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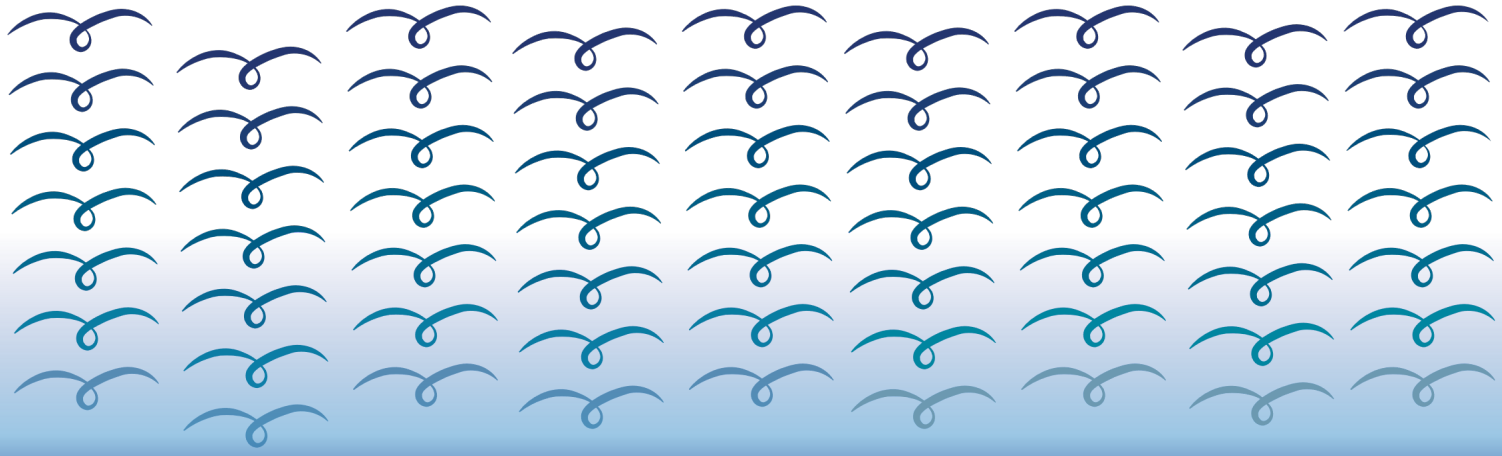

‘Mali is my Eldorado’

The effectiveness of EU-funded information campaigns on migration

Fransje Molenaar and Jean-Luc Jucker

ADMIGOV Paper related to Deliverable 6.4

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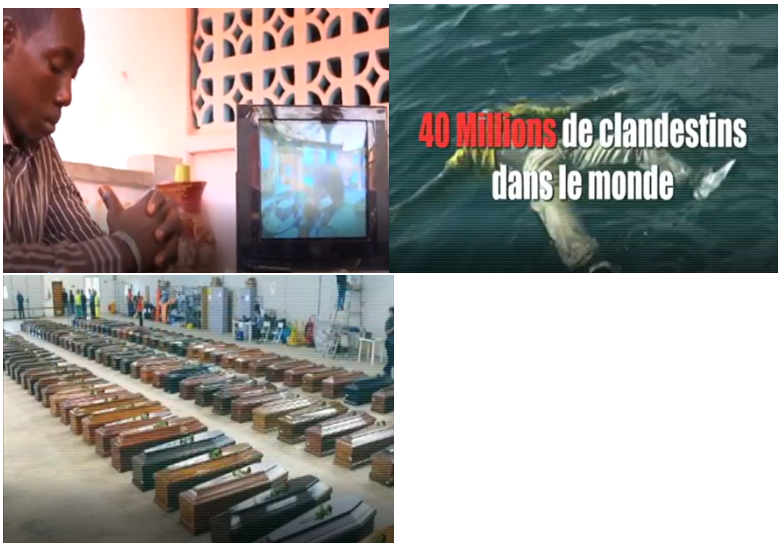
Abstract

Information campaigns have become an important tool that the European Union (EU) and its member states employ and fund to halt irregular migration. Little is known, however, about the effectiveness of these campaigns. This study uses a video financed by the EU, which has been broadcast in Mali, to study whether this clearly recognizable EU information tool is trusted by those who see it, whether it changes people's risk perceptions, and what the effect is of these changed risk perceptions on the likelihood that people will (continue to) migrate. Based on surveys with 584 respondents in Mali, comprising Malian residents without a migration history, Malian returned migrants, and West African transit migrants, we conclude that higher risk perceptions after seeing the video do indeed translate into a lower likelihood of (continued) migration. This is only the case, however, when Malian returned migrants (who, our analysis shows are more susceptible to the video's message) are included in the sample. We also find that the video fails to increase risk perceptions in those groups that are most likely to migrate to begin with, such as youth and respondents who are unsatisfied with their lives. Importantly, and confirming suggestions in the academic literature, respondents with migration aspirations and more extensive diaspora networks report significantly lower trust in the video – which is a key factor explaining the degree to which respondents change their risk perceptions after having seen the video.

Source: Projet Migration EUTF MALI UE-MME-AECID 2019

Introduction

A Malian family sits around the television – watching a scene in which rescue workers bring on land the corpses of migrants that perished at sea when their boat caught fire. 'You see', a solemn father figure in traditional Malian garb says to his teenage son, while putting down his tea glass, 'this is why I don't want you to embark upon a clandestine migration journey.' He is seconded by a young man, who adds that he has seen even worse than this, and that of the 50 people with whom he travelled into the desert, only 20 survived. The young boy and his mother shake their heads in grief and disbelief, while the television screen continues to show scores and scores of drowned migrants, dead bodies, and rows of caskets. Meanwhile, a voice-over narrates that 3000 people die on clandestine migration routes each year while an even larger figure of 10.000 people simply disappear. 'Your country, Mali, and your family need you', the voice-over urges, 'say no to irregular migration!' The screen zooms in on a final catchphrase: 'Mali is my Eldorado',[1] while depicting a number of foreign logos.



Source: Projet Migration EUTF MALI UE-MME-AECID 2019

This one-minute video is a message from the Malian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and African Integration. It has been produced with support from the Spanish Development Agency AECID and financed by the European Union (EU) under the EU Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa (EUTF for Africa). This fund, which was external to the EU budget and consisted of voluntary donations from member states' aid budgets and the European Development Fund, was used to increase collaboration with transit and origin countries to reduce migration. Development spending was a key tool in establishing and upholding this approach both by conditionalizing access to development funds on cooperation on migration issues, and by channelling funds to projects which were framed to disincentivize individuals from migrating north (Claes and Hambleton, 2020).

[1] West African migrants often use the term 'Eldorado Europe' when discussing their migration aspirations (Fiedler 2020).

The video described above does not stand alone, nor is it a novelty. It is part of global trend of public information campaigns that have been developed to inform migrants about the risks of migration, such as dying or ending up in traffickers' networks, as well as the harsh life conditions migrants may face in destination countries. A development that started in the 1990s to address the arrival of illegal workers from Eastern Europe to the West (Nieuwenhuys and Pécoud, 2007), it has since been exported to other regions, such as Africa. The European 'migration crisis' and the upsurge in migrants departing to Europe on boats from Libya in the mid-2010s has made the focus on informing migrants of the risks they face along the way – with the ultimate aim of deterring them – a popular approach for governments seeking to stem irregular migration to Europe (see, for example, Musarò, 2019).

One important question that remains largely unanswered is how effective such information campaigns are at reaching potential migrants and changing their aspirations. There are various reasons why this may not be the case. Information campaigns are based on the assumption that migrants lack information on potential risks and the hardships that could befall them abroad. The question is whether migrants indeed lack such information and whether new information will be trusted and will change their minds and behaviours (Carling and Hernández-Carretero, 2011; Nieuwenhuys and Pécoud, 2007).

In addition, a recent study by Fiedler (2020) shows that migratory feedback mechanisms play a role in processing the information that migrants encounter. Awareness-raising measures compete against the -oftentimes rosy – information obtained from family and friends abroad, which activates internal mechanisms to dissolve cognitive dissonance. Put simply, 'people prefer to be exposed to information that supports their beliefs; inconvenient or unpleasant information is suppressed and rationalized away' (Fiedler, 2020, p. 369).

To date, most evaluations of migration information campaigns largely rely on anecdotal evidence (Tjaden, 2018; Pagogna and Sakdapolrak, 2021).[2] To gain further insights in the effect that information campaigns have on (prospective) migrants, this study therefore uses survey data collected among 584 respondents, comprising West African migrants, returned Malian migrants, and Malian citizens without a history of migration, while showing them the video described above. The study is designed to answer three questions:

1. To what extent do respondents trust the video described above and what are determinants of high versus low trust in the video?
2. To what extent have respondents changed their perception of the risks involved in migrating to North Africa and Europe after having seen the video described above and what are determinants of high versus low changes in risk perceptions?

[2] Recent research conducted by the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC) forms an exception, as it systematically tracks the effectiveness of several IOM information campaigns These campaigns are found to have increased risk perceptions and lowered migration intentions (Tjaden 2020).

3. What is the likelihood that respondents will (continue to) migrate to North Africa and Europe after having seen the video and what are determinants of high versus low migration aspirations?

Combined, the answers to this question provide a unique insight into the agential drivers of migration. Making use of psychological measures that are often overlooked in migration research, such as risk attitude and satisfaction with life, the report confirms that push- and pull-factors are insufficient to explain people's migration aspirations. It also shows that risk perceptions are but one element explaining differences in such aspirations. This means that information campaigns such as the ones funded by the EU in Mali only barely scratch the surface when it comes to targeting the set of psychological and circumstantial factors that influence people's decision to migrate.

Migrants' behaviour and migration decision-making

To better understand information campaigns' effects on (prospective) migrants, we designed a survey that included the video clip described in the introduction above to study to what extent our respondents trust the message that the video contains, the effect this has on their risk perceptions, and how such risk perceptions affect their migration aspirations. There are a number of reasons to believe that information campaigns may have a limited effect in shaping migrants' behaviour and migration decision-making.

First, migration is often framed in terms of push-pull factors, meaning that migrants are seen to make cost-benefit calculations when it comes to staying in their country of origin or migrating to greener pastures. Information campaigns rely on this logic by pointing out the harsh risks that migration entails, while at times also zooming in on the economic and socio-cultural alternatives for personal advancement available in the country of origin. What these approaches miss, however, is that migration is better understood as a process in which changes in macro-structural circumstances and people's agency, i.e. their aspirations and capabilities to migrate, interact. Such agency entails both instrumental (means-to-an-end) and intrinsic (directly wellbeing-affecting) dimensions (De Haas 2014, 2021) – meaning that migration is more than a cost-benefit analysis.

An implicit assumption of information campaigns is also that migrants will believe the information communicated to them (Schans and Optekamp, 2016). Yet empirical studies show that (prospective) migrants may dismiss information campaigns that they feel are too obviously designed to prevent them from migrating (Hernandez-Carretero and Carling, 2012; Kosnick, 2014; Alpes and Sorenson, 2015). Both Hernandez-Carretero and Carling (2012) and Van Bemmel (2020) find that a (small) number of their respondents discarded risk information as they believed it to be biased or unreliable. Van Bemmel (2020, p. 58) therefore argues that 'the dissemination of risk information can even be counterproductive when there is suspicion about the credibility. Instead of preventing people from embarking, negative information can in some instances even strengthen the conviction that migration is worth the effort and thereby function as an incentive to embark.'

This leads us to expect that respondents who fit a migration profile, meaning that they possess the instrumental and intrinsic capital that is conducive to migration, will be less likely to trust the video shown to them:

> H1: respondents who possess higher levels of instrumental and intrinsic resources to migrate are expected to report lower trust in the video than respondents with lower levels of such resources.

Second, we know that personal networks, which include family, friends, and community members abroad, are a crucial source of inspiration and information for prospective migrants (Epstein and Gang, 2006). Survey research among migrants from Nigeria, Sudan, Eritrea, and Chad in Libya showed, for example, that respondents relied on friends and family in the country of destination as a first source of information on migration and that 'calling others ahead of us' was a key modality to access such information (Molenaar and Ezzedine, 2018).[3]

Research in the field of communication has compared how the characteristics of the advice-giver, of the problem for which the advice is received, and of the advice recipient have an influence on how the advice is received and subsequently evaluated. Among these factors, the recipient's closeness to the advice-giver has the strongest influence on receptiveness to advice (Feng and MacGeorge, 2006). This explains why, when prospective migrants have to align the information they receive through their personal networks with the negative messages in information campaigns, they do so by ignoring or disbelieving the latter in an attempt to prevent cognitive dissonance (Fedler, 2020).

This leads us to expect that respondents who have a higher number of diaspora contacts are less likely to trust the video as they will put more faith in the inspiration and information they receive through their close families and friends rather than from the more distant EU policy makers and its implementing partners:

> H2: Respondents with a higher number of diaspora contacts are expected to report lower trust in the video than respondents with fewer diaspora contacts.

Third, the core reasoning behind information campaigns such as the video studied in this article is that informing people about their risks will change their risk perceptions. A randomized controlled trial and other recent research conducted by the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC) shows that information campaigns can change risk perceptions (Tjaden, 2020). Yet studies also show that the majority of migrants are not ignorant actors, but that they make their decisions carefully, within a particular vulnerable, socioeconomic and cultural context, and that they develop risk-minimization strategies (Van Bemmel, 2020, p. 47; also see Hernandez-Carretero and Carling, 2012). This means that respondents may trust the message in the video, but still feel that they themselves will not suffer as much due to the risk-minimization strategies they intend to develop – perhaps based on the insights they received through their diaspora networks.

This leads us to expect that respondents who fit a migration profile, meaning that they possess the instrumental and intrinsic capital that is conducive to migration, will change their risk perceptions less after having seen the video than respondents who do not fit such a profile (i.e. who are less invested in having migration as an option available to them). In addition, we expect

[3] Only migrants from Nigeria relied more on human smugglers than on their family and friends in the country of destination for information on migration.

that respondents who have a higher number of diaspora contacts will change their risk perceptions less after having seen the video than those with fewer contacts, as they will feel confident they can design their own risk mitigation strategies. Lastly, we expect that respondents who report lower trust in the video will report lower changes in risk perceptions after having the video than those who have more trust in the video.

> H3: Respondents who possess higher levels of instrumental and intrinsic resources to migrate are expected to report less change in risk perceptions after having seen the video than respondents with lower levels of such resources.
>
> H4: Respondents with a higher number of diaspora contacts are expected to report less change in risk perceptions after having seen the video than respondents with fewer diaspora contacts.
>
> H5: Respondents who report lower trust in the video are expected to report less change in risk perceptions after having seen the video than respondents who report higher trust.

Lastly, the question arises whether changing risk perceptions would have a one-on-one effect in terms of lowering migration probabilities. Recent research conducted by the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC) found some limited evidence that this may be the case. Potential migrants who participated in awareness-raising events in Dakar, Senegal were 20 percent less likely to report high irregular migration intentions than potential migrants who did not participate in such campaigns. In Guinea, 1 in 10 potential migrants changed their intentions (Tjaden, 2020). It is unclear, however, whether these changes were tied directly to changes in risk perceptions. We developed the following hypothesis to test whether this is the case:

> H6: Respondents who report larger changes in risk perceptions after having seen the video are expected to report a lower likelihood that they will continue to migrate than respondents who reported smaller changes in risk perceptions.

As there are important psychological dynamics at play in the decision to migrate, however, risk attitudes more generally may counterbalance this effect. In their 2010 study on risk attitudes and labour migration, for example, Jaeger et al. (2010) find that 'the marginal effect of our indicator of being relatively willing to take risks is about 22% to 55% of the unconditional annual probability of migrating between labour markets' (p.688). If individuals that migrate are more prone to take risks, this begs the question whether providing them with information on risks is the most effective strategy when intending to change migrant's behaviour and migration decision-making. In line with these studies, we expect that respondents who are more risk taking to begin with will report higher (continued) migration aspirations after having seen the video than those who are less prone to taking risks. We also expect that those who report less trust in the video to report higher (continued) migration aspirations than those who report higher trust in the video:

> H7: Respondents with higher risk attitudes are expected to report a higher likelihood that they will continue to migrate after having seen the video than those with lower risk attitudes.

H8: Respondents who report lower trust in the video are expected to report a higher likelihood that they will continue to migrate after having seen the video than those who report higher trust.

Methodology

To test these hypotheses, we conducted a survey in Mali – one of the West African priority countries under the EUTF due to the high number of Malian arrivals in Europe as well as its position as a key transit country for West African migrants traveling northwards. As part of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the ECOWAS free movement protocol applies to Mali. That means that migrants from West African countries belonging to ECOWAS can travel with relative ease of movement until they reach the northern Malian towns (the same applies to Niger).

To capture the complexity of mobility patterns throughout the country, we selected three groups of target respondents for the study. These are: 1) West African migrants transiting through Mali (surveyed in Bamako and Gao)(n = 217), 2) Malian citizens without a migration history (n = 239), and 3) Malian citizens with a migration history who have returned to the country (n = 128)(called Malian returnees hereafter).[4] These latter two groups were surveyed in Kayes region – one of Mali's main regions of long-distance migrant departure that is characterized by a strong reliance on remittances for the development of its communities. As such, it is an important recipient of EUTF finance development projects – including the above-mentioned information campaigns (Claes et al., 2021).

The surveys were conducted by local interlocutors using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) software on their phones – using targeted sampling to ensure the inclusion of women and youth.[5] Prior to data collection, we conducted a two-day training workshop in Bamako with the entire research team.[6] The survey structure was set up to sample individual and household information on biographical data, migration history, migration aspirations and risk attitude towards migration, development interventions, available household assets and well-being. Under the section on development interventions, we uploaded the one-minute video described in the introduction. After being shown the video by the local interlocutors, we asked the respondents a number of questions about what they had learned from the video, how they felt while watching it, whether they trusted the video, what they estimated the risk of migrating to Europe to be, and what the likelihood was of them (continuing to) migrate to Europe.

[4] We had planned to also survey West African migrants waiting to return home in IOM transit centres. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, however, we were no longer able to access these centres.

[5] We aimed to have 25% female respondents. Women (n =143) and men (n = 441)

[6] To account for country- and region-specific characteristics and target groups, the workshop was used to further tailor formulations and answer categories to local circumstances and sensitivities. In particular, the workshop provided the opportunity for local researchers to discuss the translation of key concepts of the research into local languages such as Bambara, Soninké and Peulh. For a more detailed description of the methodology, see Claes et al. (2021).

Descriptive overview

Our three sub-questions all have a different dependent variable, namely 'trust in the video', 'changed risk perceptions after having seen the video', and 'likelihood of (continued) migration after having seen the video':

1. To what extent do respondents trust the video described above and what are determinants of high versus low trust in the video?
2. To what extent have respondents changed their perception of the risks involved in migrating to North Africa and Europe after having seen the video described above and what are determinants of high versus low changes in risk perceptions?
3. What is the likelihood that respondents will (continue to) migrate to North Africa and Europe after having seen the video and what are determinants of high versus low migration aspirations?

These variables were measured in the following manner:

Trust in the video

After showing the respondents the video, we asked them a series of questions about whether they experienced a number of emotions, including fear of migration, being upset by the message, gratitude for the information, and curiosity to learn more. Respondents could answer on a scale from zero (not at all) to ten (enormously).We also asked them how much they trusted the information in the video, using the same scale. Overall, respondents indicated they felt a bit of fear when watching the message (mean = 6.28) and they were also a bit upset when watching it (mean = 5.9). They were moderately grateful for the message (mean = 7.16) and they were a bit curious to learn more (mean = 6.07). They were also moderately trustful of the message (mean = 7.24). When comparing responses across the three respondent types, we find that Malian returnees have the most trust in the video (mean = 7.73), followed by West African transit migrants (mean = 7.24). Malians without a history of migration trust the video the least (mean = 6.99).

Given that we explicitly mentioned at the start of the study that this project has been funded by the European Union, we cannot rule out that respondents may have wanted to give the answers they felt were expected of them. Nevertheless, and as shown in Figure 1 below, we also had a number of outliers in the form of respondents who really did not trust the video at all (we have similar outliers who did not feel grateful for the information at all). This could indicate that respondents made use of this opportunity to voice how little they appreciate or trust receiving this type of information. We find that this the case mainly for Malians without a history of migration and West African transit migrants, who would not have already witnessed the migratory situation on the route to North Africa and Europe for themselves.

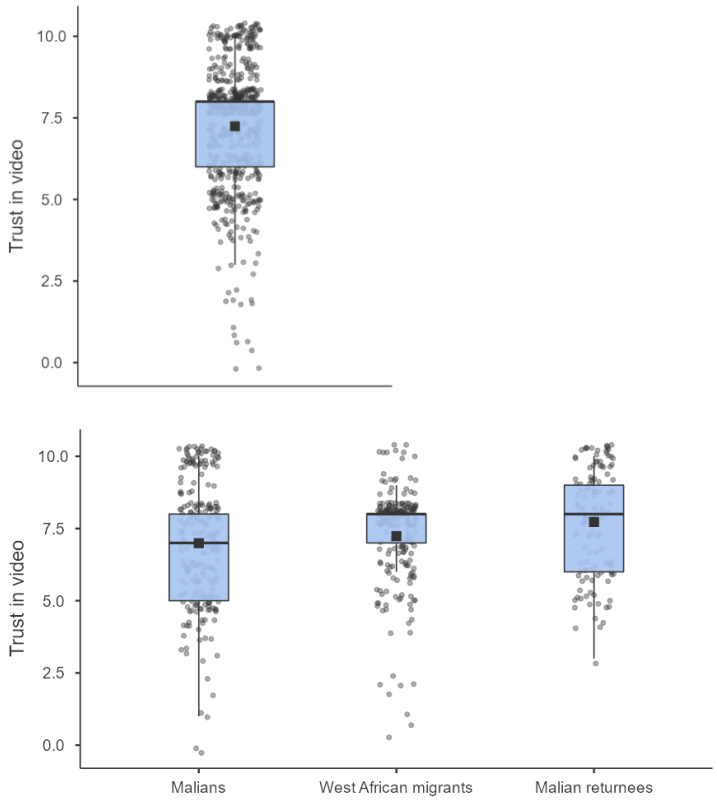


Figure 1: Box plot - Trust in video + across different respondent types.

Changed risk perceptions after having seen the video

After having seen the video, we also asked our respondents to rate on a scale from zero to ten (not at all – enormously) to what extent the information in the video changed their risk perception of migration to North Africa and Europe. The mean answer to this question was 5.93, meaning that the respondents indicated that the video had changed their risk perception a bit. Again, we find a number of outliers clustered around zero (see Figure 2 below), which may again indicate that some respondents used this opportunity to make very clear that they do not care for European-funded information campaigns on migration. When comparing responses across the three respondent types, we find that Malian returnees change their risk perception more than Malians without a migration history do (mean = 6.58 vs. 6.10). West African transit migrants report the smallest mean change in risk perception (5.35).

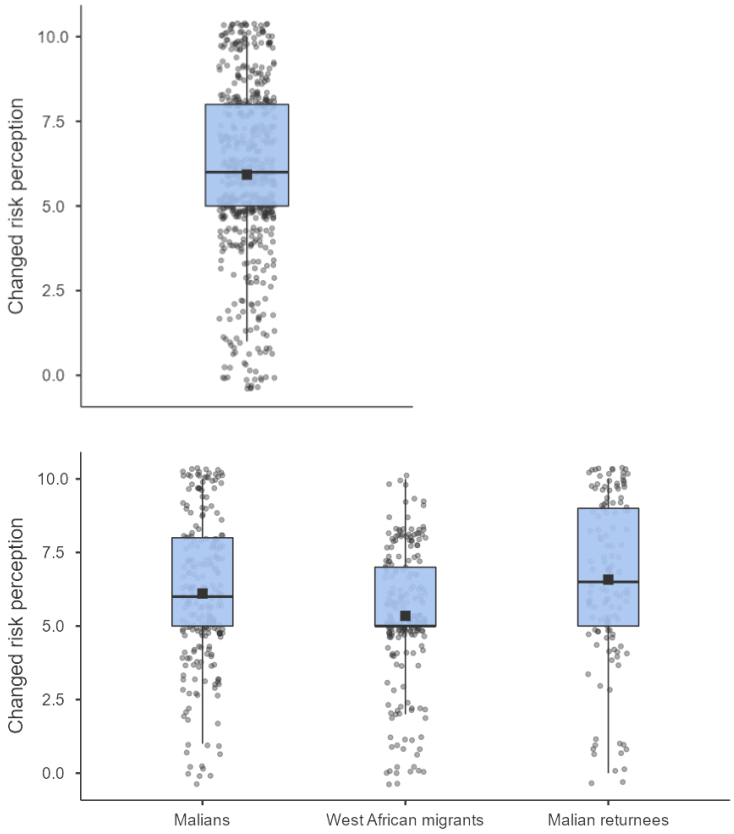


Figure 2: Box plot - Changed risk perception after having watched the video + across different respondent types

Likelihood of (continued) migration after having seen the video

After having seen the video, we asked our respondents to rate the likelihood that they would (continue to) migrate to North Africa and Europe on a scale from zero to ten (not at all – enormously). The mean answer to this question was 4.96, meaning that they were relatively undecided. This time, we do not find a cluster of outliers (see Figure 5 below).

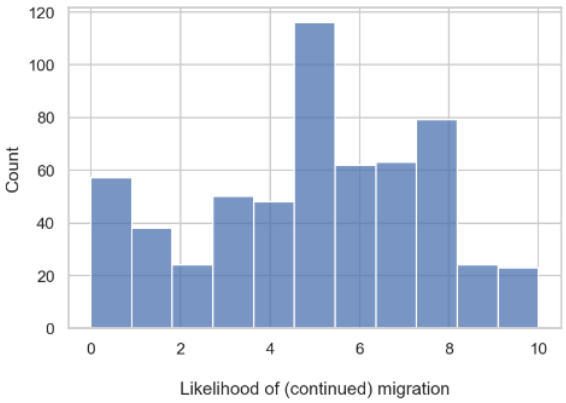


Figure 3: Distribution of answers for likelihood of (continued) migration after having watched the video

Control variables (type of respondents, gender, age, level of education)

In the linear regression models, we used the same control variables. These include the respondent type, gender, age,[7] and level of education (none, primary, secondary, other (Koranic school)) as control variables. Figure 4 below shows that, in our sample, Malian returnees are generally older males who have received less secondary education than is the case for our other respondent types. Koranic education is more prevalent under Malian respondents without a migration history, as well as West African transit migrants.

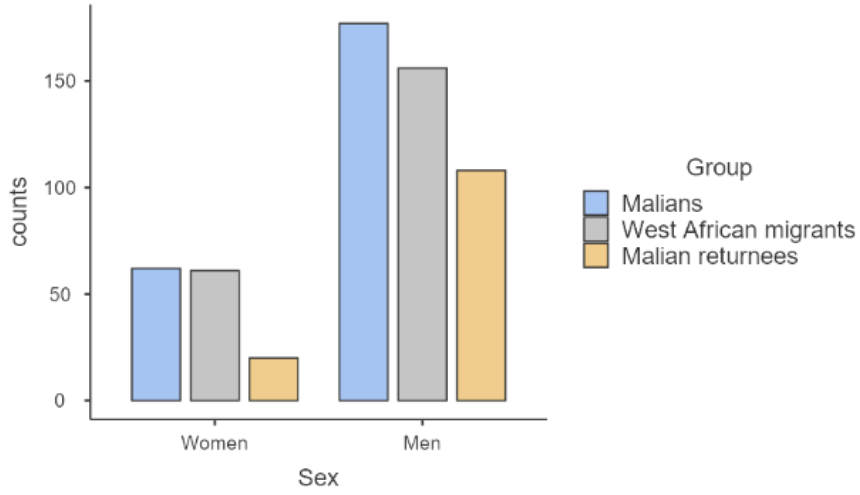


Figure 4: Distribution of gender across respondent types

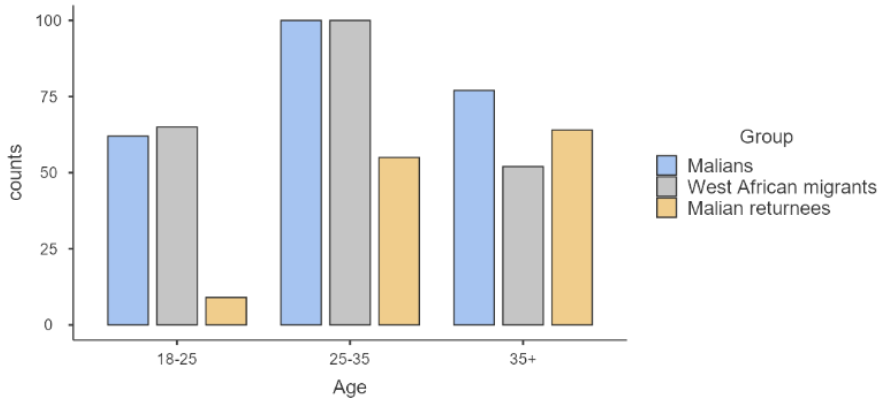


Figure 5: Distribution of age across respondent types

[7] In Mali, it is deemed impolite to ask people their age. We asked them instead if they fall in the age bracket young adult (18-25), adult (25-35), or senior (35+). Note that the average life span in Mali is 59.13 years (2019).

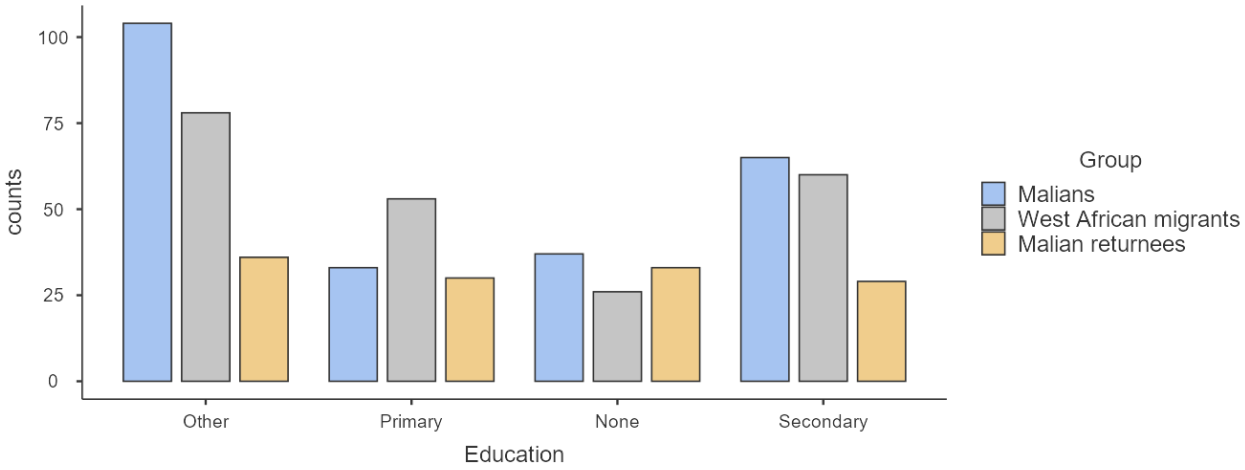


Figure 6: Distribution of level of education across respondent types

Possessing instrumental and intrinsic migration resources

In each model, we also included variables that measure whether respondents possess the instrumental and intrinsic resources to migrate (as identified by De Haas, 2014, 2020). For this, we looked at socio-economic status and current financial situation, employment, development assistance, control over life, and satisfaction with life.

Socio-economic status and current financial situation: we asked respondents to indicate if they or any member of their family have any of the following assets: refrigerator, dishwasher, oven, washing machine, plasma or LCD Television, air conditioner, summer house, automobile, motorbike, agricultural tools, computer or laptop, mobile phone and satellite dish (min. 0 - max. 13).[8] Overall, we find that West African transit migrants had access to a much smaller number of household assets (mean = 1.14) than is the case for Malians without a migration history (mean = 3.23) and Malian returnees (mean = 2.52). This suggests that access to financial resources alone does not explain migration (as per De Haas 2014, 2021).

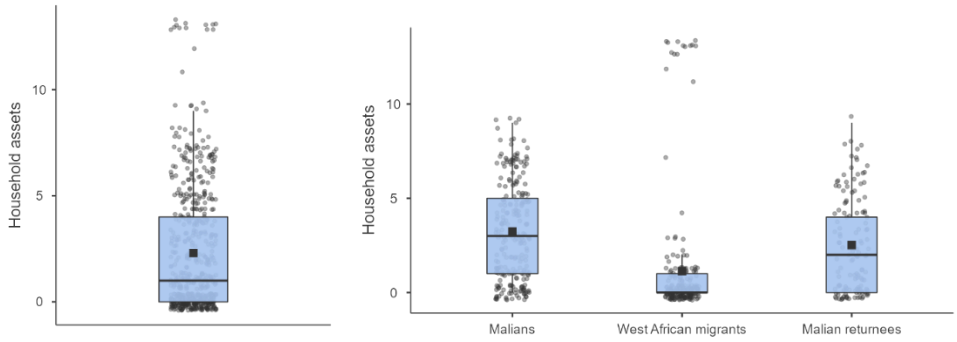


Figure 7: Box plot number of household assets (in the case of West African transit migrants – before departure) across respondent types

[8] We asked West African transit migrants the following question: In your country of origin, prior to migrating, did you or any member of your family have any of the following assets?

Employment: we asked the respondent in a binary fashion (yes = 1 and no = 0) whether they had held a job over the past year. In our sample, 71 percent of Malians without a migration history reported to have had a job over the past year (172 yes vs. 67 no), compared to 50 percent of West African transit migrants (110 yes vs. 107 no) and 57 percent of Malian returnees (73 yes vs. 55 no). This reflects the common complaint we came across in the region that there are just no jobs for people.

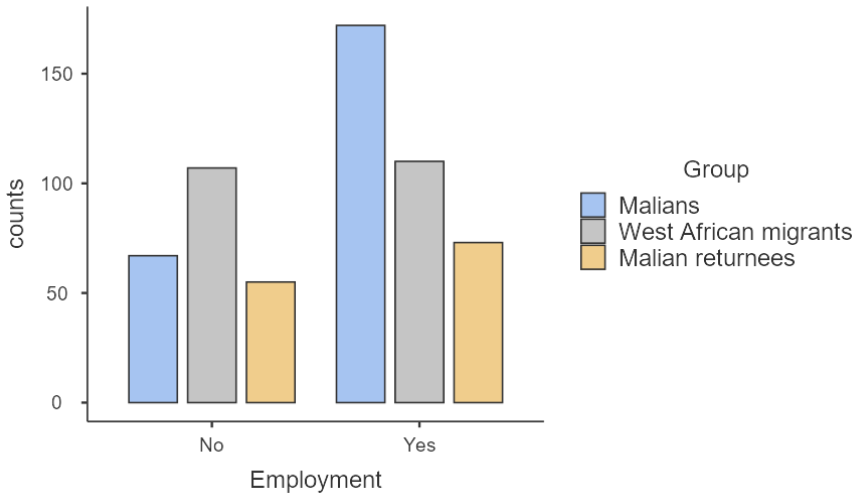


Figure 8: Distribution of employment across respondent types

Development assistance: we asked the respondent in a binary fashion (yes = 1 and no = 0) whether they had ever received development assistance (in Mali) either from the government, UN organizations, NGOs or any other source. In our sample, 49 percent of Malians without a migration history reported to have received such assistance in Mali at least once (118 yes vs. 121 no), compared to only eight percent of West African transit migrants (18 yes vs. 199 no) and 45 percent of Malian returnees (58 yes vs. 70 no).

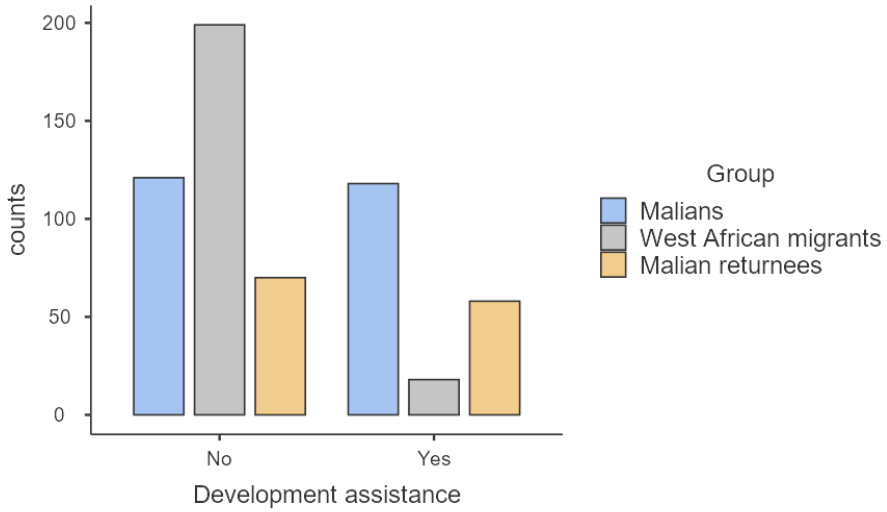


Figure 9: Distribution of development assistance across respondent types

Control over life: we asked respondents to rate on a 5-point scale from zero (no control) to four (complete control) how much they feel they are in control of their lives. We find that Malians without a migration history feel most control over their lives (mean = 2.71), followed by Malian returnees (2.65), and West African transit migrants (mean = 2.24).

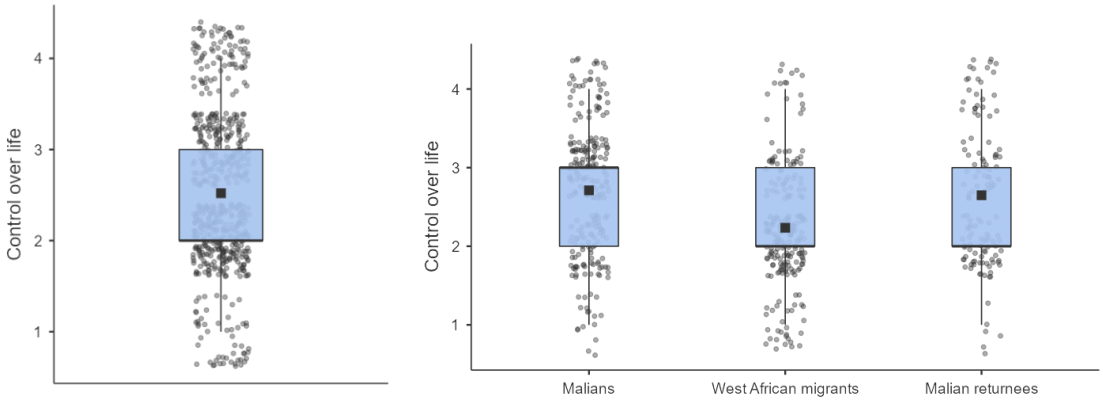


Figure 10: Box plot control over life + across respondent types

Satisfaction with life: we used the Personal Wellbeing Index (PWI), developed by the International Wellbeing Group (2013), which is a valid cross-cultural instrument that measures quality of life across 10 different domains: standard of living, health, achieving in life, children's education, employment, relationships, safety, community-connectedness, future security, and spirituality. Respondent were asked to rate on a scale from zero (extremely dissatisfied) to ten (extremely satisfied) how satisfied they are with their lives. Malians without a migration history are most satisfied with their lives (mean = 66.5) followed by Malian returnees (mean = 63.9) and West African transit migrants (mean = 60.4).

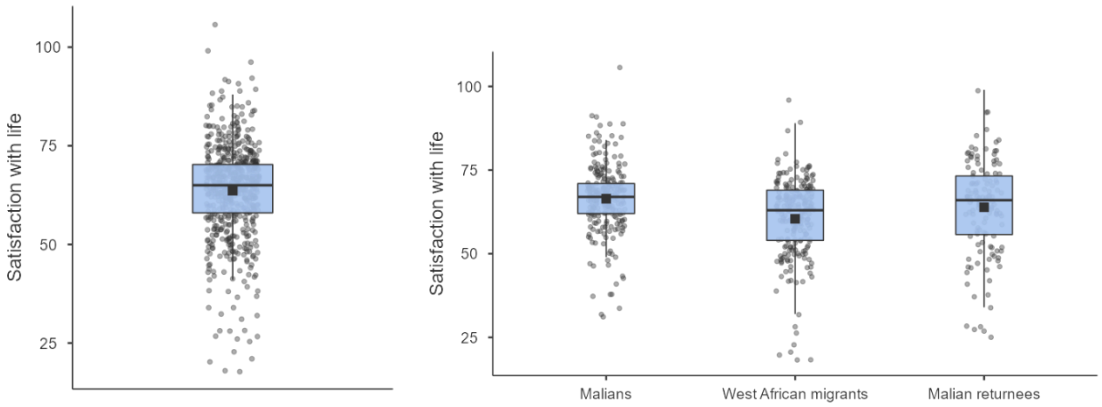


Figure 11: Box plot satisfaction with life+ across respondent types

Risk attitudes

In each model, we also included measures of risk taking attitudes. We measured this in two different ways, namely looking at risk attitudes towards income and towards health. For risk attitude towards income, we first asked the respondent the following question:

Suppose you are the only person in your family who earns an income, and you have a good job that provides you with an annual income. You have the opportunity to take a new job that is just as good, with a 50/50 chance of doubling your income and a 1/3 chance of reducing it by one third. Would you accept this new job?

If the respondents answered 'yes' to this question, we asked them the follow-up question if they would still accept the job if there was a 1-in-2 chance that it would double their income and a 1-in-2 chance that it would cut it in half. If respondents answered 'no' to the first question, we asked them the follow-up question if they would accept the job if there was a 1 in 2 chance that it would double their income and a 1 in 2 chance that it would reduce it by 20%. Summing these answers creates a variable for risk attitude towards income ranging from 1 (no risk) to 4 (high risk).

Overall, we find that West African transit migrants score highest when it comes to taking risks with their incomes (mean = 3.13). They are followed by Malian returnees (mean = 2.20). Malians without a migration history score lowest on this variable (mean = 2.09). Nevertheless, the box plots below show that there is big variation within respondent types.

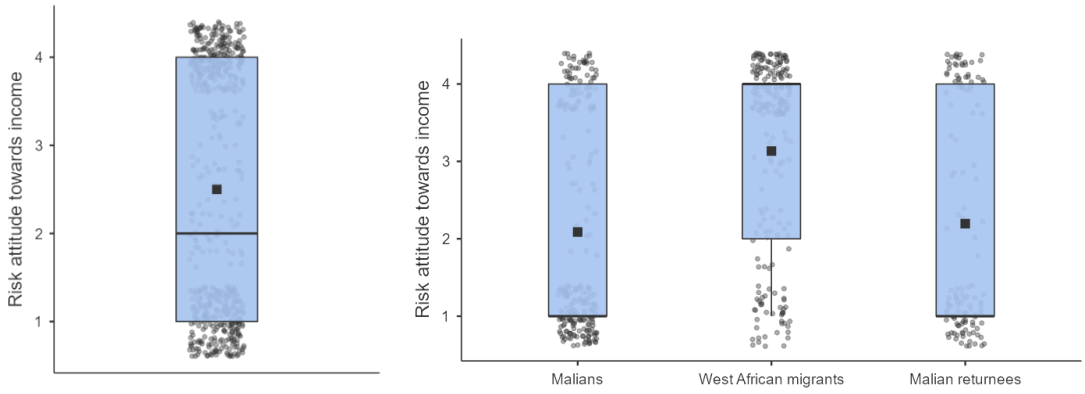


Figure 12: Box plot risk attitude towards income + across respondent types

For risk attitude towards health, we first asked the question the respondent the following question:

Imagine that Bachirou, a 25 year old man, suffers from a partial loss of sight that could eventually lead to blindness if he does not receive treatment. The doctor suggests an operation. After the operation, there is a 50% chance that Bachirou will recover completely and a 50% chance that he will lose his sight right after the operation. If you were Bachirou, would you accept the operation?

If the respondents answered 'yes' to this question, we asked them the follow-up question if they would still accept the operation if there was a 35% chance that it would result in full recovery and a 65% chance of losing eyesight immediately after the operation. If respondents answered 'no' to the first question, we asked them the follow-up question if they would still accept the operation if there was a 65% chance that it would result in full recovery and a 35% chance of losing eyesight immediately after the operation. Summing these binary answers creates a variable for risk attitude towards health ranging from 1 (no risk) to 4 (high risk).

We again find that West African transit migrants score highest when it comes to taking risks with their health (mean = 3.76). They are followed by Malian returnees (mean = 2.86). Malians without

a migration history come in last (mean = 2.82). Interestingly enough, we find a lot of variation within these two latter respondent types, while West African transit migrations are very much clustered around the highest possible risk taking score.

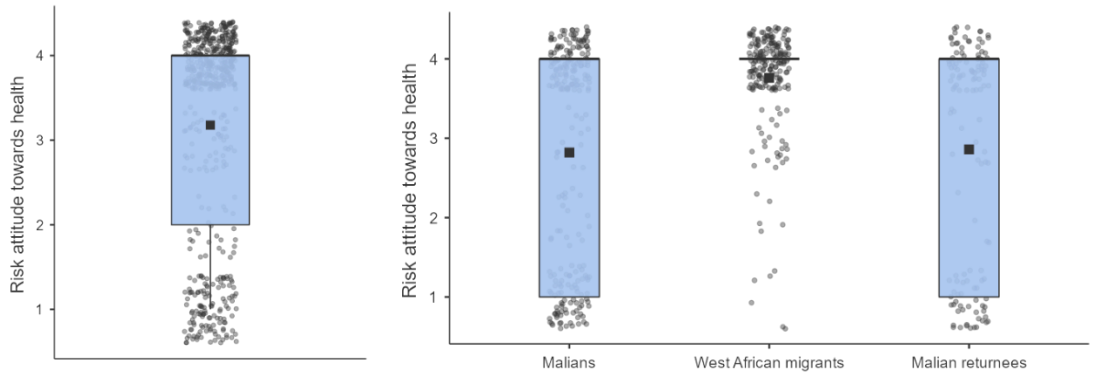


Figure 13: Box plot risk attitude towards health + across respondent types

Diaspora connections

One final variable we included in all three regression analyses was diaspora connections. We listed 12 different types of family members and connections, namely: 1) mother or father, 2) brother or sister, 3) grandfather or grandmother, 4) grandson or granddaughter, 5) niece, nephew or cousin, 6) son or daughter in law, 7) brother or sister in law, 8) father or mother in law, 9) uncle or aunt, 10) other family members, 11) friends, and 12) other non-related persons. We asked our respondents whether they knew anyone who lives abroad, and if so, to select the type of connection they had with them. We counted the number of different types of family members and connections abroad as a measure of the extent of their diaspora network. We find that Malian returnees have the most extensive networks, with a mean of 2.02 types of connections. Malians without a migration history on average have 1.67 types of contacts abroad. West African transit migrants score lowest on this measure, with an average of 1.21 types of contacts abroad.

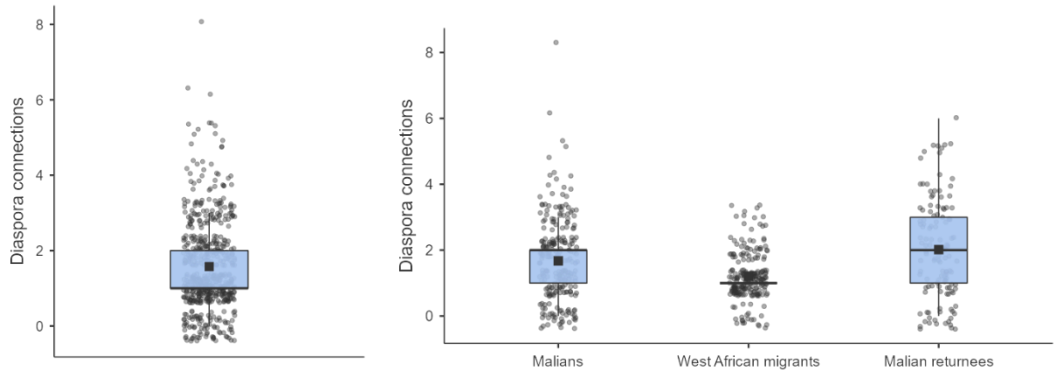


Figure 14: Figure 11: Box plot diaspora connections + across respondent types

Analysis

It may well be the case that our inclusion of returnees creates a bias in the regression results, as returnees have already experienced the trip to northern Africa and/or Europe and may therefore

view the video with different eyes than West African migrants and Malians without a history of migration would. We therefore ran the three regressions on two different samples: the full sample and the sample including only West African migrants and Malians without a history of migration. This allows us to better tease out the link between migrations campaigns and trust, risk estimation, and likelihood of (continued) migration across the different samples. The results of both sets of regressions are presented conjointly below.

Trust in the video

For trust in video, we hypothesized that:

> H1: Respondents who possess higher levels of instrumental and intrinsic resources to migrate are expected to report lower trust in the video than respondents with lower levels of such resources.
>
> H2: Respondents with a higher number of diaspora contacts are expected to report lower trust in the video than respondents with fewer diaspora contacts.

Table 1: OLS regression 'Trust in the video'

	Model 1 Full sample (Malians, West Africans, Malian returnees)	**Model 2** Sample without Malian returnees
Intercept	8.444 (0.664)***	8.251 (0.777)***
Respondent type • West Africans vs Malians • Returnees vs. Malians • West Africans vs. Returnees	 0.243 (0.211) 0.854 (0.205)*** -0.611 (0.234)**	 0.178 (0.230)
Gender (men vs. women)	0.162 (0.180)	0.019 (0.200)
Age • 25-35 vs. 18-25 • 35+ vs. 18-25	 0.218 (0.197) -0.135 (0.216)	 0.224 (0.214) -0.305 (0.243)
Education • Other vs. none • Primary vs. none • Secondary vs. none	 0.439 (0.232) 0.731 (0.256)** 0.222 (0.244)	 0.316 (0.284) 0.682 (0.319)* 0.162 (0.295)
Socio-economic status	0.156 (0.028)***	0.128 (0.031)***
Employment	-0.414 (0.170)*	-0.195 (0.203)
Development assistance	-0.300 (0.182)	-0.330 (0.215)
Control over life	-0.310 (0.095)***	-0.280 (0.113)*
Satisfaction with life	2.960 (0.007)	-0.005 (0.008)
Intention to migrate	-0.501 (0.171)**	-0.675 (0.199)***
Diaspora connections	-0.198 (0.071)**	-0.305 (0.089)***
Risk attitude income	-0.348 (0.061)***	-0.367 (0.071)***
Risk attitude health	0.307 (0.071)***	0.335 (0.086)***
R2 (N)	0.222*** (569)	0.206*** (441)
*p<.1 **p <.05 ***p <.01		

An important first point is that we do not find substantial differences between our full sample (including all three sets of respondents) and the sample without Malian returnees. This means that the effects we find for our independent variables are not influenced by the type of respondents we include in the regression analysis. In the full sample, we do find that Malian returnees report significantly higher trust scores in the video than both Malians without a migration history and West African transit migrants. This supports Fiedler's (2020) cognitive dissonance dynamic, as those groups who have never travelled beyond Mali (Malians without a migration history and West African migrants in transit through Mali) have significant lower trust in the video that those who have witnessed the dangers *en route* with their own eyes.

Socio-economic status is positively and significantly linked to trust in the video, meaning that the more household assets a respondent has access to, the higher his or her trust in the video. If a respondent has worked over the past year and/or feels more control over his or her life, he or she has significantly lower trust in the video. This might mean that people who have more to lose (i.e. those with higher socio-economic status) have higher trust in external warnings while those with

more self-confidence (i.e. those who worked over the past year and/or feel more control over their lives) have lower trust in such external warnings. Having received development assistance in the past year and satisfaction with life do not have a significant effect on trust in video. We thus find some evidence that supports the hypothesis that having instrumental (socio-economic status) and intrinsic (feeling less control over life) capital results in lower levels of trust in the video.

At an earlier stage in the survey, before showing our respondents the video, we had also asked them if 'Ideally, if you were able to, would you migrate, or would continue to live in your current place of residence? Or, if you are a non-Malian migrant, would you return to your place of origin?' We subsequently created a binary variable 'migration aspiration' (1) = respondent indicated he/she would ideally migrate and 'no migration aspiration' (0) = respondent indicated he/she would ideally continue to live in current place of residence or return to place of origin. We incorporated this variable in the model above as an alternative test of the effect of migration aspirations on trust in the video.[9] We find a significant negative relationship between having migration aspirations and trust in the video, meaning that those respondents who indicated they would ideally want to migrate report lower levels of trust in the video than those who would ideally continue to live in current place of residence or return to place of origin.[10] This again confirms our first hypothesis.

Our second hypothesis, which held that respondents with a higher number of diaspora connections would report lower trust in the video less, is confirmed. There is a significant negative relationship between the number of diaspora contacts that our respondents have and their trust in the video. From this, it follows that information campaigns hence have a steep hill to climb as they garner lower trust in prospective migrants. In addition, they are up against the influential, and likely more trusted, messages that people receive from their family members and friends abroad. Such messages may paint a rosy picture of migration – leading (prospective) migrants to distrust migration campaigns – or they may provide migrants with confidence that they will be able to mitigate risks on the route due to the information they have at their disposal. In addition, some of the horrors that migrants may encounter along the way may be simply too large for people to truly comprehend without having experienced them first-hand.

One final finding is that risk attitudes also have an effect on reported trust in the video. In the regression analysis, both variables are significant, but in different directions. Respondents' risk attitudes towards jobs is negatively correlated to trust in the video, meaning that the higher the respondents' income-related risk appetite, the less they trust the video. But when it comes to health, risk attitudes are positively correlated to trust in the video, meaning that the higher the respondents' health-related risk appetite, the more they trust the video. This finding may be indicative of the multifaceted nature of risk appetites, with people who would take higher risks when it comes to their income having lower trust in external advice (again, perhaps, because of

[9] We decided not to do so in the regressions for the other two sub-questions as this would increase the number of variables too much given in view of our limited sample size. The next regressions already contain more variables as they also include 'trust in the video', and, for the third sub-question, also 'change in risk perception' as additional independent variables.

[10] We obtain similar regression results when using the question 'Currently, do you intend to settle in another country, or to stay in Mali?' as a measure for migration aspirations.

higher levels of self-confidence), while those people who would take risks when it comes to their health – as per the doctor's suggestion – showcase higher trust in external messages or advice. We will come back to this point in more detail below.

Impact of the video on risk perceptions

As we did not ask respondents about their risk perception before watching the video, we cannot objectively assess the impact of the video. At an earlier stage of the survey, we did ask respondents how many out of ten people they thought would die on the route to north Africa and Europe. On average, our respondents indicated they expected 4.81 people out of ten to die while undertaking such migration. These two variables are positively correlated (Pearson's r 0.111, $p < .01$), meaning that the more people respondents thought would die on the route, the more their perception of risks increases after having seen the video.

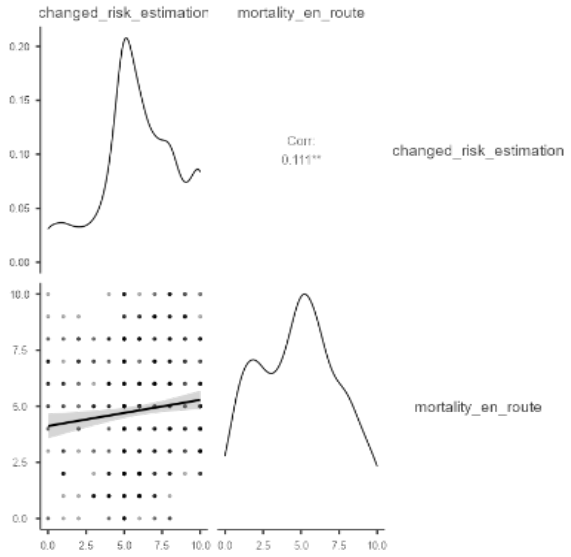


Figure 15: Correlation between changed risk perceptions after having seen the video and estimation of mortality en route before having seen the video.

This begs the larger question whether information campaigns are able to change risk perceptions in the category of people who matter most for those seeking to limit northbound migration, i.e. respondents who possess the instrumental and intrinsic resources to migrate, including high risk taking attitudes, and having diaspora contacts. We therefore ran a regression analysis including these variables (see Figure 4 below). We also hypothesized that trust in the video would have an effect on risk perceptions, with lower trust resulting in lower changes in risk perceptions.

> H3: Respondents who possess higher levels of instrumental and intrinsic resources to migrate are expected to report less change in risk perceptions after having seen the video than respondents with lower levels of such resources.
>
> H4: Respondents with a higher number of diaspora contacts are expected to report less change in risk perceptions after having seen the video than respondents with fewer diaspora contacts.

H5: Respondents who report lower trust in the video are expected to report less change in risk perceptions after having seen the video than respondents who report higher trust.

Table 2: OLS regression 'Changed risk perceptions after having seen the video '

	Model 3 Full sample (Malians, West Africans, Malian returnees)	**Model 4** Sample without Malian returnees
Intercept	1.384 (0.880)	2.133 (0.988)*
Respondent type • West Africans vs. Malians • Returnees vs. Malians • West Africans vs. Returnees	 -0.266 (0.260) 0.247 (0.263) -0.513 (0.291)	 -0.426 (0.270)
Gender (men vs. women)	-0.362 (0.225)	-0.551 (0.240)*
Age • 25-35 vs. 18-25 • 35+ vs. 18-25	 0.262 (0.248) 0.767 (0.269)**	 0.131 (0.258) 0.749 (0.288)**
Education • Other vs. none • Primary vs. none • Secondary vs. none	 0.381 (0.293) 0.214 (0.325) 0.263 (0.308)	 0.677 (0.341)* 0.302 (0.387) 0.391 (0.357)
Socio-economic status	0.106 (0.036)**	0.074 (0.038)*
Employment	-0.104 (0.214)	-0.070 (0.243)
Development assistance	0.042 (0.225)	-0.218 (0.257)
Control over life	0.012 (0.118)	0.092 (0.133)
Satisfaction with life	0.023 (0.008)**	0.011 (0.009)
Diaspora connections	-8.150 (0.090)	-0.112 (0.108)
Risk attitude income	-0.198 (0.078)*	-0.136 (0.087)
Risk attitude health	-0.018 (0.091)	0.064 (0.106)
Trust in video	0.427 (0.053)***	0.409 (0.058)***
R2 (N)	0.242*** (584)	0.208*** (456)
*p<.1 **p <.05 ***p <.01		

For this sub-question, we find one important difference in our control variables when comparing the results for our full sample (including all three sets of respondents) against the sample without Malian returnees. Gender is only a significant variable in the limited sample, meaning that men report significantly less change in their risk perceptions after having seen the video than women, but only if we do not take into account Malian returnees. This likely means that men's risk perceptions are generally less influenced by information campaigns such as this video, unless they have witnessed the dangers of migration themselves. In addition, young people (aged 18-25) changed their risk perception significantly less after having seen the video than those over 35+ in both analyses. As we know that young people are prime migration candidates, this indicates an important pitfall for information campaigns.

We find limited and mixed support for our third hypothesis, which held that respondents who possess higher levels of instrumental and intrinsic resources to migrate are expected to report less

change in risk perceptions after having seen the video than respondents with lower levels of such resources. In our full sample, we find the opposite effect for higher socio-economic status, which results in significantly more change in risk perception after having seen the video in both samples. This suggests that those respondents who have more to lose are more affected by the video. This is corroborated by the fact that higher satisfaction with life is also correlated significantly with more change in risk perception – albeit only in the full sample. Low life satisfaction is a potential driver of migration (De Haas 2014, 2020), so it is problematic that information campaigns are less able to alter risk perceptions among respondents that are dissatisfied with their lives.

We do not find support for our fourth hypothesis, as the number of diaspora connections does not have a significant effect on changes in risk perceptions after having watched the video. Our fifth hypothesis, which held that trust in the video is expected to have an effect on changes in risk perceptions is confirmed in both samples. More trust in the video results (most) significantly in more change in risk perceptions.

One final finding is that risk attitudes also have an effect on changes in risk perceptions after having watched the video, although this is only the case in the full sample and only for risk attitude towards income. The more risks respondents would take with their incomes, the lower their reported changes in risk perceptions. As we hypothesized in the section on trust in the video above, people with higher income-related risk appetites are perhaps less likely to take external advice. The regression shows that – at the very least – these respondents changed their risk perception of the migration journey to North Africa and Europe significantly less than respondents with lower income-related risk appetites. Given that high risk attitudes drive migration (Jaeger et al., 2010), this again suggests that information campaigns may not be effective where they need to be.

Impact of changed risk perceptions on migration aspirations

One final question that remains to be answered is if changes in risk perceptions indeed have an effect on migration aspirations. Again, as we did not ask respondents to rate the likelihood that they would be migrating before watching the video, we cannot objectively assess the impact of the video. At an earlier stage of the survey, we did ask respondents whether, ideally, they would want to stay put or migrate (and, in the case of West African migrants, whether they intended to return home). We call this variable 'migration intentions'. A comparison across different intention groups shows that the mean likelihood that respondents will (continue to) migrate after having seen the video is significantly higher for those groups that had already indicated that they ideally would want to migrate (see Figure 6 below).[11] This means that those respondents who had already planned to migrate generally still would like to do so after having seen the video.

Table 3: One-Way ANOVA (Welch's) 'Changes migration aspiration' across 'Migration intentions'

	F	df1	df2	P

[11] We had also included a question whether respondents are currently thinking about migrating, staying put or – in the case of West African migrants – returning home. A T-test using this question came up with similar results (see Figures 8 and 9 in Annex 1).

Changed migration aspiration	27,1	2	164	< 0,001

Table 4: Group descriptives 'Changed migration aspiration' across 'Migration intentions'

	Rester ou déménager	N	Mean	SD	SE
Changed migration aspiration	Migrate	247	5,86	2,25	0,143
	Stay	262	4,30	3,06	0,189
	Return	60	4,08	2,68	0,346

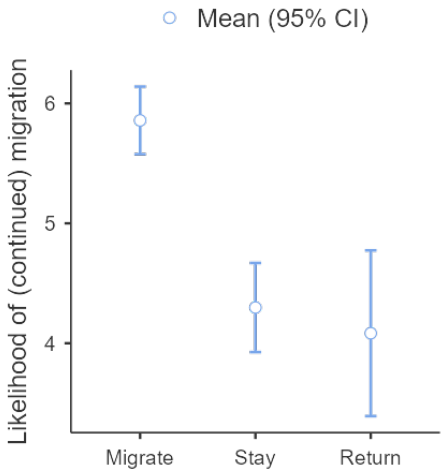


Figure 16: Ideally, if you were able to, would you migrate, or would you continue to live in your current place of residence? Or, if you are a non-Malian migrant, would you return to your place of origin?

To further explore whether the video had an effect on likelihood of (continued) migration, we ran a regression to test the following hypotheses:

H6: Respondents who report larger changes in risk perceptions after having seen the video are expected to report a lower likelihood that they will continue to migrate than respondents who reported smaller changes in risk perceptions.

H7: Respondents with higher risk attitudes are expected to report a higher likelihood that they will continue to migrate after having seen the video than those with lower risk attitudes.

H8: Respondents who report lower trust in the video are expected to report a higher likelihood that they will continue to migrate after having seen the video than those who report higher trust.

Table 5: OLS regression 'Likelihood of (continued) migration after having seen the video '

	Model 5 Full sample (Malians, West Africans, Malian returnees)	**Model 6** Sample without Malian returnees
Intercept	6.903 (0.974)***	8.568 (1.079)***
Respondent type • West Africans vs. Malians • Returnees vs. Malians • West Africans vs. Returnees	 1.892 (0.294)*** 0.720 (0.297)* 1.172 (0.330)***	 1.794 (0.298)***
Gender (men vs. women)	0.621 (0.254)*	0.064 (0.266)*
Age • 25-35 vs. 18-25 • 35+ vs. 18-25	 0.126 (0.280) -0.068 (0.306)	 -0.065 (0.285) -0.432 (0.320)
Education • Other vs. none • Primary vs. none • Secondary vs. none	 -0.590 (0.332) 0.064 (0.367) -0.487 (0.348)	 -0.953 (0.377)* -0.463 (0.427) -0.849 (0.394)*
Socio-economic status	0.127 (0.0415)**	0.093 (0.042)*
Employment	-0.127 (0.241)	0.230 (0.268)
Development assistance	-0.318 (0.241)	-0.395 (0.283)
Control over life	0.085 (0.133)	0.138 (0.147)
Satisfaction with life	-0.028 (0.009)**	-0.040 (0.011)***
Diaspora connections	0.331 (0.102)***	0.213 (0.120)
Risk attitude income	-0.118 (0.089)	-0.096 (0.096)
Risk attitude health	-0.532 (0.103)***	-0.550 (0.117)***
Trust in video	0.080 (0.063)	0.013 (0.067)
Changed risk perceptions	-0.108 (0.047)*	-0.0932 (0.053)
R2 (N)	0.198*** (584)	0.220*** (456)
*p<.1 **p <.05 ***p <.01		

An important first point is that we find significant differences between our different respondent types (using both the full sample and the sample without Malian returnees). West African migrants are significantly more likely to (continue to) migrate compared to Malians without a history of migration, which reflects the fact that we targeted transit migrants. In a similar vein, Malian returnees are also more likely to (continue to) migrate after having seen the video – indicating that either their past experiences have already prepared them for the hardship they might encounter on the way or that they are generally a more mobile segment of the population. Given that seasonal and/or recurring migration is a common phenomenon in Malian society, this latter hypothesis is entirely plausible.

We also find a significantly higher likelihood that men (continue to) migrate compared to women across both samples. Those with more instrumental and intrinsic resources to migrate (higher socio-economic status and lower satisfaction with life) also report a significantly higher likelihood that they will (continue to) migrate in both samples. Finally, those with more diaspora connections

report a significantly higher likelihood that they will (continue to) migrate after having seen the video than those with less extensive diaspora networks – albeit it only in the full sample.

When it comes to our hypotheses, we find, in line with Tjaden (2020), that changed risk perception after having watched the video does indeed correlate significantly with a lower likelihood of (continued) migration (H6). However, this effect is only present for the full sample including Malian returnees. Above, we also found that Malian returnees report higher trust scores in the videos that Malians without a migration history and West African transit migrants. All of this suggests that information campaigns might actually be most credible and most conducive to change in migrants' behaviour and migration decision making for those respondents who have already experienced the dangers of migration first hand.

We also expected that respondents with higher risk attitudes would report a higher likelihood that they will continue to migrate after having seen the video than those with lower risk attitudes (H7). We only find a significant effect for risk attitudes when it comes to health (but not for income) (in both samples). The higher the risks respondents would take when it comes to their health (following doctor's advice), the significantly lower the likelihood that they would (continue to) migrate after having seen the video. We had hypothesized before (in the section on trust in the video) that respondents who score high on this measure are perhaps more likely to follow outside advice. This could explain why the effect of this variable is different than the literature (see Jaeger et al., 2010) suggests.

Finally, we had expected that respondents who report lower trust in the video would report a higher likelihood that they will continue to migrate after having seen the video than those who report higher trust (H8). This hypothesis is not confirmed

Discussion

Information campaigns that seek to influence migrants' behaviour and migration decision-making often fall back on gruesome images of the hardship that awaits migrants *en route* to, or once arrived in, their destination countries. The campaigns thereby depart from the logic that migrants are not aware of the risks that they will face and that they will change their minds about migration once they have been informed about these risks. The present study does indeed show that the changed risk perception after watching a video on the dangers of migration correlates significantly with a lower likelihood of (continued) migration, albeit it only when we include Malian returnees in our sample. It thereby partially confirms a number of recent IOM studies (see Tjaden, 2020) that come to a similar conclusion, but highlights a need to look more closely at the different populations that may be targeted by these campaigns.

More importantly, we find that risk perception is obviously just one of the factors influencing migrants' behaviour and migration decision-making. Possessing the instrumental and intrinsic resources to migrate also significantly correlate with a higher likelihood of (continued) migration. In addition, it is unclear how long the information campaigns' effect on risk perceptions lasts in practice – especially amidst the strong pull that these other factors may hold over people's decision-making processes. In the case of the one-minute video we showed our respondents before asking them about their migration aspirations, it may well be the case that this effect ebbed away again quite quickly.

We also find that the information video used in this study failed to increase risk perceptions in those groups that matter most, i.e. those that are more likely to migrate to begin with. Youth, respondents who are more dissatisfied with their lives, and respondents who are more prone to taking risks with their incomes (but not their health) changed their risk perceptions significantly less after having seen the video. Most significantly, those who reported lower levels of trust in the video also reported lower levels of change in their risk perceptions after having seen the video.

This brings us to a final point, namely levels of trust in EU-funded information campaigns. The video we showed our respondents was moderately trusted. An important finding is, however, that respondents with migration aspirations report significantly lower levels of trust in the video. In addition, the more diaspora connections our respondents have, the lower their trust in the video is. We also find that those who have migrated to Northern Africa and Europe before have more trust in the video than those that have not done so in the past. This confirms suggestions in the literature that it may be hard for official campaigns to compete against the narratives spun by diaspora relations and that people may be hard-pressed to believe that which they have not witnessed with their own eyes.

More generally speaking, the study has demonstrated the importance of using psychological measures, such as risk attitudes and satisfaction with life, to understand migrants' behaviour and migration decision-making. Future migration research should take De Haas's (2014, 2021) call to move beyond the simplistic vision of migration as a process driven by push and pull factors and take into account the micro-determinants of behaviour, using validated personality measures. One caveat that is in order here is that video used in this study is but part of the larger information campaigns currently being funded in Mali. Rather than extrapolating the findings of this study to the larger array of instruments being used to inform Malians and West African migrants about the dangers that await them on their way to Europe, as well at the potential avenues for success available to them in Mali, more research is needed to determine whether these larger efforts face similar challenges.

Annex 1 – 'Changed migration aspirations' across 'Current migration intention'

Results for question asked to Malians: Currently, do you intend to settle in another country, or to stay in Mali?

Table 6: Independent samples T-Test

	Statistic	df	p	Mean Difference	SE difference	Lower	Upper
	3,96	328	<0,001	1,17	0,296	0,590	1,76

Table 7: Group descriptives 'Changed migration aspiration' across 'Current migration intention'

	Group	N	Mean	Median	SD	SE
Changed migration aspiration	Stay	131	5,37	5,00	2,42	0,211
	Migrate	229	4,20	4,00	3,15	0,208

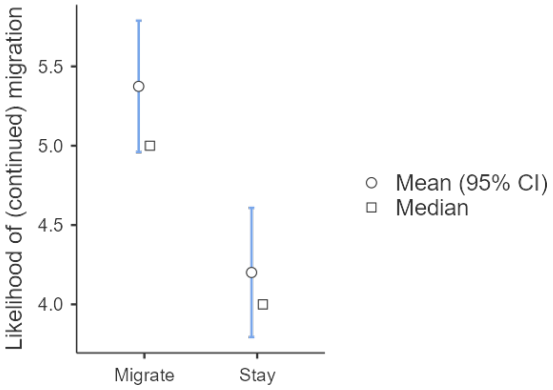


Figure 17: Currently, do you intend to settle in another country, or to stay in Mali?

Results for question asked to West African migrants: Currently, do you intend to settle in another country, to stay in Mali, or to return to your country of origin?

Table 8: One-Way ANOVA (Welch's) 'Changed migration aspiration' across 'Current migration intention'

	F	df1	df2	P
Changed migration aspiration	7,46	2	59,8	0,001

Table 9: Group descriptives 'Changed migration aspiration' across 'Current migration intention'

	Current migration intention Migrant	N	Mean	SD	SE
Changed migration aspiration	Migrate	131	6,01	2,33	0,204
	Stay	33	4,64	2,47	0,430
	Return	31	4,71	1,99	0,357

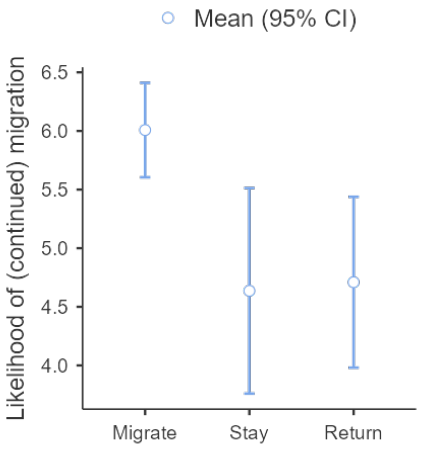


Figure 18: Currently, do you intend to settle in another country, to stay in Mali, or to return to your country of origin?

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