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Migration and Family Life between Congo and Europe

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1. Introduction

Family migration has become the main legal mean of entry into Europe. Both at the European and national levels, family reunification has become a major concern for policy makers who design more and more constraining policies in this domain (Pascouau, 2011). In Belgium, changes were introduced in the law for family reunification in 2011, making it more difficult for third country migrants to apply for family reunification (Pascouau, 2011; Ciré, 2011)[1]. Major changes were also introduced in the UK's family reunification legislation, with a sharp increase in the income threshold for sponsoring family migrants (Home Office, 2012). Such increasingly restrictive policies stem in part from the belief that immigrants, notably African immigrants, overuse their right for family reunification in Europe (European Migration Network 2012).

At the same time, the literature on Sub-Sahara Africa suggests that reunification is not a straightforward option for African families, and that African migrants are more prone to live apart across borders than other groups of migrants in Europe, or that they take more time to reunify (Esteve and Cortina 2009; González-Ferrer, Baizán et al. 2012). However, despite the availability of administrative figures on family reunification, they only provide a partial view of family reunification and forms of family life among African migrants. If they allow counting the close relatives –especially spouses and children– who enter into European countries to join a prior migrant, they are not fitted to count the relatives who stay in their origin country. As a result these data say nothing about transnational families, i.e. those families whose members live in different countries. In addition, since data on out-migration from European countries are quite rare, there is also no information on the processes of family reunification in origin countries, i.e. a reunification act resulting from the return of migrants at home, where they meet up again with their family.

The data of the MAFE project allow drawing a more refined picture of the various family arrangements of African migrants. The objective of this paper is thus to assess the extent of transnational vs. reunified families among Congolese migrants, adopting a double viewpoint based on the use of data collected both in Europe (Belgium, UK) and in Africa (DR Congo). The next section provides an overview on Congolese family arrangements and will show that living apart is a

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[1] For instance, migrants in Belgium can no longer sponsor their parents for family reunification; the income thresholds for sponsoring family migrants have also become stricter (Ciré, 2011).

relatively common situation in the Congolese context. This leads to the idea that transnational families are, to some extent, an extension of this way of life, even though they may also result from policy restrictions aimed at curbing family reunification. That section also describes recent immigration from DR to Congo and the links between changes in Congolese migration and family reunification. Using the MAFE data, the third section looks at the extent to which households in the region of Kinshasa are indeed involved in transnational families. Next, we turn to a European view of transnational families (their frequency and their socio-economic characteristics), using the individual and biographic data collected among migrants in Europe. Finally, the last section –before conclusion– studies how transnational families are formed and how they evolve (or not) into reunified families.

2. Literature Review

Family arrangements and migration in DR Congo

Even though social realities are obviously diverse across the African continent, Findley gives some insights on some general patterns regarding family and migration in Sub-Saharan Africa (Findley 1997). In contexts where families are quite extended, she shows that couples commonly live in separate places, both because economic and environmental constraints force families to spread their sources of risks and incomes (which is consistent with the NELM theory) and also because the process of couple formation implies low levels of interactions within couples (most often than not, spouses do not choose each other and have a large age gap; in some countries, polygamy also adds some distance between partners). Children also live quite commonly with other adults than their parents[2]. Doing family at a distance is thus quite common within the borders of African states. It seems also to be somehow the case across borders, as suggested by several qualitative studies pointing the existence and explaining the functioning of Sub-Saharan transnational families (Barou 2001; Razy 2007; Whitehouse 2009). This is confirmed by some rare available statistics which show that African families are more prone to live apart across borders than other groups of migrants in Europe, or that they take more time to reunify (Esteve and Cortina 2009; González-Ferrer, Baizán et al. 2012).

Congolese families do not depart from the above described model in which couples (and also parents and children) are somehow used to live apart in dispersed places. In matrilineal ethnic groups, wives and children are commonly engaged in circulation patterns between the husband home and the wife's place of origin. In other cases, multi-residence of the couple is due to labor migration. It has been demonstrated for instance that rural and urban households in Congo complement each other and form a common social unit (MacGaffey 1983).The ability of families to live apart has mainly been described in rural contexts and in socio-anthropological studies dedicated to the functioning of lineage systems. It

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[2] According to Demographic and Health (DHS) surveys in African countries, between 9 and 35 percent of households shelter children who live without their parents (Pilon et. 2006).

seems that the process of urbanization, joined to the surge of new Christian churches, tends to reinforce nuclear families and co-residence ways of living of their members (Ngondo 1996). Multi-residence seems however to remain a quite common living arrangement for Congolese families. According to the 2007 DHS, 13% (16% in Kinshasa) of the children aged less than 18 in DR Congo lived with none of their biological parents, and only 63% (and even less in Kinshasa, 53%) lived with both parents (Ministère du Plan and Macro International, 2008). Such data show that the separation of parents and children is quite common in DR Congo[3]. Ascertaining the multi-residence of couples is more difficult with existing data. Using DHS data, it is possible to measure it among married heads of households: 9% (nationally, and also in Kinshasa) of married heads of households do not live in the same household as their spouse[4]. Again, this shows that multi-residence of spouse is quite common. Such percentages reflect the situations at the time of the survey, meaning the percentage of people likely to experience such situation at least one it their lives is greater.

Lututala (1989), conceptualized the patterns of multi-residence under the label of "ubiquitous families". At the international level, living apart together is also an option for Congolese families, especially if they succeed at maintaining strong ties with their left behind relatives, through visits, in kind or money remittances. To some extent, these relationships could delay reunification or even be substitute to it. Vause (2012) reports, for instance, cases where male migrants have both business activities in Kinshasa and their family (wife and children) in Europe and who, for this reason, do regular round trips. They live between here and there, as a long-term way of life.

Migration from DR Congo

While some Congolese migrated internationally in the first half of the twentieth century[5], migration to Europe, especially Belgium (the former colonial power), did not truly take off until the 1960s, when the country became independent. At that time, Congolese migrants did not match the classical profile of the labor migrants: most of them were members of the country's elite who went to Europe to study or do professional/training missions in big firms or the administration and returned to Congo after completing their task (Kagné and Martiniello 2001). Even though we were not able to find information on the propensity to reunify before the 1990s, we hypothesize that family reunification was not very common at that time even though family reunification was somehow facilitated since the early 1980s.

The deterioration of the economic and political situation in Congo in the 1980s, and even more so in the 1990s, marked a pronounced turn in migration patterns.

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[3] 30% of the households in DRC hosted a fostered or orphan child aged less than 18 (Ministère du Plan and Macro International, 2008).

[4] Computations by the authors using the household 2007 DHS survey.

[5] Most emigration at that time involved short-distance movements to neighboring countries (Ngoie Tshibambe and Vwakyanakazi, 2008).

Out-migration progressed sharply, especially towards neighboring countries, that took in the bulk of the refugees (Flahaux, Beauchemin C. et al. 2010; Schoumaker, Vause et al. 2010). In Europe, while Belgium was the main European destination of the Congolese in the 1960s and 1970s, France gradually became the preferred destination, and other countries, notably the United Kingdom and Germany, also attracted growing numbers of Congolese migrants (Ngoie Tshibambe and Vwakyanakazi 2008). At the same time, return migration decreased (Sumata 2002) and Congolese migrants tended to stay for longer periods in Europe. Within 2 years, 18% of the Congolese migrants who entered Belgium in 1993 had out-migrated, while the proportion was only 8% for those entered 10 years later, in 2003 (Schoonvaere 2010). In short, while Congolese migrants were characterized by some sort of circulation before the 1990s, they rather adopted a settlement pattern of migration in the 1990s.

The late XXth was also a time of changes in migrants' profiles. In short, Congolese migration became less selective. Migrants came from less favored socioeconomic categories (Sumata 2002; Schoumaker, Vause et al. 2010). The proportion of women also progressed in migration to Europe (Vause 2012; Schoonvaere, 2010, Shoumaker, Flahaux, 2013). In 1992, they became more numerous than men to enter in Belgium. (Schoonvaere 2010). This feminization process may be a sign of a higher propensity of couple reunification, by comparison with the previous period. However, it should be noticed that a large number of women who entered Europe were, in fact, single upon entry; and that the proportion of female migration associated to the partner's migration tended to decrease from the pre-1995 period to the post-1995 period (Vause 2012). As profiles diversified, migrants' itineraries also became more diverse. Firstly, many Congolese migrants started coming to Europe as asylum seekers (Schoonvaere, 2010; Schoumaker, Flahaux, 2013). Secondly, migration trajectories became more complex and illegal immigration developed (Sumata et al., 2004; Schoumaker, Flahaux, 2013), so that several authors reckon that it has become a key component of Congolese migration (McGaffey and Bazenguissa 2000; Ngoie Tshibambe 2010). This justifies our interest for *de facto* and not only legal reunification.

Family reunification of Congolese migrants in administrative statistics

Since the 1990s, family reunification has been a major way for Congolese migrants to enter legally in Belgium (Perrin and Martiniello, 2011). For instance, half of the residence permits issued to Congolese migrants in 2007 were for family reunification (Schoonvaere, 2011). Data on family reunification in the UK are less readily available. For all third country migrants, family reunification is less common in the UK than in Belgium (18% in the UK versus 48% in Belgium, Scarnicchia, 2011), but no data was found on the type of residence permits issued to Congolese migrants. We know from other sources that a large share of Congolese migrants enters the UK as asylum seekers (Rutter, 2006; Schoumaker, Flahaux, 2013).

3. Transnational families from the Kinshasa viewpoint

How common are transnational families in Congo and especially in the region of Kinshasa? In other terms, to what extent are the households of the capital city connected to international migrants? What kind of relationships do they have with them? Are the households and their migrants closely related? Do they have frequent contacts? Are these contacts only of social nature or do they contribute to the material well-being of the left behind members of the household? These are the questions that are addressed in this section.

3.1. Assessing the amount of transnational households in Dakar

An important result of the MAFE project in Congo is that the population of Kinshasa is extraordinarily highly connected with international migrants: only 37% of the households declared no migrants at all (Table 1), which means, by contrast, that **almost two thirds of the capital city households are connected to at least one migrant abroad**. This huge proportion corresponds to a quite extensive measure of international migration that takes into account all sorts of migrants, wherever they are (in neighbouring countries as well as in distant destinations, such as Europe or the United States of America) and, to a certain extent, whatever their degree of relationship with the surveyed households (see definitions in Box 1). However, looking into details shows that most households have strong connections with the migrants they declared.

The migrants declared in the household questionnaire of the MAFE survey are not mere acquaintances. Up to 13% of the heads declared at least a child or a spouse abroad (Table 1). The other migrants have quite often a common residential history with the households interviewed in Kinshasa: 44% of all heads declared international migrants who used to live within their household (outside of the members of their nuclear family, i.e. their spouse(s) and children). And the vast majority of them are quite closely related to the head: siblings or other kin (Table 2).

These results call for two comments. First, they reflect the importance of the extended family in the Congolese context where it is not rare that households gather people much beyond the nuclear family of the head (Table 2). Second comment: even though a high proportion of households in Kinshasa are related to international migrants (thanks to the prevalence of extended families), their members are rarely eligible to family reunification in Europe for two reasons. First, because family reunification schemes are usually restricted to migrants' nuclear families (spouses and minor children), while, in the Congolese case, only 3.1% of the married heads have a spouse abroad, which is half of the proportion of married heads who live apart from their spouse within Congo (Table 3)[6]. Second, it is worth adding that Europe is not at all the only destination of the declared migrants. This destination gathers 60% of the head's migrant spouses,

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[6] These percentages are perfectly consistent with the figures presented in the literature review: according to the 2007 DHS data, 9 % of the married heads of households do not live with their spouse.

but only 29% of their migrant children and a bit more than 45% of the other migrants declared in Kinshasa (Table 5). For Congolese people, neighboring countries in Africa appear as attractive destinations, especially since the end of Apartheid in South Africa and the end of war in Angola (Schoumaker, Flahaux, 2013).

Table 1. Households with migrants abroad

Households who declared…	f	%
… no migrant abroad	549	36.8%
… only migrants who are spouse and/or child of the head (nuclear family)	235	12.6%
… at least one migrant who lived in the household for at least 6 months (outside the nuclear family)	665	44.3%
… at least one migrant who never lived in the household (and no migrant who lived in the household)	127	6.4%
Total	1,576	100.0%

Notes: unweighted numbers & weighted percentages; *Time of Survey:* 2008; *Population:* Congolese households (n=1,576)

Interpretation: 12.6% of the households declared that the head has at least a child or a spouse who lives abroad at the time of the survey. In addition, 44.3% of the households have contacts abroad with migrants who lived in the household for at least 6 months (outside the nuclear family).

Box 1. Definitions

"**Households**" are defined as groups of people who live in the same house and share their resources to satisfy their essential needs (housing, meals) under the authority of one person, the household head.

A "**transnational family**" is a group of persons who are relatives and who live spread across borders. The term "transnational" does not refer to the nationality of the family members, it only refers to the country where they live. In the MAFE-Congo household survey, transnational families are made of households in Kinshasa who declared migrants living abroad in at least one of these categories: (1) the children of the head; (2) partner(s) of a member of the household; (3) relatives of the household head or of his/her partner and who have been in regular contact with the household over the past 12 months. In this paper, the analyses are restricted to migrants related to the head of the household.

A "**family nucleus**" is defined as a group made of (some of) the following persons: a married couple with their minor children (under 18). They may or not live in the same place. The "**transnational nuclei**" are those in which the husband, the wife and/or the child(ren) do not live in the same country. In this case, a member who remained in the home country is called "**left behind**".

By contrast with a family or –more restrictively– a nucleus, **a household cannot be "transnational"** since, by definition, all its members live in the same place. For the same reason, a household cannot "contain" international migrants living abroad. Households may however have various types of relationships with international migrants (family links, economic ties…). Obviously, they may contain left behinds.

Table 2. Households' migratory contacts, by relationship to the head

Contacts outside nuclear family?	Siblings		Other kin**		Non-kin		Missing		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Yes, people who lived in the household *	622	44.4	733	52.0	9	0.7	19	3.0	1,383	100.0
Yes, people who never lived in the household	40	15.5	334	80.0	14	3.5	4	1.0	392	100.0
Total	662	39.3	1067	56.9	23	1.2	23	2.6	1,775	100.0

* Has she/he ever lived with the HH head for at least 6 months?
** Other relatives are: Daughter/Son-in-law, Mother/Father, Sister/Brother-in-law, Niece/Nephew, Granddaughter/-son, Other relatives of the head, Other relatives of the spouse of the head
Notes: unweighted numbers & weighted percentages; *Time of Survey:* 2008; *Population:* Congolese households' migratory contacts (excl. nuclear family) (n=1,775)
Interpretation: 44.4% of the migrants who lived in the household are siblings of the household head, compared to 15.5% of the migrants who never lived in the household.

Table 3. Spousal living arrangements of the household heads, by sex

	Total		Sex of the head			
			Male		Female	
Household heads live…	f	%	f	%	f	%
…with their spouse	971	90.8%	961	96.6%	10	14.0%
…apart, with spouse abroad	50	3.1%	10	1.3%	40	26.6%
…apart, with spouse in Congo	66	6.2%	18	2.2%	48	59.4%
Total	1,087	100.0%	989	100.0%	98	100.0%

Notes: unweighted numbers & weighted percentages; Time of Survey: 2008; Population: Congolese married household heads (n=1,087)
Interpretation: 90.8% of the married household heads live together with their spouse

Table 4. Household heads with children abroad, by sex of the household head, by sex

	Total		Sex of the household head			
			Male		Female	
Child abroad?	f	%	f	%	f	%
Children 0-18 abroad *	41	3.0%	36	3.4%	5	1.9%
Children > 18 abroad	322	21.0%	212	18.7%	110	29.1%
No children abroad	1,116	76.0%	882	78.0%	234	69.1%
Total	1,479	100.0%	1,130	100.0%	349	100.0%

* This category captures all households with at least one child 0-18 abroad
Notes: unweighted numbers & weighted percentages; Time of Survey: 2008; Population: Congolese household heads with children (n=1,479)
Interpretation: 3.0% of the household heads with children have at least one child 0-18 currently living abroad. Of the male household heads, 3.4% has at least one child 0-18 living abroad.

Table 5. Location of the migrants declared in Kinshasa households

	Spouses		Children		Migrants who used to live in the household		Migrants who never lived in the household	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Africa	35	30.9%	435	62.7%	626	41.9%	183	44.0%
Europe	21	59.3%	224	28.7%	643	48.5%	172	45.7%
North America	2	9.8%	29	6.7%	101	9.2%	32	8.1%
Other			8	1.9%	13	0.4%	5	2.3%
Total	58	100.0%	696	100.0%	1383	100.0%	392	100.0%

Notes: unweighted numbers & weighted percentages; Time of Survey: 2008; Population: Spouses living abroad of Congolese household heads (n=58); children of the heads living abroad (n=696)…
Interpretation: 30.9% of the spouses of household heads who are living abroad are located in Africa.

3.2. Congolese households' contacts with migrants

As already mentioned, even though they are rarely members of the heads' nuclear family, the migrants declared by households in Kinshasa are not mere acquaintances. It is reflected in the varied and quite intense contacts that households left behind in Kinshasa have with their migrants abroad: within the 12 months preceding the survey, of all households who declared at least one international migrant (n=1,027), 94.6% had phone contacts with "their" migrant(s), 62.3% received money, 45.0 % received in kind remittances, and 6.5% received a visit from at least one of the migrants they declared in the MAFE survey.

Of course, the migrants' degree of connection depends of their relationship to the head. But the results also show that contributions from migrants to the

households in Congo are not exclusively from the nuclear family, and/or from kin only. The proportion of the heads' siblings and other kin who remit money is barely inferior to the proportion of the spouses or adult children (about 50% remit, Table 6). The difference between spouses, children and the other migrants is more pronounced in other connection types. The propensity to send in kind remittances is clearly higher for spouses (60.3%), even though about a third of the children, siblings and other kin also send some sort of material. And spouses are also more numerous (in proportion) to have weekly distant contacts (mainly telephone) than other kin, even though they also have quite frequent contacts with their household (about 40% of the children, siblings and other kin have at least a monthly contact, Table 6).

All in all, about 50% of all migrants sent money (48.0% of women and 48.9% of men, Table 6) and a third in kind remittances (with a higher proportion among women than among men), some of them contributing to the household needs through both channels. Doing so, they provide sometimes important resources to the left behind households. According to the heads' declarations, 2.7% of the remitters covered a "very large" share of the household's expenditures on food, medicine, housing, transport, etc. during the last 12 months preceding the survey; in addition of 9.1% who provided a "large" share (Table 7). Again, if spouses are more likely to contribute very largely than other kin (14.5%, against 2,7% on average), they are far from being the only contributors. For instance, 16.4% of the remitting siblings are declared to contribute largely to the households expenditures (against 4.8% for spouses, Table 7). In total, siblings and spouses are equally likely to contribute in a large or very large share (19.3%).

The remittances sent by migrants reflect only partly the help they have received from the households to migrate out of Congo. While one migrant out of two sent money during the year preceding the survey, only one out of three received some kind of help to prepare his/her departure (31,2%, out of the 2,536 reported migrants received some sort of support; more specifically, 18.1% of all migrants received money to pay their trip). And as expected, knowing the importance of extended families in the Congolese context, the help provided by households was not restricted to the closer heads' relatives (Table 8). In any case, Table 9 shows that there is no relationship between the support migrants received, and whether or not they send remittances. Of those who received support, half sent remittances during the 12 months before the survey, while the other half did not. This shows that, the migrants' economic contribution in Congo is not only the result of a kind of contract concluded at the time of departure when the migrant received (or not) some support to out-migrate.

Table 6. Intensity of migrants' contacts according to the relationship to the head

Relationship to the heas	Monetary remittances	In kind remittances	Visit	Distant contact* every week	Distant contact* at least once a month	f
Spouses	54.8%	60.3%	22.6%	79.7%	11.6%	61
Children 0-18	1.6%	33.4%	1.5%	29.3%	53.7%	54
Children >18	50.7%	37.3%	11.3%	22.1%	41.9%	642
Siblings	50.2%	36.6%	15.9%	17.7%	39.5%	662
Other kin	48.8%	30.5%	17.4%	14.9%	44.1%	1,085
Non-kin	16.8%	12.0%	9.8%	18.7%	16.9%	24
Missing	71.2%	0.9%	0.0%	23.3%	47.4%	8
Males	48.9%	24.2%	14.9%	-	-	1.443
Females	48.0%	46.6%	15.2%	-	-	1.093
Total	48.5%	34.1%	15.0%	19.0%	41.7%	2,536

Notes: unweighted numbers & weighted percentages; Time of Survey: 2008; Population: Migrants declared by households surveyed in Kinshasa (n=2,536)
* Distant contact: phone, email, internet…
Interpretation: Of all migrants, 48.5% sent monetary remittances to "their" household (i.e. the household that declared them). 54.8% of the migrants who are spouse of the household head sent money.

Table 7. Share of household expenditures, by type of relationship: relative importance of contributors

Relationship to the head	Very large	Large	Mode-rate	Small	Insigni-ficant	Missing	Total	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	f
Spouses	14.5%	4.8%	71.6%	6.6%	2.1%	0.4%	100.0%	42
Children <18	0.0%	0.0%	25.4%	56.8%	9.1%	8.8%	100.0%	15
Children >18	2.2%	6.6%	47.9%	35.0%	8.0%	0.3%	100.0%	402
Siblings	2.9%	16.4%	44.7%	26.6%	8.2%	1.1%	100.0%	402
Other kin	2.4%	6.1%	46.5%	28.1%	14.9%	1.9%	100.0%	629
Non-kin	0.0%	22.7%	57.7%	4.6%	15.0%	0.0%	100.0%	11
Missing	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	98.1%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	5
Total	2.7%	9.1%	46.2%	29.9%	10.7%	1.3%	100.0%	1,506

Answers to the question "Which share of the household's expenditures on food, medicine, housing, transport, etc. have been covered by the money and in-kind transfers you have received from "Name" over the last 12 months?"
Notes: unweighted numbers & weighted percentages; Time of Survey: 2008; Population: Congolese migrants declared by households and who contributed to their expenditures through money or in kind remittances (n=1,506).
Interpretation: Of all migrant spouses, 14.5% contributed a very large share of the household expenditures by remitting

Table 8. Congolese households contributing to migrants' departure: composition by relation to the head

	Prepa-rations	Paid	0ther help	Combi-nation	Missing	Total
Spouses	1.9%	0.3%	3.6%	0.9%	0.3%	1.0%
Children 0-18	1.4%	2.6%	2.9%	5.3%	21.6%	6.6%
Children >18	25.9%	40.3%	58.3%	41.2%	40.6%	38.9%
Siblings	31.7%	16.1%	22.9%	22.4%	23.9%	22.8%
Other kin	39.2%	40.7%	12.4%	30.2%	13.1%	30.6%
Missing	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	0.1%
Total*	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	153	199	40	246	92	730

* Non-kin did not receive support from the household
Notes: unweighted numbers & weighted percentages; *Time of Survey:* 2008; *Population:* Congolese households' migratory contacts (n=2,536)
Interpretation: Of the migrants that received support with the preparations for their migration, 1.9% were spouse of the household head.

Table 9. Relationship between support to migrants and remittance receipt

	Sending remittances						Total	
	No		Yes		*Missing*			
Receiving support	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
No	889	50.1%	917	49.9%	0	0.0%	1806	100.0%
Yes	291	47.5%	342	51.7%	5	0.8%	638	100.0%
Missing	67	82.2%	17	14.3%	8	3.5%	92	100.0%
Total	1247	51.1%	1276	48.5%	13	0.4%	2536	100.0%

Notes: unweighted numbers & weighted percentages; Time of Survey: 2008; Population: Congolese households' migratory contacts (n=2,536)
Interpretation: Of all migrants who received support from their household for their departure, 51.7% sent remittances.

4. Family life: Congolese Migrants in Europe

An advantage of the MAFE data is to open the possibility of looking at migrants' families both from the origin and destination points of view. In the previous section, we focused on families in Congo, assessing the amount of transnational families, i.e. of households who have contact with migrants abroad. In this section, we will focus on Congolese migrants in Europe, i.e. in Belgium and the United Kingdom. Using the European biographic MAFE data collected in these two countries, we will first assess the amount of migrants who live with their nuclear family (spouse and children) vs. those who live apart across borders and labeled, in the rest of the text, as "transmigrants" because they are part of a transnational family. Secondly, we will examine whether the migrants profiles differ according to their family arrangement. Descriptive results will bring

preliminary insights on the logics explaining why some migrants and their relatives live apart across borders.

4.1. Describing the complex living arrangements of Congolese migrants in Europe

We have mentioned before that the functioning of Congolese families is not restricted to family nuclei. Giving a quantitative account of the families' complexities is probably not completely impossible but it is really challenging. For the sake of simplicity, but also because most European migration policies focus on migrants' spouses and children, we will focus here on these close members of migrants families. And actually even with these restrictions, migrants' family arrangements are so diverse that showing clear patterns remains a challenge. In an attempt to show as simply as possible this family diversity, we have built a typology that takes into account the country of residence of migrants spouse[7] and/or child(ren) aged under 18. The typology results from the crossing of two variables (Table 10): one indicates whether the migrant lives with his/her spouse with four possible outcomes (no spouse, a cohabiting spouse from whom the migrant was never separated, a cohabiting spouse after a period of separation, and a non-cohabiting spouse), the other whether the migrant live with his/her child(ren) with four similar outcomes. Note that the notion of "cohabitation" merely refers in our analyses to the fact of living in the same country and not especially in the same housing. Similarly, the term "separation" merely refers to the fact of living in two different countries (it does not imply that the partners divorced).

Table 10. A family arrangements typology (A)

Ego's Spouse*	Ego's Children**			
	No child(ren) <18	Cohabitating child(ren) (always unified)	Cohabitating child(ren) (after a period of separation)	Non-cohabitating child(ren)
No spouse	1. No nuclear family	2. Always and totally unified family	3. Totally (re)unified family	5. Totally transnational family
Cohabitating* spouse (always unified)**	2. Always and totally unified family	2. Always and totally unified family	3. Totally (re)unified family	4. Partially transnational / (re)unified family
Cohabitating spouse (after a period of separation)	3. Totally (re)unified family	3. Totally (re)unified family	3. Totally reunified family	4. Partially transnational / (re)unified family
Non-cohabitating spouse	5. Totally transnational family	4. Partially transnational / (re)unified family	4. Partially transnational / (re)unified family	5. Totally transnational family

* Informal unions are not considered, i.e. spouse always refers to marriage, and conversely, "no spouse" also includes those within an informal union. In case of polygamy, only the most recent spouse is taken into account (39 cases among 602 observations).
** Children > 18 (and their whereabouts) are not considered, i.e. no child also includes those with only children > 18; In case of children < 18 who are living at different locations, when at least 1 child <18 is not living with ego, it is considered 'non-cohabiting'.
*** Cohabitation refers to the fact of living in the same country.

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[7] In case of polygamy, the analyses take only account of the last spouse.

The 16 cells resulting from this crossing can be regrouped in five types of family arrangements, as illustrated in Table 11. In the end, this typology forms a gradient from totally unified families to totally transnational families, as shown in Table 11. Some migrants in Europe have neither a spouse nor children under 18; they are thus considered as having "no nuclear family", i.e. a family made of a mother, a father, and/or child(ren). Other migrants have a spouse and/or children under 18 who are all living with him/her at the time of the survey and from which he/she was never separated; they pertain thus to the category "Always and totally unified family"[8]. A third category of migrants are living with their spouse and child(ren) but they used to live in different countries; they are thus considered as being part of a "Totally reunified family". The fourth family category refers to cases where the reunification is only partial, i.e. the migrant is living at the time of the survey either with his/her spouse or with his/her child(ren). In other words, this type of family is also a "Partially transnational family" since its members are spread across borders. Finally, when the migrant is separated from both his/her child(ren) and spouse, he/she is considered as a member of a "Totally transnational family".

Table 11. A family arrangements typology (B)

	F1	F2	F3	
	1. No nuclear family (no child* and no spouse**)	2. Always and totally unified family	3. Totally reunified family	4. Partially transnational family = Partially reunified family	5. Totally transnational family
Ever separated from a child and/or a spouse?	n/a	NO	YES Separated from at least one child and/or spouse	YES Separated from either at least one child or spouse	YES Separated from both at least one child and spouse
Separated at the time of the survey?	n/a	NO	NO	YES Separated from either at least one child or spouse	YES Separated from both at least one child and spouse
* Informal unions are not considered, i.e. spouse always refers to marriage, and conversely, "no spouse" also includes those within an informal union. In case of polygamy, only the most recent spouse is taken into account. ** Children > 18 (and their whereabouts) are not considered, i.e. no child also includes those with only children > 18; In case of children < 18 who are living at different locations, when at least 1 child <18 is not living with ego, it is considered 'non-cohabiting'. *** Cohabitation refers to the fact of living in the same country.					

4.2. An account of migrants in transnational vs. reunified families

When thinking about reunification in Europe, a first important result to have in mind is that **a large amount of migrants have nobody to reunify with**. According to the MAFE data, a quarter of all Congolese migrants have no nuclear family, i.e. neither a spouse nor a (minor) child (26.0%, Table 12). Looking at more details, it appears that a third of them have no children under 18 (33.2%), while half of them have no spouse (50.6%, Table 12), these proportions being

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[8] The category "unified family" may refer either to families who moved as a whole or to families that were constituted in Europe (with migrants who married and/or had children at destination).

very similar in the UK and in Belgium (Table 13). However, when migrants have a spouse and/or children, their family arrangements differ depending on the country where they live. **Transnational families are indeed much more numerous in Belgium than in the UK**: 30.3% of the migrants living in Belgium live apart from their spouse and/or children (most of them from both), while the proportion is more than halved in the UK (13.1%, Table 14). Reversely, totally unified families are more numerous in the UK (a third of all migrants) than in Belgium (only 22.5%), as well as reunified families, albeit in a lesser extent (28.3% in the UK, against 20.6% in Belgium, Table 14). This is apparently in contradiction with the fact that Congolese migration to Belgium is older, so that we would have expected more reunification in this country than in a more recent destination like the UK. In details, it appears that the higher prevalence of transnational families is largely due to a higher rate of cohabitation with children in the UK (60.6% vs. 43%). This may partly be linked to the fact that Congolese migrants living in the UK are more likely to have lived in another country before settling in the UK (Schoumaker, Flahaux, 203), where they may have reunified. The difference between UK and Belgium may also be related to the different profiles of migrants. Students are more numerous in Belgium, and are more likely to be in transnational families. In contrast, asylum seekers represent a larger share of Congolese migrants in the UK. They are more likely to want to settle, and are also less likely to maintain strong links with their home country (Schoumaker, Flahaux, 2013).

Table 12. Family arrangements typology (A) - Numbers

Ego's spouse*	Ego's children**				
	No child(ren) <18	Cohabitating child(ren) (always unified)	Cohabitating child(ren) (after a period of separation)	Non-cohabitating child(ren)	Total
No spouse	26.0%	12.4%	4.8%	7.4%	50.6%
Cohabiting* spouse (always unified)**	0.2%	14.7%	3.1%	1.6%	19.6%
Cohabiting spouse (after period of separation)	4.2%	6.9%	5.0%	1.5%	17.6%
Non-cohabiting spouse	2.8%	1.7%	2.2%	5.6%	12.3%
Total	33.2%	35.7%	15.1%	16.0%	100%

Notes: weighted percentages; Source: MAfE-Congo data; Time of Survey: 2008; Population: Congolese immigrants in Belgium and the UK (n=603)
Interpretation: Of all migrants, 24.4% currently have no nuclear family, i.e have neither a spouse nor a child.
* Informal unions are not considered, i.e. spouse always refers to marriage, and conversely, "no spouse" also includes those within an informal union. In case of polygamy, only the most recent spouse is taken into account (39 cases among 602 observations).
** Children > 18 (and their whereabouts) are not considered, i.e. no child also includes those with only children > 18; In case of children < 18 who are living at different locations, when at least 1 child <18 is not living with ego, it is considered 'non-cohabiting'.
*** Cohabitation refers to the fact of living in the same country.

Table 13. Living arrangements of Congolese immigrants in Belgium and Congo, children & spouses

Ego's children			Ego's spouses		
	f	%		f	%
Belgium					
No children under-18	109	35.5%	No spouse	135	48.1%
Cohabiting children (always unified)	85	33.4%	Cohabiting spouse (always unified)	43	16.6%
Cohabiting children (after period of separation)	26	9.6%	Cohabiting spouse (after period of separation)	50	18.4%
Non-cohabiting children	58	21.4%	Non-cohabiting spouse	50	16.8%
Total	278	100.0%	Total	278	100.0%
The UK					
No children under-18	48	30.2%	No spouse	71	53.7%
Cohabiting children (always unified)	54	38.6%	Cohabiting spouse (always unified)	36	23.3%
Cohabiting children (after period of separation)	31	22.0%	Cohabiting spouse (after period of separation)	30	16.5%
Non-cohabiting children	15	9.2%	Non-cohabiting spouse	11	6.5%
Total	148	100.0%	Total	148	100.0%

Notes: weighted percentages & unweighted numbers
Source: MAfE-Congo data; *Time of Survey*: 2008; *Population*: Congolese immigrants in BE (n=278)
Interpretation: 35.5% of the Congolese migrants in Belgium have no children (under-18).

Table 14. Family arrangement typology, by country

Family arrangement typology:	All countries		Belgium		The U.K.	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
No nuclear family	114	26.0%	80	26.8%	34	25.1%
Totally unified family	106	27.3%	59	22.5%	47	33.5%
Reunified family	102	24.0%	56	20.6%	46	28.3%
Partially transnational family	28	7.0%	20	8.1%	8	5.5%
Transnational family	76	15.7%	63	22.2%	13	7.6%
Total	426	100.0%	278	100.0%	148	100.0%

Notes: weighted percentages & unweighted numbers
Source: MAfE-Congo data; *Time of Survey*: 2008; *Population*: Congolese immigrants in UK/BE (n=426)
Interpretation: 26.0% of Congolese in Belgium and the U.K. have a totally unified family.

4.3. Characteristics of Congolese transnational families in Europe

Having in mind that a large proportion of migrants have nobody to reunify with because they have no nuclear family, we now focus on those who have a spouse and/or minor children in order to draw a profile of the migrants who live apart across borders (F3 in Table 15) by comparison with the other migrants, i.e. those who were never separated from their close relatives and those who reunified (respectively (F1 and F2, Table 15). The question at stake is: are they different by nature, as if living in a transnational family was the result of a specific migratory strategy. Alternatively, it might be that migrants are maintained in a status of transnational family because they are not allowed to regroup by the state of their

destination country. In this case, the fact of being part of a transnational family could a transitional state before reunification

At first sight, living apart across borders seems to be correlated to lesser resources (Table 17). Transmigrants present vulnerable profiles under several respects. First, they are three times more likely to be undocumented than the other migrants: on average, 15.8% of them have no residence permit, while the proportion is about 5% for the other categories of migrants (Table 17). This result is not surprising since undocumented migrants cannot apply to reunification official schemes. Second, transmigrants are also vulnerable in socio-economic terms. When compared to the other categories of migrants, they are less educated (with 23.7% of them having only a primary level of education while the average is 17.2%), even though they are proportionally more numerous to be involved in studies at the time of the survey than the other migrants, especially in Belgium (Table 17). They are also more often unemployed; and they exhibit a lower socio-economic status (ISEI Index). In the end, it is not surprising that they declare more often than other migrants that they have not enough to live (Table 17). Profiles differ a bit according to the destination country: in the UK, difference between transmigrants and the other migrants is higher in matter of education level, however transmigrants are better endowed in terms of employment and they never declare they have not enough to live. All in all, it seems that migrants' legal and socio-economic vulnerability is a factor that tends to hinder or delay reunification, which is not surprising first because migrants themselves may wait to have a good situation before calling their spouse and children, and second because the socio-economic situation of migrants is part of the criteria used by states to grant (or not) reunification.

To some extent the economic difficulties encountered by transmigrants might be due to the fact that they have been in Europe for a lesser duration than the other migrants (6 vs. 10-11 years). By the way, this result tends to suggest that reunification is a matter of time for Congolese migrants. It is all the more credible that reunified and transnational migrants were approximately at the same stage of their life cycle when they left Congo: both categories were, on average, about 33 years old at the time of their first departure to Europe (Table 17). However, more refined analyses would be needed to give a better account of the migrants' family and professional situations at the time of their departure, in order to better understand their migratory strategy. As a first step, next section will examine more closely the relationship between migration and family building.

Table 15. The incidence of (re)unified vs. transnational families among Congolese migrants in Europe (only migrants who are part of family nucleus)

	All countries		Belgium		UK	
	f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
F1. Totally unified family	106	37.0%	59	30.7%	47	44.7%
F2. Totally reunified family	102	32.4%	56	28.1%	46	37.8%
F3. Partially or totally transnational family	104	30.7%	83	41.3%	21	17.5%
Total	312	100.0%	198	100.0%	114	100.0%
Notes: weighted percentages & unweighted numbers *Source*: MAfE-Congo data; *Time of Survey*: 2008; *Population*: Congolese immigrants in Belgium and the UK (excl. "no nuclear family") (n=114) *Interpretation:* Of all migrants with a family, in Belgium, 30.7% have a totally unified family, and in the UK, 44.7% do.						

Table 16. Socio-economic situation of Congolese migrants in Europe by country and type of family arrangement

	All countries	Belgium	UK
% of females among migrants according to the family arrangement type			
F1. Always and totally unified family	58.7	66.0	52.5
F2. Totally reunified family	53.7	49.2	57.9
F3. Partially or totally transnational family	53.1	53.2	52.9
% of migrants with only a primary level of education			
F1. Always and totally unified family	10.6	3.0	17.1
F2. Totally reunified family	18.5	4.5	31.4
F3. Partially or totally transnational family	23.7	16.9	43.7
% of migrants who are studying			
F1. Always and totally unified family	15.3	5.7	23.4
F2. Totally reunified family	6.6	5.2	8.0
F3. Partially or totally transnational family	19.8	21.0	16.3
% of migrants who are unemployed			
F1. Always and totally unified family	7.3	5.0	9.2
F2. Totally reunified family	19.4	19.6	19.2
F3. Partially or totally transnational family	10.9	9.5	15.0
Occupational status (average ISEI*)			
F1. Always and totally unified family	41.0	40.2	42.1
F2. Totally reunified family	38.1	39.2	37.0
F3. Partially or totally transnational family	37.7	38.9	33.4
% of migrants declaring "No, not at all" to the question "Would you say that during this period you had enough to live?"			
F1. Always and totally unified family	3.1	2.0	4.0
F2. Totally reunified family	1.0	2.0	0.0
F3. Partially or totally transnational family	5.8	7.8	0.0
% who answered they regularly send money during their stay in their current country of residence			
F1. Always and totally unified family	81.2	84.6	78.3
F2. Totally reunified family	81.0	77.4	84.3
F3. Partially or totally transnational family	74.6	70.4	87.1

Notes: weighted percentages
Source: MAFE-Congo data; Time of Survey: 2008; Population: Congolese immigrants in Belgium (n=198), and the UK (n=114), excluding "no nuclear family". All countries, n=312
Interpretation: 58.7% of the migrants in an always and totally unified family were economically active at the time of the survey.
* ISEI: International Socio-Economic Index. ISEI ranks occupations by averaging status characteristics of job holders (education, skills, employment status...).

Table 17. Conditions of migration among Congolese migrants in Europe by country and type of family arrangement

	All countries	Belgium	UK
Age at arrival (mean)			
F1. Always and totally unified family	25.5	25.2	25.7
F2. Totally reunified family	33.2	32.7	33.6
F3. Partially or totally transnational family	33.4	32.4	36.3
% of migrants who don't have a residence permit at the time of the survey			
F1. Always and totally unified family	4.7	1.0	7.9
F2. Totally reunified family	5.0	5.3	4.8
F3. Partially or totally transnational family	15.8	14.3	20.2
Duration of stay at current destination (mean number of years)			
F1. Always and totally unified family	11.8	13.3	10.5
F2. Totally reunified family	10.1	11.3	8.9
F3. Partially or totally transnational family	6.1	6.2	5.8
Notes: weighted percentages Source: MAFE-Congo data; Time of Survey: 2008; Population: Congolese immigrants in Belgium (n=198), and the UK (n=114), excluding "no nuclear family". All countries, n=312 Interpretation: Migrants in an always and totally unified family arrived in Europe at a mean age of 25.5.			

5. Transnational Families: Family formation and reunification

Thinking about the relationship between family formation and reunification, results of the previous section have shown two important things: first, most migrants have neither a spouse nor children at the time of the survey, which suggests that they moved before forming a family; second, for those who were married and had children left behind, reunification seems to be a matter of time. In this section, we take a closer look at the relationship between international migration and family formation. We examine how transnational families are formed, and to what extent they are transformed into reunified families. For the sake of clarity, we study couples and children separately.

5.1. Couples

What was observed at the time of the survey in the previous section is confirmed here at the time of first departure: for the most, adult migrants left Congo while being unmarried. This is especially true for men, among which 71% were single at the time of departure (Figure 1). The proportion is also very high for women (60%) which suggests the existence of a significant autonomous female migration. Interestingly, in the same line, divorcees and widows are slightly more numerous among females (respectively 3.7 vs. 1.2% for divorcees and 1.5 vs. 0% for widows, Table 18). This may reflect slightly more freedom among ex-married women in DR Congo, allowing them to migrate more easily than other women, who are still or not yet married. Another result reflects the existence of autonomous female migration: albeit a minority, some married women move

first, leaving behind their husband. This is the case of 7% of all women surveyed in Europe (Figure 1). Of course, in line with the conventional wisdom, the proportion of "pioneers" is much higher among males. In any case, it should be noticed that only one migrant out of five left a wife behind in Congo, which makes a small reservoir for reunification in Europe.

What happens after migration? Time passing by, the migrants' matrimonial status evolve as for any other people. Some of those who were single start a union, which is illustrated by the steep-rising proportion of persons, especially men, engaged in a marriage or, in a lesser extent, in a consensual union (Table 18). What happens, after migration, to those who were married? Some of them become widows, with a higher proportion among women because of age difference in couples (women being usually younger than their spouse). Some others divorce. This might be not only an effect of the time passing by, but an effect of migration. One conceives that, for partners who were separated by migration, being a couple at a distance is not easy and can lead to a rupture. On the other hand, for those who moved together or who reunified, the change of social context may play as a factor of divorce: being far from the familial and social control exerted in the origin country (even though communities may exert control at destination) and, furthermore, living in countries were woman emancipation is valued and were laws give a quite easy access to divorce to both partners certainly explain the fact that women are a little more likely to be divorced than men at the time of the survey (8.2% vs. 6.9%). Finally, some couples who were separated by migration do reunify.

Reunification in Europe should not be seen as a universal outcome of couple separation due to migration. It does not happen to all transnational couples, some of them maintaining for long their relationship across borders, and some others can reunify at origin when the migrant returns. In all cases, reunification is more often than not the result of a quite long process. To illustrate these points, we carried out "survival" analyses. We studied a migrant status defined as "being in a transnational married couple" and we looked at how long this status lasts. In technical terms, we computed "survivor functions" of this status (more precisely: Kaplan-Meier survival curves). We started to observe migrants when they moved out of Congo and left their spouse behind. We then "followed" them until they reunify or until they are separated from their spouse by divorce or death. . In all survival curves shown below, we only show the proportion of reunified dyads during the first 10 years after the geographical separation.[9] Since reunification is an important policy concern in Europe, we first focus on the probability to reunify in Europe. To this end, we use only the European MAFE samples. However, since reunification does not only occur at destination, we complement this view by analyzing the probability to reunify either in Europe or in Congo. In this case, we use all samples of MAFE-Congo, including migrants living in Europe and returnees living in Congo at the time of the survey.

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[9] The curves are cut after ten years because samples get smaller with time, and changes may be erratic after ten years. Ten years is also used as a cut-off point in Schoumaker, Flahaux, (2013) on return migration.

Figure 2 shows the time to reunification in current destination countries for Congolese migrants in Europe (Belgium and the U.K.) with their left-behind spouses in Congo. After 5 years, the probability of being still separated is 0.60. In other words, after 5 years, approximately 40% reunified with their spouse. After 10 years, about 51.8% of the married couples separated because of migration are finally reunited in Europe. Interestingly, the probability to reunify in Europe is highly gendered: males are much more likely than females to be joined in Europe by their spouse. When a male moved first to Europe, his probability to reunify there is 52% after 5 years (48% still separated) and 68% after 10 years (32% still separated). For a female migrant, the probability to reunify in Europe is at all durations much lower (only 21% after 5 years and still 26% after 10 years, Figure 3). This confirms the existence and shows the persistence of some sort of autonomous female migration. The following figure shows that reunification at origin, in Congo, is also an option for migrants who came to Europe. In Figure 4, we compare two separate survivor functions for competing risks. Of the Congolese migrants who came to Belgium or to the U.K., we examine here the difference between those who reunify at destination (risk 1) and those who reunify at origin (risk 2). In our sample of 99 Congolese migrants, who at the time of their first migration to Belgium or the U.K. had a spouse in Congo, 33 reunified at destination and 5 at origin. In the end, Figure 4 shows there is hardly any difference between years spent apart for migrants who reunify at destination or at origin. It should be noticed that this analysis aggregates all migrants, whatever their period of departure. Both quantitative and qualitative evidence show that there have been a changing pattern over the last decades. The Congolese migrants who arrived in Europe before the 1990s, among whom students were numerous, were probably more likely to return and reunify at origin. In the following decades, during the persisting conflict in DRC, Congolese migrants mostly came as asylum seekers who were less likely to return.

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Figure 1. Marriage & Migration at the time of 1st migration
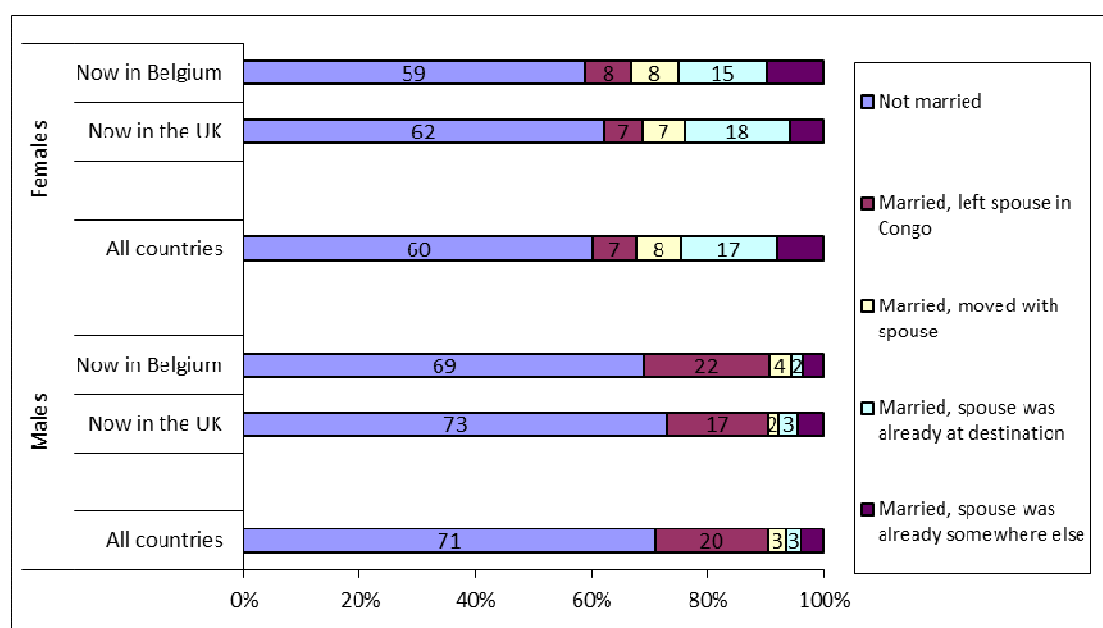
* Not married captures: singles, informal unions, divorcees and widowed
Notes: weighted percentages
Source: MAfE-Congo data; *Population:* Congolese immigrants in Europe (n=426); *Time of survey:* 2008
Interpretation: At the time of 1st migration, 71% of men were not married. For women, this was 60%.

Table 18. Marital status of Congolese migrants in Europe, by sex

	Male migrants		Female migrants	
Marital status...	at the time of 1st migration	at the time of the survey	at the time of 1st migration	at the time of the survey
Single	60.1%	32.0%	45.7%	22.5%
Consensual union	9.6%	12.0%	9.4%	17.3%
Married	29.1%	48.5%	39.7%	48.5%
Divorced	1.2%	6.9%	3.7%	8.2%
Widowed	0.0%	0.6%	1.5%	3.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	228	228	198	198
Notes: weighted percentages & unweighted numbers Source: MAFE-Congo data; Population: All Congolese immigrants in Belgium and the UK (n=426). Note that all migrants were over 18 at the time of their first departure. Interpretation: 60.1% of the male migrants in Europe were single when they first migrated. Only 32% were still single at the time of the survey (2008).				

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Figure 2. Time to reunification in Europe of Congolese couples (survivor function)
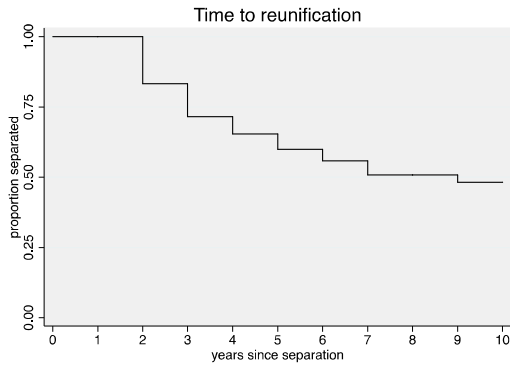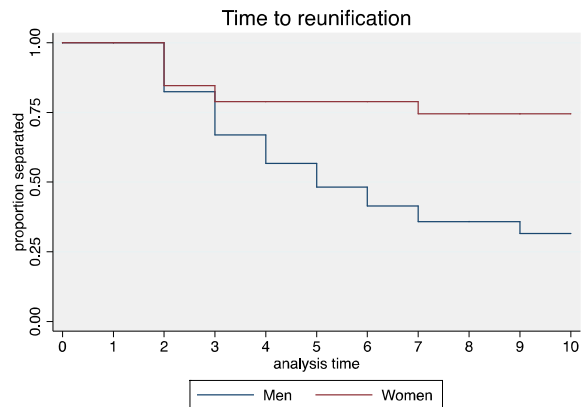
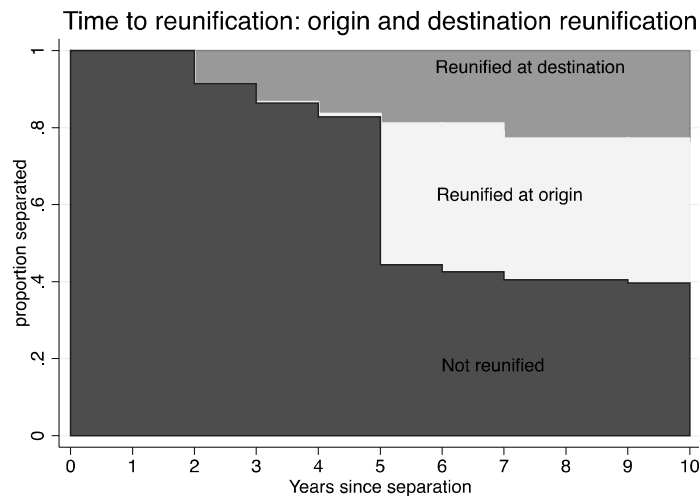**Figure 3. Time to reunification of couples, by sex of the migrant**

Notes: Weighted results

Source: MAFE-Congo data; *Population*: Congolese migrants living in Europe at the time of the survey who have experienced a period of separation from their spouse because of migration (they moved out of Congo, leaving their spouse behind). Note that the sample used here does not include migrants who married after migration with someone who was still living in Congo. (n=95, 34 failures)

Interpretation: The figures measure the duration between time of separation of married couples and time of reunification either in Europe. After 5 years, the probability of surviving (i.e. staying separated) is 0.60. In other words, after 5 years, approximately 40% reunified with their spouse. Differences between males and females are significant (Wald chi2(1) = 3.95; Pr>chi2 = 0.0469).

Figure 4. Time to reunification: couples, by country of reunification

Notes: weighted results

Source: MAFE-Congo data; *Population*: Congolese migrants living in Europe or back in Congo at the time of the survey who have experienced a period of separation from their spouse because of migration (they moved out of Congo, leaving their spouse behind). Note that the sample used here does not include migrants who married after migration with someone who was still living in Congo. (n=99; at destination, 33 failures; at origin, 5 failures).

Interpretation: The figure measure the duration between time of separation of married couples and time of reunification either in Europe (at destination) or in Congo (at origin). When looking at reunification at origin, reunification at destination is censored, and vice versa. After 10 years of separation, the probability of being reunified is 23.6% in Europe (76.4% being still separated) and 36.8% in Congo (63.2% being still separated).

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5.4. Children: time to reunification

Since most migrants were quite young and had no partner when they left Congo for the first time (while being adult), a majority of them had also no children, even though women were more likely to be parent. While only 36.6% of all male migrants had at least one child when they first out-migrated, the proportion was 47.4% for female migrants (20.9% had only minor children, 20.1% had only children above 18, and 6.4% had minor and major children, Table 19). What did the migrants do with their minor children when they left? The answer is highly gender determined. For the most, men left their child behind, which is in line with the previous results showing that they also left their spouse behind (Figure 5). On the contrary, women –who were often left behind by their partner– were more likely to move with their child(ren). It remains however that a significant proportion of them left their child(ren) behind, which is not surprising in a context were children fosterage is quite common, as mentioned in the literature review.

When there is such a separation between a migrant and his/her child(ren), to what extent does it end with reunification? Here again, as for couples, we computed survival functions to analyze the extent and timing of reunification. Each dyad formed by a migrant and each one of his/her minor children is a unit of observation. It means that one migrant appears in the dataset as many times as he/she has minor children from which he/she was separated. In other terms, the analysis population is made of the children left behind. Again, we successively look at the probability of reunifying in Europe, before adopting a larger view that takes into account the fact that reunification can also occur at origin when a migrant returns.

Figure 6 shows the time to reunification in Europe (i.e. Belgium or the U.K.). As for couples, the results show that migrants do not systematically reunify with their children in Europe and that, when it occurs, the process of reunification may be very long. After 5 years of separation (which is an especially long period for children), only 31% are reunified in Europe. And after 10 years of a transnational family life (the maximum period of separation for minor children), 49% of the children who were left behind are still living in Congo while their parent(s) is/are in Europe. In Figure 7, it is shown that migrant fathers are more likely to reunify with their left behind children compared to migrant mothers.. This may result from a selection effect of autonomous female migrants: mothers migrating without their children may be less likely to want or to be able to reunify at destination.

In Figure 8 we compare two separate survivor functions for competing risks. Of the Congolese migrants who came to Belgium or to the U.K., we examine here the difference between those who reunify at destination (risk 1) and those who reunify at origin (risk 2). In our sample of 362 minor children left behind in Congo by a parent who moved to Europe, 120 reunified at destination and 27 at origin. More migrants reunify at destination, compared to those reunifying at origin (Belgium or the U.K.). As for couples, the results show there is hardly any difference between years spent apart for children who reunify at destination or at origin.

Figure 5. Children location at time of first migration
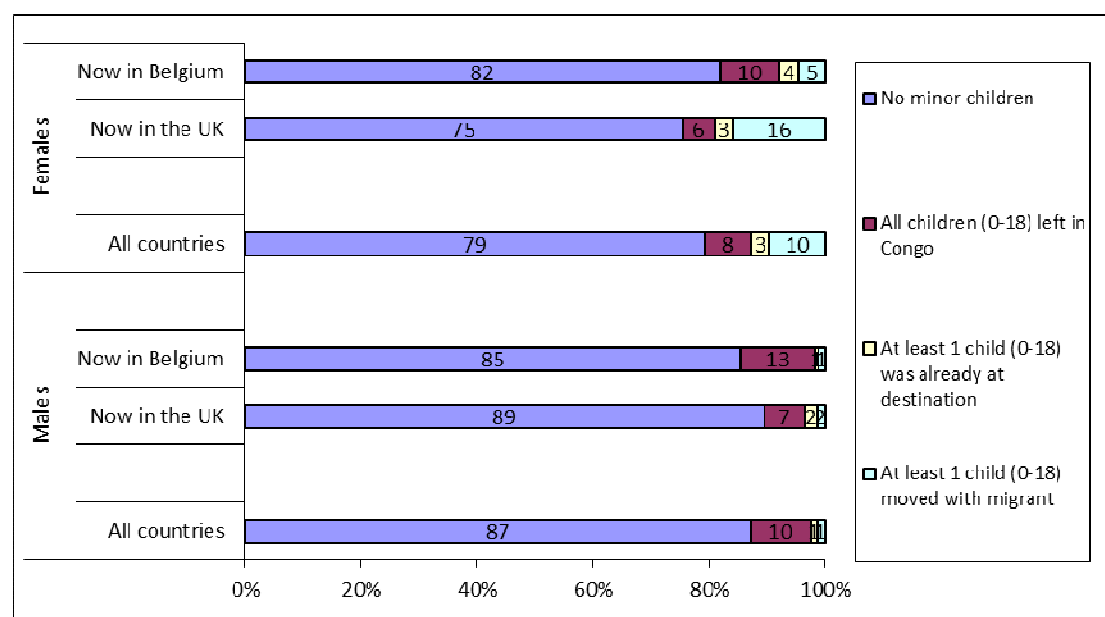
* Children over 18 are not included in the analyses.
Notes: weighted percentages
Source: MAfE-Congo data; *Population:* Congolese immigrants in Europe (n=426); *Time of survey:* 2008
Interpretation: At the time of 1st migration, 87% of men had no children under 18. For women, this was 79%.

Table 19. Children of Congolese migrants in Europe at the time of departure, by sex

	Total		Sex of the migrant			
			Male		Female	
	f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
No children	230	57.5%	137	63.4%	93	52.6%
Only children 0-18	63	17.3%	30	12.8%	33	20.9%
Only children 18>	100	18.3%	42	16.2%	58	20.1%
Both children 0-18 and 18>	29	6.9%	16	7.6%	13	6.4%
Total	422	100.0%	225	100.0%	197	100.0%
Notes: weighted percentages & unweighted numbers Source: MAfE-Congo data; Population: All Congolese immigrants (n=422); Time of survey: 2008 Interpretation: 57.5% of migrants had no children when 1st migrating.						

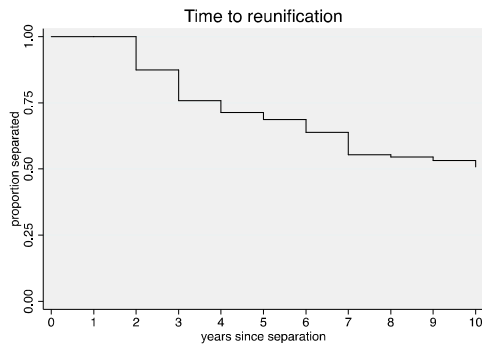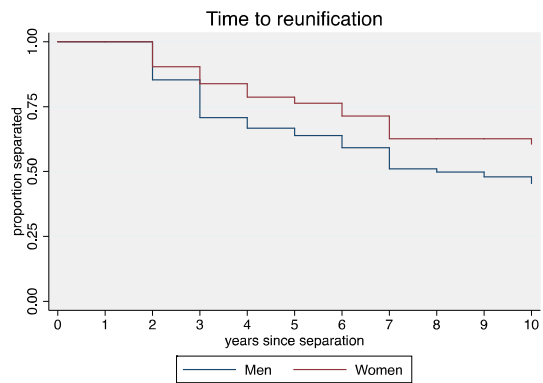**Figure 6. Time to reunification: Congolese parents and left-behind children**

Time to reunification

Figure 7. Time to reunification: parents and left-behind children, by sex of the migrant
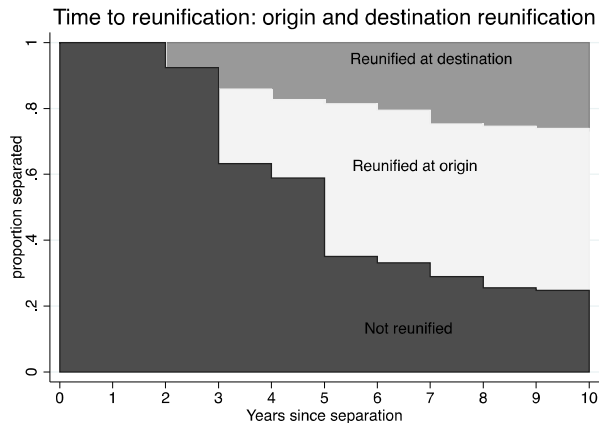

Time to reunification

Notes: weighted results

Source: MAFE-Congo data; *Population*: Children of Congolese migrants living in Europe at the time of the survey who experienced a period of separation from their parent because of their parent migration. Note that the sample used here does not include children born in Congo after the first departure of one of the parents (usually the father). (n=353, 121 failures). Censoring cases: when parents have not reunified with their children before the occurrence of the year of survey (2008); or when the child has deceased; or when the child reaches the age of 18 since s/he is no longer eligible for official family reunification.

Interpretation: After 5 years of separation, 31.3% children left behind were reunified, and 49.3% after 10 years. Differences between males and females are significant (Wald chi2(1) = 4.05; Pr>chi2 = 0.0442).

Figure 8. Time to reunification: parent-child dyads, country of reunification

Time to reunification: origin and destination reunification

Notes: weighted results

Source: MAFE-Congo data; *Population*: Children of Congolese migrants living in Europe or of returnees living in Congo at the time of the survey and who experienced a period of separation from their parent because of their parent migration. Note that the sample used here does not include children born in Congo after the first departure of one of the parents (usually the father). (n=362, 120 failures at destination, 27 failures at origin). Censoring cases: when parents have not reunified with their children before the occurrence of the year of survey (2008); or when the child has deceased; or when the child reaches the age of 18 since s/he is no longer eligible for official family reunification.

Interpretation: The figure measure the duration between time of separation of parent-child dyads and time of reunification either in Europe (at destination) or in Congo (at origin). When looking at reunification at origin, reunification at destination is censored, and vice versa. After 10 years of separation, 49.1% of the children live again with their migrant parent in Congo and 26.9% are reunified in Europe.

Conclusion

In this paper, we used the MAFE data to study the relationships between migration and family in the context of DR Congo and Europe. While most previous quantitative studies offer a restrictive view either on origin or destination, we took advantage of the transnational nature of the data to offer a double viewpoint on families. This led us to a first important result: **transnational families are quite common**. Data collected at origin show that households in Kinshasa are in very high proportions connected with international migrants, with two thirds of all households from the region of Kinshasa declaring migrants abroad (whatever their place of residence). Households in Kinshasa are strongly connected with these migrants, notably through remittances (half of the households), as well as phone calls, emails, or visits. Importantly, these contacts do not only concern spouses and children but also members of the extended family (siblings, and other kins). Even when adopting a restrictive (and European) perspective on family, by focusing on nuclear rather than extended families, transnational arrangements remain a common fact. Using the data collected in Europe among Congolese migrants, we have shown that transnational families are very frequent (almost a quarter of migrants). We have further demonstrated that living apart across borders is quite often a long-lasting arrangement for Congolese couples, as well as for their children. Results also show that reunification is not a unidirectional phenomenon: families also reunify in the origin country, when the migrants return. However, decreasing returns (Schoumaker, Flahaux, 2013) make such reunification at home less likely for Congolese migrants. As a result of decreasing returns, family reunification in Europe is likely to increase, or transnational families will last longer.

An important question is to understand why some migrants remain separated from their family for long, why some reunify in Europe, and why others reunify in DR Congo. This question cannot be answered with the results presented in this paper, but some of them suggest that transnational families result from a mix of personal choices and (economic, administrative,…) constraints. For instance, transnational families are more numerous among students. We can expect that this is a transitory situation, and that either the migrant will return to DR Congo, or will try to reunify at destination. Descriptive statistics show that transnational migrants are less educated than reunified migrants, suggesting educated migrants succeed in family reunification or return. Other types of transnational migrants present more vulnerable profiles (less educated, lower occupational status). For them, the transnational situation may result from barriers to reunification (lack of resources, no residence permit,…), or a strategy to diversify activities across continents. Again, the results presented here do not give definite answers, but research is ongoing. The differences observed between countries (with a higher proportion of transnational families in Belgium, for instance) also call for new analyses that take into account the effects of national policies of the reunification process.

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Appendix

Table A1. Overview key socio-demographic characteristics

Variable	Categories	Full sample			BE			UK			Significance	
		f	mean	s.d.	f	mean	s.d.	f	mean	s.d.	F	p
Sex	2=woman	426	1.46	0.02	278	1.45	0.03	148	1.50	0.04	1.13	0.29
Sex (W)	2=woman	426.14	1.55	0.03	278.32	1.55	0.03	148.00	1.55	0.04	0.01	0.93
Age		426	42.89	0.52	278	43.24	0.60	148	42.24	0.96	0.87	0.35
Age (W)		426.14	40.47	0.49	278.32	41.37	0.60	148.00	39.32	0.82	4.07	0.04
Education												
Primary	1=yes	426	0.15	0.02	278	0.09	0.02	148	0.28	0.04	30.70	0.00
Secondary	1=yes	426	0.28	0.02	278	0.28	0.03	148	0.30	0.04	0.20	0.66
Tertiary	1=yes	426	0.56	0.02	278	0.64	0.03	148	0.42	0.04	19.36	0.00
Education (W)												
Primary (W)	1=yes	426.14	0.17	0.02	278.32	0.08	0.02	148.00	0.27	0.04	18.00	0.00
Secondary (W)	1=yes	426.14	0.31	0.02	278.32	0.30	0.03	148.00	0.32	0.04	0.11	0.73
Tertiary (W)	1=yes	426.14	0.52	0.03	278.32	0.61	0.03	148.00	0.41	0.04	13.52	0.00
Labour force status												
Studying	1=yes	425	0.16	0.02	277	0.16	0.02	148	0.16	0.03	0.00	0.99
Economically active	1=yes	425	0.51	0.02	277	0.52	0.03	148	0.49	0.04	0.34	0.56

Unemployed	1=yes	425	0.15	0.02	277	0.14	0.02	148	0.16	0.03	0.16	0.69
Other inactive*	1=yes	425	0.19	0.02	277	0.18	0.02	148	0.20	0.03	0.15	0.70
Labour force status (W)												
Studying (W)	1=yes	425.56	0.17	0.02	277.63	0.15	0.02	148.00	0.19	0.04	0.83	0.36
Economically active (W)	1=yes	425.56	0.49	0.03	277.63	0.53	0.03	148.00	0.45	0.04	1.80	0.18
Unemployed (W)	1=yes	425.56	0.13	0.02	277.63	0.12	0.02	148.00	0.15	0.03	0.80	0.37
Other inactive* (W)	1=yes	425.56	0.20	0.02	277.63	0.20	0.03	148.00	0.20	0.03	0.00	0.97
Occupational status - ISEI		214	42.05	1.18	143	43.04	1.43	71	40.04	2.09	1.44	0.23
Occupational status - ISEI (W)		209.57	39.57	1.22	145.91	40.38	1.49	66.70	38.39	2.06	0.61	0.44
Subjective well-being												
Yes, absolutely	1=yes	418	0.78	0.02	274	0.81	0.02	144	0.74	0.04	2.26	0.13
No, not at all	1=yes	418	0.04	0.01	274	0.05	0.01	144	0.01	0.01	3.08	0.08
It depended	1=yes	418	0.18	0.02	274	0.15	0.02	144	0.24	0.04	6.10	0.01
Subjective well-being (W)												
Yes, absolutely (W)	1=yes	417.47	0.79	0.02	274.79	0.81	0.03	143.55	0.77	0.04	0.88	0.35
No, not at all (W)	1=yes	417.47	0.03	0.01	274.79	0.05	0.01	143.55	0.01	0.01	3.66	0.06
It depended (W)	1=yes	417.47	0.18	0.02	274.79	0.15	0.02	143.55	0.22	0.04	3.07	0.08

W= weighted, using pweights; Note: the *f*requencies are not whole numbers, because these values are estimated using the probability weights)

* Other inactive = Homemaker/Retired/Other inactive

Table A2. Overview migration characteristics

Variable	Categories	Full sample			BE			UK			Significance	
		f	mean	s.d.	f	mean	s.d.	f	mean	s.d.	F	p
Sending remittances	1=yes	426	0.77	0.02	278	0.77	0.04	148	0.76	0.04	0.02	0.88
Sending remittances (W)	1=yes	426.14	0.75	0.02	278.32	0.76	0.03	148.00	0.74	0.04	0.16	0.69
Age at arrival current stay		422	32.02	0.47	274	31.96	0.54	148	32.14	0.91	0.03	0.86
Age at arrival current stay (W)		422.25	30.43	0.43	273.76	30.98	0.51	148.00	29.76	0.73	1.86	0.17
Duration of current stay		422	9.97	0.37	274	10.44	0.51	148	9.10	0.42	3.07	0.08
Duration of current stay (W)		422.25	9.09	0.33	273.76	9.52	0.49	148.00	8.57	0.42	2.19	0.14
Motivation for current migration												
Family	1=yes	420	0.20	0.02	277	0.22	0.03	143	0.15	0.03	2.89	0.09
Work	1=yes	420	0.09	0.01	277	0.08	0.02	143	0.09	0.02	0.07	0.79
Study	1=yes	420	0.25	0.02	277	0.32	0.03	143	0.10	0.02	27.68	0.00
Better Life	1=yes	420	0.08	0.01	277	0.03	0.01	143	0.18	0.03	34.39	0.00
Other	1=yes	420	0.39	0.02	277	0.34	0.03	143	0.48	0.04	7.06	0.01
Motivation for current migration (W)												
Family (W)	1=yes	418.66	0.22	0.02	277.17	0.26	0.03	142.88	0.17	0.03	4.14	0.04
Work (W)	1=yes	418.66	0.09	0.02	277.17	0.08	0.02	142.88	0.09	0.03	0.14	0.71
Study (W)	1=yes	418.66	0.21	0.02	277.17	0.30	0.03	142.88	0.09	0.03	28.33	0.00
Better Life (W)	1=yes	418.66	0.09	0.02	277.17	0.02	0.01	142.88	0.18	0.03	22.26	0.00
Other (W)	1=yes	418.66	0.40	0.03	277.17	0.34	0.03	142.88	0.47	0.04	5.10	0.02

Support for the migration trip												
By parents	1=yes	426	0.10	0.01	278	0.12	0.02	148	0.08	0.02	1.21	0.27
By spouse	1=yes	426	0.19	0.02	278	0.18	0.02	148	0.20	0.03	0.23	0.63
By siblings	1=yes	426	0.09	0.01	278	0.08	0.02	148	0.11	0.03	0.75	0.39
by other	1=yes	426	0.25	0.02	278	0.29	0.03	148	0.17	0.03	8.28	0.00
Support for the migration trip (W)												
By parents (W)	1=yes	426.14	0.11	0.02	278.32	0.12	0.02	148.00	0.10	0.03	0.72	0.40
By spouse (W)	1=yes	426.14	0.22	0.02	278.32	0.22	0.03	148.00	0.22	0.04	0.02	0.89
By siblings (W)	1=yes	426.14	0.10	0.02	278.32	0.09	0.02	148.00	0.12	0.03	1.01	0.32
by other (W)	1=yes	426.14	0.23	0.02	278.32	0.27	0.03	148.00	0.17	0.03	6.32	0.01
Residence permit												
Need no permit	1=yes	418	0.43	0.02	271	0.42	0.03	147	0.45	0.04	0.23	0.63
Visa	1=yes	418	0.16	0.02	271	0.22	0.03	147	0.03	0.02	27.01	0.00
Residence permit	1=yes	418	0.45	0.02	271	0.47	0.03	147	0.41	0.04	1.26	0.26
Have no permit	1=yes	418	0.10	0.01	271	0.08	0.02	147	0.13	0.03	2.08	0.15
Residence permit (W)												
Need no permit (W)	1=yes	418.13	0.42	0.03	270.68	0.40	0.03	146.83	0.45	0.04	0.78	0.38
Visa (W)	1=yes	418.13	0.14	0.02	270.68	0.22	0.03	146.83	0.03	0.02	34.10	0.00
Residence permit (W)	1=yes	418.13	0.45	0.03	270.68	0.49	0.03	146.83	0.41	0.04	2.14	0.14
Have no permit (W)	1=yes	418.13	0.11	0.02	270.68	0.09	0.02	146.83	0.14	0.03	1.58	0.21

W= weighted, using pweights; Note: the frequencies are not whole numbers, because these values are estimated using the probability weights)