The move to move

What motivates West African university students to consider leaving their countries

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Keywords: Migration intentions, Student migration, Africa, Migration theory

Abstract

This paper attempts better to apprehend the mixed motivations that lead to international migration amongst young West African university students. We use an original survey dataset based on standardized questionnaires collected among more than 4000 students in Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and Niger. Multivariate statistical methods and interviews allow us to test a series of hypotheses linking the intensity of the intention to migrate to the perceived situation in the country of origin as well as to perceptions of the destination country in terms of economic prospects, political freedom, gender relations, opportunities for personal development, etc. We analyze conjointly intervening factors such as gender, age, ethnicity, financial resources, past migration history or networks, and put the results into perspective with contemporary migration theory. Our findings contrast strongly with the stereotypical idea that the sole dream of young Africans is to migrate to Western countries, pushed by dissatisfaction at home and lured by the sirens of an imaginary paradise abroad. Their motivations for migration, on the contrary, are mainly based in a rational awareness of the pros and cons of moving. Most students wish to leave only temporarily, in order to improve their human capital and to acquire degrees abroad. Furthermore, formulating a migration project remains a luxury; those who can afford to do so tend to be wealthier and have a higher level of social capital at the outset.

Introduction

As already stated in 1970 by Mabogunje, one of the pioneers of migration studies, the notion of 'expectations' or 'aspirations' is a crucial dimension for the theorization of migration (Mabogunje 1970: 11). Despite this insight, the numerous syntheses of migration studies that have been published since then reveal a bias toward retroactive studies, looking only at migration once it has happened and ignoring the unfolding of the migration project (Ritchey 1976; Salt 1987; Portes and Böröcz 1996; Massey et al. 1998; Boyle et al. 1998; Brettell and Hollifield 2007). Although exceptions exist[1] and although several authors have noted this gap in the research (Winchie and Carment 1989; Chirkov et al. 2007), it has rarely been addressed in migration studies.

One could of course argue that what's in the mind of potential migrants before they leave their home doesn't really matter and that, migration being a boulevard of broken dreams, the revealed preferences of people who actually make the move are the only hard, usable facts.[2] Lu made this point ten years ago, in his article "Do People Move When They Say They Will?", and identified several inconsistencies between intentions and actions in individual migration behaviour (Lu 1999). And yet, despite these obvious biases, it is still the case that the link between the two steps is strong and of paramount importance for a better understanding of the migration decision process as a whole. Although the intention or the decision to migrate doesn't necessarily lead to action, there "is more commonality than difference" (De Jong et al. 1985: 59) and one can be fairly confident that a strong link does exist (van Dalen and Henkens 2008; Bahna 2008; Gubhaju and De Jong 2009). As stated by Li in connection with the specific case of students (1996: 53):

> Migration behaviour does not always correspond to overtly stated intentions, not least because structural constraints, such as immigration regulations, may prevent intentions from being realised. Declared intentions are, nonetheless, useful in offering a general indicator of the likely extent of future migration, especially when combined with information about migrants' perception of places of residence, and studies of known migration behaviour in relation to intentions and perceptions.

Intentions thus deserve to be given increased attention from migration studies. The present paper intends to do just that.[3] The case of students is especially relevant in that context because students are at a stage of life where the realm of possible choices regarding

the future is the most open, they can be considered to be better informed and to enjoy a higher level of human capital than the rest of the population, and they are thus in a privileged position from which to elaborate coherent and differentiated migration plans. At the same time, student migrations can be assumed to be driven by factors that are not fundamentally different from what drives other migrants. As stated by Li, "Migration for education is (…) closely tied to other types of moves and must be treated as an integral part of international migration systems" (Li et al. 1996: 53). Student migration also presents an intrinsic interest: although many studies have investigated the temporary mobility of students in relation to programs such as Erasmus in the EU (King and Ruiz-Gelices 2003), there is a paucity of research on longer-term student migration, whether it is migration for the sake of pursuing higher studies or to achieve other aims (Findlay 2010). As stated by Chirkov: "Despite the importance of psychological studies of migration motivation and the existence of several interesting approaches, research on the motivation of international students to study abroad […] is not a well-developed research area, either conceptually or methodologically." (Chirkov et al. 2007: 201). One can add that the existing literature on students' migration suffers from the same retroactive bias as does the rest of the migration literature.

The aim of the present paper is, in that context, to try to understand how students at three African universities see the possibility of migration and how their intentions to emigrate are correlated with a series of individual or collective characteristics and opinions. West African countries were chosen because the relative lack of research on migration in that region contrasts blatantly with the popular stereotypical vision of unbearable migration pressure from Africa (Adepoju and Appleyard 1996; Hamilton 1999; de Haas 2008), a vision that is also quite common in Western governments and administrations (Schmid 2010) and within academia (Hatton and Williamson 2002). As stated by van Dalen (2005: 767): "most brain drain studies would lead one to believe that [African] students were absolutely determined to move to the US or to Europe".

In the first section of this paper, we attempt to identify a series of key theoretical elements that contribute to the building of a general framework of hypotheses for understanding migration intentions. To do this we review the main theories of migration and those more specifically related to students' mobility, but we also look at theories originating in social psychology that are seldom considered in mainstream migration studies. The second

section presents the dataset and the profile of the students on the basis of an original survey dataset collected in 2009 among more than 4000 West African university students in Côte-d'Ivoire, Senegal and Niger. The third section discusses the methodology used, and the fourth presents and interprets the results.

Theories of migration and migration intentions

Why do people migrate or wish to do so? For more than a century, the social sciences have been attempting to answer that question, which concerns geography as well as psychology, political economy and economics, sociology, anthropology and demography. As shown by Massey in his plea for theoretical pluralism in migration studies, one can consider each school of thought to have contributed valuable conceptual enlargements that are often complementary rather than antagonistic (Massey et al. 1994). They allow us to draw a reasonably coherent picture of the different factors and causal mechanisms that might be at play in relation to migration. The recent history of migration studies can be understood, in that perspective, as a progressive enlargement of the spectrum of explanation mechanisms (Piguet and de Coulon 2010).

The neoclassical school points to the central importance of economic factors and to the process of utility maximization by individual agents that underlies migration intentions. The expectation of higher wages and better employment leads those people who are not averse toward risk and can afford the cost of displacement to consider migration, whereas others discard it (Harris and Todaro 1970). Behaviourist geographers acknowledge this general framework but add—among other things—that actors have only limited access to information and that their rationality is thus bounded, leading them to pursue their satisfaction in an incremental way by seizing opportunities rather than by targeting the behaviour that would maximize their utility in absolute terms (Wolpert 1965). Considering the ways in which people are aware of migration opportunities and risk, and the ways in which they process this information, thus appears paramount. Both the neoclassical and the behaviourist conceptions fit nicely into Everett Lee's famous but very general push-pull model, which (without any attempt at empirical validation) mentions demographic, economic and political factors in the areas of departure and destinations, along with intervening opportunities and obstacles,[4] as interacting to produce migrations. Although this has been forgotten by the many adherents of the push-pull framework, one can note that Lee goes in the same direction as Wolpert when

he states that " … it is not so much the actual factors at origin and destination as the perception of these factors which results in migration"[5] (Lee 1966: 51).

Several other lines of thought are especially relevant regarding the specific case of student migration. Life-cycle approaches (Leslie and Richardson 1961) conceptualize the decision process as heavily influenced by the age and family status of the potential migrant: a young single student, a family whose children are not yet in school or a recently divorced person will have much stronger incentives to move than people in other situations. In the same vein, the human capital approach (Sjaastad 1962) stresses that the propensity to migrate varies according to a person's level of education and skills and that migration itself can bring a significant contribution to the accumulation of human capital by allowing the migrant to get valuable degrees and experience. Several authors use a framework inspired by Bourdieu's distinction between forms of capital (Bourdieu and Passeron 1978) and stress the importance of social and cultural capital as both a determinant for and a consequence of migration (Findlay 2010). Investing in education outside of the country is not only a way to repatriate expertise, in the narrow sense of human capital, but also a way to bring home the symbolic prestige associated with specific countries and universities. As noticed by Waters (2006), this process can be largely gender-dependent. More recently, mobility studies (Urry 2007) have contributed to the conceptualization of migration in connection with various forms of capital by emphasizing that the very fact of moving and "knowing how to move" can be considered as an asset in itself, one that facilitates subsequent moves (Tarrius 1989) and forms a component of spatial capital.[6]

A significant conceptual improvement in migration theory can be associated with the "new economics of labour migration" (NELM) (Stark 1991). Central to this approach is the idea that the household, rather than the individual, should be considered as the decision-making unit regarding migration decisions. Phenomena that might appear irrational through the lenses of the preceding schools of thought can be understood as rational when viewed this way. It is possible, for example, that while the departure of one member of a household brings no absolute increase in earnings, it nevertheless makes sense as a collective risk-diversification strategy. Another important concept brought to the fore by the NELM is the importance of relative deprivation: the decision to move can follow a degradation of the situation of a person or household relative to the rest of society, without any change in its

absolute purchasing power.

Theories rooted in social psychology and especially in theories of motivation and decision have also made a significant contribution to the understanding of migration intentions. Tartakovsky and Schwartz (2001) distinguish three types of motives for moving (preservation of the self and the quest for security; personal development; and materialism), whereas De Jong and Fawcett (1981) point toward seven categories in which expectations of improvement should be taken into account: material life, status, comfort, stimulation, autonomy, affiliation and morality. These motivations interact with social and cultural norms as well as individual characteristics such as gender[7] and personality. The propensity to take risks and the locus of control (the extent to which an individual believes him- or herself to be in control of events that affect his or her life) are often seen as central psychological characteristics in this regard (Winchie and Carment 1989; Chirkov et al. 2007; Boneva and Frieze 2001); they interact with the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction and shape migration intentions (Stinner and Van Loon 1992).

Among recent contributions to migration theory, the network approach—rooted in older concepts such as chain migration and social capital—is of great relevance (Boyd 1989; Epstein 2008; Tilly 2007). Central here is the idea that contacts with already expatriated friends or members of one's close or distant family are significant assets that usually facilitate and encourage migration (De Jong 2000; Epstein and Gang 2006). As stated by van Dalen (2005: 755): "although we know from actual migration decisions that social networks play a crucial role in facilitating migration, one question in the migration literature that remains unresolved is whether social networks play a similar role at the stage when intentions are being formed". According to Haug (2008), five mechanisms explain the impact of networks on migration: affinities (the existence of relatives and friends at the place of residence/destination reduces/increases the tendency to migrate), information (the more information channels, the more influential such information is on the decision to migrate), facilitation (relatives and friends promote migration to their own places of residence by facilitating adjustment to the new location), conflict (intra-familial conflicts within the community of origin cause migration) and support (families may encourage members to migrate for work, e.g., as a strategy to secure the household income). In addition to affinities at home, networks might also discourage the move by providing dismal information about

opportunities abroad or by putting additional constraints on the potential migrant (Faist 1997). An interesting and yet under-researched question in that context is the respective impact of weak versus strong, and family versus nonfamily, networks (Herman 2006).

The line of thinking pioneered by network theory stresses the linkages between expatriates and potential migrants and can be associated with the general paradigmatic shift that has occurred in migration studies, from a conception of migration as a once-and-for-all movement between two geographical spaces, to the conception of a transnational space of flow within which migrants move without losing contact with their region of origin (Palloni et al. 2001; Faist 1997; Vertovec 1999; Portes 2001). This idea is also central in contemporary theories of globalization, often inspired by the world system theory. Applied to migration, such theories point toward the connections between different kinds of flow and different segments of social and economic life often previously considered as isolated from one another. Sassen shows, for example, how a change in the world flow of goods implies new opportunities for work for women, which modify gender relations and ultimately increase the incentive for migration for men (Sassen 1988). Other researchers point to the way new technologies of information and communication (NTIC) affect the desire to emigrate through the circulation of norms and values often linked to a "western" way of life but also because they bridge, to a certain extent, the informational and emotional geographic distances between spaces. Finally, one must add that many authors have recently advocated a “return of the state” in migration theory, stressing the importance of the political dimensions to understand both the way in which power relations can restrain mobility by setting up different kinds of borders, and the way in which the political situations in the countries of origin and destination can constitute an important driver of migration intentions (Hollifield 2000; Cornelius et al. 2004).

The very brief inventory of theories we have sketched allows us to identify eight key dimensions that combine the micro level (i.e. psychological variables) with the meso (i.e. context of the studies) and the macro (political context) levels in order to understand migration intentions:

1. The academic context
2. Individual and “psychological” characteristics

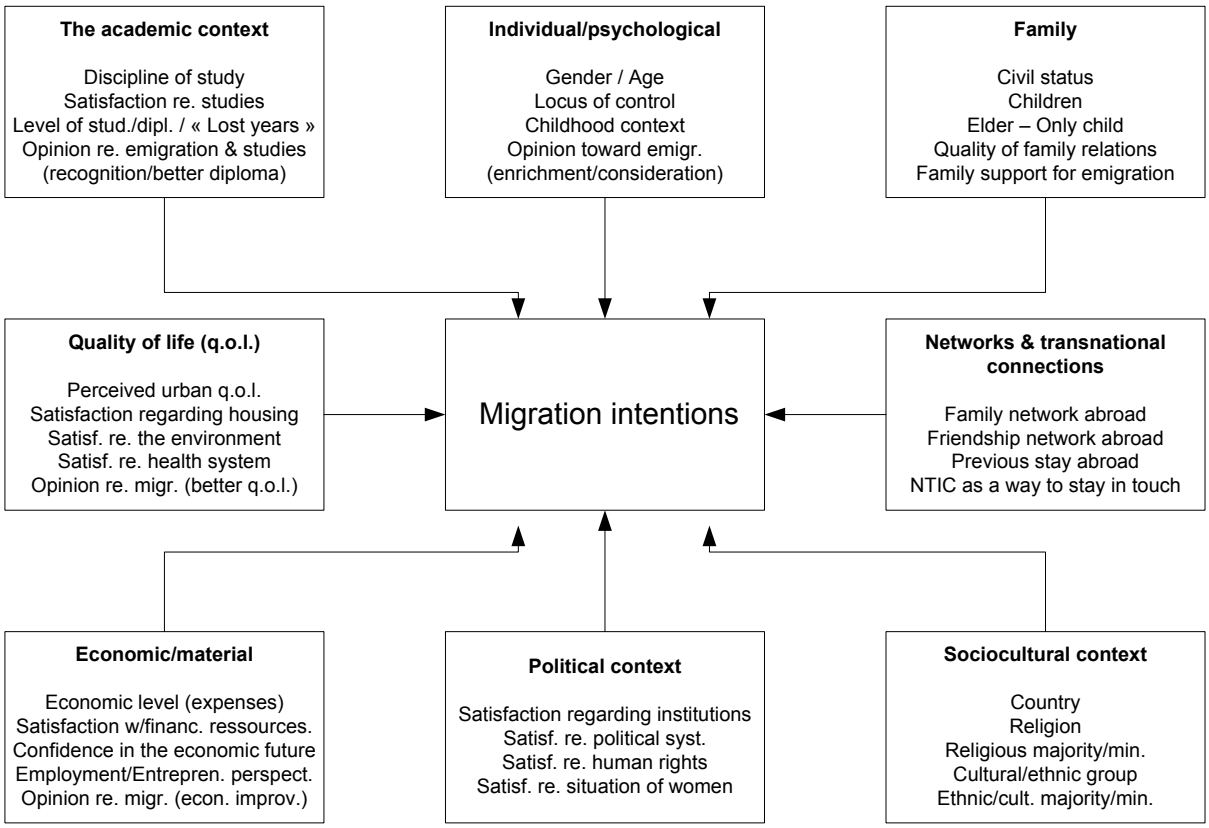
3. The familial context
4. Networks and transnational connections
5. The sociocultural context
6. The political context
7. Economic and/or material dimensions
8. The quality of life

Figure 1 presents these dimensions and the variables that were produced in our questionnaire. For the purpose of clarity, the chart highlights the—hypothesized—relations between migration intentions and the other variables, but it is evident that there are also numerous interdependencies among the explaining variables themselves. The idea is then to define a set of indicators that will be able to describe and measure the different and intersecting paths leading to migration intentions. We follow here the suggestion made by Lieber: "Because the decision to migrate to a place is usually made prior to prolonged exposure to the destination place, it is possible to avoid the post-hoc rationalizations that scholars make when they investigate migration behavior after the event by utilizing personal interviews or questionnaires for people who are about to move" (1978: 17).

Dataset, profile of the students and hypothesis

A questionnaire based on the eight dimensions mentioned above was distributed on the campuses of Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire), Niamey (Niger) and Saint-Louis (Senegal) to a random sample of students.[8] The reply rate varied significantly between countries and ranged from 90% in Niger and Senegal to 47% in Côte d'Ivoire.[9] A total number of 4126 valid questionnaires was collected, 851 in Senegal (confidence interval (CI) +/- 3% with p< 95%), 1509 in Niger (CI +/- 2.3% with p< 95%) and 1766 in Côte d'Ivoire (CI +/- 2.3% with p< 95%).

The profiles of the students who responded to the questionnaire were systematically compared with the profile of the whole student population on the basis of official statistics for each university. This revealed a high level of representativity that confirms the randomness of the distribution process and the quality of the sample.[10]



Migration intentions

Three questions were posed regarding students' migration intentions: questions about the desire,[11] about a plan[12] and about concrete actions taken to prepare for migration. Whereas 62% of the students expressed a desire to emigrate and 61% a precise plan, only 27% had taken concrete steps such as collecting information on the Internet, requesting matriculation at a university, requesting information or a visa from an embassy, soliciting a recommendation letter from a professor, contacting an emigration agency, etc.[13] Basically, our three indicators represent a gradient in the strength of the migration project.[14] A cross-tabulation nevertheless shows that they also reflect different facets of the phenomenon of migration intention and action: some people, for example, mention a concrete plan but no wish to emigrate or some concrete information-gathering actions but no plan. These are not inconsistencies—as one might think at first glance—but the complexities of the phenomenon at play. The temporal dimensions of migration intentions also vary and indicate that most students seek a compromise between staying and leaving: most of them only wish to leave for a few years (Table 1). This is connected to the fact that most of the students do not want to emigrate for work but, instead, wish to study abroad in order to acquire a higher-level degree than the one they are currently studying for (among those who answered the question about the main

reason for leaving, 63% mentioned studies, 14% work abroad, 3% family reasons, 18% a quest for new experiences in life and 2% other aims). Only a minority of students actually wishes to leave either before they have finished the degree towards which they are currently working or after they have completely finished their education.

Duration of migration plan	Students	Valid %
No plan	1578	39.3
3 months to 2 years	525	13.1
Temporary but more than 2 years	857	21.3
Forever	257	6.4
Don't know	802	20.0
Valid total	4019	100.0
Missing values	107	
Total	4126	

In order to build a robust and simple indicator of migration intentions, we built a variable that takes the value "yes" if the respondent has simultaneously expressed a desire to emigrate, has formulated a concrete plan and has taken at least one concrete step towards emigration. On that basis, 17% of the students show migration intentions that can be considered fairly serious and concrete. We take this indicator as the dependent variable in the rest of this analysis.[15] The independent variables were grouped according to the factors defined above.

The academic context

The academic context in which the students find themselves plays a central role in our research, but complex mechanisms are at play. On the one hand, dissatisfaction with their studies might constitute a reason for students to leave the country. On the other hand, the most successful, satisfied and enthusiastic students might also be the ones most attracted by the opportunities of studying abroad, and they might also be the ones most heavily encouraged by their instructors and professors to do so. The role of specific academic disciplines is also difficult to predict: the international literature suggests that some disciplines, such as economics, might imply more opportunities for mobility, while others, such as law, might be more country-specific,[16] but on the other hand opportunities in the local labour market might also look better for those who have completed their studies in the most globalized fields of studies, such as economics. The distribution by discipline shown in Table 2 indicates a fairly balanced sample that will allow us to put these hypotheses to the test.

Whole sample	Sig.	Exp(B)	**Côte d'Ivoire**	Sig.	Exp(B)	**Niger**	Sig.	Exp(B)	**Senegal**	Sig.	Exp(B)	**Women**	Sig.	Exp(B)	**Men**		
Political context																	
Q26. Confidence in the future (factor score)	**.006**	**.847**	ConfidFuture	**.111**	**.869**	ConfidFuture	**.242**	**.863**	ConfidFuture	**.046**	**.768**	ConfidFuture	**.000**	**.606**	ConfidFuture	**.039**	**.871**
Quality of life																	
Q26. Quality of life (factor score)	**.300**	**1.069**	QualLife	**.676**	**.961**	QualLife	**.193**	**1.202**	QualLife	**.096**	**1.254**	QualLife	**.010**	**1.380**	QualLife	**.135**	**1.112**
Q37. Mig. = Better quality of life (yes)	**.451**	**1.096**	BetterQLife	**.342**	**1.192**	BetterQLife	**.994**	**1.002**	BetterQLife	**.980**	**.994**	BetterQLife	**.041**	**1.721**	BetterQLife	**.836**	**.971**
Academic context																	
Q19. Discipl (ref Social sciences)	**.692**	-	Discipl	**.383**	-	Discipl	**.845**	-	Discipl	**.468**	-	Discipl	**.495**	-	Discipl	**.321**	-
Discipl (Economics)	**.266**	**1.232**	Discipl(1)	**.751**	**1.097**	Discipl(1)	**.889**	**1.063**	Discipl(1)	**.512**	**1.272**	Discipl(1)	**.396**	**1.372**	Discipl(1)	**.987**	**1.004**
Discipl (Humanities)	**.240**	**1.210**	Discipl(2)	**.526**	**1.171**	Discipl(2)	**.609**	**.745**	Discipl(2)	**.335**	**1.343**	Discipl(2)	**.932**	**1.028**	Discipl(2)	**.335**	**1.216**
Discipl (Medical/Pharm.)	**.625**	**1.137**	Discipl(3)	**.095**	**.252**	Discipl(3)	**.427**	**.747**	-	-	-	Discipl(3)	**.582**	**.786**	Discipl(3)	**.156**	**.639**
Discipl (Technica/Natural sciences)	**.884**	**.974**	Discipl(4)	**.584**	**.854**	Discipl(4)	**.500**	**.783**	Discipl(4)	**.832**	**.927**	Discipl(4)	**.431**	**.700**	Discipl(4)	**.432**	**.852**
Discipl (Law)	**.401**	**1.158**	Discipl(5)	**.765**	**.921**	Discipl(5)	**.250**	**.638**	Discipl(5)	**.146**	**1.659**	Discipl(5)	**.277**	**.682**	Discipl(5)	**.904**	**.975**
Q21. Level of study (ref BAC)	**.095**	-	LevelStud	**.060**	-	LevelStud	**.011**	-	LevelStud	**.838**	-	LevelStud	**.128**	-	LevelStud	**.007**	-
Level of study (BA)	**.455**	**1.102**	LevelStud(1)	**.109**	**1.371**	LevelStud(1)	**.204**	**.706**	LevelStud(1)	**.857**	**.947**	LevelStud(1)	**.496**	**1.197**	LevelStud(1)	**.192**	**1.219**
Level of study (MA)	**.033**	**1.559**	LevelStud(2)	**.020**	**2.280**	LevelStud(2)	**.042**	**2.400**	LevelStud(2)	**.591**	**.794**	LevelStud(2)	**.045**	**2.417**	LevelStud(2)	**.002**	**2.086**
Q22. LostYears (yes)	**.641**	**1.056**	LostYears	**.310**	**1.192**	LostYears	**.436**	**.826**	LostYears	**.582**	**1.147**	LostYears	**.032**	**.552**	LostYears	**.251**	**1.165**
Q18. Satisf. teaching (yes)	**.718**	**.956**	SatisfTeachng	**.212**	**.793**	SatisfTeachng	**.350**	**1.301**	SatisfTeachng	**.367**	**1.265**	SatisfTeachng	**.781**	**1.076**	SatisfTeachng	**.521**	**.912**
Q18. Satisf. relat. prof. (yes)	**.091**	**1.238**	SatisfProf	**.066**	**1.391**	SatisfProf	**.404**	**1.271**	SatisfProf	**.841**	**.947**	SatisfProf	**.295**	**1.328**	SatisfProf	**.342**	**1.148**
Q18. Satifs. discipline (yes)	**.625**	**1.076**	SatifsDisc	**.664**	**1.067**	SatifsDisc	**.364**	**.715**	SatifsDisc	**.126**	**1.850**	SatifsDisc	**.784**	**.914**	SatifsDisc	**.458**	**1.138**
Q18. Satisf. equality (yes)	**.412**	**1.107**	Equality	**.155**	**1.286**	Equality	**.409**	**1.251**	Equality	**.129**	**.661**	Equality	**.904**	**1.036**	Equality	**.465**	**1.107**
Q18. Satisf. resource of the faculty (yes)	**.845**	**.974**	SatResFac	**.714**	**1.091**	SatResFac	**.891**	**1.039**	SatResFac	**.282**	**.775**	SatResFac	**.862**	**.958**	SatResFac	**.675**	**1.070**
Q18. Satisf opport. PhD (yes)	**.666**	**.945**	OpportPhD	**.388**	**.838**	OpportPhD	**.797**	**.924**	OpportPhD	**.762**	**1.078**	OpportPhD	**.100**	**1.536**	OpportPhD	**.179**	**.806**
Q18. Satisf. no obstacles (yes)	**.574**	**1.076**	NoObstacles	**.602**	**.898**	NoObstacles	**.727**	**1.103**	NoObstacles	**.120**	**1.480**	NoObstacles	**.500**	**.836**	NoObstacles	**.249**	**1.191**
Q37. Mig. = recognition (yes)	**.748**	**1.039**	Recognition	**.469**	**.880**	Recognition	**.019**	**1.785**	Recognition	**.575**	**.871**	Recognition	**.463**	**.838**	Recognition	**.356**	**1.136**
Q37. Mig. = betterDipl (yes)	**.015**	**1.326**	BetterDipl	**.254**	**1.237**	BetterDipl	**.198**	**1.342**	BetterDipl	**.027**	**1.649**	BetterDipl	**.058**	**1.539**	BetterDipl	**.061**	**1.292**
Networks & Transnational connections																	
Q27. Stayed abroad (yes)	**.078**	**1.256**	StayedAbrd	**.402**	**1.219**	StayedAbrd	**.193**	**1.356**	StayedAbrd	**.523**	**1.172**	StayedAbrd	**.119**	**1.488**	StayedAbrd	**.709**	**1.058**
Q36. Transnational links (yes)	**.011**	**1.467**	Transnatlnk	**.197**	**1.382**	Transnatlnk	**.433**	**1.244**	Transnatlnk	**.010**	**2.191**	Transnatlnk	**.083**	**1.825**	Transnatlnk	**.078**	**1.348**
Q14. Family network (yes)	**.000**	**1.600**	FamilyNetwk	**.003**	**1.680**	FamilyNetwk	**.189**	**1.486**	FamilyNetwk	**.074**	**1.822**	FamilyNetwk	**.020**	**2.095**	FamilyNetwk	**.001**	**1.583**
Q14. Friends network (yes)	**.146**	**1.180**	FriendsNetwk	**.264**	**1.218**	FriendsNetwk	**.595**	**1.132**	FriendsNetwk	**.804**	**.945**	FriendsNetwk	**.161**	**1.382**	FriendsNetwk	**.506**	**1.092**
Constant	**.000**	**.027**	Constant	**.000**	**.008**	Constant	**.044**	**.101**	Constant	**.016**	**.029**	Constant	**.002**	**.015**	Constant	**.000**	**.046**

The students' satisfaction with their studies was measured across 7 variables.[17] The best rating concerns the interest in their discipline (82% satisfied). The quality of the teaching is satisfying for 57% of students, the relationship with the teaching staff for 63%. The resources of the department or university are satisfying for only 24% and the opportunities for a PhD for 35%.[18] Two thirds (63%) of the students consider that there are obstacles to the smooth pursuit of their studies, one aspect of such obstacles being invalidated years of study ("années blanches") related to political turmoil or other crises, which have affected 43% of the students surveyed. Finally, 68% of the students consider that the equality of opportunity in their studies (for example between men and women) is satisfactory.[19] An important result that might be related to migration intentions is that overall, 54% of the students consider that one can get a more valuable degree outside of the country.

Our sample shows that 38% of the students had not yet achieved any university degree, whereas 52% were postgraduate at an intermediate level (a two- or four-year degree, equivalent to a DEUG or a bachelor's degree) and 10% at a higher level (a master's or a PhD). The level of education already achieved appears potentially important but also possibly equivocal in its effects: do intentions to leave increase with the number of years of study, or do students who have already earned a degree have sufficiently good prospects at home that they would prefer to stay?

Individual characteristics

A look at individual characteristics reveals that women represent about a quarter of the sample (1085 persons). The mean age of the students is 24.5, with a minimum of 17 and a maximum of 47; 21% of the student are under 21 years old, 57% between 21 and 25, and 22% 26 or over. About one half grew up in a large town, while 21% and 29%, respectively, spent their childhoods in a village or small town and thus had to migrate in order to join the university. Regarding psychological profiles and attitudes, a very basic question related to the locus of control ("Do you believe that your actions can have an influence on your life?") shows that 83% of the students think that they can have an influence, a characteristic of personality hypothetically linked to migration. More generally, 40% of the students consider that someone who has lived outside of the country enjoys greater respect when returning home and 57% that migration is an enriching life experience.

The familial context

The variables related to the family show that only 6% of the students were or had been married, whereas 9% had children[20]; 27% were the eldest among their brothers and sisters or were the only child. All these characteristics might imply specific responsibilities and hinder migration. Family relations were rated good or excellent by 82% of students, average by 14% and bad by 4%. The most common attitude of their families toward migration was neutral (66%), with 31% of the students being encouraged to move and only 3% discouraged by their families.

Networks and transnational connections

Networks and transnational connections were assessed through one question about past stays abroad (24% of the students had spent more than one month in another country, mainly in Africa[21]) and numerous questions related to the kind of international network the person had: whereas 27% of the students had no connections abroad at all, 65% had a family network[22] and 40% a nonfamily network.[23] One specific question attempted to measure the "transnational attitude" of the students by asking whether they considered NTIC as facilitating migration while avoiding the necessity of cutting links with family and friends. This view was shared by a rather impressive 80% of the students.

The sociocultural context

A central differentiating characteristic within our sample is of course the fact that three countries are represented. Although all three are situated in Western, French-speaking, Africa, their recent histories, as well as their political systems, vary. A certain level of collaboration between universities does exist at the regional level, but the academic landscape and conditions of life differ widely. One can thus expect significant differences in migration intentions according to the national context.

The religious background of the students (measured by weekly religious observance) also varies within our sample, with 60% Muslims, 34% Christians, a marginal group of other religions and 6% nonpracticing. Only 15% of the sample consisted of people belonging to a religious minority in their own country.[24] Considering the number and specificities of the various cultural and/or ethnic groups in the three countries, a single indicator—whether the person belongs to a group that is dominant or part of the majority[25]—was used at the aggregate level. In specific national models we used the cultural groups of each country as

additional independent variables. On the whole, 30% of the students in the sample were defined as belonging to ethnic minorities. We have no theoretical reason to believe that a univocal relationship might link such broad cultural characteristics as religion or ethnicity with migration intentions, but current popular discourse so often refers to such categories that it appeared well worth it to at least test the hypothesis. Much more grounded is the possible push factor that might exist in relation to a minority status that could imply discrimination.

The political context

The political situation constitutes a push factor that might be especially relevant for the "intellectual elite" constituted by university students. Four variables were used in order to assess the perception of the political context: confidence in institutions (33% reported medium or high levels of satisfaction),[26] trust in the political future of the country (51%),[27] rating of the human rights situation (51%) and rating of the situation of women (63%).[28]

The economic and/or material situation and perspectives

The material situation of the students was measured by way of their total expenses in CFA (West African CFA franc) (excluding housing) during the week preceding the interview, with a mean result of 5000 CFA (10 USD).[29] Two subjective indicators were also computed. The first was based on the satisfaction expressed regarding financial resources: 57% of the students considered their resources to be insufficient, 29% to be barely sufficient and 14% to be sufficient or more than sufficient. The second indicator was based on the evolution of the financial situation. On the whole, about one third of the students described their situation as having deteriorated, one third as stable and one third as improved.[30]

The level of confidence regarding the economic future of each of the three countries was measured using three questions related to the general situation, individual prospects and entrepreneurial opportunities. The level of confidence in the general situation appears fairly high, with 65% of the sample rating it as medium to excellent; the individual prospects of getting a job and for entrepreneurial opportunities rank lower, with 37% and 38% respectively rating these "medium to excellent". And yet, despite these rather unpromising prospects regarding their individual economic futures, only one half of the students consider that they could improve their economic situation by migration, whereas 54% think that their competencies would be better recognized outside of the country. Overall, 15% of the students mention the opportunity to move abroad as the main motivation for studying while 31%

mention instead the prospect of a job in the public sector and 17% in the private sector. An academic career is the main motivation for 10% of the students, and 23% mention a general quest for knowledge ahead of work-related motivations.

The quality of life

Those aspects of the quality of life that are not directly material were approached by way of a set of questions mostly related to the individual appreciation of the geographical context of the three cities of Abidjan, Niamey and Saint-Louis. A first question was related to the quality of life in the city, rated "medium to excellent" by 71% of students.[31] More critically viewed were the housing conditions (only 41% rating these "medium to excellent"), environmental situation (climate and pollution) (40%), and the health system (45%).[32] Our hypothesis is of course that a low rating could constitute a push factor, but this might not be the case as, overall, only 30% of the students actually consider that they could improve their quality of life through migration.

Synthesis

As an intermediate conclusion to our global profile, one can note that students clearly represent a specific subpopulation. They are not only younger and have more to offer in terms of human capital, but they also obviously have more financial resources[33] and contacts abroad[34] than do other sectors of the population. This has obvious consequences for their attitudes toward migration. On the one hand, many express the wish to go abroad; on the other they show a fairly high level of clear-eyed rationality regarding the difficulties of such a project. Many don't actually try to fulfil their wish by taking concrete actions toward leaving. This clarity of assessment is also exemplified by the fact that a huge majority (94%) completely dismisses the idea of migrating illegally,[35] an option they consider dangerous and unsuitable considering the social status they have already acquired through their university studies. This attitude probably contrasts with what might be witnessed among the nonstudent population of the same age group.

Methodology

We now need to look at the impact of each of the independent variables we have just surveyed on intentions to migrate at the individual level. In other words, we want to measure whether, for example, the respondents who consider their financial resources to be insufficient are the same people who express a greater desire to leave the country. On the basis of the

answers to such questions, we will then be able to come back to the theoretical considerations mentioned above and to evaluate which one appears best suited to describe the case of West African students. For this purpose we will use a logistic regression model with the dependent binary variable “migration intentions” defined above.

Before running the analysis one must consider the interdependences that might emerge between independent variables and might lead to collinearities. This is especially true for the 12 variables related to the perception of the situation in the country of origin. As subsequent qualitative interviews showed, it is hard for students to disentangle the components of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. On that basis, we used a factor analysis[36] which allowed us to identify two independent central dimensions of satisfaction: a first factor summarizes attitudes related to the quality of life, the housing situation, the environment, human rights and the health system, while a second independent factor summarizes the confidence expressed by students in the institutions of the country and its economic future as well as employment and entrepreneurial prospects. We have labeled the first factor "Quality of life" and the second "Confidence in the future" and use the two factor scores of each student in the logistic regression analysis instead of the original 12 variables. Another issue of colinearity concerns the material situation of the students, originally rated using three different indicators. After careful consideration we chose to keep one indicator only: the satisfaction they expressed regarding financial resources. Aside from technical arguments,[37] using the subjective perception of material resources appears theoretically more relevant following the point already made by Lee that subjectivity is paramount for understanding migration intentions. The level of colinearity between the other variables used in the regression was systematically tested and is below the usual threshold.

Another preliminary issue concerns the missing values that occurred as some students refused or were unable to answer specific questions. Although missing values are not problematic by themselves if not too frequent, they should be random in order to prevent a bias in the results.[38] Fortunately, the missing value analysis[39] confirmed a fairly random distribution of nonanswers. The refusal to answer, in other words, is not worryingly correlated with specific individual characteristics such as gender, age, country, etc.[40]

The SPSS procedure logistic regression was used to compute the results, with 36 independent variables in the equation. 2775 valid observations remained after the suppression of respondents with missing values.[41] Three national models were computed, as well as separate models for men and women, in order to take possible interaction effects between gender/country characteristics and other variables into account (Tables 3 & 4). The variables "religious majority" and "ethnic majority" were removed from the national models because at that level they were, obviously, redundant with the variables "religion" and "ethnicity". Two additional models—not presented in the tables—were computed: One of these models does not use factor scores to describe confidence in the future and quality of life but instead uses three original variables selected among the ones used in the factor analysis: confidence in the political future of the country, satisfaction regarding the environment and satisfaction regarding family relations. The aim of this model was to check the robustness of the results. We also computed a model that did not include the six variables describing the individual attitudes toward studying abroad, as these might be imagined to interact with other characteristics such as a previous stay abroad or satisfaction regarding the situation in the country. The results of these two models did not differ substantially from the main models.

The protocol suggested by Menard (2002) has been used to assess the quality of the logistic regression results: *Collinearity* has been tested by calculating the level of correlations among all independent variables. This level remains far below the limit suggested by Menard (76). In addition, a linear regression model using the same dependent and independent variables as the logistic model has been computed and the "tolerance" statistic calculated for each independent variable. This statistic remains far greater than the minimum target. *Nonlinearity* has been tested by transforming the few noncategorical independent variables (age and weekly expenditures) into categorical variables. With age, no signs of nonlinearity were detected. With weekly expenditures, a certain level of nonlinearity was detected. We decided to create three categories based on the deviation from the national mean. The additional advantage of this choice is to consider the expense levels of individuals in the context of national price levels (considering that all three countries use the same CFA currency), but this variable was discarded in the final model anyway. *Nonadditivity* has been tested by calculating separate models according to gender and countries. *Zero cells* were not an issue due to the large size of the sample.

Whole sample	Sig.	Exp(B)	Côte d'ivoire	Sig.	Exp(B)	Niger	Sig.	Exp(B)	Senegal	Sig.	Exp(B)	Women	Sig.	Exp(B)	Men	Sig.	Exp(B)
n=2775 - R^2 0.161			n=1313 - R^2 0.158			n=962 - R^2 0.176			n=500 - R^2 0.208			n=709 - R^2 0.296			n=2066 - R^2 0.125		
Country (ref Cdi)	**.000**		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Country (Niger)	**.022**	**.588**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Country (Senegal)	**.049**	**1.555**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Individual/ Psychological																	
Q1.Gender (women)	**.699**	**.952**	Gender	**.031**	**.639**	Gender	**.380**	**.767**	Gender	**.008**	**1.923**	-	-	-	-	-	-
Q2. Age (years)	**.690**	**.992**	Age	**.151**	**1.046**	Age	**.142**	**.943**	Age	**.783**	**.985**	Age	**.861**	**1.009**	Age	**.222**	**.971**
Q17. Locus of control (yes)	**.462**	**1.114**	LOC	**.510**	**.855**	LOC	**.382**	**1.319**	LOC	**.956**	**1.015**	LOC	**.830**	**.937**	LOC	**.715**	**1.065**
Q12. Childhood (ref village)	**.078**	-	Childhood	**.016**	-	Childhood	**.507**	-	Childhood	**.429**	-	Childhood	**.645**	-	Childhood	**.062**	-
Q12. Childhood small town	**.051**	**1.383**	Childhood(1)	**.014**	**1.904**	Childhood(1)	**.427**	**1.304**	Childhood(1)	**.456**	**1.290**	Childhood(1)	**.445**	**1.432**	Childhood(1)	**.094**	**1.352**
Q12. Childhood large town	**.028**	**1.412**	Childhood(2)	**.004**	**2.110**	Childhood(2)	**.860**	**.948**	Childhood(2)	**.198**	**1.494**	Childhood(2)	**.706**	**1.187**	Childhood(2)	**.019**	**1.490**
Q37. Migration = life enrichment (yes)	**.793**	**1.032**	Enrichment	**.051**	**1.441**	Enrichment	**.563**	**.868**	Enrichment	**.081**	**.638**	Enrichment	**.552**	**.864**	Enrichment	**.764**	**1.043**
Q37. Migration = consideration (yes)	**.105**	**1.212**	Consideration	**.621**	**.912**	Consideration	**.165**	**1.397**	Consideration	**.022**	**1.706**	Consideration	**.414**	**1.210**	Consideration	**.054**	**1.308**
Family																	
Q3. Civil Status (married)	**.881**	**.946**	CivilStat	**.590**	**.637**	CivilStat	**.721**	**1.397**	CivilStat	**.821**	**1.214**	CivilStat	**.898**	**.924**	CivilStat	**.954**	**.973**
Q4. Children (yes)	**.299**	**.752**	Children	**.121**	**.618**	Children	**.746**	**.728**	Children	**.524**	**.432**	Children	**.213**	**.451**	Children	**.577**	**.841**
Q6. Eldest (yes)	**.533**	**1.077**	Eldest	**.578**	**1.102**	Eldest	**.525**	**1.171**	Eldest	**.536**	**.853**	Eldest	**.934**	**1.020**	Eldest	**.565**	**1.082**
Q34. Fam. attitud/migration (ref neutral)	**.000**	-	FamAttit	**.000**	-	FamAttit	**.000**	-	FamAttit	**.002**	-	FamAttit	**.000**	-	FamAttit	**.000**	-
Q34. Fam. attitud/migration (encourage)	**.000**	**2.426**	FamAttit(1)	**.000**	**2.464**	FamAttit(1)	**.000**	**3.105**	FamAttit(1)	**.001**	**2.108**	FamAttit(1)	**.000**	**2.791**	FamAttit(1)	**.000**	**2.501**
Q34. Fam. attitud/migration (discourage)	**.224**	**1.435**	FamAttit(2)	**.049**	**2.732**	FamAttit(2)	**.564**	**1.403**	FamAttit(2)	**.578**	**.743**	FamAttit(2)	**.830**	**.874**	FamAttit(2)	**.108**	**1.736**
Economic/Material																	
Q8. Satisfaction/Resources (ref insufficient)	**.794**	-	SatisfResour	**.527**	-	SatisfResour	**.894**	-	SatisfResour	**.690**	-	SatisfResour	**.422**	-	SatisfResour	**.270**	-
Q8. Satisfaction/Resources (just sufficient)	**.614**	**1.066**	SatisfResour(1)	**.266**	**1.237**	SatisfResour(1)	**.855**	**.950**	SatisfResour(1)	**.607**	**1.144**	SatisfResour(1)	**.254**	**1.375**	SatisfResour(1)	**.268**	**1.174**
Q8. Satisfaction/Resources (more t. sufficient)	**.837**	**.965**	SatisfResour(2)	**.608**	**1.176**	SatisfResour(2)	**.636**	**.845**	SatisfResour(2)	**.785**	**.920**	SatisfResour(2)	**.236**	**1.442**	SatisfResour(2)	**.435**	**.840**
Q10. Economic situation improved (yes)	**.245**	**1.150**	ImprovEcon	**.729**	**1.064**	ImprovEcon	**.326**	**1.283**	ImprovEcon	**.396**	**1.237**	ImprovEcon	**.051**	**1.616**	ImprovEcon	**.502**	**1.099**
Sociocultural context																	
Q16. Religion (ref. Muslim)	**.261**	-	Religion	**.201**	-	Religion	**.889**	-	Religion	**.593**	-	Religion	**.148**	-	Religion	**.294**	-
Q16. Religion (without)	**.150**	**.649**	Religion(1)	**.225**	**.644**	Religion(1)	**.771**	**.712**	Religion(1)	**.312**	**2.556**	Religion(1)	**.119**	**.300**	Religion(1)	**.368**	**.744**
Q16. Religion (Christian)	**.756**	**1.060**	Religion(2)	**.852**	**1.055**	Religion(2)	**.708**	**1.282**	Religion(2)	**.784**	**1.122**	Religion(2)	**.407**	**1.250**	Religion(2)	**.262**	**1.190**
Q16. Religious majority (yes)	**.514**	**.881**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	ReligMaj	**.519**	**.794**	ReligMaj	**.528**	**.865**
Q16. Ethnic majority (yes)	**.175**	**1.188**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	EthnicMaj	**.255**	**.766**	EthnicMaj	**.345**	**1.153**
-	-	-	EthnicCI(ref Akan)	**.330**	-	EthnicNE (ref Hausa)	**.623**	-	EthnicSN (ref Wolof)	**.442**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	EthnicCI(Malinke/ Mande N.)	**.700**	**.901**	EthnicNE(Zarma Songhay))	**.730**	**1.094**	EthnicSN(Serere)	**.461**	**.769**	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	EthnicCI(Mande S.)	**.122**	**.574**	EthnicNE(Tuareg)	**.236**	**.401**	EthnicSN(Jola)	**.254**	**.554**	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	EthnicCI(Krou)	**.107**	**.694**	EthnicNE(Peul)	**.337**	**.584**	EthnicSN(Peul)	**.770**	**1.113**	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	EthnicCI(Gur)	**.417**	**.685**	EthnicNE (Other/Mixed)	**.905**	**.952**	EthnicSN(Toucouleur)	**.102**	**.560**	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	EthnicCI(Other/Mixed)	**.409**	**1.611**	-	-	-	EthnicSN(Lebou)	**.952**	**1.029**	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	EthnicSN (Other/Mixed)	**.512**	**1.263**	-	-	-	-	-	-

Whole sample	Sig.	Exp(B)	Côte d'ivoire	Sig.	Exp(B)	Niger	Sig.	Exp(B)	Senegal	Sig.	Exp(B)	Women	Sig.	Exp(B)	Men		
Political context																	
Q26. Confidence in the future (factor score)	**.006**	**.847**	ConfidFuture	**.111**	**.869**	ConfidFuture	**.242**	**.863**	ConfidFuture	**.046**	**.768**	ConfidFuture	**.000**	**.606**	ConfidFuture	**.039**	**.871**
Quality of life																	
Q26. Quality of life (factor score)	**.300**	**1.069**	QualLife	**.676**	**.961**	QualLife	**.193**	**1.202**	QualLife	**.096**	**1.254**	QualLife	**.010**	**1.380**	QualLife	**.135**	**1.112**
Q37. Mig. = Better quality of life (yes)	**.451**	**1.096**	BetterQLife	**.342**	**1.192**	BetterQLife	**.994**	**1.002**	BetterQLife	**.980**	**.994**	BetterQLife	**.041**	**1.721**	BetterQLife	**.836**	**.971**
Academic context																	
Q19. Discipl (ref Social sciences)	**.692**	-	Discipl	**.383**	-	Discipl	**.845**	-	Discipl	**.468**	-	Discipl	**.495**	-	Discipl	**.321**	-
Discipl (Economics)	**.266**	**1.232**	Discipl(1)	**.751**	**1.097**	Discipl(1)	**.889**	**1.063**	Discipl(1)	**.512**	**1.272**	Discipl(1)	**.396**	**1.372**	Discipl(1)	**.987**	**1.004**
Discipl (Humanities)	**.240**	**1.210**	Discipl(2)	**.526**	**1.171**	Discipl(2)	**.609**	**.745**	Discipl(2)	**.335**	**1.343**	Discipl(2)	**.932**	**1.028**	Discipl(2)	**.335**	**1.216**
Discipl (Medical/P harm.)	**.625**	**1.137**	Discipl(3)	**.095**	**.252**	Discipl(3)	**.427**	**.747**	-	-	-	Discipl(3)	**.582**	**.786**	Discipl(3)	**.156**	**.639**
Discipl (Technica/Natural sciences)	**.884**	**.974**	Discipl(4)	**.584**	**.854**	Discipl(4)	**.500**	**.783**	Discipl(4)	**.832**	**.927**	Discipl(4)	**.431**	**.700**	Discipl(4)	**.432**	**.852**
Discipl (Law)	**.401**	**1.158**	Discipl(5)	**.765**	**.921**	Discipl(5)	**.250**	**.638**	Discipl(5)	**.146**	**1.659**	Discipl(5)	**.277**	**.682**	Discipl(5)	**.904**	**.975**
Q21 Level of study (ref BAC)	**.095**	-	LevelStud	**.060**	-	LevelStud	**.011**	-	LevelStud	**.838**	-	LevelStud	**.128**	-	LevelStud	**.007**	-
Level of study (BA)	**.455**	**1.102**	LevelStud(1)	**.109**	**1.371**	LevelStud(1)	**.204**	**.706**	LevelStud(1)	**.857**	**.947**	LevelStud(1)	**.496**	**1.197**	LevelStud(1)	**.192**	**1.219**
Level of study (MA)	**.033**	**1.559**	LevelStud(2)	**.020**	**2.280**	LevelStud(2)	**.042**	**2.400**	LevelStud(2)	**.591**	**.794**	LevelStud(2)	**.045**	**2.417**	LevelStud(2)	**.002**	**2.086**
Q22. LostYears (yes)	**.641**	**1.056**	LostYears	**.310**	**1.192**	LostYears	**.436**	**.826**	LostYears	**.582**	**1.147**	LostYears	**.032**	**.552**	LostYears	**.251**	**1.165**
Q18. Satisf. teaching (yes)	**.718**	**.956**	SatisfTeachng	**.212**	**.793**	SatisfTeachng	**.350**	**1.301**	SatisfTeachng	**.367**	**1.265**	SatisfTeachng	**.781**	**1.076**	SatisfTeachng	**.521**	**.912**
Q18. Satisf. relat. prof. (yes)	**.091**	**1.238**	SatisfProf	**.066**	**1.391**	SatisfProf	**.404**	**1.271**	SatisfProf	**.841**	**.947**	SatisfProf	**.295**	**1.328**	SatisfProf	**.342**	**1.148**
Q18. Satisfs. discipline (yes)	**.625**	**1.076**	SatifsDisc	**.664**	**1.087**	SatifsDisc	**.364**	**.715**	SatifsDisc	**.126**	**1.850**	SatifsDisc	**.784**	**.914**	SatifsDisc	**.458**	**1.138**
Q18. Satisf. equality (yes)	**.412**	**1.107**	Equality	**.155**	**1.286**	Equality	**.409**	**1.251**	Equality	**.129**	**.661**	Equality	**.904**	**1.036**	Equality	**.465**	**1.107**
Q18. Satisf. resource of the faculty (yes)	**.845**	**.974**	SatResFac	**.714**	**1.091**	SatResFac	**.891**	**1.039**	SatResFac	**.282**	**.775**	SatResFac	**.862**	**.958**	SatResFac	**.675**	**1.070**
Q18. Satisf opport. PhD (yes)	**.666**	**.945**	OpportPhD	**.388**	**.838**	OpportPhD	**.797**	**.924**	OpportPhD	**.762**	**1.078**	OpportPhD	**.100**	**1.536**	OpportPhD	**.179**	**.806**
Q18. Satisf. no obstacles (yes)	**.574**	**1.076**	NoObstacles	**.602**	**.898**	NoObstacles	**.727**	**1.103**	NoObstacles	**.120**	**1.480**	NoObstacles	**.500**	**.836**	NoObstacles	**.249**	**1.191**
Q37. Mig. = recognition (yes)	**.748**	**1.039**	Recognition	**.469**	**.880**	Recognition	**.019**	**1.785**	Recognition	**.575**	**.871**	Recognition	**.463**	**.838**	Recognition	**.356**	**1.136**
Q37. Mig. = betterDipl (yes)	**.015**	**1.326**	BetterDipl	**.254**	**1.237**	BetterDipl	**.198**	**1.342**	BetterDipl	**.027**	**1.649**	BetterDipl	**.058**	**1.539**	BetterDipl	**.061**	**1.292**
Networks & Transnational connections																	
Q27. Stayed abroad (yes)	**.078**	**1.256**	StayedAbrd	**.402**	**1.219**	StayedAbrd	**.193**	**1.356**	StayedAbrd	**.523**	**1.172**	StayedAbrd	**.119**	**1.488**	StayedAbrd	**.709**	**1.058**
Q36. Transnational links (yes)	**.011**	**1.467**	TransnatInk	**.197**	**1.382**	TransnatInk	**.433**	**1.244**	TransnatInk	**.010**	**2.191**	TransnatInk	**.083**	**1.825**	TransnatInk	**.078**	**1.348**
Q14. Family network (yes)	**.000**	**1.600**	FamilyNetwk	**.003**	**1.680**	FamilyNetwk	**.189**	**1.486**	FamilyNetwk	**.074**	**1.822**	FamilyNetwk	**.020**	**2.095**	FamilyNetwk	**.001**	**1.583**
Q14. Friends network (yes)	**.146**	**1.180**	FriendsNetwk	**.264**	**1.218**	FriendsNetwk	**.595**	**1.132**	FriendsNetwk	**.804**	**.945**	FriendsNetwk	**.161**	**1.382**	FriendsNetwk	**.506**	**1.092**
Constant	**.000**	**.027**	Constant	**.000**	**.008**	Constant	**.044**	**.101**	Constant	**.016**	**.029**	Constant	**.002**	**.015**	Constant	**.000**	**.046**

Results

A first important result of our analysis is that—although we controlled for contextual variables—migration intentions differ strongly among our three countries, which were included in the model as dummy variables. While in Côte d'Ivoire 16% of the students have migration intentions, the Exp(B) of 0.588 shows that—all other variables being set at mean level—the percentage of candidates for migration would be 10% for a group of students in Niger and 23% in Senegal (Exp(B) = 1.555). This difference points toward national specificities that have not been captured by our model. For Niger, the qualitative interviews with students and experts point to the low level of general development[42] and the geographical enclosure of the country, both of which preclude international connections, while the opposite is true for Senegal. Senegalese students also gave the impression that they were especially confident regarding their opportunities for moving abroad, thanks to the reputation of their university. The specific situation of Côte d'Ivoire, with a civil war that led to a closure of the country, and a history of immigration rather than emigration, as two strong factors that would tend to inhibit (e)migration but, on the other hand, a domestic situation of political turmoil that might act as a push factor to encourage (e)migration, might explain that country's middle position.

The academic context

A first and very interesting result here is the absence of any link between a student's field of study and intentions to emigrate. In comparison with social science students, neither economists nor lawyers nor medical or natural science students appear significantly more, or less, prone to migration. This result points to the very individual nature of the factors that affect the inclination toward migration. Losing years of study when those years are invalidated ("années blanches") could also be assumed to be a factor leading to dissatisfaction and an incentive to leave the country, but this does not turn out to be the case. On the contrary, for women at least, lost years seem to significantly *decrease* the propensity to emigrate (from 22% to 13%). This result points to the importance of life-cycle planning in an academic career, which is differentiated by gender: for women, the prospect of completing a foreign diploma when they are older may be incompatible with plans for marriage and building a family.

Of the set of seven variables used to depict the satisfaction of students with their studies, the only variable that affects migration intentions, though even this one does not play a very significant role, is the rating of the quality of the student's relations with the teaching staff. This variable has a counterintuitive impact, in the sense that the students who report good relations with their teachers have a higher propensity to emigrate. (This effect shows up most clearly in Côte d'Ivoire.) The hypothesis can be launched that professors encourage the students with whom they have the best rapport to pursue their studies abroad, or that good relations with teachers constitute a stimulus to go on studying at a higher level (abroad). Good relations could also be conceived as a kind of specific social capital favourable to migration. A low level of interest in the discipline, dissatisfaction with the resources available in the department or university, issues of access to PhD opportunities, obstacles to the progression of studies and the situation regarding equal opportunities (especially between men and women) have no push impact. Although 23% of all women students appear dissatisfied with the level of equality, they are not keener to emigrate than those who are satisfied with the level of equality.

On the whole, then, it appears that the equivocal character of the relation between the academic context and migration intentions, already pointed out in our hypothesis, prevents our results on that topic from showing any clear patterns. The only link between migration intentions and the academic context that is clearly confirmed involves students who consider the chances of obtaining a more valuable degree to be higher outside of the country. These students, as one would expect, are more often planning to emigrate, although the difference remains limited (14 to 18%).[43]

Individual and psychological dimensions

Gender, surprisingly, plays no role at the aggregate level or in Niger, but Senegalese women show a markedly higher level of migration intentions than do men (42% versus 27%[44]), whereas the contrary is true in Côte d'Ivoire (11% versus 17%). The interview results in Senegal show that women students have a higher level of confidence in their chances of getting high-level jobs at home if they have first acquired international experience. The fact is that there are several visible examples of such successful women's careers in Senegal, which might act as a stimulus.

Age plays no role, but it must be remembered that this attribute has limited variability among students. The level of education already acquired appears to be a much more important factor, with MA students significantly keener to emigrate. This result can be related to the limited opportunities for pursuing PhD studies at home. The only exception to the correlation between emigration intentions and the level of education achieved is Senegal, but this country, notably, offers better opportunities for completing a PhD.

Attitudes toward one's ability to control one's own life (locus of control), the idea that migration can be an enrichment in itself, or the belief that it will confer prestige on returning émigrés, do not play a role in migration intentions at the aggregate level. There are no exceptions at the country level to this general conclusion with respect to the locus of control, but students in Côte d'Ivoire seem more sensitive to the life-enrichment argument (migration intentions go up from 13% to 17% among those who agree) and students in Senegal to the idea that return from migration brings prestige (29% to 41%); this last point is also true, to a moderately significant extent, for men in general. Counterintuitively, there seems to be a (not very significant) tendency for migration candidates in Senegal to dismiss the idea that migration could be a life enrichment, perhaps reflecting a more utilitarian and realistic view of migration.

On the basis of spatial capital theories, one might think that having migrated from the countryside or from a small town could represent a first migration experience that would have a positive impact on intentions to move further, but that turns out to be very clearly not the case. On the contrary, having had an urban childhood in a large town (and this effect is strongest in Côte d'Ivoire) increases the intention to emigrate. It seems here that an early confrontation with “modernity” increases migration aspirations, whereas having already successfully migrated from the countryside brings enough change so as not to induce subsequent aspirations to move.

The family dimension

Being married, having children, being the eldest son or daughter or being the only child might be assumed to hinder intentions to migrate because of the responsibilities to the rest of the family implied by such positions within a family, but this is not the case among our students. Only a minority has actual family responsibilities and—maybe because of their relative

youth—these students do not seem to feel a specific burden preventing them from formulating migration intentions. By contrast, intra-familial relations, especially the attitude of the family toward migration, appear as the strongest factor in the family dimension differentiating candidates for migration from noncandidates. Overall, 26% of the students who report encouragement from their family intend to migrate, versus 12% of those whose family remains neutral. This impact is manifest for men as well as for women in all three countries, with the greatest effect shown in Niger.[45] This result is fully in line with existing empirical studies and confirms the central role that must be given to the family's attitude in the understanding of the migration decision in general (Kok 2010) and more specifically of student migration (Cairns and Smyth 2009: 10; Pimpa 2005).

Networks and transnational connections

An important feature of our study was its ability to differentiate between types of networks abroad that might affect migration intentions as well as to measure the impact of past moves on future intentions to migrate. This part of our analysis leads to some of the most interesting results regarding migration theory. It first confirms that a family network has a very significant impact on migration intentions, increasing them from 11% to 16%. This impact is even stronger for women, who might be more dependent on external help to consider migration. Furthermore, having spent time abroad has a positive, though not very significant, stimulating impact, while having friends abroad plays an even weaker role. The "transnational attitude" was measured by one single indicator that attempted to identify students for whom NTIC facilitate migration. Agreeing with this opinion (that NTIC facilitate migration) is, at the level of the whole sample, positively linked to migration intentions. The correlation is actually mainly due to the case of Senegal, where NTIC are more widely accessible and where a clear link exists between transnational attitude and migration intentions (20% to 35%).

These general results confirm that the building of spatial capital constituted by networks abroad, knowledge of migration due to past experiences and mastery of distance-bridging technologies are all associated with a stronger commitment to migration. It would nevertheless be going too far to say that migration itself constitutes a self-reinforcing mechanism: students who have migrated from the countryside or from small towns,

counterintuitively, manifest a lower level of intentions to migrate further; they seem to have already reached their target.

The sociocultural context

Neither religious affiliation nor belonging to a religious majority or minority has an impact on a student's intentions to leave. Nor does belonging to a specific ethnic group or to an ethnic majority or minority.[46] In our current context, in which religion and ethnicity are often considered to be inescapable realities that hold the explanatory keys to the world's geopolitics and social processes, this result is well worth noting. This is all the more the case in Africa, where the ethnic lens has been the toolkit of the Western gaze for several centuries. Our results strongly contrast with the very significant ethnic differences observed by Agadjanian et al. (2008), also regarding the migration intentions of young people, but in the very different context of Kyrgyzstan. They are however coherent with the results of Ndione who finds no correlation between migration behaviour and ethnicity in Senegal (Ndione 2008). He explains this by the fact that migration behaviours, which were specific to certain cultural groups in the past, are characteristic today of a larger proportion of the whole population. At the same time, one must admit that our religious and ethnic indicators remained limited. We were, for example, unable to measure variations in the *intensity* of religious practices or ethnic affiliations.

The economic dimension

The self-described economic situation of the students shows no impact on their migration intentions. This result contradicts a very basic assumption that the most deprived students would have the highest incentive to leave because of the prospect of improving their economic situation.[47] In fact, although one half of the students do indeed think that they could improve their economic situation by moving abroad, this opinion has no practical consequences, as this group of students shows no stronger migration intentions than the others.[48] The opinion that competencies are better recognized outside of the country also fails to generate significantly more migration intentions except, very modestly, in Niger where agreement with the opinion about better recognition raises the propensity toward migration from 8 to 14%. The explanation of these results seems to lie in the temporary character of most migration intentions. Most students plan to return home and want to acquire a foreign degree for that sole purpose. Economic prospects abroad are thus not a central concern. This

result also testifies to a fairly high level of lucidity regarding the economic prospects abroad. Students are fairly well aware that migration is costly and those whose economic situation at home is the worst know that they cannot afford to move. The attitudes are more differentiated among those who enjoy better financial means; there, some admit to being attracted by opportunities abroad but, as also becomes clear in in-depth interviews, those students have no illusions either and are fairly well informed about the financial risks associated with migration.

Quality of life and confidence in the future

As mentioned in our section on methodology, above, a factor analysis was used to synthesize the students' appreciation of the quality of life and the national socioeconomic context along two independent dimensions. The hypothesis that dissatisfaction regarding the quality of life might lead individuals to plan to leave the country is clearly rejected. In the case of women, the relation is even contradictory and an improvement of one standard deviation in the factor "quality of life" leads to an *increase,* from 19% to 25%, in the inclination to emigrate. This counterintuitive result also holds true, but to a lesser extent, for the whole population (male and female students) in Senegal. It might indicate that the migration intentions of students have more to do with a proactive project than with a flight from unsatisfactory living conditions.

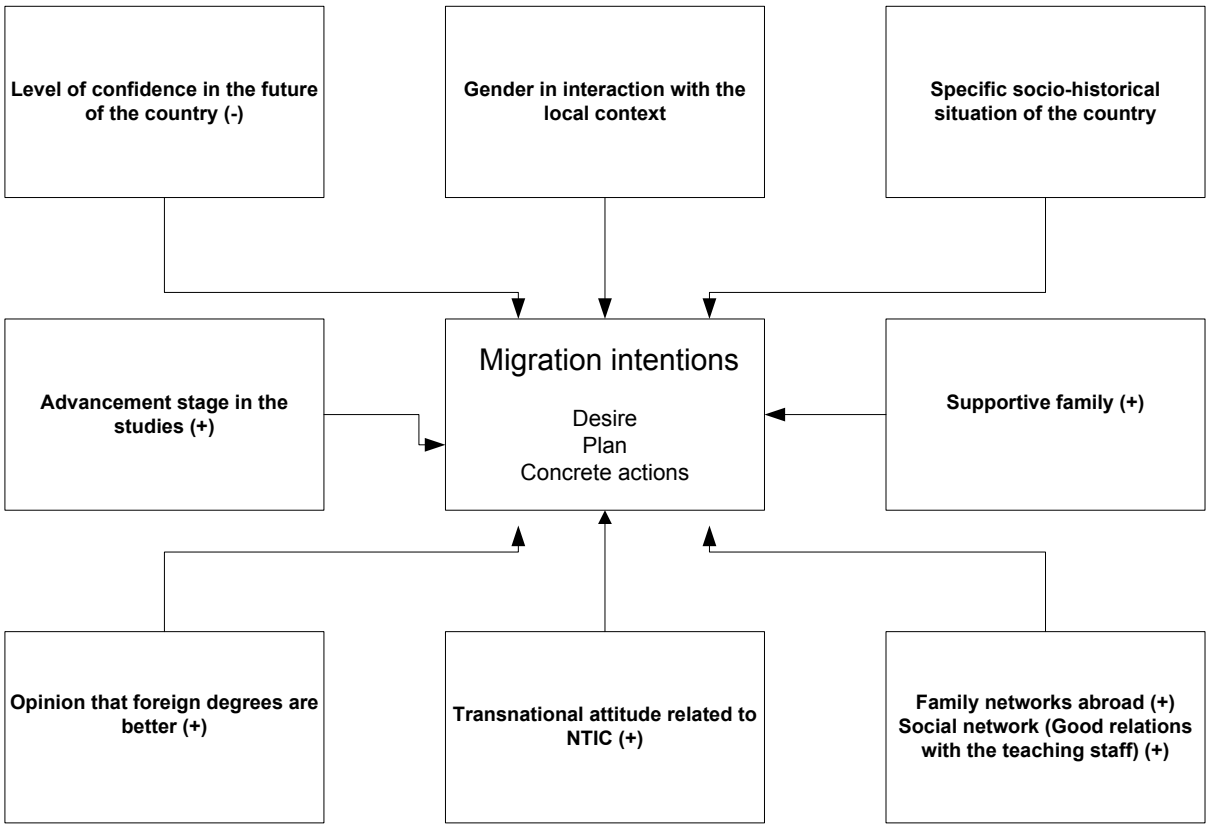
Dissatisfaction alone is not enough, and those who want to leave think about the future improvements that it might bring them rather than about their present situation. Confidence in the future seems to play a more substantial role, as the results in the second factor testify: a decrease of one standard deviation in the confidence index leads to a modest but statistically significant increase, from 17% to 19%, in intentions to emigrate. This impact is, again, stronger among women (25% versus 19% for men) and in Senegal (38% versus 32%).

Quality of life does not play a role as a pull factor, either, and the minority of students who consider living conditions outside of the country to be more favourable do not manifest a higher level of intentions to emigrate. Migration is lucidly seen as a process that, although it might bring some good upon return, remains harsh and demanding during the stay abroad.

The picture that emerges from these results is that of migration intentions on the part of people who, in certain cases, do not rate their quality of life as particularly low, but are not confident in the future prospects of their country. Planning to emigrate has thus more to do with a proactive strategy, of improving what is currently going rather well but might get worse, than with a reactive strategy toward existing push or pull factors.

Conclusions

A new explanatory framework emerges from our empirical results and is synthesized in Figure 2. It reveals that in the case of West African students, the migration intentions are linked not so much to current dissatisfaction with the socioeconomic and political situation as they are to the level of confidence in the future of the national economy and political institutions. This is coherent with our descriptive results, which show a high propensity among students to consider migration as a temporary move that might improve their situation upon return through the acquisition of a valuable foreign degree. Although many families remain fairly neutral and do not try to influence students regarding their migration, the family dimension emerges as a strong decisive factor in stimulating or discouraging migration: a supportive family at home is for many a precondition for considering migration, and a familial network outside of the country is characteristic of those most resolved to emigrate. Although a systematic test of the different theoretical propositions that were used to build our framework of hypotheses was not the aim of this paper, we will conclude by looking at how well they work when set next to our results.



The neoclassical school, focused on earning differentials, clearly doesn't find much echo in the case of African student migration. The most deprived are not the ones who feel the strongest incentive to migrate. This point also holds true at the country level, as the poorest country in our study—Niger—has the lowest proportion of students intending to emigrate, whereas Senegal—the richest of our three countries—has the highest. Even those students who do believe that migration could improve their economic situation are no more likely, because of that belief, to intend such a move. Seen as an enlargement of the neoclassical framework, the "new economics of labour migration" appears more relevant for interpreting our case: its emphasis on the centrality of the familial household as a unit of reference for migration intentions is largely corroborated by our results.

Behaviourist geographers, as well as Lee's push-pull model, broadened the scope of the neoclassical theory by stressing the importance of subjective perceptions of the quality of life at home, among other factors, as central for explaining migration.[49] Although it might seem all too obvious that dissatisfied people are the most prone to consider leaving their country, this is not confirmed by our results. In certain cases the relation is even inverted, looking as though the more satisfied students and, the more ambitious and enthusiastic are actually those for whom migration offers the highest attraction. Likewise, in somewhat symmetrical

findings, the prospect of an improved quality of life abroad doesn't act as a pull factor. Even students who share the opinion that an improvement would be made possible by emigrating do not show stronger actual intentions of migration. This counterintuitive result might be linked to the already mentioned fact that most students see migration as a temporary move. It might also be explained by the distinction that emerges from our results between satisfaction at the time of the study, which plays no role toward migration, and prospects for the future which, if unpromising, appear to significantly increase the desire to leave the country. This "lagged" apprehension of the situation is rarely mentioned in existing theories of migration. It should definitely be kept in mind for future empirical research and theorization.

For a test of the life-cycle approach to migration our population of students is not the most relevant, as they are all at approximately the same stage of life, between childhood on the one hand and professional activity and family building on the other. It is therefore not very surprising that neither age nor family status contributes to migration intentions for the respondents in our study, but it is interesting to notice that the level of education they have already achieved (i.e. where they are in their studies) does have a clear positive impact. These results underline that a person's relative advancement in the life-stage (here, having or not acquired a diploma) appears more relevant than her biological age.

The human capital approach is highly relevant in our case: students clearly see migration much more as a way to improve their status upon return, or in other words as a way to increase their capital, than as a way to get a better return on their existing knowledge by finding a job abroad. This is illustrated by the fact that while, on the whole, students who think they could improve their situation abroad do not show a higher propensity to leave, those who consider foreign degrees to be more valuable than domestic ones clearly do. It remains surprising to us, with respect to the human capital approach, that the field of study plays no role whatsoever in increasing or reducing migration intentions. This contradicts the hypothesis that a foreign degree might be more valuable in some disciplines, such as economics or medicine, than in others, such as the social sciences or humanities. A possible explanation emerges from the qualitative interviews: the value of a foreign degree appears to be more of a symbolic asset—allowing entry to *any* profession, including, for a large proportion of the students, the public sector—than it is the certification of specific competencies related to a particular discipline.

Although the social psychology framework appears useful for interpreting the motivations stated by the student and allows them to be linked with personal development and materialism rather than self-preservation or a quest for security, individual characteristics and traits of personality such as the locus of control seem to play no role in migration intentions in our study. Individual biography, on the other hand, seems quite important in shaping future attitudes: the fact of having already had an international migration experience, for example, leads to an increase in migration intentions, which also sustains the hypothesis that knowing how to move is a form of capital facilitating further migration. Our results also allow for differentiation within the classic network hypothesis: First, we show that networks do indeed have an impact, not only on actual migratory moves, as is already well known, but also on migration intentions.[50] Second, we show that, if family networks and the fact of having already had one's own personal migration experience play an important role in stimulating migration intentions, having friends abroad has a less sensitive impact. If one qualifies the family network as stronger than other networks, this reveals an interesting "strength of strong ties" phenomenon. One hypothesis could be that family networks already play a role at the early stage at which migration intentions are formed, whereas weaker networks play a role at a later stage. Specific domestic networks also appear to play a role, as positive relations between students and university staff foster migration intentions.

The only aspect of globalization theories that we were able to test also finds support in our results, namely that NTIC are considered by those who wish to emigrate as an important tool for reducing the social disconnection implied by migration. The gender dimension of migration that is often mentioned in that context also appears especially relevant. On the one hand, a simple differentiation between men and women doesn't follow the stereotype that women are systematically less prone to emigrate—in one country, indeed, they have a much higher level of migration intentions than men—but on the other hand, gender appears to interact with other factors in a specific way, as exemplified by the fact that for women a lost year of study decreases the inclination to emigrate, as it makes it more difficult to combine the timetable of studies abroad with the timetables of family formation and reproduction at home.

The general picture that emerges from our research contrasts strongly with the

stereotypical idea that the sole dream of young Africans is to migrate to Western countries because they are pushed by dissatisfaction at home and lured by the lights of imaginary paradises. The migration intentions invoked by the thousands of students that we have interviewed appear, on the contrary, mainly motivated by their quite rational awareness of the possibilities offered by migration. Most students wish to leave only temporarily, in order to improve their human capital and to acquire degrees abroad which, partly thanks to the symbolism attached to them, will be efficiently valued on the domestic labour market. But formulating a migration project remains a luxury; those who can afford to do so tend to be wealthier and have a higher level of social capital. Among those who talked to us about their dreams, only a minority will actually have the privilege of studying abroad. In the global market for talent that is currently emerging, African students might not hold the best cards. They have not benefited from the most efficient initial teaching. Due to financial constraints and restrictive immigration policies, the road to higher studies is currently restricted to a lucky few. Although the aim of our study was not to design new policies for improving the link between development and migration, the (partly unexpected) conclusions that we have drawn clearly point toward possible improvements in the way universities could collaborate to offer interesting courses of study to these potentially circulating elites.

[1] Among recent exceptions, one can mention, in Africa, Prinz (Prinz 2005) on Tanzanian students' migration imagery, Schoorl (2000) and van Dalen (2005) on migration intentions in Ghana, Morocco, Senegal and Egypt, and Gubhaju and Jong (Gubhaju and De Jong 2009) on South Africa. In other parts of the world: see Agadjanian (2008) on intentions to migrate among young people in Kyrgyzstan, Yang on the Hubei province of China (2000), Hadler (2006) on European countries, van Dalen (2007) on the Netherlands, Tartarovsky and Schwartz (Tartarovsky and Schwartz 2001) on Russia, Šmigelskas on Lithuania (2007) and Frieze (2004) on Central and Eastern European university students.

[2] One can note that this is an old argument which to a certain extent follows a disciplinary line between economists—who often trust only in revealed preferences—and the other social sciences, which give more attention to the meaning given by people to their actions and to the ways in which they make their decisions.

[3] A clear distinction has to be made here between the aim of using migration intentions as a proxy for quantitatively estimating actual behaviour—a risky and imprecise extrapolation (Bahna 2008)—and our aim of studying the rationale behind intentions in order to better understand the whole migration process.

[4] A point already made by Stouffer (Stouffer 1940; 1960).

[5] Wolpert uses the concept of "place utility".

[6] Spatial capital can be defined, by analogy with the concept of motility used in mobility studies, as the combination, at the individual level, of the level of *access* to mobility, the level of *competences* regarding mobility and the level of motivation (*appropriation*) (Flamm and Kaufmann 2006).

[7] As stated by Davis (2001: 10): "(…) social norms regarding gender roles play an important role in promoting or hindering migration by females and males. The patriarchal family system accepts and foments male migration, but hinders female migration. Fathers are more likely to resist the migration of daughters, and husbands the accompaniment of their wives and children, even years after first leaving home".

[8] The questionnaire was handed out to students at selected entry points on the way to each campus (or, in the case of Senegal, in the students' apartments). Those who agreed to answer received a pen as well as a writing pad. The questionnaire was self-administered but students had the opportunity to get help in case of doubt. The general methodology used to design the questionnaire is based on (Bilsborrow et al. 1984); the specific distribution/collection setting is based on (Besson and Poli 2009).

[9] These differences can be explained by the setting of the distribution and the size of the universities. In Côte d'Ivoire, because of the huge size of the campus (54,000 students), the questionnaire was handed out to students entering the campus and they were asked to give it back immediately. In Senegal (5000 students) the questionnaire was handed out and collected directly in students' apartments. In Niger (10,000 students) the questionnaire was handed out at entry points to the campus with the opportunity to give it back later.

[10] For a complete discussion of each national case see the national and synthesis reports (in French) available at www.snis.ch.

[11] "Si vous en aviez la possibilité, souhaiteriez-vous résider dans un avenir plus ou moins proche à l'étranger ?" / "If you had the opportunity, would you like to live abroad in the near future or later on?" We used a scale of five items ranked "not at all", "not really", "to some extent", "very much", "enormously". It was recoded into a dichotomous variable "No" (1/2) – "Yes" (3/4/5).

[12] The existence or not of a migration plan was captured through the question "Avez-vous le projet précis d'aller vivre à l'étranger?"/ "Do you have a precise plan to go live abroad?" and the answers were coded Yes or No.

[13] Information on the Internet 15%; requesting matriculation at a university 13%; requests from an embassy: information 6%, visa 3%; solicitation of a recommendation from a professor 2%; contacting an emigration agency 2%.

[14] A similar distinction is made by Agadjanian (2008: 629) and by (van Dalen et al. 2005: 755).

[15] The choice to simplify the analysis by considering this binary choice has been confirmed by a comparison of the results with alternate models using either other binary variables or ranked multivariate indicators. Any gain in quality of prediction was marginal and the list of significant independent variables remained fairly stable.

[16] See Findlay (2010) for a recent overview.

[17] Satisfaction with the quality of teaching, satisfaction with relations with the teaching staff, interest in the discipline studied, satisfaction with the "equality of opportunity" (for example between men and women), satisfaction with the resources of the department or university (computers, library, classrooms, etc.), satisfaction with PhD opportunities, satisfaction with the opportunities for pursuing studies without obstacles or delay. We

used a scale of 5 levels from very unsatisfied to very satisfied, recoded to a binary variable:1= very unsatisfied/unsatisfied, 2=fairly satisfied/satisfied/very satisfied.

[18] This can be attributed to the fact that in certain disciplines and universities, this possibility doesn't exist at all.

[19] Surprisingly, there are significantly more women (78%) than men (64%) who are satisfied on that point (nb. the statistical significance of bivariate differences has been tested using nonparametric tests; Chi-square, Kruskal-Wallis or Mann-Whitney). This might point toward the special situation of women students who, having already overcome several barriers to equality, seem to enjoy a rather favourable position among university students, a point mentioned several times in the qualitative interviews.

[20] The percentage of students who had children was not significantly different for women and for men.

[21] Students from Niger were the most likely to have had such a foreign experience (40%), followed by the Senegalese (25%) and then the Ivoirians (11%).

[22] Cousin(s):41%, uncle(s)/aunt(s):39%, brother(s)/sister(s):23%, father/mother:5%, husband/wife:1%, child(ren):0.4%.

[23] Students from Senegal were the most likely to have such a contact abroad (90%), followed by the Nigerians (80%) and then the Ivorians (58%).

[24] The majority of the population in Niger and Senegal is Muslim. The situation in Côte d'Ivoire is less clear. Christians are clearly a majority in the south and among dominant ruling groups, but Muslims are numerically dominant if one includes the north of the country, which was separated from the south during the civil war. On that basis, we consider Christians to be the majority in Côte d'Ivoire in our analysis; they form 73% of the students in our sample from that country (15% are Muslims and 12% nonpracticing). Nonpracticing individuals were considered as members of a religious minority.

[25] Group considered dominant and/or majority: Niger:Hausa and Zarma Songhay, Senegal: Wolof and Serer, Côte d'Ivoire: Akan and Krou.

[26] No significant difference appears among the three countries.

[27] Confidence in the political future shows important inter-country differences, with students in Côte d'Ivoire much more satisfied (63% as against about 42% in Niger and Senegal). This situation can be explained by the post-civil war transition period that coincided with our study. Students in Côte d'Ivoire nevertheless remain very critical regarding human rights, with only 37% rating that situation "medium to excellent" as against 54% in Niger and 77% in Senegal.

[28] There was no significant difference between women and men regarding this question. The situation was rated best in Senegal (76% medium to excellent), followed by the two other countries at about 60%.

[29] This indicator was recoded in order to take national purchasing power into account: a score of 1 (low level of expenses) was attributed to the 33% of responses with the lowest levels of expenses for each country, respectively, and 2 (medium) and 3 (high) for the other two thirds.

[30] The feeling of improvement is much stronger in Niger (47%), whereas in Côte d'Ivoire only 21% share this feeling.

[31] The inter-country differences remained limited here, with 70% satisfaction in Côte d'Ivoire, 64% in Niger and 84% in Senegal.

[32] The housing and environmental conditions were rated much higher in Senegal, where students benefit from a campus situated outside of the city.

[33] At the same time, it must be remembered that some of the most privileged students might not be in our sample in the first place, as they might do all their studies abroad.

[34] This comparison cannot be systematic because our surveys were not addressed to populations other than students, but the comparison can be made indirectly by looking at overall country reports such as UNDP's Human development report and at more specific migration reports from individual countries such as the one recently published by IOM (International Organization for Migration) on Niger, Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire (Hamidou 2009).

[35] The survey included the question "Would you be ready to leave illegally?" / "Seriez-vous disposé à partir illégalement?"

[36] Principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation. Factor 1 explains 30% and factor 2 13% of the variance.

[37] It appeared from bivariate analysis that the objective variable "level of expenses"—although not very highly correlated with the subjective indicators—was significantly correlated with two other variables:how advanced in his or her studies a student was, on the one hand, and where he or she had lived in childhood, on the other (those two variables not being themselves significantly correlated). The "level of expenses" indicator also counted a high percentage of missing values (>10%). The two subjective indicators "material situation" and "improvement in material situation" were themselves significantly correlated. In order to avoid redundancies, the material situation was thus rated only with the subjective indicator expressing the satisfaction of the students. The second subjective indicator, the improvement in material situation, was dropped due to its stronger correlation with another variable: the rating of the economic prospects of the country.

[38] If one group (for example younger students) systematically refuses one specific question, the whole result of the analysis will be biased.

[39] This procedure considers missing value as a modality of each variable and checks the correlation of this modality with all other variables in the sample.

[40] The highest frequency of missing values (10.5%) concerns—as might be expected—the question about weekly expenditures (that was dropped from analysis anyway) and the second highest (6.4%) the locus of control question ("Do you believe that your actions can have an influence on your life ?"). In the debriefings of the students after the questionnaire some reported difficulties in understanding the meaning of that question, but the variable was kept in the analysis due to its theoretical relevance.

[41] The model's pseudo R-square is 9.8% (Cox & Snell), resp. 16.1% (Nagelkerke), and 82.5% of the observations regarding the dependent variable are correctly predicted.

[42] According to the Human Development Index 2010, Niger ranks 167, Côte d'Ivoire 149 and Senegal 144. http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/ consulted on Jan. 11th 2011.

[43] In Niger and to a lesser extent in Côte d'Ivoire, many students appeared rather proud of the domestic degrees.

[44] In the following results we display the difference in the percentage of individuals expressing migration intentions corresponding to a change in the independent variable—here gender—considering all other variables as equal to the mean.

[45] There is also a positive though nonsignificant relation between a discouraging attitude on the part of the family and migration intentions on the part of the student. The positive direction of this relation might look surprising, but the explanation seems to lie in a bias leading migration candidates to be more prone than noncandidates to noticing or experiencing disapproval from their family. It might also be linked to the fact that students who report negative relations within their families more often also report a discouraging attitude from the family. The push factor of the negative relations might in this case annihilate the pull factor of the discouraging attitude.

[46] The only specific national cultural groups that are slightly less prone to expressing migration intentions are the Mande South (p=0.12) and the Krou (p=0.11) in Côte d'Ivoire—a situation that could be linked to advantageous career prospects in the public sector for these groups, due to their connection with those currently in power at the time of the study—and the Toucouleur (p=0.1) who enjoy, to a certain extent, a similar situation in Senegal.

[47] Exploratory models using the level of expenditures in the week preceding the interview even show that students with the lowest level of expenses have a significantly *lower* propensity to plan migration.

[48] One can note an exception among women:21% of women who agree with the possibility of an improvement abroad display migration intentions, versus 14% among those who do not agree.

[49] Behaviourists also stressed the limited availability of information for potential migrants. Although this precise point was hard to include in the quantitative part of our analysis, the qualitative interviews show that students were not unaware of the risks associated with migration and pretty well informed about the (un-)availability of opportunities abroad.

[50] The question of whether this impact remains less strong at this stage of the migration project, as stated by van Dalen (2005), was not addressed here due to the lack of information on actual migration decisions in similar contexts.

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