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Is the Feminization of International Migration Really on the Rise? The Case of Flows from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Senegal

While women's international migration is not a new phenomenon, women have long been absent from research in this area (Boyd and Grieco, 2003; Morokvasic, 2008). Men were perceived to be the only protagonists of international mobility while women were seen as either left behind or passively following their husbands. However, from the 1980s, research increasingly brought women to the forefront of attention and claimed to observe a rising global trend towards a feminization of migration flows (Castles and Miller, 1998; Piper, 2005). Furthermore, the focus shifted away from the “trailing wives” to autonomously migrating women employed in the domestic and care sectors, the emblematic figures being nannies or nurses (King and Zontini, 2000; Tacoli, 1999).

More recent work has nuanced such claims, arguing that the feminization of migration is neither a new nor a universal trend (Donato et al., 2006, 2011; Gabaccia, 1996; Piya and Donato, 2013; Schrover, 2013). Africa, in particular, is a region where claims of increasing female participation in international migration flows have not really been backed by data, mostly since such data has thus far been unavailable. Taking advantage of a recent multi-sited and retrospective dataset – the Migration between Africa and Europe (MAFE) survey – this article aims to fill this gap. Our objectives are twofold: first, we examine the extent to which Congolese and Senegalese international migration flows display a trend towards increasing feminization. Second, we seek to assess whether the profiles of migrant men and women are converging, with autonomous forms of mobility reaching similar levels for both sexes, or whether

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women's international migration from these regions remains largely dictated by family strategies.

In pursuing these objectives, this article attempts to make several distinctions, not systematically discussed in the literature. First, it is not always clear what is meant by the term “feminization” of migration. While most studies refer to a gradual increase in the percentage of female migrants (Alexander and Steidl, 2012; Boyd, 2006; Castles and Miller, 1998), others point to an increase in absolute levels of female mobility (UNFPA, 2006), while yet others to an increase in women's economic mobility in particular (Piper, 2005; Verschuur, 2013). This article shows that it is important to distinguish between these dimensions. A relative increase in the share of women crossing borders is not necessarily accompanied by an absolute increase in their numbers, which nuances the implications of the term “feminization”. Second, the literature generally considers migration to be autonomous when the migration project seeks to satisfy the migrant's personal economic needs (Le Jeune et al., 2005) and when the woman migrates on her own, and not with her husband or in order to join him abroad (Piper, 2005). Yet, studies show that the boundary between “tied movers” and “autonomous economic agents” is not so clear-cut (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994). On the one hand, women following their spouse may enter employment at destination (Oso Casas, 2004); which nuances the “tied mover” character of their migration; on the other hand, kin networks may play a large role in the mobility of single women, so their migration may not be as “autonomous” as it appears (Comoé, 2005).

Another limitation of most current studies is that they approach the question of women's migration from the perspective of the destination countries. Furthermore, those that do consider the sending side examine the intersection of gender and migration within a single culture. In a recent stocktaking exercise, Donato et al. (2006) argue that comparative studies are needed if we want to understand the factors underlying the gender composition of migration. This article adopts a comparative design and examines migration flows from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Senegal, using identical data. By comparing two countries characterized by different migration histories, social and political contexts and gender regimes we can examine how culturally defined gender relations influence international migration, in terms of both who migrates and how they migrate.

The first section of this article reviews the relevant literature on the feminization of migration, arguing for more conceptual precision in the definition of the term. The second section briefly describes some differences in the migration histories and gender systems of DR Congo and Senegal, the two countries under study, while the third section introduces the data and methodology. The fourth section presents the results, which are further discussed in a final section.

1. Previous research on the feminization of migration

The multiple dimensions of feminization

It is not always clear in the literature what the phenomenon of feminization actually describes and therefore how it should be measured. Most researchers and policy reports define feminization as an increase in the share of women in the migration stream and therefore measure changes in gender ratios among foreign-born populations. Alexander and Steidl (2012, p. 224) take this idea a bit further when they state that the feminization of migration is a dynamic process in which “international migrant streams formerly dominated by men gradually become gender-balanced or even majority-female”.

Thus, feminization generally refers to a relative change in the gender composition of migration flows. The implicit assumption in this definition, as illustrated in Castles and Miller’s (1998) statement that “women are playing an increasing part in all regions and in all types of migrations” (p. 37) is that this change occurs through an increase in the absolute levels of female mobility. Yet there are very few studies that take both aspects into consideration (Beauchemin et al., 2013; Zlotnik, 1995). Notwithstanding, examining only relative shifts can lead to wrong conclusions. For example, Zlotnik (1995) shows that the rise in the female share of the foreign-born population in post-1974 Germany was not due to an increase in female immigration through family reunification, as had long been believed, but to a larger decrease in the numbers of male migrants.

Yet another meaning is put forward by other scholars who understand feminization as an increasing migratory participation of women as autonomous economic agents, as opposed to dependent migrants. For example, in the recent *International Handbook on Gender, Migration and Transnationalism*, Verschuur (2013) considers that “‘feminization of migration’ refers to a specific process, namely, that of women increasingly migrating as independent workers, not necessarily with their families” (p. 150). Similarly, for Oishi (2002, 2005), an important dimension of feminization is not only that women are travelling more, but that “they are traveling as autonomous migrants and not only as dependents” (2002, p. 2). Piper (2010) also argues that the “real change of the last decades has occurred in the way they move: more women are now migrating independently in search of jobs, rather than as family dependents travelling with their husbands or joining them abroad” (p. 2).

This article argues that all three dimensions need to be considered if we want to understand changes in gendered patterns of migration. However, they refer to different aspects, measured by different indicators, and cannot be conflated into the same concept without losing their empirical value.

*Feminization of migration flows:
a non-linear and highly contextual trend*

The feminization of migration is often presented in the literature as a new and universal phenomenon, going back a couple of decades and uniformly affecting all regions of the world. According to Castles and Miller (1998), the feminization of international migration flows is among the five key trends of the new “age of migration”. Nicola Piper (2003) similarly states that “the feminization of labor migration has become a well-established fact” (p. 726).

Recent research has nuanced the scope of such claims, however. Studies conducted mostly by social historians examining shifts in gender ratios show that feminization is neither a recent nor a linear trend and that it is highly problematic to characterize past migrations as “male-dominated” (Gabaccia and Zanoni, 2012; Houstoun et al., 1984). The share of women in immigrant flows to the United States increased sharply between the 1830s and 1860s, and then again in the first half of the twentieth century, reaching 50% in 1930 (Gabaccia, 1996). Similarly, the gender ratios of migrants in many European countries were mostly balanced before the Second World War. The Netherlands and France even experienced substantial rises in their female migrant population in the interwar period (Beauchemin et al., 2013; Schrover, 2013) leading Schrover (2013) to conclude that “if there was ever a period of feminization, it was in this interwar period” (p. 123). It was through the introduction of guest worker programmes in the two decades following the Second World War that migrant men started outnumbering women in Europe, before the share of women started growing again from the mid-1970s onward.

Furthermore, feminization is not a consistent, universal trend. Recent studies document large variations in the evolution of gender ratios both by region of destination and of origin (Cerrutti and Gaudio, 2010; Donato et al., 2006; 2011; Massey et al., 2006; Piya and Donato, 2013; Schrover, 2013; Zlotnik, 1995, 2003). On average, shares of female immigrants rose by three percentage points between 1960 and 2000 in developed regions of destination, but remained stable in developing areas (Zlotnik, 2003). This apparent lack of change in the latter is due to highly contrasting trends among the various developing regions: whereas the immigrant population in Latin America and in East and Southeast Asia became increasingly feminized, Africa and South Asia experienced the reverse trend. Recent work has also revealed major differences in the gender composition of migration streams by their region of origin. Flows originating in Africa and North America (mostly Mexico) are the only ones where the proportion of males has increased since the 1970s (Donato et al., 2011).

Last, in the regions where it has occurred, the extent of feminization has not been as substantial as many have claimed. Katherine Donato and colleagues found that when the higher death rates of immigrant men compared to women were taken into account, the increases in the female shares were much more conservative than previously thought (Donato et al., 2011, 2012).

Thus, empirical work does not really support the claim of a recent, linear and substantial global trend towards the feminization of migration flows, but rather “dynamic and complex shifts in the sex composition of immigrant populations worldwide” (Donato et al., 2011, p. 512). This calls for a distinction between the feminization of migration and the feminization of the “migratory discourse” (Oso, Casas and Garson, 2005; Vause, 2009). The latter refers to the increasing conceptualization of women as actors of migration (Vause, 2009) and is the more recent and widespread phenomenon of the two.

However, these empirical studies are limited in that they focus exclusively on relative changes – shifts in gender ratios – and pay no attention to variations in absolute terms. Furthermore, they only use data collected in destination countries (mostly census data) which poses at least two problems. First, it excludes illegal immigrants, which may bias results if the likelihood of entering the country illegally varies by gender. Second, it ignores differential rates of remigration by gender: several studies have found that men are more likely to return to their origin countries or engage in secondary migration than women (Grasmuck and Pessar, 2005; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994). In contrast, this article adopts a sending-country perspective and examines both relative and absolute changes in gendered patterns of international mobility.

Blurred lines between associational and autonomous female mobility

For a long time, research mainly portrayed women as associational migrants, passively following fathers or husbands. It was only in the 1980s that women started being conceptualized as social and economic actors of migration in their own right (Morokvasic, 1984; Oso, Casas and Garson, 2005; Vause, 2009). While many studies claim this shift in focus was motivated by a change in the nature of female mobility and a rise in autonomous forms of migration (Adepoju, 2000, 2004; Piper, 2010), few have actually examined in a quantitative framework whether this was indeed the case. Those that do so mostly use two indicators: migrants’ motivation for migration and their marital status (often measured at the time of the survey and not at the time of migration) (Massey et al., 2006; Ouali, 2003).

Subsequent work has challenged a too rigid dichotomy between the two forms of female mobility. Studies suggest that the boundary between family and labour migration is often blurred, as women who migrate to reunite with their spouses may subsequently enter employment at destination (Kanaiaupuni, 2000). In a study on Senegalese women migrants, Coulibaly-Tandian (2008) shows that family reunification is sometimes a pretext for labour migration, as some women strategically use this channel in order to reach Western destinations. More generally, researchers have argued that in the context of increasing restrictions on international mobility, the channel of migration cannot be presumed to reflect individuals’ actual motivations, but rather the most accessible option for travelling abroad at that moment. Since entering

Europe as a labour migrant is increasingly difficult, migration candidates may try to claim refugee status or enter as family migrants if this increases their chances of reaching their destination (Gonzalez-Ferrer, 2011).

Research has further challenged the belief that “autonomous” female migration is indeed independent and has stressed the influence of other family members in the mobility process. In a study on internal female migration in Côte d’Ivoire, Comoé (2005) finds that the migration of unmarried daughters is, to a larger extent than that of unmarried sons, a strategy decided within the family. The strict control exerted by kinship networks in this form of mobility leads Comoé to conclude that women’s autonomy in the migration process remains limited.

In the context of sub-Saharan Africa, research has mostly examined internal migration patterns, with some findings emphasizing an unprecedented development of autonomous female moves from rural to urban areas (Antoine and Sow, 2000; Bocquier and Traoré, 2000; Findley, 1997; Hertrich and Lesclingand, 2013; Lesclingand, 2011). Other studies, however, have underlined the continuing importance of the family dimension in these mobilities (Comoé, 2005; Le Jeune et al., 2005; Mondain and Diagné, 2009). This article focuses instead on international migration and uses several indicators to assess changes in the migration profiles of men and women, going beyond the usual measure used in the literature.

II. Gender systems and patterns of migration: towards a comparative approach

With few exceptions, research on gendered migration patterns has focused on a single country. However, a comparative approach is needed in order to understand how systems of gender relations shape international mobility patterns (Green, 2002). Comparing five Latin American countries, Massey et al. (2006) show that the characteristics of female migration vary according to the patriarchal nature of the gender system. They find that in societies where women are more autonomous, independent, and less tied to men as partners, they are more likely to migrate as independent agents. Similar findings are reported by Cerrutti and Gaudio (2010) in their comparison of Mexican and Paraguayan migration patterns: gender relations (among others) affect the volume of female migration, the characteristics of women who migrate and the channel of migration. According to Oishi (2005), the extent and the ways in which women cross borders depends on the “social legitimacy” of this behaviour in a given society, and is deeply rooted in the prevailing social norms about gender equality and women’s wage employment. Oishi convincingly shows how the low social legitimacy for female migration in Bangladesh, externalized in restrictive government policies and internalized by the women

themselves, is a major factor explaining the low levels of female mobility from that country.

No such comparative research has been undertaken on international mobility from sub-Saharan Africa. This article adds a longitudinal perspective to the above-mentioned studies and examines, in a comparative framework, the extent to which flows from Senegal and DR Congo have feminized over the past four decades, using data from the two countries' capital areas (Kinshasa and Dakar). Our two case studies differ in their economic, political and cultural contexts as well as in their prevailing gender norms, which have shaped different migration histories. The following section briefly discusses some of these differences, focusing in particular on the two capital areas while also situating them in their broader national contexts.

Migration and gender roles in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Senegal and their capital regions

While both countries gained their independence in 1960, Senegal has followed a trajectory of political stability whereas the DR Congo has experienced violent political conflicts. Though richer in natural resources, DR Congo is in a worse economic situation than Senegal and is ranked as one of the world's poorest nations.

Senegalese international migration has a long and well-documented history, going back to the First World War, when many Senegalese served in France as infantrymen (Robin et al., 2000). The flows intensified after Independence, particularly towards booming African countries and towards France, where the expanding automobile industry was in need of workers (Pison et al., 1997). Congolese migration is more recent and less documented than the Senegalese flows and is largely directed towards neighbouring countries. Congolese migration to Europe started in the early 1960s, and consisted primarily of elites, students or professionals sent by companies for training in Belgium, the former colonial power (Kagne and Martiniello, 2001). The deteriorating economic situation and the renewed political turmoil in the 1990s intensified migration flows. Towards Europe, these flows were increasingly composed of asylum-seekers (Schoumaker et al., 2010). Starting in the 1980s, both countries saw a diversification of both departure regions and destinations,⁽¹⁾ with Italy and Spain attracting a large number of Senegalese, while the United Kingdom and France became an important destination for the Congolese. Dakar gradually became the main departure and return region in Senegal, with France, Italy and Spain together attracting around 45% of international flows from the capital area (2002 Senegalese census).

(1) In Senegal, religious networks, and in particular the Mouride brotherhood, have played an increasing role in these new migration dynamics, explaining to a certain extent the diversification of destinations (Bava, 2003).

There is some evidence of differing gender relations in the two contexts. In DR Congo, as in Senegal, women are traditionally subordinated to male authority, and positions of social and economic responsibility are held by men (Pilon and Vignikin, 2006). Being less educated than men, women are also less present on the labour market, where they occupy more insecure jobs. However, the severe crisis in DR Congo over recent decades has modified these social relations. This is particularly true in Kinshasa, where women have gradually developed new strategies (Batumike, 2009; Bouchard, 2003; Mianda, 1996; Ngoie Tshibambe, 2007; Verhaegen, 1990). As unemployment rose among men, women were forced to take over their husbands' responsibilities, to leave the domestic sphere and to take on a variety of small jobs. According to some authors, the crisis has weakened men's social position and has forced them to accept the economic participation of their spouses, who have gained considerably in social status and decision-making power within the family (Bouchard, 2002; Mianda, 1996).

In Senegal, as elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa, persistent economic hardships have similarly increased women's role in household survival strategies, but the crisis has not been as severe as in DR Congo, and women's economic participation does not have the same social significance. Using biographic data collected in Dakar in 2006, Adjamagbo et al. (2006) find that the ideal model of marriage described by men and women envisages the man as the sole provider of the family's material and financial comfort and excludes women from any work obligation. If a woman does happen to work, her income is often used for her own consumption – in clothes or finery – as it is hardly conceivable for a woman to provide for the family and to thus challenge the husband's economic role.

A comparison of men's and women's educational level and activity status between the two capital regions based on recent Demographic and Health Surveys supports these qualitative findings. Gender gaps in both education and economic activity are much higher in Dakar than in Kinshasa: in the former, women are twice as likely as men to be illiterate and almost twice as likely to be not working.⁽²⁾ In Kinshasa, gender differences in economic activity are much smaller (44% of women were working at the time of the survey versus 56% of men) and almost everyone is literate.⁽³⁾

These differences in gender norms may translate into differences in attitudes towards female migration and mobility practices. Qualitative evidence suggests that in Senegal, women's migration tends to be opposed by the family and by society. For example, Bâ (2003) finds that female international migration,

(2) 42% of Senegalese women are illiterate, versus 25% of men; 45% Senegalese women were working at the time of the survey, versus 65% of men.

(3) Indeed, one of the most substantial differences between the two contexts is the absolute level of education. The Congolese, and those living in Kinshasa in particular, have almost all obtained at least some primary education and over 92% are literate, whereas a third of those living in Dakar have no formal education and female illiteracy rates are above 40%.

especially if not undertaken for family reunification, is stigmatized and often associated with prostitution. Women who migrate have to reconcile their desire to make a living with the risk of challenging the social order and being marginalized. The low social legitimacy of international female migration in the Senegalese context has been emphasized by several recent studies (Dia, 2009; etc). In DR Congo, women's independent migration seems to be more broadly accepted in the current context of change linked to the economic crisis (Mianda, 1996).

To summarize, traditional views about gender roles appear to maintain a stronger hold in Dakar than in Kinshasa and represent a veritable obstacle to Senegalese women's economic participation. While we are not arguing that Congolese women are fully emancipated or that DR Congo has achieved gender equality, research from the two contexts seems to suggest that Congolese women are subjected to lower social control than their Senegalese counterparts and enjoy greater autonomy. Given these differences, we may expect to find higher levels and larger increases in feminization and autonomous female mobility in Kinshasa than in Dakar.

III. The “Migration between Africa and Europe” dataset

To answer our research questions, we need data collected in both origin and destination countries. First, information on migrants and non-migrants is needed in order to estimate migration rates; second, direct information from migrants is also required in order to achieve a better understanding of the nature and degree of the autonomy involved in respondents' international moves. Due to the difficulties of conducting multi-sited research, many surveys limit themselves to collecting information on return migrants. However, it can be argued that returnees are a selected group and that their migration experiences are not necessarily representative of the entire migrant population. Furthermore, time-specific data on several aspects of the respondents' lives are needed in order to examine changes in the rate and type of international mobility over time.

The Migration between Africa and Europe (MAFE)⁽⁴⁾ survey, conducted between 2008 and 2010 in several African countries and European destinations, is well suited for answering our research questions. In a first stage, household surveys were conducted in the regions of Dakar (1,200 households) and Kinshasa (1,576 households), collecting basic socio-demographic information on all household members. The surveys followed a three-stage probabilistic sampling strategy, and were representative of the capital areas. This article uses these data to evaluate the degree of feminization of migration flows from these two regions. The household survey records information on all spouses and children

(4) More information can be found on the project website: <http://mafeproject.site.ined.fr/en/>

of the household head irrespective of their current location, but not on all other family members, such as siblings of the household head.⁽⁵⁾ For this reason, the analysis sample for the first research question only includes the household head, his or her spouse(s) and his or her children. The dates and destinations of the first and last trips of all members (present or currently absent) with international migration experience were also collected, making it possible to calculate the number of potential as well as actual migrants. Table 1 presents the breakdown of the analysis sample for each country of origin in terms of gender, migration status and region of destination of migrants' first international move.

Table 1. Total number of cases by gender, country of origin and migration status

	Senegal		DR Congo	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Migrant to Africa	151	77	477	324
Migrants to Western countries	254	147	166	131
Total migrants	405	224	643	455
Non-migrants	3,117	3,424	2,588	2,977
Total number	3,522	3,648	3,231	3,432

Source: MAFE household data (2008-2010).

An individual life event history questionnaire, identical in each country surveyed, was also used to collect more detailed information. Non-migrants and return migrants were interviewed in the regions of Dakar (1,067 individuals) and Kinshasa (1,645 individuals); additionally, current migrants were interviewed in several European countries (200 Senegalese each in France, Italy and Spain; 279 Congolese in Belgium and 150 in the United Kingdom). The questionnaire records retrospective information on many aspects of respondents' life histories, such as their family formation history, their occupational, residential and migration trajectories, among others. These data are used to answer the second research question, with respect to the nature of individuals' international moves. Thus, the study population for this second part of the analysis is exclusively composed of migrants, both current and returnees at the time of the survey. Furthermore, only information on migrants' first international migration experience as an adult (at ages 18-65) is analysed. Table 2 presents the total sample by gender and destination of their first international move.

While innovative in many ways, the MAFE data also have several limitations. First, the retrospective nature of the individual questionnaire means that the data suffer from two main biases: first, substantial selection bias arises due to prior mortality, since estimates are only representative for the survivors; this

(5) Only a selected population of the latter appear in the survey: those who live with the household head or who used to live in the household but are currently abroad and have frequent contacts with the household.

Table 2. Total number of migrants interviewed by gender, country of origin and destination

	Senegal		DR Congo	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Migrants to Africa	109	39	259	135
Migrants to Western countries	341	278	237	217
Total migrants	450	317	496	352

Source: MAFE household data (2008-2010).

will particularly affect older cohorts. Second, memory bias leads to inaccurate reporting, due either to memory lapses or to a “conscious misrepresentation of the past”. Whereas the first bias is unavoidable, the survey tried to minimize the second by using life history calendars to record time-dated events. It should also be noted that while the origin samples are representative of the Dakar and Kinshasa areas in 2008, some of the migrants interviewed at destination may not have previously lived in these regions.⁽⁶⁾ In the final samples, however, this was the case for only one-fifth of the migrants, on average. Furthermore, the estimation of migration risks based on the household data does not take into account the migration of entire households, and may thus underestimate mobility if such cases are common.⁽⁷⁾

IV. Findings

A feminization of Congolese and Senegalese migration flows?

The first objective of this article is to examine the extent to which a feminization of Congolese and Senegalese migration flows can be observed. We estimate migration trends by gender and destination (African versus Western countries) using discrete-time event history analysis based on the MAFE household data collected in the Dakar and Kinshasa regions.⁽⁸⁾ Individuals enter the risk set at age 18 and are observed until their first international migration lasting at least one year, or up to the time of the survey, whichever comes first.

A first way to approach this objective is to compare men’s and women’s migration propensities across several cohorts. This can be done by estimating Kaplan-Meier survival curves, which illustrate cumulative probabilities of

(6) For more information on the complex sampling strategy used, see Beauchemin and Gonzalez-Ferrer (2011).

(7) Qualitative evidence suggests that such a phenomenon is infrequent, given the extended nature of households in sub-Saharan Africa (Dia, 2009).

(8) As such, the trends we estimate are not representative nationally. However, it could be argued that a higher degree of feminization should be observed in urban areas, especially in the capital cities, than in rural areas (Le Jeune et al., 2005).

survival and also take into account right-censored observations.⁽⁹⁾ Three cohorts are distinguished: those aged 50 or more in 2008 (born between 1915 and 1959), those aged 30-49 (born between 1960 and 1979) and those aged 18-29 (born between 1980 and 1991). The latter are only observed during 10 years. Initially, all 18 year-olds are in their origin country (Senegal or DR Congo). The probability of remaining there diminishes with age or, in other words, the probability of moving abroad increases.

Figure 1 distinguishes migration towards African countries and that towards Western destinations⁽¹⁰⁾ (Europe and North America). Migration from the Kinshasa area to other African countries presents a relatively clear picture. From one cohort to the next, the timing of migration accelerates; the younger cohorts migrate earlier than the older ones. The intensity of the phenomenon seems also to have increased: the youngest cohorts appear the most likely to have migrated at least once to another African country by age 23. Last, for each of the three observed cohorts, gender differences do not appear to narrow, as men are systematically (and significantly) more likely to migrate than women. Migration from the Kinshasa area towards Western countries appears to be much less frequent than intra-African migration. The patterns for migration to the West are less clear-cut. The estimates for the different cohorts tend to overlap, indicating neither an acceleration of migration, nor an intensification of departures. In terms of gender differences, only the estimates corresponding to older cohorts differ. By contrast, gender differences disappear for the two most recent cohorts; the intensity and timing of migration is the same for men and women. Contrasting the two figures also shows that migration to Western countries is much less frequent than intra-African migration.

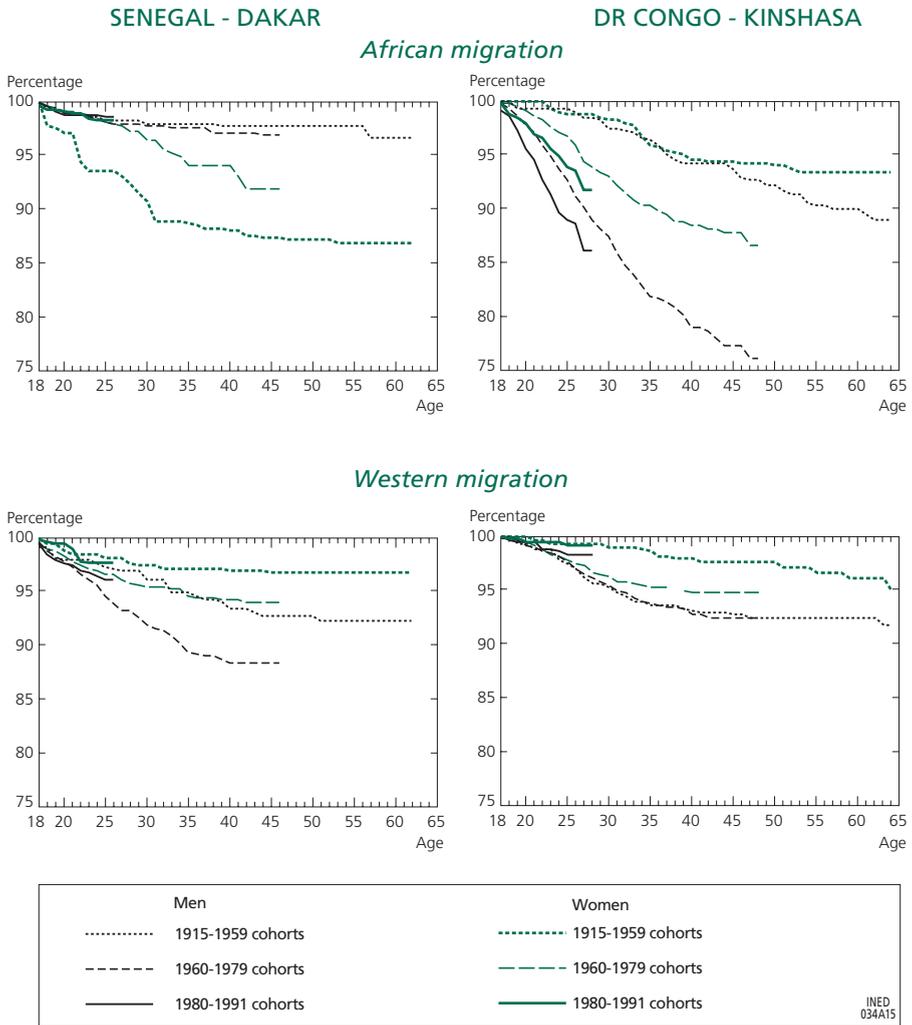
Migration trends from the Dakar area in Senegal look quite different. First, a decrease in intra-continental flows is observed. Men belonging to the oldest cohort are significantly more likely to have migrated to another African country and to have started their migration at a lower age than those belonging to younger cohorts.⁽¹¹⁾ This has also led to a narrowing of gender gaps between subsequent cohorts, despite the fact that intra-continental migration propensities among women have not changed significantly. A different picture emerges for migration towards Europe and North America. Both men and women born between 1960 and 1979 are significantly more likely to have migrated to a Western country before age 40 than those born before 1960. Furthermore, although the difference is only significant for men, the timing of these migrations seems to have accelerated between cohorts, as the Senegalese increasingly

(9) If an individual in the survey is interviewed at age 25 and has not yet migrated, this does not mean that s/he may not migrate in the future. S/he will appear as right-censored and will no longer be counted as being "at risk" of experiencing the event after 25 years.

(10) The few cases of migration to other destinations in Asia, Australia or South America were treated as right-censored.

(11) 12% of men born between 1915 and 1959 had migrated to another African country by age 32, versus only 5% of those born between 1960 and 1979.

Figure 1. Probability of not having experienced an international migration, by country of origin, destination, gender and cohort (Kaplan-Meier survival curves)



Source: MAFE data.

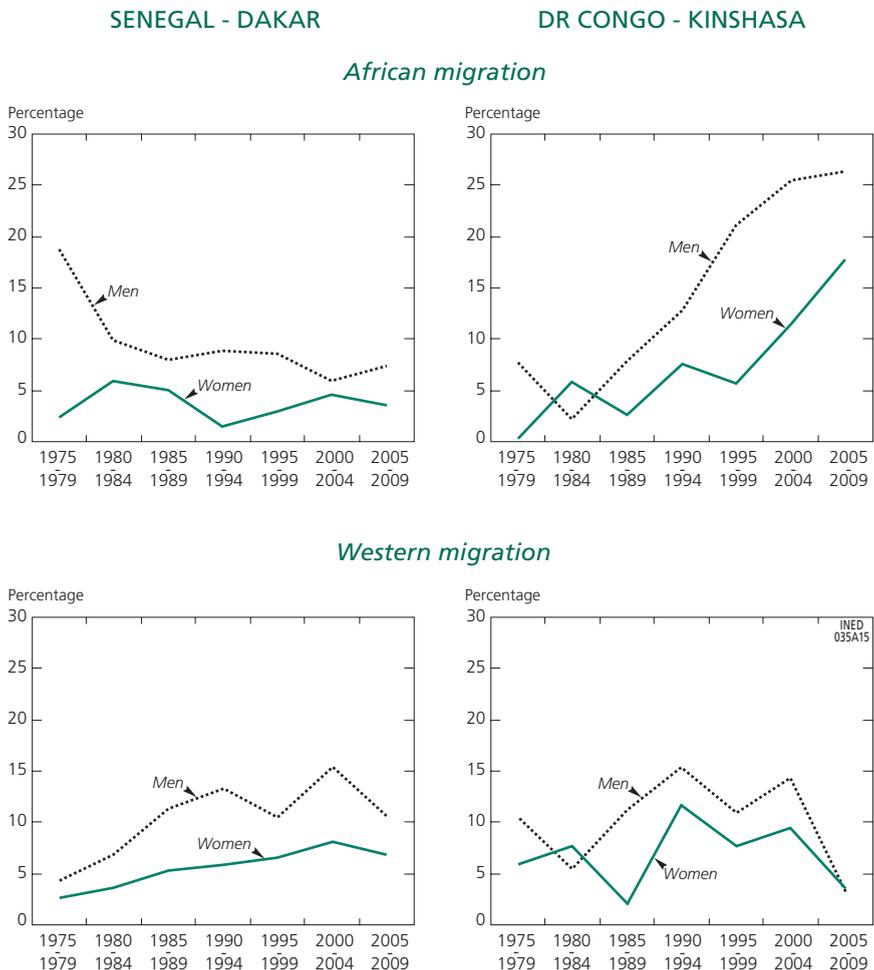
migrate at a younger age. Finally, there is no narrowing of the gender gap between the cohorts.

This analysis by cohort has several shortcomings. Reports from older respondents could be unreliable because of recall errors and selection biases. Another way to look at these trends is to follow their evolution over time. This gives a complementary view to the cohort analysis. A discrete-time logistic regression model is used to estimate migration odds separately by gender while taking age and period (five-year) effects into account. These odds are transformed

into lifetime risks of undertaking at least one international migration between ages 18 and 65. The evolution of these migration probabilities from 1975 to 2008 is presented in Figure 2.

As expected, these confirm the broad trends observed with the cohort-based survival functions. With respect to intra-African flows from Kinshasa, a clear increase in the risks of departure for both men and women can be observed from the late 1980s onwards. This trend should be interpreted in the context of political turmoil in the country from this period onwards. Yet the intensity of female migration is lower and gender differences persist. These intra-continental trends contrast with trends towards Western destinations. First, migrations risks are lower: the probability of migrating to a Western

Figure 2. Life-time risks of undertaking a first international migration between ages 18 and 65, by gender, country of origin and destination



Source: MAFE data.

destination does not exceed 15% for men and 10% for women at any point in time. The patterns are quite similar by gender: an increase in risks up to the mid-1990s, especially among women – which probably reflects the repercussions of the severe crises of 1991 and 1993 – followed by a period of stagnation and then a net decrease in risk in the later periods, paralleling the improvement in political and economic conditions from 2001 onwards. Senegalese flows display different trends: intra-continental moves from Dakar have been slowly decreasing in the past decades, as already seen in the cohort analysis; the gaps between men and women gradually decrease and seem to disappear after 2000, mostly due to a decrease in migration risks for men. By contrast, trends towards Western destinations show a moderate increase for both men and women, albeit to a smaller degree for the latter. Thus, gender differences persist across the period.

Overall, our findings tell a nuanced story with respect to the feminization of Congolese and Senegalese flows. On the one hand, the likelihood of migration appears to be rising for Congolese women with respect to African destinations and for the Senegalese with respect to Western countries, but the same can also be said for their male counterparts. A narrowing of gender differences is observed solely in the case of intra-continental Senegalese migration, but this should be placed in the context of a decrease in the risk of migrating towards these destinations, especially for men. If by feminization we understand both an intensification of flows and a decrease in the gender gap, we only see evidence of these trends with respect to migration from the Kinshasa region to Western destinations, where female mobility seems to have increased and to have narrowed the gap with men, at least up to the year 2000.

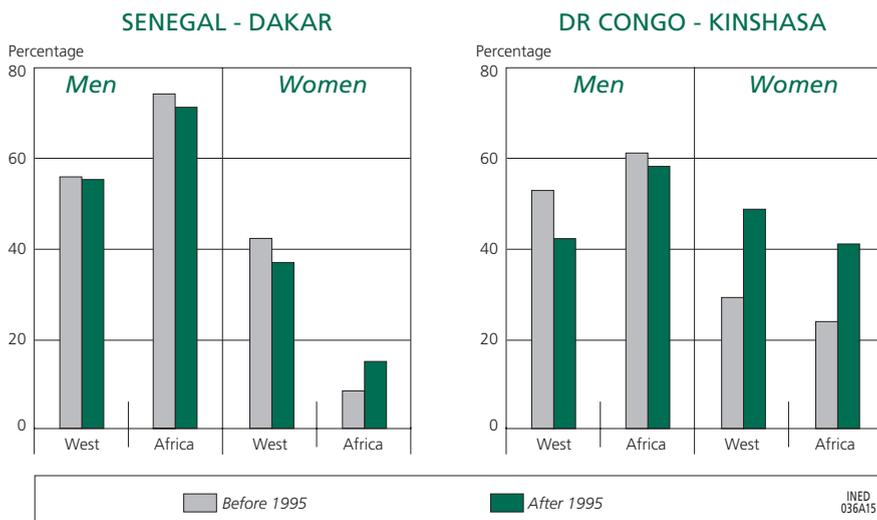
A rise in autonomous female migration from DR Congo and Senegal?

The second objective of this article is to investigate whether the migration experiences of men and women in the two countries are converging, or whether their mobility projects and trajectories remain different. In particular, we seek to examine the extent to which women's autonomous migration has increased in recent periods. We use here the data collected through the retrospective life event history questionnaire, both from return migrants interviewed in their origin countries and from current migrants interviewed in Europe. The following analyses all refer to the first adult migration undertaken by the individual. We continue to distinguish between migration to African and to Western countries, but the comparison is limited. Since the survey did not interview current migrants in Africa,⁽¹²⁾ findings with respect to migration towards another African country are only based on migrants who subsequently moved to Europe or who returned to their origin country, and who may represent a selected sample.

(12) This limitation only applies to the individual questionnaire; for the household survey, all (current) migrants were reported by the household head, irrespective of the destination.

Several indicators are used to apprehend the degree of autonomy of a move. A first, relatively raw, indicator is migrants' family status, and in particular whether or not they were single⁽¹³⁾ at the time of their migration. If independent female migration has increased, we should observe an increase, among women, in the share of migrants who are single. We distinguish two periods – before and after 1995 – on the basis of two considerations. First, 1995 is a natural threshold in both countries: in DR Congo it marks the beginning of the armed conflict (Hesselbein, 2007), and in Senegal, a period of slight but sustained economic recovery in the wake of structural adjustments (Gerdes, 2007). Second, the 1995 cut-off point provides large enough sample sizes in all groups for a meaningful analysis. Figure 3 shows that, prior to 1995, in both DR Congo and Senegal, women were substantially less likely to be single at the time of their first migration than men. However, among Congolese migrants, profiles largely converged by gender in the more recent period, mostly because of a significant rise in the share of women who were not in couple at the time of their migration. In Senegal, on the other hand, no significant change is observed. A clear difference by destination emerges, however, as a lower share of intra-African female migrants are single than of women choosing Western destinations.

Figure 3. Share of migrants who are single in the year of their migration by gender, period, country of origin, and destination



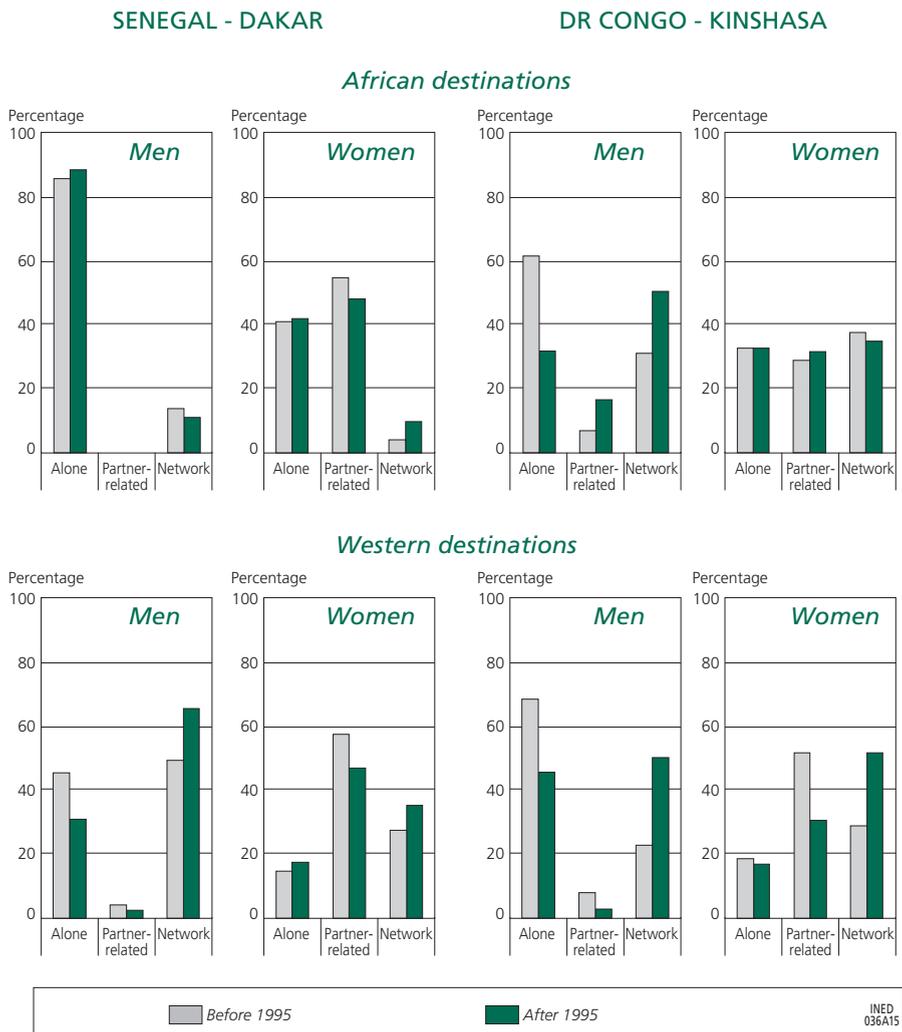
Source: MAFE data.

The partnership status at the time of migration is only a partial indicator of autonomy, as women can be in a couple and leave their spouse behind, arguably a case of independent economic migration. On the other hand, qualitative work has emphasized the importance of other ties in independent

(13) Not in a formal or informal union.

female migration, challenging the idea that their moves are autonomous. The MAFE data includes information on the migration trajectories (dates and destinations) of the respondents' personal circle, including their partner(s), kin and friends. Based on this, the mode of migration can be examined, i.e. whether migrants follow their partner abroad (either taking the trip together or reuniting at destination), follow another member of their personal network or move alone to a destination where they have no ties. In the latter case, the migrant makes the trip alone and does not join anyone from their reported migrant network at destination (category "alone" in Figure 4).

Figure 4. Mode of migration from Senegal and DR Congo by gender and period



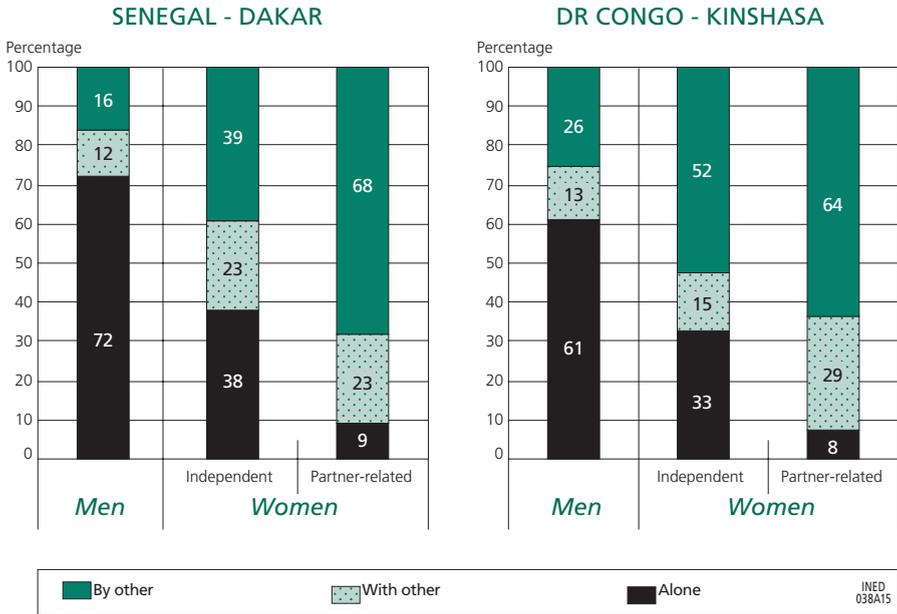
There are large gender differences in Congolese migration to other African countries: up to 1995, around 6 out of 10 migrant men, but only a third of migrant women, migrated to destinations where they had no ties. Very few men migrated in relation to their partner (8%) but a much larger proportion of women did so (30%). No change in the nature of female migration is recorded for intra-continental moves. Female migration to Western countries displays a different pattern: first, the share of women migrating “alone” is much lower than among intra-African moves. Second, the percentage of those moving in relation to their partner decreased significantly between the two periods. However, this translates into an increase in the share of women following other ties at destination, and a slight decrease in those moving to a destination where they have no connections. This latter aspect also concerns men, and is arguably related to the development of Congolese migration networks.

On the other hand, Senegalese women are, to start with, much more likely to migrate in relation to their partner than the Congolese, and no significant change in the nature of their migration is found. Only a slight – and not statistically significant – decrease in the share of partner-related migration towards Western destinations can be observed. Again, this is to the benefit of network-related migration, which increased for both men and women moving to Western countries. A striking difference between intra- and inter-continental Senegalese flows relates to the significance of migrant networks. Few Senegalese moving to an African country, but a large share of those choosing Western destinations reported having other ties already present at destination.

A final aspect considered is the extent of involvement of other social ties in the decision-making process and the financing of the migrant’s trip. A move can be considered more autonomous if it has been individually decided and funded. Findings in both countries show that even when it takes place independently of their partner, women’s migration is often the fruit of a collective decision, in which they do not always participate, and this to a significantly larger extent than for men (Figure 5). In Senegal, only 38% of women migrating independently of a partner decided their migration alone, compared with 72% of men; the gap is similarly large in DR Congo (33% of women migrating independently decided alone, versus 61% of men). In contrast, 40% (in Senegal) and 52% (in DR Congo) of women’s “independent” moves were actually entirely decided by others, compared with 16% and 26%, respectively, among men.

In this context, it seems that networks (of migrants or of non-migrant kin and friends) play a key role in women’s migration process. Prior findings also show that having ties abroad other than the partner are much more important in triggering women’s mobility than men’s (Toma and Vause, 2011). It is difficult, however, to evaluate whether their effect is to encourage or, on the contrary, to control and constrain women’s autonomy.

Figure 5. Migration decision-making



V. Discussion and conclusion

This article examines changes in women's participation in international migration flows from DR Congo and Senegal, in terms of both the level and the nature of their moves. It uses a novel dataset that collected multi-sited and retrospective information in the two countries' capital areas and in the most important European destinations of their migrants.

Trends in female migration from the capital areas of DR Congo and Senegal do not seem to parallel those observed in other regions of the world. No evidence of a substantial feminization of migration flows has been found in either context, which confirms previous findings by Donato et al. (2011) with respect to the composition of migration flows originating in Africa. Furthermore, for those destinations where the likelihood of female migration has increased, the narrowing of gender gaps is due solely to a decrease in male migration associated with a stagnation (or to smaller decreases) in female mobility. The only exception is migration from the Kinshasa region to Western destinations, where women's share in these flows has increased due to a rise in female mobility. This article thus argues that both absolute and relative changes in female migration should be considered in order to better evaluate the extent of feminization and to explain shifts in the gender composition of flows. Our argument reiterates an earlier call by Zlotnik (1995), who urged researchers to go beyond considering only changes in gender ratios, and to investigate the extent to which narrowing

gender gaps may actually be driven by a decrease in male migration, as she found to be the case for flows from developing countries to Germany. This, she argues, is a different case scenario, probably triggered by factors other than increases in absolute levels of female mobility. Unfortunately, most studies do not make this distinction, also due to the lack of adequate data.

Findings based on the MAFE data show some evidence of a rise in autonomous female migration from Kinshasa, especially towards Western destinations. In contrast, no salient change in this direction can be observed in the Senegalese case, irrespective of the indicator used. This challenges previous generalizations based on small-scale and mostly qualitative studies, which argue that autonomous female migration has intensified in Senegal (Sakho et al., 2011; Sall et al., 2010; Tall and Tandian, 2010). Besides considering partnership status at the time of migration and the motivation of the move, the MAFE data allowed us to consider other social ties besides the partner that are potentially involved in the migration process. Our findings show that while the role of the spouse in driving female migration has weakened in some cases, the role of other networks has increased, especially in migration towards Western destinations. The share of women moving to countries where they have no connection is much lower than for men and has not increased in recent periods. This suggests a need to qualify the concept of “autonomous” female migration and to emphasize the blurred nature of the borders between “autonomous” and “associational” moves (Coulibaly-Tandian, 2008; Lambert, 2002).

Overall, Senegalese women seem less likely to migrate than Congolese women and more likely to do so in association with their partner. Furthermore, whereas some increase in more independent forms of female migration can be noted among the Congolese, no substantial change is found in the Senegalese context. The two trends – the feminization of flows and an increase in autonomous female mobility – thus seem to go hand in hand. The flows that have feminized the most – Congolese mobility, especially to Western destinations – are also those where autonomous moves are the most frequent among women. We interpret these differences in light of the more rigid patriarchal system prevailing in Senegal, which constrains women’s autonomy with respect to migration but also their labour market participation. This translates into both lower levels of female mobility and a larger share of associational moves; neither of these two characteristics seems to change in later periods. We argue that a comparative design is necessary in order to better grasp the significance of gender as a socio-cultural construct in migration patterns.



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Sophie VAUSE, Sorana TOMA • IS THE FEMINIZATION OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION REALLY ON THE RISE? THE CASE OF FLOWS FROM DR CONGO AND SENEGAL

Previous research, mostly focused on Asian and Latin American contexts, found that women are increasingly present in international migration flows, especially as independent economic actors. This article examines the extent to which these two trends can be observed in the African context. It uses data collected as part of the Migration between Africa and Europe (MAFE) project in Senegal, DR Congo and several European countries. Discrete-time event-history analysis reveals only moderate increases in the likelihood of female migration over time, especially towards Western destinations, but no decline in gender gaps. The collection of rich retrospective information from both current and return migrants allows a more in-depth investigation of the nature of women's moves. Several indicators can be used to examine the extent to which women move autonomously or in association to their partner. While some evidence of a rise in autonomous female migration was found among the Congolese, no salient change was visible in Senegal. The findings were interpreted in light of the more rigid patriarchal system and traditional gender norms that characterize Senegal in comparison to DR Congo.

Sophie VAUSE, Sorana TOMA • PEUT-ON PARLER DE FÉMINISATION DES FLUX MIGRATOIRES DU SÉNÉGAL ET DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE DÉMOCRATIQUE DU CONGO ?

Plusieurs recherches, principalement centrées sur l'Asie et l'Amérique latine, ont fait état d'une présence croissante des femmes dans les flux migratoires internationaux, et plus particulièrement en tant qu'actrices économiques indépendantes. Cet article examine dans quelle mesure il est possible d'observer ces deux tendances dans le contexte africain. Il s'appuie sur des données collectées par le projet *Migrations entre l'Afrique et l'Europe* (MAFE) au Sénégal, en République démocratique du Congo et dans plusieurs pays européens. L'analyse biographique en temps discret ne montre qu'une hausse modérée dans le temps de la probabilité de migrer pour les femmes, plus particulièrement vers les pays occidentaux, mais pas de réduction des disparités entre les sexes. La collecte d'une information rétrospective riche auprès des migrants actuellement à l'étranger et de retour dans leur pays d'origine rend possible une analyse plus approfondie de la nature des migrations féminines. Plusieurs indicateurs nous permettent d'examiner dans quelle mesure les femmes se déplacent de manière autonome ou avec leur conjoint. Des signes de progression des migrations féminines autonomes ont été identifiés au sein de la population migrante congolaise, tandis qu'aucun changement saillant n'est perceptible au Sénégal. Un système patriarcal et des normes traditionnelles plus rigides en matière de genre caractérisent le Sénégal et peuvent expliquer certaines différences par rapport à la République démocratique du Congo.

Sophie VAUSE, Sorana TOMA • ¿PUEDE HABLARSE DE FEMINIZACIÓN DE LOS FLUJOS MIGRATORIOS DE SENEGAL Y DE LA REPÚBLICA DEMOCRÁTICA DEL CONGO?

Varias investigaciones, principalmente centradas sobre Asia y América Latina, ponen de relieve una presencia creciente de las mujeres en los flujos migratorios internacionales, particularmente como actrices económicas independientes. Apoyándose en los datos recogidos en Senegal, RDC y en varios países europeos dentro del marco del proyecto *Migraciones entre África y Europa* (MAFE), este artículo examina en qué medida se pueden observar las dos tendencias citadas en el contexto africano. El análisis biográfico con tiempo discreto muestra solamente una tendencia moderada a la alza de la probabilidad de emigrar de las mujeres, en particular hacia los países europeos, sin reducción de las disparidades entre los sexos. La colecta de informaciones retrospectivas, a la vez, sobre los migrantes actualmente en el extranjero y sobre los que han regresado al país de origen, permite un análisis más profundo de la naturaleza de las migraciones femeninas. Varios indicadores nos permiten saber en qué medida las mujeres se desplazan de manera autónoma o con su cónyuge. Ciertos signos de progresión de la migración femenina autónoma han sido detectados en la población congoleña, mientras que ningún cambio es perceptible en Senegal. Un sistema patriarcal y normas tradicionales más rígidas en materia de género en este último país pueden explicar ciertas diferencias respecto a la República Democrática del Congo.

Keywords: Feminization, gender, international migration flows, Sub-Saharan Africa, autonomous female migration, Congo, Senegal, Europe.