

This paper addresses the drivers of migration intentions amongst francophone West African university students. We use an original dataset collected from more than 4000 students in Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, and Senegal. Multivariate methods allow us to link the intention to migrate with the characteristics of students, with their opinion regarding mobility as well as with the perceived situation of their country of origin. We analyze intervening factors such as ethnicity, financial resources, past migration history, and social networks, and put the results into perspective with migration theory. Our results show that migration intentions are complex processes: the national context plays a role, but family support and networks are important. Generally, only a minority of students wish to leave and then only temporarily, to improve their human capital upon return.