000 euros monthly) she received. However, she has plans of working after her studies hence have started with plans to learn basic Portuguese to increase her chances of securing work.

### **Transnational parenting roles**

The interviewee engages in transnational parenting, even though separated from the /her child's father. She works at maintaining a very good relationship between them for the sake of the child. This is necessary because the father has the custody of the child while she is away, and it will be necessary to enable her to have constant communication with her son. She still performs her role as a mother, even across borders. She says: *"My son's father and I are separated but we are on good cordial terms, so we talk from time to time and he is a wonderful father and takes good care of my son. My son is always happy when I talk to him and we communicate a lot like three times a week. He loves me and I love him too, I miss him and cannot wait to live with him in Portugal"*

Talking about how her role as a mother has changed since she migrated, she said: *"When I was in Ghana, I had my own place because we were separated and we used to where my son would come to my place during the weekend and with his father during the weekdays. I contributed to providing him with his needs as a parent will do. Since I am here in Lisbon, he cannot visit on weekends. So I talk to him as often as I can and buy him things as well as providing for his needs"*

Even though the interviewee still performs her parenting roles, it is never the same, especially with her being the mother and with societal expectations of providing care and not the father assuming the majority of roles of caregiving. She mentions this in relation to care arrangements they had even when she was in Ghana, where her son spent school week with his father, and she had him for the weekend. She explains this arrangement occurred because his partners parents lived and owned a place in the capital, providing comfort and extra helping hands to help her busy schedules.

She shared: *"I had a very busy work schedule as I spent longer time on film sets, and his father had taken a break off work at that time so it was convenient that he stayed with him while I had him over the weekend. Also, my son's grandparents (ex-partners parents) owned a bigger house in the city while I rented a single room after the separation so it was comfortable for him in his father's house. His grandmother helped a lot and it has been the same since I left, except that I can't have him over in the weekends"*

*"I know people don't understand and assume I don't care about my son, but I really do care about him, I was not in a good place back then, and my family was in Obuasi, far from the city to help raise him. That is why I need to work to bring him here, so they stop talking, yet they don't know the roles I play in raising him. I talk to him often, I send his father money every month when I receive my stipend. I am really trying but I guess it is not enough"*

When the researcher asks her which of the roles she finds hard to perform across borders she responds:

*"It is hard to single out one particular thing and I cannot do things every day for him like I would when I was in Ghana, so talking to him frequently and sending him money for his needs are the major roles, none is more important than the other. I am his mother and its expected that he spends more time with me, but I am working on that"*

*"I am a single mother and it has not been easy to have physical contact with my son. What gives me joy and the peace of mind I have is knowing his father is also a wonderful man and he takes very good care of him in my absence. He sounds very happy anytime I talk to him, so it helps even though it is not easy"*

### **Plans of reunification**

The interviewee mentions that reuniting with her son will give her great pleasure and she is working towards that. She says: *“I have always wanted him to come at least for a visit so I have plans of getting him a residence card so he can visit and eventually move him to live with me”*.

With the schedule of her school program, and no knowledge of her eligibility as a student, she could not apply for reunification earlier but with the study coming to an end and with plans of living in Portugal, she plans to start the process of reuniting with her son.

*“Even though I do not have too much information on it. I know it is not difficult and only if you have genuine reasons. You can go to the immigration office, book an appointment and they will help you through the process and once you provide the needed documents, you are good to go”*

*“I got to know I was eligible to apply through a Ghanaian friend and that is the importance of knowing people from home, I thought because I was a student I did not qualify. I read about it and also went to the immigrant center for further details. I already have an appointment for him on 2<sup>nd</sup> June”*

The interviewee mentions that she has started collating the necessary documents she will need for the process. She shares in her opinion that the process in itself is not difficult, the only issue is to provide all the required documents, which in her case, the only challenge she will have is a proof of a work contract which she does not have as her appointment time with SEF is fast approaching. But she is quite optimistic she will find work, regardless of the language barrier.

*“I have started the process and it is not difficult. They told me the documents they require, and I have most of them while I am still working on the other documents. The main requirement is to get a job and have means to financially take care of him, so, I need to get a job first now that I am almost out of school. The process has not been difficult at all, once you go there, to Centro Nacional de Apoio à Integração de Migrantes (CNAIM), they will help you. There is a helpline you can call to enquire for more information too”*

*“Well, I have not tried getting a job before and because of the language barrier I am sure I will find something. I know a Ghanaian friend who is working here but is not fluent in Portuguese, so I think it will not be so hard”*. She sounded very optimistic about her chances.

### **Future prospect**

The interviewee mentions that she has in her future plans making Portugal her home, where she can live with her son. Even though she was very brief about it, she plans to achieve this by first working towards achieving reunification with her son and then to securing a permanent resident status. She hopes to find a suitable partner as well and live happily.

*“I have decided to work after school, and I am positive that once I provide the needed documents and go through the process it shall be fine. In the next ten years, I would like to settle somewhere in Europe, preferably Portugal, with my son and be able to work. I will find a partner to settle down with and as I like to be happy, enjoy the rest of my life happily.*

## **6. Eno (Pseudonym)**

### **Socio-demographic information**

Name: Eno

Sex: Female

Age: 41

Education: Basic education (lower secondary education)

Date of arrival in Portugal: 2012

Family situation: Two children (Twins) in Ghana, co-parenting with ex-partner in Ghana.

### **Observation notes**

This participant was one of the Ghanaian people I met in Lisbon in my first semester in my master's program through the recommendation of another Ghanaian man when I requested for the service of a Ghanaian stylist. Prior to the study, she mentioned she lived in Norway for some time when I mentioned my next program mobility country was Norway. When I asked her to be a participant in the study, she was a bit reluctant and kept postponing a time for the interview. I observed that she wasn't very comfortable with the idea of an interview considering her mode of entry into Portugal. But after much explanation of the research interest and the idea of participant confidentiality, she agreed and we scheduled an interview on Sunday May 10, at 14.00. Her interview presented a detailed conversation on her previous migration experience which influenced her decision to reunification and was the longest interview conducted thus far. The interview was done in twi (Akan) language via a telephone call from our homes. It lasted about 50 minutes

### **Family information**

The interviewee reports having two children, twins, a boy and a girl. They are 22 years old and are currently in their final year in teachers training. She was separated from her partner before travelling out of Ghana in 2009. In her absence, her older sister and parents in Ghana provide care for the twins, with support from their father. The children lived in their aunt in their maternal grandparent's house in the capital, Accra. Her ex-partner is a subsistence farmer in the eastern region of Ghana and has been supporting with the upkeep of the twins. He also has a basic education certificate from junior secondary school. She also has an auntie who lives in Norway for about 27 years now but no family in Portugal.

### **Interviewee educational background assessment**

Sharing her educational background, Eno mentions she only completed junior secondary school (JSS) in the capital, Accra. Her school was public school and the language used for teaching was English and Ga. She reports average skills reading and writing both languages as she did not further her education after the JSS. She says: *"I can speak Ga and Twi very well but not much of reading and writing. For English, it is a little difficult for me because I did not really continue school after my junior secondary school. I understand and speak, but not very fluent as the local languages"*

### **Previous working experience before migrating**

While in Ghana, the interviewee reports working as a hair stylist in a salon on a contract base. She described the informal contract as a common practice among hair stylists who are unable to open their own shops after graduating from the apprenticeship are hired to work in shops for a salary. She called it *"work and pay"*. She said it is usually at the discretion of shop owners to negotiate terms of payments, usually based on your skill, amount made in sales and sometimes the number of clients you work on. This sometimes leaves workers at the mercy of shop owners and this was the case of Eno. She also engaged in petty trade where she sold sweets after work in her neighborhood. She shares her experience:

*"Before I travelled, I worked as a hair stylist in a salon, we call it work and pay. I did not have enough money to open my own shop, so I had to work for people to support myself and my children. My madam was very strict, and our pays was based on the number of people you work on each day. So, you can imagine, if you are not the client's favorite stylist, you always go home with something small. But it was better than doing nothing"*

*"I also had something small going after closing from the salon. I invested some of my money into a small table top business. I sold sweets like toffees, gum and biscuits in the evenings in*



*my area, it was quite busy at night and I could make some sales from there to compliment my business too”*

### **Early motivations to migrate**

Life after giving birth to her twins was not very rosy for Eno. She mentions that because her partner was not engaged in any salaried job and had to rely on the produce from his small-scale farming, thus, support was not always available. Also, she was not making enough money from the salon and her side business to cater for the increasing needs of the twins. Her parents were also not economically able to support her as much as she wanted. It was during these challenging times that she got in touch with her auntie who had travelled to Norway long ago. She preached how much she could make in Norway with her skills in hair styling among the afro-community as it was hard to find many afro salon shops in Oslo. She was encouraged and started planning the process with her:

*“Life was hard at a point in time, especially after I gave birth to my children. You know how it is with twins, I had to buy everything in pairs and I did not have enough support to perform all these duties. As they were growing too, providing school items and fees for them was hard. Their father was not making much from his farm produce and my salary was almost nothing, even the income from my side job could not help to provide for these needs. I had to give my parents something small as well because they were not working. I was struggling to make ends meet. One day my maternal aunt in Norway called my parents and asked to talk to me after my mother told her about my struggle. She asked if I was interested in trying to work in Norway as an afro-hair stylist as it was very lucrative, that is where my motivation came from, because she sounded very promising”.*

After the initial conversation, Eno got in touch again with her auntie to gather more information on the opportunity to travel to Norway. Her auntie was willing to sponsor the trip, so she can refund part of it if she was successful. The interviewee discussed the idea with her parents and older sister who supported the idea and pledging their support to raise the children should she decide to leave, they saw it as an opportunity to change their life’s situation for the better. She shares the process to her journey:

*“I called my auntie again, this time round with much interest in the proposal. She told me I could apply for a visa from the Norwegian embassy to visit my relative in Oslo as it was the embassy that usually gives a visa in Ghana. She was going to sponsor the trip with the money for the application, sponsor cover letter and proof of relation so it was not going to be difficult. All these were on a condition that I will work and refund at least half of the cost of the travel when I arrive in Oslo. At the time, it sounded very good to me because I needed a way out of Ghana, and I did not have the money for the cost of the journey too.”*

*“I discussed the issue with my family, (parents and big sister) as it was a major decision I had to take because of my children. They were only 11 years then and young, I needed a plan for them. They were willing to raise my children if I leave because it was an opportunity to work abroad and make life better for us all. They all welcomed the idea, even though I did not ask for the opinions of my children, it was for their own good. I told their father too, he did not have much choice because the children stayed with me all along”*

After deciding on the offer, the interviewee started the application after receiving the necessary documents from her auntie in Norway, she submitted her application with the help of an uncle who was much educated (bachelor’s degree holder) who assisted in the filling of forms and attachment of documents. Eno got her Schengen tourist visa approved and she made the necessary preparations with her family until her departure from Ghana in 2009.

*“I made the decision to travel for a better life in Norway so my aunt sent me all the documents I needed and the money for the application process as well. My uncle who completed the university was asked to help me fill the forms and add all the documents too. I submitted my application in March 2009 and by June 2009, my visa was ready. She sent my ticket through my uncle’s mail. She said she spent about 5,000 Ghana cedis for the whole process (application and my ticket) which is around 1,000 euros currently. Everyone in my family helped with my preparations, I told my children they will be staying with their aunt and grandparents while I go to make a living. It was sad but I had to leave for the better then, I left Ghana in August 2009 for Oslo for the new life”*

### **Previous migration experiences**

Before arriving in Portugal, the interviewee spent 3 years in Oslo, Norway, where she worked as a hairstylist in Afro shops. As she mentioned earlier, Eno went to Oslo, through the sponsorship of her auntie who lived there. Upon her arrival, she was hosted by her auntie, took her through the basic survival skills in the city and also to prepare for the work she came to do. She shares how she did not have any stress while settling in because of the help she received in the first month of arrival as she familiarized herself with the city and culture of the Norwegian people. Due to the existence of a support network, she did not stress much to settle in on arrival. She said:

*“When I arrived in Oslo, it was not so hard because my auntie was there to meet me, she took me to her house where I was going to live. She used the first month to teach me how to survive in the city, how the transport system works, the currency, the options I had to work even without work documents, introduced me to some Ghanaians who lived in Oslo and also how Norwegians relate with people. All this helped me as I did not feel lost in such a big place”*

She shares her work experience in Oslo as a twist in her expectations, filled with dramatic turns from her expectation in wages for work, how her once sweet relationship with her auntie who sponsored her trip to Norway turned sour, and the numerous places she had to work in search of better terms of work. She narrates:

*“After the first month, I was supposed to start work in a shop owned by a Nigerian woman, who was a stylist herself and also had a section where she sold afro-hair products and weaves. I got this work through the connection of my auntie as she was a good friend of hers, and I considered it a good opportunity since there was no need to present my work permit because she knew my situation. The agreement initially was to pay me 2,000 Norwegian kroner (2,000 NOK) a month as 2009, which is like 200 euros a month, because I was new and she had to assess my skills, and likely increase if I did well. My task was mainly to do braids and assist with other hair styling if I was less busy. I was new to the system, so I thought it was fine, moreover I did not have to pay rent as I was living with my auntie”*

*“I was able to send some money home after the first month for my children and parents. I had to also start saving to refund at least 5,000 NOK to my auntie as we agreed earlier before I went there. The work was hard because it takes a long time to finish braids, especially if it is smaller in sizes, but I tried my best, yet I was not getting an increase as promised by my madam. I asked about it after 6 months and she said I was greedy, but I was asking only what I was told. My auntie was not happy about the report she heard. She started acting different towards me and it was quite uncomfortable. I managed to pay her the money I owed, and she asked me to start paying something small for rent and utilities since I wanted more money.”*

The interviewee also shares how she survived on her salary considering the fact that she had to refund the cost of the journey and also to include paying rent to her auntie after registering her displeasure at here asking for a raise in wages from her friend, while remitting her family back home as well. She mentions how hard it was to survive on the rest of money considering Norway's high cost of living.

*"I felt sad, but I had a choice, so I stopped work in the first shop after I got another place to work through the recommendation of a Senegalese friend I met through at our shop once. The pay was better, I was paid 4,000 NOK a month, I paid 1,000 NOK for rent to my auntie, sent about 1,000 NOK (500 Ghana cedis by then) to my family back home and survived on the rest. It was hard because Norway is expensive, and I was eating less from home so as not to annoy my auntie after breaking business deals with her friend."*

Eno further shares how she moved in with a Ghanaian friend with whom she shared similar status as undocumented migrants as a next stage of her life after she moved out of her aunties house due misunderstandings. Her association with the Ghanaian lady introduced her to another network, her brother in Portugal who preached easy access to documentation in Portugal to Eno. He convinced her to enter Portugal illegally, without documentation from Norway to try her luck of regularizing her stay in Portugal. She describes the process of moving to Portugal as below:

*"All this while, my visa had expired, and I had lived in Oslo for almost two years without papers, I could only work in shops that understood my situation and because of that I was cheated in salary, because the shop owners made a lot of money, it is expensive to braid in Oslo, even normal styling. I did not have any help to acquire documents as I was almost on my own. I moved to live with Ghanaian friend, we split the rent and I was much free compared to my auntie's house (her auntie stopped trying to help get papers). I just moved to live with my friend, she also did not have paper's, so we wanted find solution together"*

*"My friend and housemate had a brother in Lisbon, he had lived there for some time, so he told us it was less expensive to live here, and also quite easy to get documents because he had gotten his permit; so, we should come to Portugal. My friend did not come because she had a Norwegian boyfriend whom she was planning to marry to get documents. I did not have anyone so I took the chance, especially after he told me they don't usually check for visas when you travel from one country to another in Europe. In 2012, I bought a ticket to Lisbon. I was scared of been caught and sent to Ghana, but I was fortunate, they did not check for visas or permits before boarding the plane. I entered Lisbon without any legal permit and was caught by the immigration"*

In simple terms, she explained her motivation to migrate to Portugal *"Norway was okay, but I worked in Norway for some time, yet I had no documents. I heard it was easy to work for it in Portugal, that is why I moved here, that was my motivation to come here"*.

### **Settling in Portugal**

After succeeding to enter Portugal, the interviewee mentions once again a stress-free settling in experience as she had a network already in Portugal who provided the immediate help she needed to settle in, including accommodation, basic information on getting around the city and where to find work. The network was the brother of her former housemate in Oslo.

*"When I arrived, my friend's brother was there to pick me from the airport and took me to his house. He was working at a construction place when I first arrived, but it was not something I could do, and I also wanted to work as a hair stylist like I did in Norway. He introduced me to*

*a few Ghanaians in Lisbon and also assisted me find a salon to work in because there are many shops that worked on Afro hair in Lisbon. I lived with him for a month and then I got a cheaper but decent place in the city center as I had to survive on my savings from Norway”*

The only challenge she mentions is her reasons why she could not regularize her stay in Lisbon since she entered in 2012. Her challenges included fear of renewing her passport may lead to her legal residence status exposed, her inability to secure a work contract due the nature of her work (less wage) and also the cost of application for permits. She shares an interesting view that she observed the Police, referring to immigration does not randomly check for migrant’s documentation which also made her relax her efforts to regularize her stay. She shares:

*“All these while I had not been able to get my documents because of many reasons; like my passport expired in 2014 but I was scared to go and renew because I did not have a permit, I did not have any work contract from the places I worked and later to the style I chose to work too, and the amount to apply for permits too was expensive. Since the Police don’t “control” much in this country, I was able to get by while surviving on my job. I had no idea I could get a residence permit without proof of visa. It was my friend’s brother who continually checked up on me, asking me about my progress but I guess I was okay with living without documentation”*

The interviewee shares the process leading to her regularization in Portugal, placing emphasis on the help she received from her network support through the whole process, starting from renewal of passport, to booking of SEF appointment, tickets to attend appointment in Porto and to gathering all necessary documents. Even though she mentions encountering some challenges like demonstration proof of legal entry into Portugal that almost made her give up regularizing her stay, she was successful after the second appointment after providing some complementing documents about work and as paying taxes prior to her appointment which earned her the waiver on providing proof of visa into the country.

*“Well, in 2018 I finally booked an appointment with SEF after saving a while for proof of subsistence requirement, the appointment was in Porto. My friend’s brother was helpful through the process; he assisted me renew my passport in Spain first before the appointment, helped me gather documents for the appointment and even booked my trip to Porto. When I went for the appointment, it had to be rescheduled because they requested for my boarding pass from the day I entered Lisbon but I did not remember where I even kept it. It had been almost 6 years since I arrives and had changed accommodation about 2 times so it will be hard to provide that, I decided not to go back again” I did not want to be caught that I entered without a visa”*

*“Oh, now I have papers, I got my residence permit last year, 2019. Before my next appointment, I got a work contract as a stylist working in a salon and also, I had social security number, I also paid tax for the previous 12 months before my appointment. I told them I did not find my boarding pass but God was on my side that day, the man just looked at the documents for a while and then he said, you will pay 280 euros. I have never been so relieved in a while now, I feel free and happy”*

She demonstrated a great sigh of relief after living in an irregular situation for such a long time.

### **Working in Portugal**

The interviewee shares how she had bad work experience in Portugal just like she did in Norway due to her irregular situation which made business owners take advantage of her situation to cheat her of her due wage for the work she was doing as a hairstylist. She mentions

how the search for better work wages made her work in different salons since she arrived. She shares:

*“Just like in Oslo, I had the same issue with shop owners as they always wanted to pay very small for such a tiring job. I stood all day braiding hair and had to endure backache only for little money, just because I did not have documents yet. I could not report them to the trade union. I had responsibilities at home, my family, my children, because of this I worked in many salons looking for better wages, but they are all the same”.*

After failing to land a job in a salon with better wages, Eno gave up working for people and decided to engage in individual home hairstyling services while working as a cleaner when people needed help cleaning their homes.

*“So finally, I stopped working in shops and started home services. I called the few friends I made while working to call me for home service if they needed my service, at a reduced price but I could charge close to my work's worth. I also started to look for other job opportunities, like cleaning. It was better than the whole day in the salon for peanuts, so I could schedule hair styling appointments and clean homes when it was needed”*

*I have worked in many salons around the city center, changing due to bad terms of work, currently I am working as a cleaner and also home service hair styling. I am still discussing with the woman who gave me the work contract last year to see if I can be paid according to the regular standards because now I have my documents so I won't allow myself to be cheated again. If not I will continue working this way’*

### **Language learning in Portugal**

When asked to share her language learning experience in Portugal, the interviewee describes her ability to speak Portuguese as a self-taught process with help from her work colleagues from Mozambique and also a Portuguese. She mentions how important it was for her to learn the language because Portuguese was the main medium of communication between clients and workers, serving as motivation to even learn faster.

*“I did not go to any language school to learn Portuguese, but I learnt it at work from my colleagues from work. The people in the salon knew very little English so I had to try to understand Portuguese and to speak too. It was a bit hard at first, I always needed someone to explain what a client wanted to exactly, I needed it to survive*

*“I can't tell the exact duration I used to learn Portuguese, but in a year, I could speak and understand Portuguese, I had to put in the effort to learn by picking up on common sentences, words and asking for help from my colleagues at work. They were helpful, both the native Portuguese and two others from Mozambique.’*

She further gives examples of instances where her knowledge in Portuguese language came in handy, in terms of her work, personal convenience and when accessing Portuguese national offices for services to show the importance of knowing a language when one goes to a different place.

*“Of course, knowledge of Portuguese is necessary and has been helpful. Most houses I work in are owned by Portuguese people and even hair styling, because usually even if people understand English, it is hard to speak so I make it easier for them when I speak Portuguese. I can confidently walk into shops and express myself about what I want, when I came here fresh, it was hard, especially the old people. Also, it was helpful when I went to SEF in Porto, I am not sure the man could speak English, but I did not try because I wanted to express myself*

*well so he could understand so we spoke Portuguese, because people can only help you when they understand you”*

Asking if her knowledge in Portuguese included reading and writing, the interviewee mentions due to the process of learning being informal, she has no idea if she could read or write much Portuguese. She however thinks she will enroll in language school as she works to access permanent residence in the future.

*“I am not sure I can write or read Portuguese because I learnt it through listening and not in a school so it will be difficult. Except basic words that I read, example filling forms. In the future when I need it for permanent residence, I will go to the language school to learn to read and write. For now, I just got my first residence permit so with time, I will consider that”.*

### **Transnational Parenting roles**

The interviewee talking about her transnational roles as a parent towards her children and family was very emotional. She mentions that she was glad that despite all her challenges she is still able to keep in touch with her family through her support for them. She mentions keeping in touch with her family through phone calls as she has not been able to visit Ghana since she travelled in 2009. She shares her happiness that she has been able to support her children to the tertiary level. She mentions the role of remittances in helping her transnational roles and also the role of migrant networks in sending material things to her family in Ghana. She shares:

*“Thanks be to God that I am still able to work and support my family back in Ghana all these years. I miss my children, but we talk more times, they are old now and have come to understand that I had to travel for the family’s good. They are in teachers training now, I send them money regularly through western union. I send money for their fees and school upkeep. Sometimes I send things through people going to Ghana since I haven’t been able to visit since 2009”.*

Answering on her views on parenting from Portugal as a mother, Eno shares how different it is considering how she has missed out on many important milestones as a mother in the lives of her children and how she sometimes craves for their love and support, amidst feelings of guilt for leaving them behind. But she defends her decision and situation as not being her fault but a failure in her plans and compensates for the lack of physical contact with video calls with her children anytime she has the opportunity. This notwithstanding, she plans to visit Ghana in Christmas as she has her residence permit. She shared:

*“Trying to be a parent and good a mother from abroad is different, I have missed out on many important events in their lives because I am here. It’s hard because sometimes when I am sad and lonely, I wish they were here. I feel bad for being away this long, but it is not my fault, things did not happen as I planned. I am working to save money so I can visit by Christmas this year, 11 years is a long time. I do my part of providing their needs, in addition to their father and my sister’s effort, I am forever grateful to them for raising the children well up till now. For now, all I do is to send some money, make calls anytime I get the opportunity to reach them. Thanks to video calls on WhatsApp, I can see their faces and it gives me comfort. They have grown so beautifully”.*

### **Plans of family reunification**

Sharing her plans on family reunification, Eno shares she had the plan to reunite with her children once she settled abroad even before she left Ghana but due to the twists in her migration journey, she never had the opportunity to reunite with them. Even though she has resolved her irregular situation, she feels it is too late considered that alternative, even though she would love to have them visit her in Lisbon.

*“If I say I did not have this plan in mind I would be lying. I always had this plan when I was leaving Ghana, I was hoping I could work and get papers so my children would join me. Things did not work out that way, till I came to Lisbon. Even here, I recently got my permit, that's why it didn't happen. Now I am not sure I will apply for reunification because they adults now, almost graduating as trained teachers, so I will wish that they will rather visit me sometime”*

When asked if the thought of reunification was accompanied with knowledge of the Portuguese law on family reunification, she mentions how a Portuguese woman whom she works for had taken the opportunity to provide information on the process of reunification once during a discussion on her transnational parenting role and the desire to bring her children over to Portugal. She gave up on the idea after realizing her children have grown past the age (18 years) that makes them eligible for family reunification with her. Though sad of the lost opportunity, she is consoled that they will work and live comfortably in Ghana and anticipates a possible visit.

*“I know what they need when you apply. I know you need to have some money saved, enough to take care of yourself and those you want to bring, papers to stay in Portugal, a decent accommodation, no criminal record and what proof that you are related to them. A woman I work for told me about it one time when she asked why I have not bring my children yet, she is really nice but now it's too late because she told me they have to be at least 18 years old before they qualify as children and my children are 22 years now.”*

*“I only pray one day they get the opportunity to visit me here but not to live here forever. I feel sad they lost that opportunity because I did not have what it takes back then, but they will start work soon so it's fine, I will visit them anytime I have the opportunity to travel home”*

### **Future Plans**

With regard to future plans, the interviewee hopes for better living conditions including a well-paying work and living in much more decent accommodation which allows his family to visit her to make up for the lost opportunity of reuniting with her family.

*“In the future I want to be able to get a better job, live in a better place and have the ability to let my family visit here too. Even though we cannot live together here, I wish, even if for a short time, to live together as a family.”*

She further shares her view on making Portugal her future home, affirming her plans, she said she will be living in Portugal for a long time and her decision based on her experience of the laws in Portugal and Norway, describing Portugal's laws for migrants as much more flexible.

*“I think the laws here are a bit flexible compared to Norway, I lived here for a long time without issues even without documents. I have come to love Portugal and I think I will live here for a long time, things will get better for me in the future I believe”*

When asked if she will consider marriage in the future considering she was separated from her partner before migration, the interviewee shares that she won't consider marriage as something for her but does not mind living with someone but not legally married.

*“No, I am not sure I want to get married at this age, I won't mind living with somebody but not to marry, I have no interest in marriage’.*

### **7. Mintah (Pseudonym)**

#### **Socio-demographic information**

Name: Mintah

Sex: Male

Age: 40

Education: Senior Secondary Education

Date of arrival in Portugal: 2006

Family situation: Married to a Portuguese, with two children in Portugal

### **Observation notes**

I met this participant through my last interviewee after many attempts to find leaders of the Ghanaian community in Lisbon to interview to provide information on effort and support available to the community for family reunification and language learning strategies. He happens to be one of the people who brought up the idea of forming an association for Ghanaian citizens in Lisbon to help extend help to each other. When I contacted him to be a participant in the study, he was happy to assist, even though he mentions it's a new development, thus, he does not have many achievements in this regard. Also, because he did not have a family back in Ghana, but was a beneficiary of reunification of a Portuguese, he felt he could share his experience in that regard. It was an opportunity for me to explore the other aspects of reunification laws among third country nationals and Portuguese citizens even though not the main focus of my study. This participant's interview was more of a "privileged testimony" to compliment data collected from a study sample group rather than as a primary data participant. We scheduled an interview on the next weekend, 10<sup>th</sup> May 2020 at 13.00. the interview was conducted in Twi, via telephone call at the scheduled time in our homes. It lasted about 40 minutes.

### **Family Information**

The interviewee reported living with his family here in Lisbon. He is married to a Portuguese woman he met here in Lisbon in 2009. He has two children, boys. The oldest is 9 years while the younger one is 3 years old. His wife is also 36 years, works in a Pasteleria and a high school (senior secondary) leaver.

### **Interviewee Educational Background**

The interviewee completed senior secondary school education in Ghana. He had his primary education in the capital city in Accra, where the medium of instruction was English, Ga and Twi (Ghanaian languages). His senior secondary education was also in English.

### **Previous working experience before migrating**

Before embarking on his migrant experience, the interviewee reports working as a sanitary distribution company assistant where they made distributions to their clients on a wholesale basis. He explains:

*"I worked as a hand assistant in a distribution company. The company was producing sanitary products like washing soap and powder, cleaning solvents, toilet roll and those things. We had some clients we distributed products to every week with our vans, so I worked as one those who helped load products at the factory and offloading for our clients on wholesale basis"*

### **Early motivations to migrate**

Sharing on his motivation to migrate, the interviewee mentions even though he had a job in Ghana, he was not earning much. He further mentions the known success stories of some people he knew who had migrated and visited their families periodically earlier as his motivation to make a decision to migrate.

*"As a young man growing, I wanted to live life comfortably. Even though I had work, it was not paying much, I lived from "hand to mouth" where I could not save money from my pay after paying my bills. I could spend everything even sometimes a week before I was paid. I even borrowed foodstuffs sometimes and paid at the end of the month. Imagine, how could I have*



*made life better living like this? Also, I saw how some people who went abroad came back to visit their families looking successful, some were my mates and it boosted my desire to travel too. Their families were now living well, I wanted my parents to enjoy too”*

He shares how one friend he contacted led him to make his first travel outside Ghana. He was from Italy and was on holiday in Ghana, he introduced him to the travel agent who helped him secure his first visa. He mentions he gathered money from the support of his parents and his salary after he made plans of travelling. He shares how the whole process happened:

*“I met my friend from Italy for a Christmas visit, he told me how he worked for his visa to Italy and introduced me to the man. He owned a travel and work agency, he explained the process to me and how much I needed to pay. As at that time, it was about 20 million Ghana cedis, now they changed the currency so it will be 2,000 Ghana cedis, a lot of money back then. I told my parents of my plan, that will require their assistance as I could not have raised that amount on my own. I cut down on expenses, eating more from my parent’s house and saving up for the trip. When I got the money, we started the process, the agent did everything, I only provided my passport and money and submitted it at the German embassy in Ghana. I got my Schengen visa in 2004, it was valid for 6 months and was a tourist visa. So, I left Ghana in 2004 to Italy to seek better living conditions.*

### **Previous Migration Experience**

The interviewee before arriving in Portugal had lived three years in Italy as a seasonal worker on agricultural farms and sometimes on construction sites. He narrates how his friends in Italy helped him settle down on his arrival with information, a place to live for two months and fed him until he started working. They introduced him to the work they engaged in and served as a support system as he was new to the European lifestyle. He shares:

*“When I arrived in Italy, I did not feel very lost because my friends knew I was coming, the one with whom all the ideas started with, he lived with some other Ghanaians in the same house. They took me to their house, they were four living in the house, in [...]. I had no struggle at all, they were very nice, and they explained how they survived in Europe, the cheap shops, transport system, how to find work and that survival information. For the first two months I was not working as they said we had to wait for the season to start so we can work. But all that time, I ate and lived in their place for free”*

He further shares the important role his support network helped him land his first job and kept him company. He also mentions another means of working even when his visa has expired.

*“After two months, the season for harvesting had begun, my friends had already discussed my arrival with their boss, so I was introduced to him. I was hired to work on the tomatoes farms alongside my friends, that was my first job. Later when I was paid, I found a place close to their house and moved in but spent most times together at work and even at their home. They were all I had in strange land. They were very helpful”*

*“When my visa expired, I had no legal residence again, but I still managed to work, the farm work did not really require documentation, when we changed jobs, it was important to have one's papers, so they don't cheat you. Even though I had no documents, I got a permit from someone to work, meaning I worked with that name. When we were not working on the farms, we worked on construction sites or sometimes packing containers for shipping. It was quite tiring, but we made money. I could refund my parents money they invested in my travel within a year, some few euros were a lot Ghana cedis so I could also send them money for upkeep”*

The interviewee mentions that he was not able to regularize his stay in Italy within the 3 years until he decided with one Ghanaian to move to Portugal as they heard from other networks in Portugal about the possibility of regularizing their stay as he mentions it was quite difficult to do so in Italy and did not want to risk deportation.

*“We (with his Ghanaian friend) decided to leave Italy for Portugal as some of our friends told us it was easy to get your papers in Portugal. Even though we were surviving in Italy, we did not want to be deported if we were caught. Because it was common to be caught there and sent home if you don’t have documents. We travelled to Portugal, we knew one guy who was hustling in Portugal here, so he was giving us information about the airlines that don’t usually check for visas once its within Europe. So we travelled to Portugal in 2007, luckily, we were not caught”*

### **Settling in Portugal**

Mintah shares his process of settling in Portugal with his friend when they arrived from Italy. He once again receives help from his contact in Lisbon who hosted him, introducing him to his work and the Portuguese way of living.

*“Like I said we had a friend who lived in Portugal, he sorted us out, we stayed with him, helped us get our first job, accommodation. He worked a bit outside of Lisbon as a construction help and he linked us to the same company”.*

### **Working in Portugal**

The interviewee shares his work experience in Portugal since he arrived in 2007. His main occupation was the construction site help which took him to many parts of Portugal, sometimes sleeping in cheap hostels while away from Lisbon.

*“I have worked in many places in Portugal, including Lisbon, Porto, Braga, Algarve. I was not static as I was used to moving to work at different places in Italy, I took any opportunity anywhere in the country. Usually, when our company gets a contract in another city, I volunteer to work there too, sleeping in cheap hostels, sometimes for more than one month. But my own room was in Lisbon. Currently I work as a post delivery man in Lisbon. I stopped the construction job”*

### **Language learning in Portugal**

Mintah reports that he learnt to speak Portuguese listening to his colleagues and later through the intermarriage with his Portuguese wife. He mentions how they agreed to improve his Portuguese by speaking only Portuguese at home even though his wife understood English.

*“I learnt to speak Portuguese from my colleagues at work, most of them were from Cape Verde, Angola and Guinea. I realized if I wanted to live here for long, it was necessary to learn. Moreover, I had learnt some Italian so I could understand since they have similar words. It took me a while, but I learnt it. Also, when I met my wife, even though she understood some English, she suggested we speak Portuguese at home to make it better. After we married, we applied for reunification and I got my residence permit too. After 3 years, I wrote the language certificate exams after I enrolled at the Luso language school, it is a private language school, to get my Portuguese citizenship”*

### **Family reunification Experience**

The interview shares his experience of his marriage with a Portuguese that resulted in his experience of family reunification in Portugal.

*I met my wife in Braga while I was away working with my former company in 2009. She was an acquaintance. I met her at a café and later we moved to a higher level. She was very nice to me and kept the relationship going even after I returned to Lisbon. It was not hard for me*

*to decide to settle with her because I did not have any wife or family back home. It was also necessary for me because I still did not have legal documents, it was a way I could get papers. She decided to make our relationship legal and apply for reunification with me. That is how it happened, she led the process even though I supported her with money, she moved to Lisbon when we decided to live together. After we married, we applied for reunification and I got my residence permit too. After 3 years, I wrote the language certificate exams after I enrolled at the Luso language school, it is a private language school, to get my citizenship. You know Ghana allows dual citizenship, so I am still Ghanaian. ”*

### **Role of Ghana Association in helping members access family reunification information**

The interviewee shared how the association, though young, tries to provide information on issues such as family reunification to those who need it, even though not formally, they reach out to members. He mentions that currently there are about 18 registered members under the association. For him, he believes his survival through all these years in Europe was possible with support networks he had met in both countries in his migration stories, thus, he believes it is an opportunity to provide similar help to those who need it.

*“The association is young, we started just recently, and we have about almost twenty people registered as members, so we don’t have laid out procedures for giving such help to those who need it. Now it is more like when someone asks, then you tell them where to go or tell them if you are confident about it. We are now growing so maybe in the future we can have organized programs that will provide such information because it’s necessary. For instance, since I came to Europe, I was lucky to meet friends who gave information and help in diverse ways that have made my story a success. We all need each other, so this is an opportunity for me to provide similar help to other Ghanaians who come to Lisbon, we are not many here, but we can hold each other in a foreign land. such information is given on an individual basis, I do that sometimes, even to people outside Portugal interested in coming here.”*

When asked for his opinion on why the most of few Ghanaians here in Lisbon have not applied for family reunification, he says he does not have a definite answer to the question as it is an individual decision of people to apply for reunification. but he believes even though the law seems quite clear and simple, they are probably organizing and preparing for the process as it requires adequate preparations to meet all the requirements.

*“Well, I can’t answer for them with facts or evidence, I can only share my opinion on why I think the Ghanaians here have not brought their families here yet. I believe everyone loves to have their families close because life abroad gets lonely sometimes so definitely, they might have considered this option. But they need preparation, you know the law looks very simple and clear, but it requires adequate preparation; a well-paying job, enough money to take care of them, resolving your own documentation if you have a challenge like mine and a decent accommodation for them. And this takes time to put yourself together before you can bring them. In the meantime, if they are able to send money and things back for the family, it will be fine. At the right time, when everything falls in place, they will bring them”.*

### **Future plans for the Association**

When asked to share his vision for the association, he says; *“I pray in the future people from Ghana will recognize that Portugal is a good place to live and more of them will come here. I will be happy to see a vibrant association like they have in Norway, Germany, and Italy to reach out to each other through programs and celebrations to sustain our lives abroad. I believe it will happen, then we can boldly grant interviews on our role to our people.*

## Appendix IV

### Non-Plagiarism Declaration

I hereby declare that the Dissertation titled: Resilience among Ghanaian migrants in Lisbon in accessing family reunification and learning of Portuguese language

Submitted to the Erasmus Mundus Master's Program in Social Work with Families and Children: X

- Has not been submitted to any other Institute/University/College
- Contains proper references and citations for other scholarly work
- Contains proper citation and references from my own prior scholarly work
- Has listed all citations in a list of references.

I am aware that violation of this code of conduct is regarded as an attempt to plagiarize and will result in a failing grade (F) in the program.

Date: 31st/October/2020

Signature:



Name: RITA ADOMA PARRY