

Working Paper no.: 2016/06

Tatiana Eremenko and Helga A.G. de Valk

The role of family and international migration dynamics in the formation of single-parent families

N i D i

netherlands
interdisciplinary
demographic
institute

The role of family and international migration
dynamics in the formation of single-parent

Tatiana Eremenko¹ and Helga A.G. de Valk²

Working Paper no.: 2016/06

1. Tatiana Eremenko, INED (France) and NIDI/KNAW/UoG (the Netherlands)
2. Helga A.G. de Valk, NIDI/KNAW/UoG (the Netherlands) and Vrije Universiteit Brussels (Belgium). Corresponding author: P.O. Box 11650, 2502 AR The Hague, The Netherlands. Mail: valk@nidi.nl. Phone: + 31 70 3565238.

The authors are solely responsible for the content of the Working Paper.

November 2016

1	Introduction.....	3
2	Background: Single parents and immigrant families in France	5
2.1	Single parent families	5
2.2	Immigrant families	6
2.3	Analysing the formation of single-parent families in the migratory context	7
2.4	Research questions	9
3	Data and methods	10
3.1	Data and definitions	10
3.2	Measures	12
3.3	Statistical methods.....	13
4	Descriptive statistics	15
4.1	Partnership history.....	15
4.2	Childbearing history	17
4.3	Family composition	18
4.4	Living and financial arrangements	19
5	Typology of single mother immigrant families	22
6	Discussion	25
7	References	27
8	Appendices	29

Abstract

This study discusses the importance and meaning of single motherhood in the migratory context. We analyze trajectories of single immigrant mothers in France to understand the role played by family and migration dynamics in the formation and experience of their families in a specific migratory context. Firstly, we compare indicators regarding family formation and composition for single mothers with different migration histories using the nationally representative “Trajectories and Origins” survey (2008-2009). Secondly, we construct a typology of single immigrant mothers through a combination of Multiple Correspondence Analysis and classification. Family structures at origin determine prevalence and characteristics of single mother families at destination, with fewer single mothers among North African and Asian immigrants and substantially more of them among Sub-Saharan Africans. These family configurations are also associated with specific migrant profiles: spouse migrants are least likely to become single mothers and often do so involuntarily (widowhood), whereas independent migrants are most likely and often outside of any partnership. Our typology yields profiles of immigrant single mothers observed among non-immigrants (single at birth, separated after cohabitation...), but also profiles specific to migrant women in more precarious socio-economic conditions. Changes in the profiles of female migrants contribute to the transformation of single parenthood in destination countries. The impact of the destination country’s family context and state policies needs to be further investigated.

Acknowledgements

This work was conducted as part of the European Research Council Starting Grant Project (no. 263829) “Families of migrant origin: A life course perspective”

1 INTRODUCTION

In many Western countries, children of immigrants are more likely to live with both of their parents compared to children of non-immigrants (Hernandez and al 2010). Different explanatory factors have been brought forward: low or inexistent divorce rates in the parents' countries of origin, importance of family related migration, especially for women migrants. However, there appears to be an important heterogeneity among the immigrant population pointing to a more complex relation between the two phenomena. The proportion of children in single-parent households has always been higher among immigrants from regions where the nuclear family model was not prominent such as the Latin American and Caribbean community in the Netherlands (de Valk & al 2010) or Sub-Saharan Africans in France (Kirszbaum & al 2009).

This paper aims at understanding to what extent family and international migration dynamics play a role in the formation and experience of single parent immigrant families by focusing on the family and migratory trajectories of single immigrant mothers. We use France as our case study for several reasons. Firstly, France has a long immigration history, but it has experienced a new wave of immigration in the end of the 1990s-2000s. Although previous flows were primarily composed of migrant workers originating from neighbouring European countries or former African colonies and followed or accompanied by their families, recent flows are significantly more diverse in terms of geographical origins and migratory trajectories. As a result, we observe a diversity of migration profiles: migrants that arrived as children (1.5 generation), family migrants, and independent migrants. Secondly, a growing proportion of children in France are residing in single parent families: between 1999 and 2011, the proportion of minor children living in these families increased from around 12% to 18%. Children in immigrant families continue to be "protected" from this situation, as the increase was much lower, going from 11% to 13%. However, there appear to be important differences by the family's origins, with the proportion of children residing in these family configurations being the highest among Sub-Saharan families (one child out of four).

For our analysis we use the "Trajectories and Origins" survey (2008-2009) covering not only diverse origin groups but also different migrant generations and including a whole range of individual, family and migration characteristics, allowing us to explore the diversity of single parenthood and its determinants. We estimate indicators characterizing the general process of family formation (legal marital status, age at first child, age of youngest child, number of children), and the family formation process in the migratory context (place of birth of children, cohabitation within extended households), for mothers distinguishing their couple and immigrant status.

This study adds to the existing literature by discussing the importance and meaning of single motherhood in a context of migration. We also identify the intensity with which the migration shapes the formation of single parent families. For example for some single parent families identified as “immigrant”, the link with international migration may be weak (when the parent arrived to the destination country during their childhood and had formed their family in the destination country).

2 BACKGROUND: SINGLE PARENTS AND IMMIGRANT FAMILIES IN FRANCE

2.1 SINGLE PARENT FAMILIES

Single parent families have become widespread in France. The proportion of children under 18 years living in these families doubled in the last two decades, going from 9% in 1990 (Algava 2003) to 18% in 2011 (Lapinte 2013). This development is not specific to France, which currently occupies an intermediate position compared to other European countries (Chzhen & Bradshaw 2012).

The ways these families are formed has also changed in the context of the rise in divorce and the development of cohabiting unions. In the past most of these families were formed following a parent's death: 55% of single parents in France in 1962 were widowers (Algava 2003). Today they arise after the parent's separation: 79% of single parents were separated from their partner in 2011 (Buisson & al 2015). These changes result in these families' distinct characteristics compared to two-parent families: children are on average older as the parent's separation takes place later in life; the number of children is smaller as the separation prevents future children's birth or some of them may have already left the household.

Most single parent families consist of mothers living with their children. Single fathers are rare in France (15% of single parents in 2011) and have distinct characteristics (more often widowed, older and living with older children) (Buisson & al 2015). Although these families are defined by the absence of a cohabiting partner, some single parents may be in a non-cohabiting couple for different reasons (professional, medical...). These family situations represented 8% of single parents in 2011, and reached 12% among single fathers (Buisson & al 2015).

Extended households in France are becoming less frequent, but single-parent families continue to be over-represented in these household types. In 2011, 12% of single parent families were part of an extended household (Acs & al 2015) whereas the corresponding proportion among all families with children was 5% (INSEE). The proportion was higher for single mothers never having been in a union (19%) and mothers aged less than 30 years (22%), thus families in potentially less stable socio-economic situations.

Single parent families have more unfavourable socio-economic conditions than other families (income, housing), and this is equally the case in the French context (Chardon & al 2008). Existing social benefits offset part of these difficulties. The isolated parent benefit (*allocation de parent isolé, API*) targets parents bringing up their children alone and can be combined with other existing social

benefits such as the minimum subsistence benefit (*revenu minimal d'insertion, RMI*). When it was created (1970), the *API* targeted families in which a parent had died or only one parent had recognized the child, thus traditional single parent families formed by “widows” and “child mothers” (Eydoux & al 2007). Its’ scope was later expanded to include families in which parents had separated (1976), the condition remaining that the other parent doesn’t contribute to the child’s upbringing. Whereas the poverty level of single parents is close to 50% prior to social transfers, it decreases to 33% after taking them into account (Haut Conseil de la Famille 2014).

As single parents’ profiles have evolved with a growing number of divorced and separated parents, there is the possibility that the other parent may be contributing to the child’s upbringing in emotional, physical, but also financial terms. The non-resident parent has the obligation to contribute to the children’s upbringing by providing the parent with which the child lives most of the time a financial contribution (*contribution à l’entretien et l’éducation de l’enfant, CEE*). It accounts on average for 14% of the single parent’s income (Haut Conseil de la Famille 2014). However cases when this contribution remains unpaid are numerous and increasing its payment rate is a national priority.

2.2 IMMIGRANT FAMILIES

France has been an important immigration destination since the 19th century. Following World War II, migration flows intensified, primarily composed of migrant workers from neighbouring European countries or former African colonies, accompanied or joined afterwards by their families. In the following three decades the immigrant population doubled, going from 1,9 million in 1945 to 3,9 million in 1975. Throughout the end of 1970s and 1980s migration flows stagnated, in part due to the halt on work migration introduced by the government in 1974. When they resumed in the mid-1990s, migration flows became more diversified in terms of migrant profiles (family migrants, asylum seekers, students...), but also geographical origins with a growing number of Sub-Saharan African and Asian migrants. In 2011, 5,5 Million immigrants resided in France, representing 9% of the total population.

Female migration to France has always existed, but represented a minority of flows in the past (in 1975, 44% of immigrants were female) and was mainly comprised of family migrants (Beauchemin & al 2013). Nowadays female migrants represent the majority of migration flows to France and their proportion among the immigrant population has also risen (51% in 2008). A growing number of women are migrating outside of the traditional family reunification framework (for work, studies, asylum) and these profiles are particularly numerous among new flows.

Characteristics of immigrant families in France differ in many ways from their non-immigrant counterparts, but we observe similar trends among the two groups. Immigrants in a couple are more often married, especially natives of North Africa and Asia, but cohabiting unions are becoming more numerous among younger generations (Borrel & Tavan 2004). Although marriage remains a compulsory stage in the family formation process, whether prior or after cohabitation, atypical trajectories can also be observed. For example Sub-Saharan Africans and Southern-Eastern Asians were more likely to have had a first child outside of a union, and form a first union later in life. Although immigrants are less likely to experience a separation than non-immigrants, they are also becoming more frequent, especially among specific groups (more educated migrants, migrants from European countries other than Southern Europe, Algeria, Sub-Saharan Africa) (Borrel & Tavan 2004). Immigrants have larger families than non-immigrants (36% of immigrant parents live with three or more children compared to 22% of the entire population, Blanpain & Lincot 2015), but their family sizes are decreasing.

In developed countries children in immigrant families are less likely to live with one parent (Hernandez & al 2010) and this is equally the case in France. Although the proportion of children in this type of families has increased, going from 11% in 1999 to 13% in 2008 (authors' estimation using the TeO survey described in section 3), it remains significantly lower than for children in non-immigrant families (20% in 2008). However there are important differences by geographical regions, with a maximum of one child out of four among Sub-Saharan families being in this situation.

2.3 ANALYSING THE FORMATION OF SINGLE-PARENT FAMILIES IN THE MIGRATORY CONTEXT

The demographic behaviour of immigrants and their descendants has been the object of an increasing number of studies. Different hypotheses regarding the relation between family events and migration have been examined, mainly through the lens of union formation and fertility. Establishing precise hypotheses on the link between single parenthood and international migration is more difficult given the diversity of forces at work. Thus in this section we describe existing evidence on possible links between the two processes through three types of mechanisms related to family dynamics, migration dynamics or state policies. Although our study does not test the possible effects of these different mechanisms, these elements allow for a better understanding and interpretation of observed patterns in the following sections.

Firstly, prevalence and characteristics of single immigrant families in the destination countries may reflect family patterns in the immigrants' countries of origin (Lippman & Wilcox 2013). The proportion of children in single parent families is often higher among immigrant families of Caribbean, Latin American and Sub-Saharan African origin and lower among North African and Asian

ones (de Valk 2010, Kirszbaum & al 2009, Landale & al 2011). Even if the identification and estimation of single parent families in non-Western contexts may reveal more complex, they appear to be less frequent in Arab countries and Asia (Lippman & Wilcox 2013), thus partly explaining the lower prevalence among these immigrant communities. In many Sub-Saharan African societies, the nuclear family characterized by the importance of the spousal relation and the role of biological parents in the children's education, is not the dominant family form (Findley 1997). In these societies children live in other households types and other family members may play an important role in their upbringing. Similarly, single mother families are common in many Latin American countries, often forming part of an extended household (Esteve & al 2012). The level of acceptance in a society of births outside of marriage and divorce often determines the frequency of single parent families and the way they are formed (Le Pape & al 2015). When they are rare, they are more often involuntary, formed following the death of the spouse. Conversely when this phenomenon is widespread, they are more often formed through the separation of parents or childbearing outside of an established union. Other family formation patterns may also indirectly contribute to the formation of single parent families such as an important age difference between the spouses.

Secondly, migration dynamics may also play a role in the formation of single parent immigrant families. Migrant families often experience geographical separations during the migration process: family migration takes place in a stepwise manner; return migration of one of the parents, more often the father, may leave the mother living alone with children. In these cases, despite the absence of one of the parents in the household (and thus a single parent family at destination), the parent may remain married or in a couple with the non-cohabiting parent. However, couples also experience a higher risk of union dissolutions in the migration process. For example, in Israel single-parents families remain rare; nearly one third of them were immigrant women, mainly originating from the former Soviet Union (Katz 2000). This situation was partly linked to a higher frequency of single mother families at origin, but interviews with mothers also showed that many of them became single parents upon arrival in Israel, as their spouses didn't want to emigrate.

The changes in the composition of migration flows, especially among female migrants, may also contribute to the phenomenon of single parent families due to a greater selectivity into international migration of these mothers and families. In the "traditional" stepwise family migration model, men initiate family migration and are later followed by their wives and children. In this case, children are more likely to live in a two-parent family in the destination country and female migrants arriving as spouses may be less prone to experience separations due to a variety of factors. As female migration becomes more independent and women's migration motives diversify, migrant families headed by single mothers may be the evidence of a greater autonomous status of women. In societies where

these family situations are stigmatized, migration may be a solution to gain independence and build a future for themselves and their children (Ypeij 2005, Cadart 2004, Dreby 2015). Single mothers and their children can be a particularly vulnerable group in the context of conflicts. As a result, some of them have fled their countries of origin and applied for asylum in Europe, and have thus become prominent in these flows.

Thirdly, state policies shape both family dynamics and migration flows. They may have a direct role in the formation of single parent families through the separation of family members. In some cases migration policies may prevent the admission of family members at the same time. A growing number of single mother families are formed after the deportation of the father in the United States (Dreby 2015). Another situation is illustrated by the French case. In 1993, the government introduced measures prohibiting polygamy into its immigration legislation. Partners in a polygamous union were obliged to “decohabit” (one of the spouses had to settle in an autonomous housing), which resulted in the formation of “single-parent” families (Cadart 2004, Gaullier 2008). More generally, public support mechanisms, financial or housing, for single parents and their children may lead to a higher visibility of these family configurations.

2.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This paper aims at understanding the role of family and international migration dynamics in the formation of single mother immigrant families in France. *Do characteristics of single immigrant families differ from those of non-immigrants? To what extent do they vary by the migrant’s trajectory, coming as a family or an independent migrant? Which mechanisms – family, migration, policy – explain the differences observed?*

3 DATA AND METHODS

3.1 DATA AND DEFINITIONS

We use the “**Trajectories and Origins**” (TeO) survey carried out by the National Statistical Institute (INSEE) and the National Institute for Demographic Studies (INED) in 2008-2009 (Beauchemin et al 2010). The survey included 21,761 respondents residing in households in metropolitan France, for which detailed retrospective family and migration histories were collected.

In this paper **families** are defined using cohabitation as a main criterion. Only families with at least one cohabiting child under the age of 18 were included in the analysis. **Single parent families** are defined as families comprising of one parent, regardless of union status (respondents may be in a relationship but not residing with the partner). Our paper focuses on children living with their mothers, whether single or partnered, since this is the majority situation. Children living with only their father are relatively rare (4% of children under the age of 18, Lapinte 2013).

Mothers’ migration histories are described using three indicators: immigrant status, country of birth and migratory trajectory. **Immigrants** are defined as persons born abroad with a foreign nationality at birth. **Immigrant families** are defined as families in which the mother is an immigrant (this definition differs from the one used in Section 2 in which immigrant families are defined by the presence of at least one immigrant spouse in the family, whether it is the female or male).

The **country of birth** refers to the country where the immigrant mother was born. We distinguish six geographical regions taking into account both migration histories to France and sample sizes: Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, Sahel Africa, other Africa, Asia and other countries.

Three **migratory trajectories** are identified through the combination of age and partnership status upon arrival in France:

- *Child migrant*: younger than age 15 upon arrival or accompanied by/joining a parent already residing in France;
- *Spouse migrant*: age 15 or older upon arrival and accompanied by/joining a spouse residing in France;
- *Independent migrant*: age 15 or older upon arrival and a) not in a couple or b) the first migrant of a couple.

The final sample consists of 1,099 single mothers, of which 430 are immigrants. An overview of these mothers and their background characteristics can be found in Table 1. Since we compare the

situation of single mothers to those who are partnered, the table also includes information on the latter group (more detail on sample sizes etc. for all groups can be found in Table 1 of the Appendices). We use weighted estimates throughout the paper.

Table 1 Immigrant status, country of birth and migratory trajectory of mothers living with at least one child under the age of 18 by partnership status (%)

	Partnered mothers N=4,608	Single mothers N=1,099
All mothers		
- Non-immigrant	55	61
- Immigrant	45	39
Immigrant mothers		
Country of origin		
- Algeria	14	15
- Morocco and Tunisia	20	15
- Sahel Africa	5	7
- Other Africa	10	23
- Asia	19	11
- Other	33	29
Migratory trajectory		
- Child migrant	24	42
- Spouse migrant	55	23
- Independent migrant	21	35

Source: TeO (2008). Author's calculations. % weighted. Figures may not add up to 100% because of rounding

Around one third of single immigrant mothers originate from three countries in North Africa including 15% from Algeria and 15% from Morocco and Tunisia (second column Table 1). Sub-Saharan single immigrant mothers represent 30% of the sample, with most of them coming from countries outside of Sahel Africa (23%). Asian immigrants, including Turkish, account for 11% of our sample and other countries, mainly Europeans, represent 29%. 65% of single immigrant mothers arrived to France as family migrants, either as children (42%) or spouses (23%). Independent migrants represent 35% of our sample. Although there is a correspondence to a certain extent between the single immigrant mothers' countries of origin and migratory trajectories, the three migrant profiles are nevertheless present among all origins (see Table 2 of the Appendices for more detail).

3.2 MEASURES

In order to describe the dynamics leading to the formation of immigrant single mother families, the following indicators were used. Summary statistics pertaining to each dimension are provided in Table 2.

Partnership history. The combination of information on the total number of unions (over lifetime) and current legal marital status allowed identifying five union trajectories. Among ever-married women we distinguished a) widowed, b) divorced and c) currently married mothers. Among never married women we distinguished mothers d) who had previously been in a cohabiting union and e) who had never been in a cohabiting union.

Childbearing history. The age at birth and country of birth of the first child are used to describe the time and place of family formation. Three age groups were distinguished: women who were under 22 years, those between 22-27 years, and 28 years or older at first birth. Since teenage pregnancies in France are rare (only 5% of mothers living with a child under the age of 18 had a first child before the age of 20), we set a higher age limit identifying “young” mothers (22 years). We distinguished mothers, who had their first child abroad (in the majority of cases also prior to their migration), from those who had the first child in France.

Family composition. Characteristics of cohabiting children are used to describe the family composition. First we distinguish “families with young children” (youngest child is under the age of 6) *versus* those with school-aged children. Second we distinguish between “large families” (three or more cohabiting children) *versus* those with less than three cohabiting children.

Living arrangements. Households in which persons other than the mother (and eventually the partner in the case of partnered mothers) and children live are identified as extended, with a further distinction between maternal grandparents *versus* other members (family-in-law, other family members, non-family etc.). We also include an indicator reflecting whether children reside elsewhere part of the time (for example in the father’s household if the parents are separated).

Financial arrangements. Beneficiaries of social benefits include parents receiving a minimum subsistence income (RMI) and/or an isolated parent benefit (API). We also distinguish parents receiving financial help from outside the household, as these are potentially families in which the other parent contributes. Single mothers providing financial help to members outside the household are also identified.

Table 2 Summary statistics of indicators related to families of mothers living with a child under the age of 18 by partnership status (%)

		Partnered mothers N=4,608	Single mothers N=1,099
Partnership history	Never in a union	0	9
	Cohabiting union	24	43
	Married	72	9
	Divorced	4	34
	Widowed	0	5
Mother's age at first child	Under 22 years	11	21
	22-27 years	49	39
	28 years or more	40	40
Country of birth of first child	Abroad	4	6
	France	96	94
Age of youngest cohabiting child	Under 6 years	51	27
	6-11 years	25	33
	12-17 years	24	41
Number of cohabiting children	1 child	30	46
	2 children	45	42
	3 children or more	25	13
Living arrangements	Living in extended household	2	4
	Living with maternal grand-parents	1	2
	Living with other members	2	3
	Children live elsewhere part-time	2	7
Financial position	Receiving social benefits	1	13
	Receiving financial help from outside of household	5	35
	Providing financial help outside of household	10	11

Source: TeO (2008). Author's calculations. % weighted. Figures may not add up to 100% because of rounding

3.3 STATISTICAL METHODS

Our analyses were conducted in two steps. Firstly, we estimated descriptive statistics for the indicators outlined above for single mothers by migration history. T-tests were systematically conducted comparing each group of single immigrant mothers (all immigrants, immigrants by country of origin, migratory trajectories) to non-immigrants. When relevant, single mothers were also compared to their partnered counterparts (not reported in the tables).

Given the sample sizes for some countries of origin in the survey we used, additional robustness checks for some indicators were carried out using the 2011 population census¹. For single mothers living with a child under the age of 18 in metropolitan France the number and proportion of single

¹For more information on the population census:
http://www.insee.fr/fr/themes/detail.asp?reg_id=0&ref_id=fd-rp2011

mother families, legal marital status of single mothers, number and age of cohabiting children, proportion of extended households were checked against the census data for the total immigrant group and by country of origin. Overall the levels and patterns from the two sources yielded similar results. When there were differences, we reported these when discussing the findings of our analyses.

In the second stage, we constructed a typology of single mothers based on the family and migratory trajectories leading to this family type through a combination of Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) and classification (with SPAD software). In order to avoid multicollinearity between variables (e.g. current legal marital status and union history), either only one variable was included or the information was combined into one new variable. Table 3 provides descriptive information on the variables included in the MCA. The typology was constructed for single immigrant mothers; single non-immigrant mothers were assigned to a cluster based on their proximity.

Table 3 Variables in the MCA and classification for single immigrant mothers living with a child under the age of 18 (%)

		Single immigrant mothers N=431
Father of children	Deceased	11
	Not deceased	89
Partnership history	Never in union	15
	Previous cohabitation	24
	Previous marriage	60
Age at first child	Under 22 years	27
	22-27 years	43
	28 years or more	30
Country of birth of first child	Abroad	31
	France	69
Age of youngest cohabiting child	Under 6 years	34
	6-11 years	31
	12-17 years	34
Receives social benefits	Yes	22
	No	78
Receives financial help from outside the household	Yes	24
	No	76

Source: TeO (2008). Author's calculations. % weighted. Figures may not add up to 100% because of rounding

4 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

4.1 PARTNERSHIP HISTORY

Our analyses show that the proportion of single mothers does not differ by immigrant status: the share of single mothers living with children under the age of 18 (out of all mothers) is the same for both immigrant and non-immigrant women and applies to about a fifth (19%, see Table 4). However, there are important variations by countries of origin of immigrant women. Asian mothers are least likely to be single (12%), followed by Moroccan and Tunisian mothers (15%). Conversely, Sub-Saharan Africa immigrants were most likely to be in this situation (27% of Sahel Africans and 35% of other Africans).

These variations might be related to the specific migration history to France or the position in French society of these different communities. Even though we cannot fully assess this in our data we can see that they differ by the migratory trajectories of these women. Spouse migrants are least likely to be single mothers (9%) suggesting a stronger relation between their family and migration projects, but also potentially a greater dependency on the spouse. We find a higher prevalence of single mothers among the group of child migrants (24%). This is interesting as for this group family formation is less likely to be directly affected by the migration since their move took place when they were a child. This does suggest that the 1.5 do have a different position and integration processes than the 1st generation as is suggested in previous studies. Finally about a third of mothers having migrated independently are single.

Table 4 Proportion of single mothers for mothers living with at least one child under the age of 18, by migratory history (%)

ALL MOTHERS	19
Immigrant status	
Non-immigrant	19
Immigrant	19 ^a
IMMIGRANT MOTHERS	
Country of origin	
Algeria	19 ^a
Morocco and Tunisia	15 ^a
Sahel Africa	25 ^a
Other Africa	34
Asia	12
Other	17 ^a
Migratory trajectory	
Child migrant	25
Spouse migrant	9
Independent migrant	33

Source: TeO (2008). Author's calculations. % weighted. Figures may not add up to 100% because of rounding
 Note: Some estimations by country of origin do not reach statistical significance, are nevertheless consistent with the levels observed in the population census.

Comparing the routes into single motherhood from a partnership history standpoint further we find that immigrant mothers are more likely to have become single mothers following the death of their spouse (8% compared to 4% among non-immigrants) (Table 5). At the same time immigrant mothers are more often married (even though living single with a child below 18) than non-immigrant mothers (17 *versus* 8 per cent among immigrant and non-immigrant respectively) pointing potentially at the difference between *de jure* marriages where *de facto* partners have separated or live apart due to different reasons. The route into single motherhood via divorce is equally common among immigrant and non-immigrant women. For those women who have never been in a union (second pane of Table 5) we see that non-immigrant women were more likely to cohabit before (86% have previously been in a union and in most cases just one) whereas immigrant women were much more likely to never have been in a union (33% of never married single immigrant mothers didn't declare any union).

In line with the previous results we see important differences between immigrant women of different origins and migratory trajectories. Important to mention is that although widowed mothers remain a minority among all groups, they constitute 12 to 15% of North and Sahel African women and they also represent 18% of spouse migrants. Furthermore the proportion of divorced mothers was highest among North African countries (around 40%-50%) and spouse migrants (45%).

Our analyses finally show that of Sahel and other African immigrants respectively 50% and 67% have never been married. Among this group, 44% of other African mothers didn't declare any union, suggesting that single parenthood started directly at the time of the child's birth.

Table 5 Partnership history of single mothers living with at least one child under the age of 18 by immigrant status, country of birth and migratory trajectory (%)

	Ever married			Never married		Total
	Widowed	Divorced	Married	Previous cohabitation	No previous union	
ALL MOTHERS						
Immigrant status	5	34	9	43	9	100
- Non-immigrant	4	34	8	46	8	100
- Immigrant	8 ^a	33 ^a	17	28	14	100
IMMIGRANT MOTHERS						
Country of origin						
- Algeria	12	39 ^a	16 ^a	16	17 ^a	100
- Morocco and Tunisia	14	55	16 ^a	13	3 ^a	100
- Sahel Africa	15 ^a	21	15 ^a	34 ^a	14 ^a	100
- Other Africa	3 ^a	20	10 ^a	37 ^a	29	100
- Asia	8 ^a	38 ^a	26	23	5 ^a	100
- Other	4 ^a	32 ^a	20	35 ^a	10 ^a	100
Migratory trajectory						
- Child migrant	3 ^a	32 ^a	15 ^a	34	16 ^a	100
- Spouse migrant	18	45	17	20	0	100
- Independent migrant	6 ^a	28 ^a	19	25	22	100

Source: TeO (2008). Author's calculations. % weighted. Figures may not add up to 100% because of rounding

4.2 CHILDBEARING HISTORY

In addition to partnership history it is the childbearing history that may have an important impact on the routes to single motherhood. In our sample we find that between 21 and 25 per cent of current single mothers with a child below 18 had their first child young (before the age of 22) and this is slightly more common for immigrant single mothers (Table 6). Also among the different immigrant origins we find equal low shares of young mothers with the exception of mothers from Sub-Saharan Africa where this proportion was significantly higher (48% for Sahel Africa and 32% for other Africa). In these communities the higher proportion of young mothers appears to be the result of a more general pattern of early family formation in the origin countries since we observe similar proportions for partnered mothers (not in table). No major differences between women with different migratory

trajectories are found except that child and independent immigrant women are more likely to be older (over 28) at the time of first birth than is the case for spouse migrants.

Table 6 Age at first child for single mothers living with at least one child under the age of 18 by immigrant status, country of birth and migratory trajectory (%)

	Under 22	22-27	28 or over	Total
ALL MOTHERS				
Immigrant status	21	39	40	100
- Non-immigrant	21	39	41	100
- Immigrant	25 ^a	42 ^a	32	100
IMMIGRANT MOTHERS				
Country of origin				
- Algeria	19 ^a	34 ^a	47 ^a	100
- Morocco and Tunisia	25 ^a	41 ^a	34 ^a	100
- Sahel Africa	48	33 ^a	18	100
- Other Africa	32	49 ^a	19	100
- Asia	24 ^a	43 ^a	33 ^a	100
- Other	19 ^a	43 ^a	38 ^a	100
Migratory trajectory				
- Child migrant	28	41 ^a	31	100
- Spouse migrant	28	47 ^a	24 ^a	100
- Independent migrant	21 ^a	40 ^a	39	100

Source: TeO (2008). Author's calculations. % weighted. Figures may not add up to 100% because of rounding

Looking at where the first child was born (not in Table) we find that overall only a minority of single immigrant mothers (28%) gave their first birth abroad, but that the proportion varies greatly by country of origin ranging from 18% of Moroccan and Tunisian immigrants to 37% of other Africans. Adult migrants, whether spouse or independent, are mostly likely to have had a first child abroad (40% versus 11% of child migrants).

4.3 FAMILY COMPOSITION

The next step of the analyses looks at the age and number of children living with the single mother. Immigrant families more often comprise younger children than non-immigrant ones: 36% have a child under the age of six versus 25% (Table 7). This difference is mainly due to the specific situation of Sub-Saharan immigrants: more than 50% of single mothers live with a child under the age of 6. Spouse migrants have the same child age composition as non-immigrants (24% of single mothers live with a young child), whereas child and independent migrants more often live with small children (42% and 39%).

Table 7 Characteristics of children living with single mothers by immigrant status, country of birth and migratory trajectory (%)

	% with children under 6 years old	% with 3 or more children
ALL MOTHERS		
Immigrant status	27	13
- Non-immigrant	25	11
- Immigrant	36	26
IMMIGRANT MOTHERS		
Country of origin		
- Algeria	34 ^a	35
- Morocco and Tunisia	30 ^a	25
- Sahel Africa	58	37
- Other Africa	54	30
- Asia	30 ^a	23
- Other	24 ^a	15 ^a
Migratory trajectory		
- Child migrant	42	24
- Spouse migrant	24 ^a	37
- Independent migrant	39	20

Source: TeO (2008). Author's calculations. % weighted. Figures may not add up to 100% because of rounding

Immigrant families are on average larger than non-immigrant ones and this pattern is also observed for single mother families: 26% of the former have 3 or more children compared to 11% of the latter (Table 7). However, among single mothers this indicator varies to a lesser extent than among partnered mothers (37% of immigrant partnered mothers lived with 3 or more children, the proportion reaching 60% among Sahel Africans). The largest families are observed among spouse migrants (around one in three single mothers lived with three or more children), whereas this is much less common among child and independent migrants.

4.4 LIVING AND FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

In the last step of the descriptive analyses we look at their socio-economic status. Single immigrant mothers were twice as likely to be living in extended households as non-immigrants (9% *versus* 4%) (Table 8)². This observation held for all groups with the exception of Moroccan and Tunisian mothers

² The corresponding proportions estimated from the population census are slightly higher but follow the same pattern: 13% of single immigrant mothers and 9% of single non-immigrant mothers live in an extended

and other countries, as well as spouse migrants among whom only 3% of single mothers live in an extended household. Algerian, Asian and other African, as well as child migrants most often live with their own parents (not in Table). The proportion of single mothers living with members other than maternal grandparents was higher for Sahel Africa (12%) and independent migrants (7%).

Is living in an extended household an indicator of possible support mechanisms among the migrant community or solely a practical arrangement to minimize housing costs in which members maintain separate budgets? The proportion of single mothers having a separate budget from other household members is low (2% or less), and limited to single mothers living in extended households (10%) (not in Table). No differences emerge by immigrant status; however sample sizes are insufficient to see if patterns differ by family and migration histories.

Table 8 Living and financial arrangements of single mothers living with at least one child under the age of 18 by immigrant status, country of birth and migratory trajectory (%)

	% living in extended households	% with children living part-time in another dwelling	% receiving social benefits	% receiving financial help
ALL MOTHERS				
Immigrant status	4	7	13	35
- Non-immigrant	4	8	11	36
- Immigrant	9 ^a	2 ^a	22 ^a	27 ^a
IMMIGRANT MOTHERS				
Country of origin				
- Algeria	15 ^a	3	23 ^a	21 ^a
- Morocco and Tunisia	3	6	30 ^a	27
- Sahel Africa	12	0 ^a	13	12 ^a
- Other Africa	11 ^a	0 ^a	20	22 ^a
- Asia	19 ^a	0 ^a	17	16 ^a
- Other	3	4	22 ^a	41
Migratory trajectory				
- Child migrant	14 ^a	2 ^a	19 ^a	30
- Spouse migrant	3	3	27 ^a	29
- Independent migrant	8 ^a	2 ^a	21 ^a	21 ^a

Source: TeO (2008). Author's calculations. % weighted. Figures may not add up to 100% because of rounding

household. Thus the survey appears to under-represent this group of single mothers as they may be more difficult to identify and interview.

Another important aspect in understanding the living arrangements of single mother families is the children's residential patterns. 2% of single immigrant mothers have children living elsewhere part of the time, whereas the corresponding proportion is 8% among non-immigrants (Table 8). These residential arrangements are non-existent for children of Sub-Saharan African and Asian families and more frequent among North Africans and other immigrants.

Single mothers are more likely than partnered mothers to receive social benefits (13% *versus* 1%) or financial help from outside the household (35% *versus* 5%) (not in Table). Most mothers receive just one type of income; only 4% of single mothers received both. This pattern by partnership status is observed for both immigrant and non-immigrant mothers. Single non-immigrant mothers show a greater reliance on help from other persons (36%) than social benefits (11%), whereas the corresponding proportions are similar for single immigrant mothers (27% and 22%) (Table 8).

Single mothers from other countries show a similar pattern to non-immigrants: they are more likely to receive help from outside the household (41%) and less often social benefits (22%). Type and level of support varied among the remaining groups: Moroccans and Tunisians more often receive either type of help (around 27-30%) and Sahel Africans are least likely to receive any type of help (around 12-13%).

All migrant profiles receive social benefits more frequently than non-immigrants, but the difference is largest for spouse migrants (27%). Lower levels of support from outside the household between immigrants and non-immigrants mainly result from the specificity of independent migrants: only 21% receive this type of help.

Single immigrant mothers were twice as likely to provide financial help to persons outside the household as non-immigrants (19% *versus* 9%, not in Table). This proportion is highest for mothers from Sub-Saharan Africa (34% of Sahel Africans and 25% of Other Africans), and migrants having arrived as adults (22% of spouse and 26% of independent migrants). In most cases, single mothers are either receiving or giving financial help to persons outside the household; less than 5% were in both situations.

5 TYPOLOGY OF SINGLE MOTHER IMMIGRANT FAMILIES

In the second step of our analysis we construct a typology of single immigrant mothers using a Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) and a classification. Six categories of single mothers are identified (Table 3 in the Appendices provides a detailed description of each category):

1. *Widows*: Ever married women having become single mothers following their partner's death. They have older children and are less likely to receive financial help from outside of household.
2. *Separated after marriage*: Ever married women having become single mothers following a separation. They had their first child in France at an older age. They are more likely to receive financial help from outside the household and less often welfare state benefits.
3. *Separated after cohabitation*: Never married women having previously been in a cohabiting union and having become single mothers following a separation. They live with young children.
4. *Single at birth*: Never married women who have never been in a union. Their first child was born in France and they live with young children.
5. *Migrant mothers receiving social benefits*: Mothers receiving social benefits. They are more likely to have been previously married and having had their first child in the country of origin.
6. *Migrant mothers with no financial help*: Mothers not receiving any financial help. They are more likely to have been previously married and having had their first child in the country of origin.

The categories were constructed using only observations of single immigrant mothers; single non-immigrant mothers were assigned to a cluster based on their proximity in a second step. Among the six categories, only the last two – migrant mothers receiving social benefits and migrant mothers with no financial help – are characterized by a migrant-specific variable (having had a first child in the country of origin). The remaining categories – widows, separated after marriage, separated after cohabitation, single at birth – do not involve migrant specific variables.

Table 9 Distribution of types of single mothers living with at least one child under the age of 18 by immigrant status, country of birth and migratory trajectory (%)

	Widows	Separated after marriage	Separated after cohabitation	Single at birth	Migrant mothers receiving social benefits	Migrant mothers with no financial help	Total
ALL MOTHERS							
Immigrant status	5	27	41	9	3	14	100
- Non-immigrant	5	28	43	8	2	14	100
- Immigrant	9	18	26	14	11	21	100
IMMIGRANT MOTHERS							
Country of origin							
- Algeria	16	24	13	17	14	16	100
- Morocco and Tunisia	15	24	13	3	24	21	100
- Sahel Africa	13	15	34	14	6	17	100
- Other Africa	4	9	36	29	3	19	100
- Asia	8	16	23	5	8	40	100
- Other	6	21	31	9	14	19	100
Migratory trajectory							
- Child migrant	5	19	32	16	9	19	100
- Spouse migrant	19	21	17	0	20	22	100
- Independent migrant	7	15	24	21	9	23	100

Source: TeO (2008). Author's calculations. % weighted. Figures may not add up to 100% because of rounding

Among non-immigrants, 71% of single mother families were formed following a separation, either after marriage or cohabitation (Table 9). Only 44% of single immigrant mother were in these two “majority” categories and a great heterogeneity was observed among this group³. Widows were over-represented among immigrants (9% versus 5% of non-immigrants), particularly among North Africans (15-16%) and spouse migrants (19%). These groups, along with immigrants from other countries also have similar proportions of single mothers separated after marriage compared to non-immigrants, whereas they are significantly lower among the other groups, particularly other Africans and independent migrants. Single mothers separated after cohabitation are rare among most migrant groups (less than 25%), but represent one third of Sub-Saharan Africans. They are also common among migrants having arrived as children (one in three single mothers) and to a lesser extent among independent migrants (one in four single mothers). Single immigrant mothers who had

³ This situation is partly due to the fact that only single immigrant mothers were used as active observations in the construction of the typology. Thus, the possible heterogeneity among single non-immigrant mothers is potentially not captured in our analysis.

not been in a union represent 29% of single mothers from other African countries, but also a substantial proportion of child and independent migrants.

6 DISCUSSION

This paper aimed at analyzing the links between the phenomenon of single parenthood and the transformation of international migration flows, namely the feminization and diversification of countries of origin. Our study adds to the existing evidence on the topic by viewing the single motherhood experience as a multidimensional phenomenon and by introducing a life-course perspective. The description of their characteristics, followed by the construction of a typology of these families in France today suggests the different mechanisms linking the two phenomena and points to future directions for investigation.

In line with previous studies we observe variations in volume and characteristics of single mothers by origin. Within communities with low numbers of single parent families, such as Asians or North Africans, these are more likely to have been formed following the death of a spouse and concern older children. Conversely single motherhood among Sub-Saharan Africans is frequent and is characterized by its' precocity, with mothers being single from the time of the child's birth. These patterns result from differences in family structures at origin, with fewer single parent families in Arab and Asian countries and their greater prevalence in societies where non-nuclear family models predominate, such as in Sub-Saharan Africa. Other family formation characteristics prevalent in certain origin countries but on the decline in France (such as an important age difference between spouses) also indirectly contribute to this phenomenon.

However single mother families at destination are not a direct transposition of these family structures and one of the mechanisms explaining their existence and features is the type of female migration that emerges in the origin countries. Spouse migrants are least likely to experience single parenthood, and when they do it is more often involuntarily (following the death of a spouse) or at a later age. Conversely, independent migrants having migrated on their own are also the group that most frequently experiences these situations. They also show the highest proportion of single mothers who had never been in a union, suggesting that their independent status extends to different domains, including decisions related to migration, but also family formation. Child migrants occupy a specific situation to the extent that international migration only indirectly affected their family formation process. For this group single motherhood appears to be linked to more vulnerable family situations as it is characterized by early childbirth outside of a union. Thus, the changes in the origins and profiles of female migration today contribute to the transformation of single parenthood among the immigrant population in destination countries today.

Our results also point to the similarities and differences in the experience of single parenthood among immigrant and non-immigrant populations. Some of the profiles generated by the ACM resemble those already observed among non-immigrant women (widows, separated after marriage or cohabitation, single at birth), as well as new ones specific to migrant women (migrant mother receiving social benefits, no financial help). Whereas the majority route for non-immigrants towards single motherhood is following separation, we observe a higher heterogeneity among immigrants.

Moreover, profiles that appear to be similar may have divergent meanings in some cases. For example, among non-immigrants living in an extended household was primarily limited to mothers having become single at birth of the child. On the other hand, this was observed among other profiles of single immigrant mothers, thus suggesting the existence of extended family support networks throughout different life cycles. Similarly, in single non-immigrant families support and interaction from outside the household, such as receiving financial help or children residing elsewhere part-time is limited to profiles of single mothers where the child's father is potentially present (separated after marriage or cohabitation). Although children of immigrant mothers are unlikely to reside elsewhere part-time, we see that immigrant mothers who became single at birth are as likely to receive financial help from outside the household as are other profiles, pointing to the existence of potential financial support from other family members and not only the child's father. Immigrant mothers are also more likely to provide help outside the household showing that this is a two-way interaction and that their positions in the support network may change with time and their family and socio-economic situation. More generally, these results suggest that despite the absence or the early separation with the child's father, single immigrant mothers may not be more at risk of isolation than their non-immigrant counterparts. The role played by these support networks may be especially important in the integration process for these families given the fact that they sometimes have characteristics that put them at difficulty (large families, small age children...).

This paper has identified some of the mechanisms tied to family and migration dynamics that may play a role in the experience of single parent families. However as we suggest in our literature review, destination country's policies may also lead to the emergence or shape these experiences. In our particular case we focused on France, a country characterized by a general acceptance of divorce, cohabitation, childbearing outside of marriage, as well as policies targeting parents bringing up their children alone, which can be qualified on a whole as a single parent friendly context. The characteristics of single immigrant families, even of the same geographical origins, may be different in destination countries in which childbearing within marriage remains the norm and policies for such family types are non-existent.

7 REFERENCES

- Acs, M., B. Lhommeau and E. Raynaud (2015). "Les familles monoparentales depuis 1990." Dossiers Solidarité et Santé(67): 34.
- Algava E., 2003, *Les familles monoparentales : des caractéristiques liées à leur histoire matrimoniale*, Direction de la recherche, des études, de l'évaluation et des statistiques (DREES), vol. 218.
- Beauchemin, C., C. Hamel, et al, Eds. (2010). Trajectoires et origines : enquête sur la diversité des populations en France. Premiers résultats. Documents de travail. Paris, Institut national d'études démographiques
- Beauchemin, C., C. Borrel, et al (2013). "Les immigrés en France : en majorité des femmes." Population & Sociétés **502**.
- Blanpain N., Lincot L., 2015, « Avoir trois enfants ou plus à la maison », *Insee Première*, 1531.
- Borrel C., Tavan C., 2004, « La vie familiale des immigrés », in *France, portrait social*, INSEE, p. 109-124.
- Buisson G., Lapinte A., 2013, « Le couple dans tous ses états. Non-cohabitation, conjoints de même sexe, Pacs... », *Insee Première*, (1435).
- Cadart, M.-L. (2004). "La vulnérabilité des mères seules en situation de migration." Dialogue **163**(1): 60-71.
- Chardon O., Daguet F., Vivas É., 2008, « Les familles monoparentales. Des difficultés à travailler et à se loger », *Insee Première*, 1195.
- Chzhen Y., Bradshaw J., 2012, « Lone parents, poverty and policy in the European Union », *Journal of European Social Policy*, 22(5), p. 487-506.
- de Valk, A. G. H. (2010). "Children of Immigrants in the Netherlands: Growing Up in Diversity." Child Indicators Research **3**(4): 503-524.
- Dreby J., 2015, « U.S. immigration policy and family separation: The consequences for children's well-being », *Social Science & Medicine*, 132(1), p. 245-251.
- Esteve A., García-Román J., Lesthaeghe R., 2012, « The Family Context of Cohabitation and Single Motherhood in Latin America », *Population and Development Review*, 38(4), p. 707-727.
- Eydoux A., Letablier M.-T., Georges N., 2007, *Les familles monoparentales en France*, Paris, Centre d'Etudes et de l'Emploi, 36 vol.
- Findley, S. E. (1997). *Migration and family interactions in Africa. Family, population and development in Africa*. London, Zed Books: 230.
- Gaullier, P. (2008). " La décohabitation et le relogement des familles polygames. Un malaise politique émaillé d'injonctions contradictoires." Recherches et Prévisions **94**: 59-69.
- Gonzalez-Ferrer A., Baizán P., Beauchemin C., 2012, « Child-Parent Separations among Senegalese Migrants to Europe: Migration Strategies or Cultural Arrangements? », *Annals of The American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 643, p. 106-133.
- Haut Conseil de la Famille (HCF) (2014). *Les ruptures familiales : état des lieux et propositions : rapport du 10 avril 2014*. Paris, Haut Conseil de la Famille: 218.
- Hernandez, D., S. Macartney, et al (2010). "Children of Immigrants: Family and Socioeconomic Indicators for Affluent Countries." Child Indicators Research **3**(4): 413-437.
- Katz R., 2000, « Attitudes of New Immigrant and Veteran-Resident Israeli Divorced Mothers Toward Single Motherhood », *International Migration*, 38(5), p. 83-97.
- Kirszbaum, T., Y. Brinbaum, et al (2009). The children of immigrants in France: the emergence of a second generation. Innocenti Working Papers. Florence, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre: 64.
- Landale N. S., Oropesa R. S., Noah A. J., 2014, « Immigration and the Family Circumstances of Mexican-Origin Children: A Binational Longitudinal Analysis », *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 76(1), p. 24-36.
- Landale N. S., Thomas K. J. A., Van Hook J., 2011, « The Living Arrangements of Children of Immigrants », *The Future of Children*, 21(1), p. 43-70.
- Lapinte A., 2013, « Un enfant sur dix vit dans une famille recomposée », *Insee Première*, 1470.
- Le Pape, M.-C., B. Lhommeau and E. Raynaud (2015). Les familles monoparentales en Europe : de nouvelles façons de faire famille pour de nouvelles normes ? Couples et familles. Paris, INSEE: 27-40.
- Lippman L. H., Wilcox W. B., 2013, *World Family Map 2013. Mapping Family Change and Child Well-Being Outcomes*.
- Tabutin D., Schoumaker B., 2004, « La démographie de l'Afrique au sud du Sahara des années 1950 aux années 2000 : synthèse des changements et bilan statistique », *Population*, 59(3-4), p. 521-621.
- Tabutin D., Schoumaker B., 2005, « La démographie du monde arabe et du Moyen-Orient des années 1950 aux années 2000 : synthèse des changements et bilan statistique », *Population*, 60(5-6), p. 611-724.

Ypeij A., 2005, « Gendered Travels: Single Mothers' Experiences at the Global/Local Interface », in Davids Tine, van Driel Francien *The Gender Question in Globalization. Changing Perspectives and Practices*, Aldershot, Ashgate, p. 109-124.

8 APPENDICES

Table 10 Immigrant status, country of birth and migratory trajectory of mothers living with at least one child under the age of 18 by partnership status (n)

	Partnered mothers	Single mothers	Total
ALL MOTHERS			
Immigrant status	4,608	1,099	5,707
- Non-immigrant	2,522	669	3,191
- Immigrant	2,086	430	2,516
IMMIGRANT MOTHERS			
Country of origin			
- Algeria	236	56	292
- Morocco and Tunisia	306	50	356
- Sahel Africa	189	53	242
- Other Africa	224	116	340
- Asia	532	58	590
- Other	599	97	696
Migratory trajectory			
- Child migrant	633	162	795
- Spouse migrant	1,137	109	1,246
- Independent migrant	316	159	475

Source: TeO (2008). Author's calculations.

Table 11 Migratory trajectory of immigrant mothers living with at least one child under the age of 18 by partnership status and country of birth (%)

	Child migrant	Spouse migrant	Independent migrant	Total
Partnered mothers				
Algeria	27	57	16	100
Morocco and Tunisia	21	58	21	100
Sahel Africa	8	67	25	100
Other Africa	17	46	37	100
Asia	24	59	18	100
Other	30	51	20	100
Total	24	55	21	100
Single mothers				
Algeria	58	25	17	100
Morocco and Tunisia	43	30	27	100
Sahel Africa	13	33	55	100
Other Africa	38	16	46	100
Asia	52	21	27	100
Other	40	23	37	100
Total	42	23	35	100

Source: TeO (2008). Author's calculations. % weighted. Figures may not add up to 100% because of rounding

Table 12 Typology based on classification by factors. Test values and percentage of modality in each group

Category	Characteristic modality	Test value	% of the group in the modality	% of the modality in the group	% of the modality in the sample
Widows (n=45, 9%)	Father deceased	100,0	100	100	10
	Previous marriage	4,6	16	91	61
	Youngest child aged 12-17	4,0	19	62	34
	No financial help from outside HH	2,6	13	91	76
Separated after marriage (n=82,18%)	Financial help from outside HH	10,3	56	72	24
	Previous marriage	8,9	31	99	61
	1st child at age 28 or more	6,0	38	59	30
	No social benefit	5,8	24	99	78
	Father not deceased	3,9	21	100	90
	1st child born in France	3,8	24	87	69
Separated after cohabitation (n=98, 26%)	Previous cohabitation	20,1	94	100	24
	Father not deceased	4,5	25	100	90
	Youngest child less than 6	3,2	32	49	35
Single at birth (n=63, 14%)	Never in union	18,1	97	100	15
	Youngest child less than 6	3,8	24	57	35
	Father not deceased	3,3	16	100	90
	1st child born in France	2,4	17	83	69
Precarious (n=47, 11%)	Social benefit	12,6	50	100	22
	Previous marriage	5,2	17	94	61
	Father not deceased	2,6	12	100	90
	1st child born abroad	2,3	17	47	31
Other (n=95, 21%)	Previous marriage	10,3	36	100	61
	No financial help from outside HH	7,5	29	100	76
	No social benefit	7,0	28	100	78
	Father not deceased	4,4	25	100	90
	1st child born abroad	4,0	35	48	31
	1st child at age 22-27	3,7	31	60	43

Source: TeO (2008). Single immigrant mothers living with at least one child under the age of 18.

This study discusses the importance and meaning of single motherhood in the migratory context. We analyze trajectories of single immigrant mothers in France to understand the role played by family and migration dynamics in the formation and experience of their families in a specific migratory context. Firstly, we compare indicators regarding family formation and composition for single mothers with different migration histories using the nationally representative “Trajectories and Origins” survey (2008-2009). Secondly, we construct a typology of single immigrant mothers through a combination of Multiple Correspondence Analysis and classification. Family structures at origin determine prevalence and characteristics of single mother families at destination, with fewer single mothers among North African and Asian immigrants and substantially more of them among Sub-Saharan Africans. These family configurations are also associated with specific migrant profiles: spouse migrants are least likely to become single mothers and often do so involuntarily (widowhood), whereas independent migrants are most likely and often outside of any partnership. Our typology yields profiles of immigrant single mothers observed among non-immigrants (single at birth, separated after cohabitation...), but also profiles specific to migrant women in more precarious socio-economic conditions. Changes in the profiles of female migrants contribute to the transformation of single parenthood in destination countries. The impact of the destination country’s family context and state policies needs to be further investigated.

The Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI) is an institute for the scientific study of population. NIDI research aims to contribute to the description, analysis and explanation of demographic trends in the past, present and future, both on a national and an international scale. The determinants and social consequences of these trends are also studied.

NIDI is a research institute of the Royal Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW).

