


Poverty and Migration: Trends and Reflections from West Africa

Research Puzzle

- Political discourse: by combating poverty, migration to richer countries will decrease (linear relationship)
- Migration scholarship: increase in income first leads to higher migration rates, which only start to decline once poverty has fallen sharply ('migration hump' theory)

Preliminary insights (qualitative)

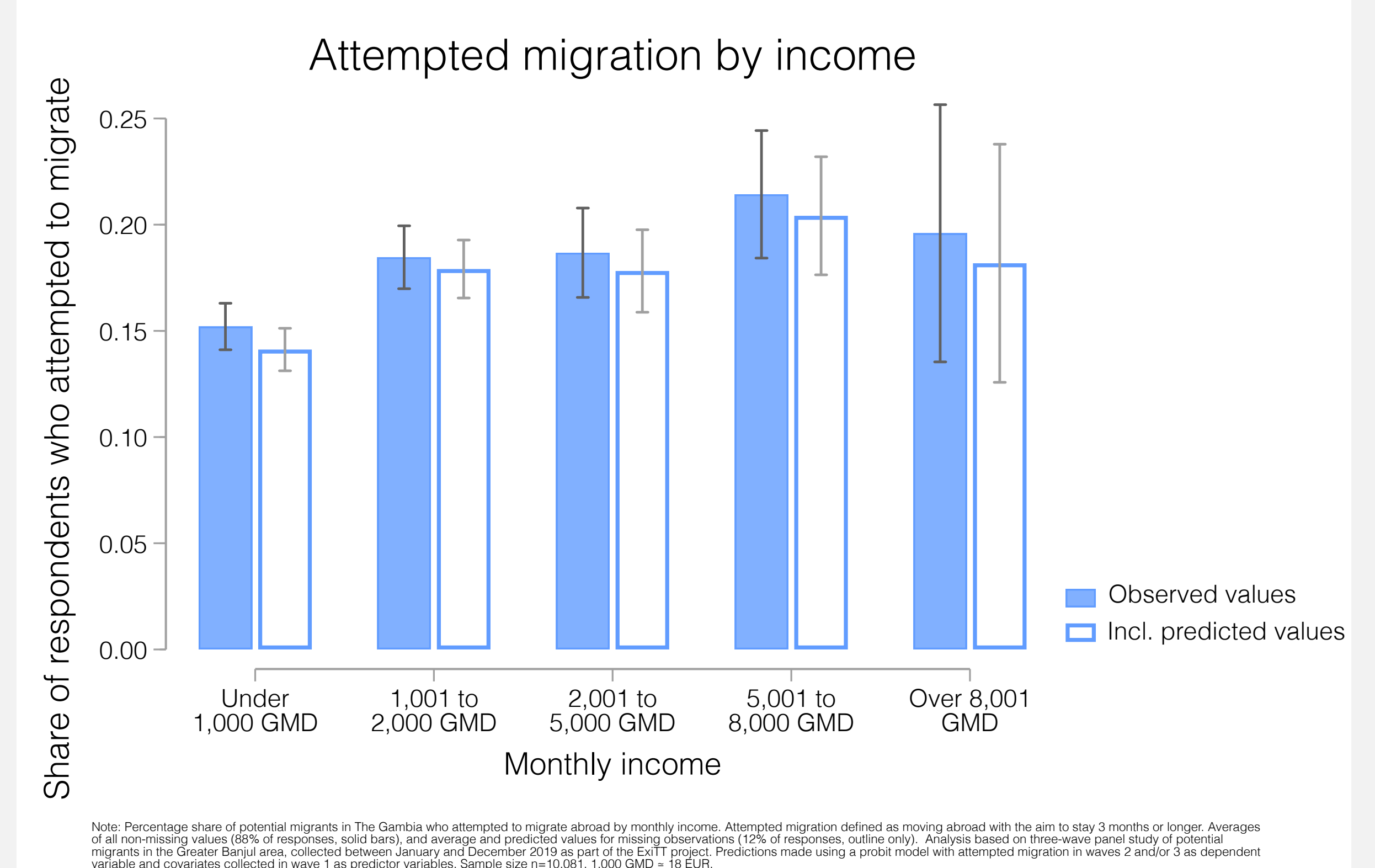
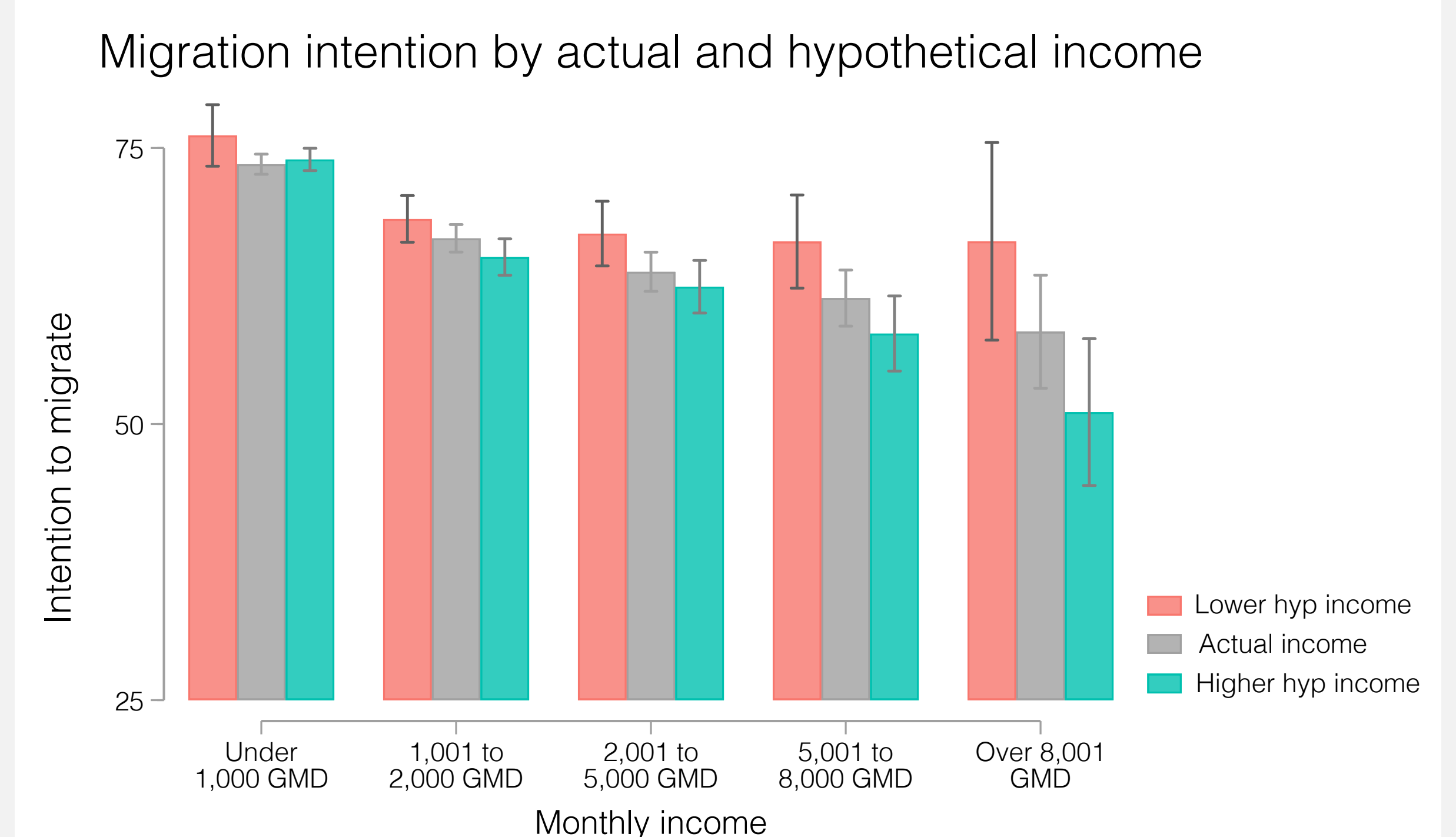
- **Sample**: 34 semi-structured interviews with potential migrants and returnees in Casamance, Senegal.
- **Migration is embedded in social values, norms and structures beyond the economic factor**: The decision to migrate includes personal motivations based on previous migration models in the community. If a migrant returns without fulfilling certain expectations, the migrant faces the threat of disapproval and stigmatization as failure.
- **Migrants exhibit high capacity for raising money**:
Many informants declared having gathered between 200€ and 500€ thanks to their social capital.
 
- **Migrants have possibilities to earn money on the move**: employments can last between a few weeks to a few years. At the same time, they are exposed to abuse and exploitation.
- **Migration is embedded in transnational dynamics**: Especially across politically unstable regions (Libya, Mali) where migrants must deal with many sources of insecurity that can exacerbate the poverty of their family back home (human trafficking prices, kidnapping-for-ransom, thievery).

Contacts:

- Judith Altrogge (IMIS), judith.altrogge@uni-osnabrueck.de
- Hamza Safouane (IMIS), hamza.safouane@uni-osnabrueck.de

Preliminary insights (quantitative)

- **Sample**: 10,000 potential migrants aged 16-35 recruited in Greater Banjul area, The Gambia. Re-interviewed after 3 and 6 months.
- **Recorded outcomes**: i) income/poverty status, ii) migration intentions, iii) change in migration attentions in response to hypothetical income changes, iv) actual migration and migration attempts
- **Findings**:



- **Key insights**: One *can't* be too poor to *desire* to migrate: negative relationship between (hypothetical) income and migration intentions. But one arguably *can* be too poor to *attempt* to migrate: positive relationship between income and migration attempts, leveling off at higher incomes. This said, even the poorest attempt to migrate at high rates.

- Daniel Auer (WZB), daniel.auer@wzb.eu
- Max Schaub (WZB), max.schaub@wzb.eu