

Title: How migration projects influence union formation in DR Congo? A multi-site and event history analysis

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### **Summary:**

Marriage has experienced major changes in African countries. This paper focuses on the migration project as an agent of these changes. Although most research related to the effects of migration is about actual migration, this paper rather focuses on the effect of prospected migration. The theoretical proposition is that migration can impact individuals' behaviors in origin countries even though migration has not (yet) occurred. The sub-Saharan context is especially relevant to test this idea, as it is both a place where intentions to migrate are widespread and where out-migration is highly constrained, thus creating a reservoir of would-be migrants. This paper provides a specific case study to test the effect of prospective migration. The aim is to determine whether non-migrants living in the city of Kinshasa (DR Congo) who have a migration project tend to delay marriage or entry into union. The data come from surveys of the MAFE project (migration between Africa and Europe). These data include multi-sited retrospective information on migration projects and migration histories, as well as union histories. Using event history models, the results confirm the influence of the migration project on the timing of union among men and women in the city of Kinshasa.

### **1. Background**

The analysis of social changes in union formation associated with international migration is the objective of this study. Specifically, the question is whether migration or migration projects lead would-be migrants to adapt the timing of their union.

Studies conducted in the city of Kinshasa and some other African cities show transformations of matrimonial practices, with later and less frequent marriages (Nappa et al, 2014; Calvès, 2007; Antoine et al., 2006). The economic crisis is a major factor associated with these changes (Nappa et al, 2014). During these times of socio-economic crisis, international migration from Kinshasa also increased drastically (Schoumaker et al., 2010). In this context of crisis, social changes and migratory flows, we focus on the formation of couples among would-be migrants. Marriage is a long and expensive process in Kinshasa (Shomba, 2004), and so is international migration. In this demanding situation, with limited financial resources, it is likely that candidates for migration give priority to the migration project rather than to the start of their union. The differences in the scale of involvement of men and women in marriage, and the importance of the autonomous migration of women suggest gender differences in the realization of the migration project.

## **2. Literature**

The study assumes that the individual shapes a profile based on the available information to maximize his/her chances of achieving a goal (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980). In this sense, potential migrants can forge a profile they deem favorable to the success of the migration project. The financial aspects are important, but the constraints of parental obligations can also be seen as an obstacle to the realization of the migration project. In the few studies where the two phenomena are analyzed, it appears that individuals anticipate or modify the schedule of key events in the family cycle to get into a stance that they consider favorable to the realization of the migration project (Kley, 2011; De Jong , 2000).

In the Congolese context, these theoretical elements coupled with the economic and social realities lead to the following hypotheses: (1) competition from a financial point of view between union formation and international migration. The role of men in the organization of the wedding – include the payment of a dowry - suggests a greater burden on men. (2) Migrating while being single offers a wider range of opportunities one at destination: to marry in the destination countries, to marry at distance, to marry a person of another nationality, etc. Hence the importance of migrating while being single. (3) Despite the increase in autonomous migration, Congolese women migrate more for family reasons. Moreover the social recognition of women still goes through her marital status (Thiriat 1999; Kalambayi, 2007). In this sense, our hypothesis is that the family project remains a priority over the migratory project among women. Based on these elements, the hypothesis is that men who are planning an international migration delay their entry into union and marriage while there would be no timing difference with non-immigrant among women.

## **3. Data Sources and Methodology**

The MAFE surveys (migration between Africa and Europe) are to date the only surveys that contain the information that meet the objectives of this study. Information is transnational in nature, collected both in DR Congo and in two destination countries, namely Belgium and the United Kingdom from 2009 to 2010. A little over 400 migrants were interviewed in Europe, and around 1,600 non-migrants were interviewed in Kinshasa, among which a significant percentage had migratory projects. In addition, the information is available to operationalize the migration project in a time-varying way. Each respondent was asked if and when he/she has started taken steps to migrate. Information is also available on the migratory trajectories, marital histories, professional activities etc.

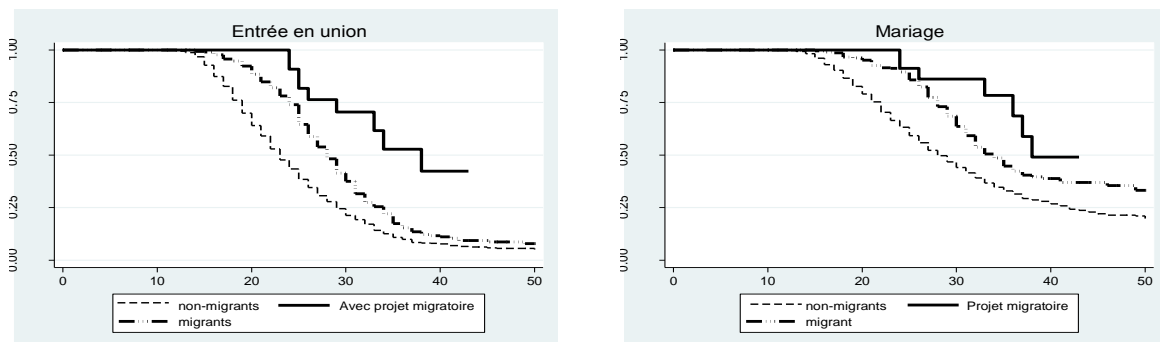
Analyses are organized into two parts. The first part describes the occurrence of union formation in different subpopulations; the second part seeks to highlight the effect of the migration project and of actual migration on the start of union. In the descriptive part, Kaplan-

Meier estimators are used to construct survival curves. The second part deals with the effect of the migration project on union formation and marriage. These effects are evaluated with discrete time event history models.

#### 4. Preliminary results

The analysis of the occurrence of union formation (Figure 1) shows a difference of entry into union and marriage between non-migrants, migrants and people who have had a migratory project. As expected People who have a migratory project start their union later than other groups. The log-rank test gives a statistically significant difference between the curves, but does not allow at this stage to conclude in the descriptive part, with a net effect of the migration project on entry into union or marriage. Several factors can come into play to explain this result.

Figure 1: Entry in union and marriage when the project is before the formation of the couple (Kaplan-Meier estimator)



The effect of the migration project on men is confirmed in multivariate analyzes (Table 1). It appears a delay in union formation among men who have international migration projects, while this is not significant among women. These results confirm the hypothesis that men delay the formation of the couple when a migration project is being prepared.

Table 1: Discrete-time event history models (odds ratios) of first marriage in Kinshasa and among Congolese migrants in Europe.

Covariates	Males	Females
<b>Age groups (time-varying)</b>		
15 – 19	1,00	1,00
20 – 24	5,44***	0,84
25 – 29	7,23***	0,73+
30 – 34	7,28***	0,31***
35 – 39	3,23**	0,14***
40 +	1,96	0,00***
<b>Cohort (constant)</b>		
25 – 29 years	1,00	1,00
30 – 39 years	2,08+	1,67*
40 – 49 years	4,59***	2,64***
50 ans et plus	7,00***	5,38***
<b>Migration project and experience (time-varying)</b>		
Non-migrant	1,00	1,00
Non-migrant with a migratory project	0,11***	0,43+
Migrant in destination country	0,89	0,74+
Return migrant	1,03	0,43*
Non-migrant after end of migratory project	0,82	1,62
<b>Economic activity</b>		
Inactive	1,00	1,00
Unemployed	1,11	0,39***
Student	0,77	0,07***
Employed	2,81*	0,46***
<b>Economic status at age 15</b>		
Lower than average	1,00	1,00
Average	0,70	2,21**
Higher than average	0,98	3,99***
+ p<0,15 ; * : p<0,10 ; ** : p<0,05 ; *** : p<0,01		

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