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Migration intentions: Data from a Field Study in Albania*

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Abstract

This paper documents data about migration intentions collected through a survey conducted between September and December 2019 in the city of Tirana (Albania). The information contained in the data belongs to three main categories: (i) the socio-demographic characteristics of the subjects interviewed (ii) their migration intentions in the form of rankings of preferred destinations within Europe as well as worldwide, and (iii) measures of their risk and time preferences. The data collection involved two different approaches. First, incentivized *lab-in-the-field* laboratory games were used to elicit risk and time preferences of the subjects. Second, a randomized experiment with respect to the preferred migration destinations was used to unveil the importance of information about potential destinations when individuals rank destinations.

Descriptive statistics of the data indicate that approximately 72% of the subjects in our sample express the desire to migrate in the future. The country ranked as most preferred European destination is Germany, while worldwide the US rank first. About 57% of the subjects consider the level of earnings at destination as the most important attribute to decide where to emigrate. We find further that, when provided with official statistics about earnings at destinations, 26% of individuals change their most preferred destination. Interestingly, the data suggest that this change is twice as much prevailing for those with no intention to migrate than for intended movers. Finally, whether we provide more than just information about earnings or not does not seem to matter much.

JEL Classification: C93, C81, F22

Keywords: *Field Experiment, Data Collection, Albania, Intended Migration*

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1 Introduction

The number of international migrants worldwide amounted in 2019 to 272 million individuals. It reflects an increase of 51 millions since 2010.¹ This represents about 3.5% of the world population. Still this increase does not reflect fully the increase of migration pressures worldwide. Actual international mobility is heavily hampered by many factors, including migration restrictions embedded in immigration policies conducted by the most attractive countries for prospective migrants. A large number of individuals wishing to migrate are prevented to do so by out-selection factors. As a result, they either become forced stayers in their country of origin, or undocumented migrants in other countries. In both cases, they do not appear in official statistics of international migrants in most countries.

In order to better measure migration pressures, academic researchers as well as international organizations have relied on data capturing migration intentions rather than actual movements of people. World Bank (2018) uses migration intentions captured by the Gallup World Survey data to define the concept of potential migrants. A large academic literature has also used the Gallup data to elicit the determinants of migration choices.² While the formation of intentions is important in its own right, one important advantage of migration intentions is that they reflect true and unconstrained choices about future locations and allow to better capture self-selections factors of migration. Migration intentions turn out to be highly correlated with actual location choices and can therefore be used as predicting migration flows (Bertoli & Ruysen (2018)).

To a large extent, the empirical literature on migration intentions has used the Gallup data (GWP).³ Regarding migration choices, the GWP data provide valuable information but only about the most preferred destination (including home). A limitation of the GWP data is that the information about the most preferred destination hides some important information on other destinations that could be attractive for subjects. Also, one does not know the process leading to that choice. One of the basic

¹<https://www.un.org/development/desa/en/news/population/international-migrant-stock-2019.html>

²See among many others Dustmann & Okatenko (2014); Manchin & Orazbayev (2018); Docquier *et al.* (2014); Bertoli & Ruysen (2018); Beine *et al.* (2019)

³www.gallup.com

motivation about our field study is to shed light and eventually overcome these limitations. To this aim, we have designed and collected data through a field work survey covering 1500 subjects living in the urban areas of the city of Tirana (Albania). The data collected in the field study capture rankings of preferred destinations rather than unique choices regarding the most preferred one. One of the direct use of this type of data is to shed some light on the issue of deflection in international migration, an issue that has received recent attention in the literature.

Second, we conduct experiments allowing us to elicit some determinants of the formation of migration intentions and choices of preferred destinations. The traditional migration literature has advanced many potential motives, such as income differential across regions, relative deprivation, climate shocks at origin and social conflicts (among others Clark & Davies Withers (2007); Stark & Taylor (1989); Naudé (2010); (Feng *et al.* (2012)); Beine *et al.* (2013)). An important question is to what extent individuals value the utility associated to other factors than income. The literature using actual migration flows indeed suggests that maximizing income alone may not actually lead to utility maximization since other factors such as amenities, climate shocks Beine & Parsons (2015), culture Collier & Hoeffler (2018), marriage (Dupuy, 2018) or criminality Lundquist & Massey (2005) may additionally be considered by potential migrants. This study is contributing to this strand of the migration literature by including non-monetary characteristics in the set of potential factors.

To detect the effect of information with respect to the intended destination countries, we designed a laboratory experiment where attributes (monetary and non-monetary) were manipulated between two groups. We divided our sample of 1500 individuals into 2 random groups. A first group (the control group) was informed about the average income in their most preferred destinations. In the second group (the treatment group), subjects were given information not only about income but also about the attribute they indicated as most important besides earnings.⁴ We then asked subjects to rank again potential destinations after information was given. Comparing rankings before and after the information is revealed and between control and treatment groups allows us to pin down the importance of information about destinations in the ranking of those.

⁴See section 2 for more detailed explanation.

A final motivation for our experiments was to elicit individual preferences and to connect them with migration choices. A long-standing hypothesis in the migration literature is that individuals willingness to take risks plays an important role in the migration decision (see for instance Docquier & Rapoport (2012)). A quite recent literature has investigated whether risk attitudes influence individuals' migration decisions (Jaeger *et al.* , 2010). We included *real incentivized laboratory* games in the field to measure risk and time preferences which can allow us to test the extent to which these factors are affecting migration intentions.⁵

The purpose of this paper is to provide a set of descriptive statistics regarding the main feature of the field experiment. We focus on data regarding the individual characteristics (part 1 of the field study) and about migration choices under different schemes (part 2 of the field study). In this paper we do not report either information about the details of the games eliciting the preferences, or their evolution due to the occurrence of two large earthquakes that shook Tirana during the survey. All these details can be found in Beine *et al.* (2020).

The paper is organized as follows. In section 2 we describe the design of the sample and the collection of the data. Section 3 shows the summary statistics of main variables collected and discusses their representative degree with respect to the whole population of Albania. Section 4 gives key insights for the main outcomes of the survey related to the migration intentions. Section 5 concludes.

2 Organization of the Field Study and of the Experiments

2.1 Sample and Randomization

Data were collected in the capital of Albania, Tirana,⁶ which comprises roughly 1/3 of the entire population of the country.⁷ Albania provides an ideal setting for our study for several reasons. It is still today considered a low-middle-income country with a GDP per capita around 4078\$ per year (World Bank (2017)). It has a history

⁵See Beine *et al.* (2020) and in particular Section 2.7.

⁶The sample was drawn based on a randomization of the different divisions of city of Tirana. The main reason for sampling Tirana is that international migration occurs mainly from a big urban area of a developing country.

⁷<http://www.instat.gov.al/al/temat/treguesit-demografik%C3%AB-dhe-social%C3%AB/popullsia/>

of out-migration starting in 1990 soon after the fall of communism. It exhibits a net emigration rate averaging 3% since 2004, which is high by international standards.⁸ This is also the highest rate among European countries, in spite of the fact that it is subject to actual mobility restrictions imposed by most European countries and other developed countries.⁹ Albania is a country with a high proportion of potential emigrants.¹⁰ This situation creates favorable conditions not only for the investigation of the determinants of intended emigration but also for the factors influencing the perceived attractiveness of foreign locations.

The survey was completed in Albanian language (translated from English in Albanian and then re-translated by a third official translator). The interviews were conducted by nine trained enumerators and administrated with the use of a specific IT application, designed for the project. The application collected, in a digital way, all the information of the subjects participating to the survey.¹¹ The data collection started on August 31, 2019 and ended on December 30, 2019.

Before starting the full data collection, the survey was subject to a pilot phase in order to make sure that the questionnaire and the laboratory experiments were fully understandable by the potential participants. It was tested in subsequent steps with different subjects having distinctive characteristics in terms of age, gender and education level.¹²

The survey is structured in three different modules. In the first module, we collect socio-demographic information. The second module focuses on migration intentions, including some experiment. In the third module, we run two laboratory experiments to elicit preferences about risk and time, and we also collected stated trust preferences.¹³

⁸www.indexmundi.com

⁹Albania is neither part of the Schengen agreement nor of the European Union.

¹⁰The desired emigration rate in the Gallup data was respectively 53.8%, 55.5%, 55.4%, 49.1% and 46.9% for 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 respectively. These rates put Albania in the top 10 countries in terms of desired emigration rate on a continuous basis and by far as the top European country.

¹¹The application was created for the purpose of the study in order to collect all the info quickly and in a safe way.

¹²The pilot phase lasted one month including the training of the enumerators.

¹³For more information about the laboratory games see Section 3.

2.2 Randomization

Our sampling strategy was stratified at the level of a district, as the urban city of Tirana is composed of 11 districts called “mini-bashki.” Each enumerator was assigned to visit all the districts during the survey. In practice, each enumerator was asked to perform at most three interviews per day. A batch of three interviews could be done in only one of the 11 districts of the city, either in a morning session or in an afternoon session. To make sure that each enumerator’s interviews were uniformly distributed across districts, sessions and types of questionnaires, each enumerator was randomly assigned on each day to a district, a session, and a type of questionnaire. In total, 2,374 individuals were randomly intercepted, 1,504 agreed to participate and 1,502 completed the survey.

Upon interception, individuals were informed that they would be compensated for their time. The rewards took the form of a voucher in terms of top-up of their mobile phone. It was mentioned that, though the exact amount would depend on their answers to the laboratory games, they will be endowed with 1000Lek (8 Euros). Nevertheless, no further details about how the final amount would be determined and what type of games they will play was given at that stage. Hence, acceptance to participate does not depend on these elements.¹⁴ The interview lasted around 20 minutes on average.

One aim of the study was to evaluate how the pre-migration information about potential destinations changes the migration intentions and in particular the ranking of the preferred destinations. While expected income has been shown to be a robust determinant of the movements of people (Grogger & Hanson (2011)), recent evidence suggests that additional non-monetary factors also play a fundamental role (Beine *et al.* (2015)). Nevertheless, since individuals have limited capacities in processing complex information, they might not account fully for these additional covariates. In order to assess the extent to which this occurs, we proposed to run the following randomized experiment in our survey.

For all subjects, we first asked them to rank, by order of importance, the attributes about potential destinations in the following list: average monthly earnings, cost of living, unemployment rate, index of freedom, climate (temperature) and the size of

¹⁴The average payment for the individuals amounted to 1300Lek (10 Euros).

Albanian migrant community at destination.¹⁵ The order in which the attributes appeared in the list presented to the subjects was randomized in order to avoid framing effects when ranking attributes. Subsequently, we displayed (through a vignette) information about the actual numbers corresponding to each of these attributes for each of the chosen countries of destination. A random sample of the subjects (the control group) received only information about earnings whereas the remaining subjects (the treatment group) received additional information (on top of earnings) about their most important attribute at destination. For those subjects whose most important attribute is earnings, the additional information given refers to the second most important attribute. To summarize, depending on the treatment group, subjects randomly received the following information:

1. **Control group:** expected after-tax earnings relative to their 5 preferred destinations.¹⁶
2. **Treatment group:** expected after-tax earnings and the most important attribute besides earning relative to their 5 preferred destinations.

Table (1) presents the results of the randomization process. The table provides information by month in which the interview took place, by treatment group, by district and by enumerator. The random division of the sample in the treatment and control groups produce balanced sub-samples.

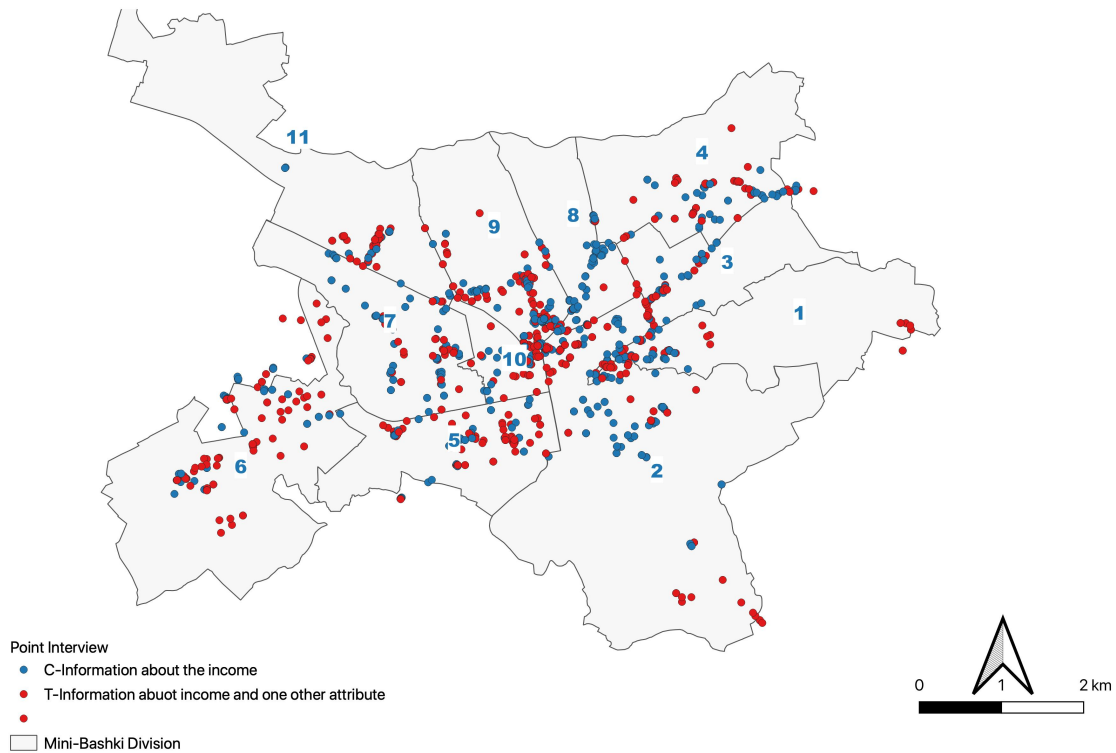
Figure (1) provides the exact locations of all the completed interviews. The figure shows that the data collection process took place in all the districts and was randomly distributed over the whole the city. The figure confirms a full coverage of the all administrative areas of the Tirana city.

One can therefore conclude from Table (1) and Figure (1) that interviews are randomly distributed across space and treatment groups.

¹⁵These attributes are considered to be the most important attributes in the decision to migrate. The choice of this list of additional covariates is based on Baláz *et al.* (2016).

¹⁶See Section 4 for a more details.

Figure 1: Distribution of the interviews by treatment and by district



3 Descriptive Statistics

3.1 Individual characteristics of the respondents

Table (2) provides descriptive statistics of the sample regarding the main socio-demographic characteristics of the subjects participating in the survey. We also provide statistics from two external sources of data for the sake of comparison. In particular, column (6) of Table (2), provides a corresponding measure drawn from various official sources whereas column (7), gives measures from the last wave of the GWP survey for Albania.¹⁷ By stratification, the sample is balanced on gender, i.e. 50% males. the average age is around 33 years old, which closely match the official average age of the entire population of Albania (Census 2011).¹⁸

Individuals in our sample have, on average, less than one child (0.79 from our ver-

¹⁷It should be emphasized that the GWP do not provide a sample matching the official population data and over-samples certain parts of the population. This is obvious with respect to gender. Furthermore, the GWP data are for Albania and not only for Tirana like in our field study.

¹⁸www.instat.gov.al.

Table 1: Randomized dimensions of field study

	Aug-Sept	October	November	December	Total
	Information exper.				
Control	177	246	198	135	756
Treated	136	274	213	123	746
Districts					
1	26	45	50	27	148
2	39	60	37	39	161
3	33	47	39	25	144
4	25	40	29	18	114
5	26	43	36	29	134
6	33	51	38	28	150
7	18	59	45	20	142
8	21	46	35	23	125
9	35	40	43	20	138
10	34	42	31	20	129
11	21	40	32	24	117
Enumerators					
1	58	66	61	16	201
2	8	43	59	39	149
3	11	24	24	40	99
4	36	57	48	12	153
5	45	55	75	25	200
6	24	58	30	38	150
7	13	88	39	10	150
8	48	52	46	54	200
9	39	61	45	55	200
Total	313	520	411	258	1502

Notes: Baseline Sample 2019

sus 0.80 in the census data),¹⁹ live in a household with 4 people²⁰ and have spent 14.1 years in schooling (versus 15.2 at census level)²¹. In the sample, 81% state being employed,²² and the average individual monthly income is 28,382 LEK (or 250 Euros).²³ Finally, 64% of the individuals in our sample declared owning a house or a land which is slightly lower than 74% at the population level.²⁴

¹⁹<https://www.statista.com/statistics/443999/fertility-rate-in-albania>.

²⁰<https://invest-in-albania.org/this-is-the-average-household-size-in-tirana>.

²¹http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/ALB.pdf.

²²http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@europe/@ro-geneva/@sro-budapest/documents/publication/wcms_167170.pdf. If we account for informal employment, the employment level should be 88%.

²³<http://www.instat.gov.al/en/themes/labour-market-and-education/wages/>. The official average monthly earnings in Albania is higher but include those employed. The average monthly income in Albania is 51,870, which is equivalent to 415 euros per month.

²⁴<http://www.instat.gov.al/al/temat/censet/censusi-i-popullsis%C3%AB-dhe-banesave>.

Table (3) shows the mean difference for each variable between the control and treatment group. On average,²⁵ the table shows clear evidence of no statistically significant differences between the two groups except for the employment status. These results are reassuring regarding the efficiency of our randomization protocol.

Tables 4, 5 and 6 show the summary statistics of some categorical variables by comparing these figures with those retrieved from the last Census in Albania (2011). With respect to the distribution of the educational level, our sample gives a very high rate of the individuals completing a University or Master degree, relative to the census data. This discrepancy may have occurred for at least two reasons; (i) the last available census (2011) does not reflect the rise in education participation that took place, at all levels, in the last decade in Albania. There indeed was a huge increase of new private Universities in particular between 2013 and 2014.²⁶ Moreover, in 2014, the Ministry of Education ordered to shut down a list of Private Universities for not being in line with the legislation and delivering “fake” diplomas.²⁷ (ii) the population of the capital Tirana is different in terms of educational attainment by construction. Indeed, most of the Universities and other higher education Institutions of the country are located in Tirana itself.²⁸

With respect to the remaining dimensions, marital status and religion, statistics from our sample are very close to the ones reported by the Census, except for divorce which can be (partly) explained by the fact that the divorce rate has been growing very fast in recent years in urban areas in Albania.²⁹

To summarize, our sample seems to be relatively closed to the population of Albania when it comes to the vast majority of the characteristics observed in our data. The data collected in our sample are reflecting population figures, supporting herewith the representativeness of our data.³⁰

²⁵We perform a t-test for checking the difference between the two groups.

²⁶<http://www.instat.gov.al/al/temat/tregu-i-pun%C3%ABs-dhe-arsimi/arsimi/>.

²⁷https://arsimi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/VKM_per_heqjen_e_licences.pdf.

²⁸Albania also had a very different system before 1990 and after the new Bologna System was implemented in 2003, http://www.ehea.info/page-full_members. Before the Bologna system, there was no Master degree in the Albanian education system, so the huge ratio of Master degree in the data comes mostly the younger individuals.

²⁹<http://www.instat.gov.al/al/temat/treguesit-demografik%C3%AB-dhe-social%C3%AB/lindjet-vdekjet-dhe-martesat/>.

³⁰All the information relative to the Census was retrieved from: <http://www.instat.gov.al/al/temat/censet/censusi-i-popullsis%C3%AB-dhe-banesave/>.

Table 2: Baseline Summary Statistics of individual characteristics

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
	Mean	s.d.	min	p.50	max	Official stat.	Gallup (2019)
Male	0.50	0.50	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.51	0.376
Age	32.91	13.09	17.00	28.00	78.00	34.50	50.98
Number children	0.79	1.16	0.00	0.00	7.00	0.80	0.718
Number people in household	3.80	1.39	0.00	4.00	12.00	3.00	3.183
Education Years	14.10	2.66	0.00	15.00	25.00	15.20	10.07 [†]
Employment Status	0.81	0.39	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.88	0.81 [‡]
Owens a house or a land	0.64	0.48	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.74	-
Individual income	28382.19	27818.83	0.00	28000.00	180000.00	29850.00	14631.75
Has ever migrated	1.21	0.41	1.00	1.00	2.00	-	-
Friends (relatives) ever migrated	0.98	0.15	0.00	1.00	1.00	-	-

Notes: All variables are from 2019 Baseline survey - (Tirana)Albania

All the Official Statistics come from INSTAT-Albania

[†] Years of education inferred from information about degrees and subject to bias.

[‡] Employment rate inferred from people participating to the labour market.

Table 3: Mean test across groups for Individual Characteristics

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
	Gender	Age	Number of Children	Household Size	Education Years	Employed	Owner House	Income	Marital Status
Control Group									
Mean	0.50	33.07	0.78	3.86	14.13	0.78	0.63	29237.10	3.29
s.d	0.50	13.24	1.11	1.35	2.66	0.41	0.48	29249.74	1.95
Treated Group									
Mean	0.50	32.75	0.80	3.74	14.07	0.84	0.64	27515.82	3.27
s.d	0.50	12.95	1.21	1.43	2.66	0.36	0.48	26280.73	1.95
t-test (p-value))	0.958	0.636	0.690	0.113	0.633	0.001	0.692	0.230	0.851
Observations	1502	1502	1502	1502	1499	1502	1502	1502	1502

Notes: All variables are from 2019 Baseline Survey

t-test is used to determine if there is a difference in the mean between the two groups

Table 4: Education Status

	Highest education degree completed		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Frequency	Prop. sample	Prop. Population (Census 2011)
No education	4.00	0.27	0.10
Primary level	18.00	1.21	1.60
Low secondary level	138.00	9.29	41.75
Upper secondary level	532.00	35.80	29.50
University	550.00	37.01	10.96
Master	244.00	16.42	0.10
Total	1486.00	100.00	

Notes: Baseline Sample 2019

Sources for column (3): Albanian Census (2011)

4 Migration Intentions

The second module of the field study is devoted to the patterns of migration intentions. To this aim, we have collected information about past experience in terms of

Table 5: Marital Status

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Frequency	Prop. sample	Prop. Population (Census 2011)
Married	622.00	41.41	51.88
Widowed	9.00	0.60	0.72
Divorced or Separated	35.00	2.33	4.86
Single	836.00	55.66	42.53
Total	1502.00	100.00	

Notes: Baseline Sample 2019

Sources for column (3): Albanian Census (2011)

Table 6: Religion

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Frequency	Prop. sample	Prop. Population (Census 2011)
Muslim	986.00	65.65	58.70
Christian Orthodox	163.00	10.85	6.75
Christian Catholic	166.00	11.05	10.03
Protestant	12.00	0.80	0.21
None	146.00	9.72	13.75
Other	29.00	1.93	5.49
Total	1502.00	100.00	

Notes: Baseline Sample 2019

Sources for column (3): Albanian Census (2011)

international migration but also about future intentions and in particular rankings of preferred destinations under various schemes: the ranking when limiting oneself to only European countries, the ranking when considering the whole world and the ranking after the enumerator had revealed some information about destination countries.

4.1 Migration intentions

Question Q1 captures the intention to emigrate and was formulated as: *Q1: Are you planning to migrate in the future?*

The answer to that is coded as a binary variable taking for value 0 if the answer is no and 1 if the answer is yes. The question is closely related to one of the Gallup question mentioned earlier.³¹ 72% of our sample answered positively to question Q1, indicating

³¹The GWP includes two questions relative to migration: intentions to emigrate permanently in the future (WP3110) and most preferred foreign destination for intended emigrants (WP3110). Therefore there is a difference with respect to GWP surveys in that we do not constraint the horizon of migration and consider desires of temporary emigration.

their intention to migrate in the future. This figure is similar to the one reported in the Gallup data.³² Table 7, which compares the proportion by gender, clearly shows no statistically significant difference between men and women.

Table 7: Emigration intentions by gender

	Observations	Percentage
Female		
No	225.00	14.98
Yes	527.00	35.09
Total	752.00	50.07
Male		
No	202.00	13.45
Yes	548.00	36.48
Total	750.00	49.93
Total		
No	427.00	28.43
Yes	1075.00	71.57
Total	1502.00	100.00

Notes: Baseline Sample 2019

4.2 Location of migrants network

We also have collected information about individuals' international network as measured by the country where most of one's relatives and friends live. Table 8 reports summary statistics. For most of the individuals in our sample, the international network is principally located in Italy, Greece coming second. These two countries are not surprising as they were the two initial favourite destinations after the fall of the communist regime in the early 90's.³³

4.3 Preferred Destinations

In contrast with the GWP survey that asks potential emigrants to state only their most preferred destination, we have collected their ranking of preferred destinations under two different schemes. First subjects were asked to answer the question:

³²Data from Gallup World Poll surveys reveal that over the 2015-2017 period, Albania was ranked fourth in the World in terms of intended emigration rate with a figure reaching 60%. Over the last three waves (2017 to 2019), the figure was close to 50%.

³³<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/wphc/Albania/04-analysis.pdf>.

Table 8: Distribution of Migrants Network

Country	country where most of the relatives lives		
	Frequency	Pct	Cumul. Pct
Italy	477.00	31.78	31.78
Greece	347.00	23.12	54.90
Germany	192.00	12.79	67.69
United States	192.00	12.79	80.48
United Kingdom	139.00	9.26	89.74
No Response	36.00	2.40	92.14
Canada	27.00	1.80	93.94
France	25.00	1.67	95.60
Switzerland	20.00	1.33	96.94
Belgium	10.00	0.67	97.60
Sweden	10.00	0.67	98.27
Austria	5.00	0.33	98.60
Netherlands	3.00	0.20	98.80
Spain	3.00	0.20	99.00
Hungary	2.00	0.13	99.13
Luxembourg	2.00	0.13	99.27
Australia	1.00	0.07	99.33
Finland	1.00	0.07	99.40
Ireland	1.00	0.07	99.47
Japan	1.00	0.07	99.53
Norway	1.00	0.07	99.60
Poland	1.00	0.07	99.67
Qatar	1.00	0.07	99.73
Romania	1.00	0.07	99.80
Russia	1.00	0.07	99.87
Turkey	1.00	0.07	99.93
United Arab Emirates	1.00	0.07	100.00
Total	1501.00	100.00	

Notes: Baseline Sample 2019

Q2: Imagine that you will have the opportunity to migrate only to one of the European countries (where you can work and live). In case you want to leave Albania, rate the first 4 countries that you would prefer to visit. Please rank them from the most preferred to the least one.

Second, we extended the set of possible destinations to the whole world and asked subjects to answer the following question:

Q3: Now, imagine that you now will have the opportunity to migrate to all the countries of the World (where you can work and live). Please rate the first 5 countries that you would prefer to go and rank them from the most preferred to the least one.

The answers to these two questions are recorded through a nominal scale. The main difference between the first and the second question concerns the change in the set of possible options (the so-called choice set in the framework of discrete choice modelling).

Tables 9 and 10 report summary statistics for the first ranked country when respectively subjects can only choose among European countries and when they are not limited to Europe. When limited to choose among European countries, nearly 44% of the sample pointed to Germany as their first destination. When not limited to Europe, the most frequent favorite destination is the USA (42%), whereas Germany shifts to the second place. For the sake of comparison, we also report in Table 10 the corresponding proportion from the last wave (2019) of the GWP survey for Albania.

Table 9: Europe Raking

	Most Preferred European Destination		
	Frequency	Percent	Cumulated Pct
Germany	476.00	44.28	44.28
Great Britain	137.00	12.74	57.02
Italy	113.00	10.51	67.53
Switzerland	70.00	6.51	74.05
France	62.00	5.77	79.81
Sweden	47.00	4.37	84.19
Austria	28.00	2.60	86.79
Norway	27.00	2.51	89.30
Belgium	24.00	2.23	91.53
Netherlands	23.00	2.14	93.67
Spain	21.00	1.95	95.63
Greece	15.00	1.40	97.02
Denmark	13.00	1.21	98.23
Luxembourg	5.00	0.47	98.70
Romania	4.00	0.37	99.07
Finland	3.00	0.28	99.35
Other	7	0.9	100
Total	1075.00	100.00	

Notes: Baseline Sample 2019.

Table 10: World Ranking

	Most Preferred Destination (Worldwide)			
	(1) Frequency	(2) Percent	(3) Cumulated Pct	(4) Gallup (pct)
USA	453.00	42.14	42.14	19.13
Germany	153.00	14.23	56.37	29.78
Canada	133.00	12.37	68.74	1.97
Great Britain	88.00	8.19	76.93	8.88
Australia	55.00	5.12	82.05	1.18
Italy	25.00	2.33	84.37	18.93
Switzerland	17.00	1.58	85.95	2.37
France	16.00	1.49	87.44	3.35
Turkey	15.00	1.40	88.84	0.59
Sweden	14.00	1.30	90.14	2.37
Norway	13.00	1.21	91.35	0.39
Austria	11.00	1.02	92.37	0.79
Japan	10.00	0.93	93.30	0
Netherlands	9.00	0.84	94.14	0.20
Spain	7.00	0.65	94.79	0.39
New Zeland	7.00	0.65	95.44	0
Belgium	6.00	0.56	96.00	0.99
Arab United	5.00	0.47	96.47	0
Denmark	5.00	0.47	96.93	0.59
China	4.00	0.37	97.30	0
Greece	4.00	0.37	97.67	4.54
Luxembourg	4.00	0.37	98.05	0.20
Brazil	2.00	0.19	98.23	0
Portugal	2.00	0.19	98.42	0
Russia	2.00	0.19	98.60	0
South Africa	2.00	0.19	98.79	0
Other	13	0.9	100	0.99
Total	1075.00	100.00		

Notes: Baseline Sample 2019.

Column (4) reports the proportion of people choosing the country as preferred destination in the GWP survey for Albania in 2019 (question WP3110).

4.4 Determinants other than income at destination

An important goal of the field study is to evaluate how the pre-migration information affects the migration intentions and in particular the ranking of preferred destinations. To this aim, the IT application we used to administer the survey was enriched with a database containing summary statistics about 8 attributes characterizing a country and considered to be essential when choosing a migration destination. We used this

database in two different ways. First, we gave to all participants the possibility to rank the 8 attributes by decreasing order of importance.³⁴ This helps us understand what information about destinations potential emigrants use in their decision-making process. The stated question is the following one:

Q4: Imagine that someone will give you the opportunity to migrate. Check the following list and rank these attributes (from the most important to the less important) in their role to decide where to emigrate:

1. Monthly Net Wage in PPP
2. Cost of living in PPP
3. Unemployment rate
4. Crime rate
5. Poverty Rate
6. Freedom and democracy indicator
7. Size of the Albanian Community.
8. Climate (temperature)

Table (11) gives summary statistics for the most important when deciding where to migrate. Nearly 57% of the sample chose monthly earnings as the most important attribute of the destination country, whereas the cost of living and freedom were listed as the most important attribute only by respectively 15% and 10% of the sample. Table (12) gives summary statistics for the second most important attribute: 37% of our sample chose the cost of living, as the second most important attribute. This reflects that in our sample, the most important pull factors are economic ones. The size of the Albanian diaspora at destination is not considered as an important attribute. This could indicate that personal ties are much more important than possible ties based on the ethnicity.

³⁴The order of the attributes was randomized in order to avoid framing effects.

Table 11: Attribute Ranked as First Choice

	First Attribute for the destination country		
	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative
Monthly Earnings	862.00	57.39	57.39
Cost of Living	223.00	14.85	72.24
Freedom	151.00	10.05	82.29
Unemployment Rate	100.00	6.66	88.95
Climate	78.00	5.19	94.14
Crime Rate	41.00	2.73	96.87
Poverty Rate	32.00	2.13	99.00
Size of Albanian Community	15.00	1.00	100.00
Total	1502.00	100.00	

Notes: Baseline Sample 2019

Table 12: Attribute Ranked as Second Choice

	Second Attribute for the destination country		
	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative
Cost of Living	554.00	36.88	36.88
Monthly Earnings	317.00	21.11	57.99
Unemployment Rate	257.00	17.11	75.10
Freedom	120.00	7.99	83.09
Climate	84.00	5.59	88.68
Poverty Rate	81.00	5.39	94.07
Crime Rate	76.00	5.06	99.13
Size of Albanian Community	13.00	0.87	100.00
Total	1502.00	100.00	

Notes: Baseline Sample 2019

4.5 Impact of information on changing first choice of location

We make use of the classification of the additional covariates to run an experiment. Using a randomization device in the IT application, we assigned individuals to either a treatment group or a control group. Depending on the group to which an individual was assigned, the application subsequently displayed, through a vignette, information about earnings (control group) and about their stated most important attribute besides earnings (treatment group) on the previously chosen destinations. We then re-asked the individuals to rank their 5 stated countries by the following question:

*Q5: You ranked 5 countries in Q4. Knowing this information that I am giving you, how will you re-rank these 5 countries?*³⁵

³⁵The application will display the 5 stated countries and will allow the enumerator to drag and re-arrange the list based on the respondent answers for the re-ranking.

Table 13 gives the proportion of individuals who change their first choice in terms of preferred location, by type of treatment. We also make a distinction between intended stayers (people ranking Albania first in question Q4) and intended movers (people Ranking Albania second or lower or not at all in question Q4). The basic statistics suggest that some additional information about destinations induces 26% of individuals to change their most preferred destination. The data also suggest that this change is more prevailing for intended stayers (43%) than for intended movers (19%). At first glance, giving additional information about some variable on top of earnings does not lead individuals to adjust their first choice more often.

Table 13: Change in most preferred destination as additional information is provided

	Individuals changing their first destination choice					
	Control		Treated		Total	
	Frequency	Pct	Frequency	Pct	Frequency	Pct
Intended Stayers	91	41.94%	96	45.5%	187	43.7%
Intended Emigrants	112	20.78%	94	17.57%	206	19.18%
Total	203	26.85%	190	25.47%	393	26.16%

Notes: Baseline Sample 2019.

Intended stayers (resp. emigrants) are individuals willing to stay (resp. to emigrate) without any information about potential destination.

5 Conclusion

We designed a field study focusing on migration intentions in a European developing country, Albania. The study was conducted in the urban areas of the capital of Albania, Tirana, in the last part of 2019. We collected 1500 valid interviews. The study was divided in three different parts : (1) individual characteristics of the subjects; (2) information about their migration intentions ; (3) elicitation of the individual parameters such as risk and time preferences.

Our sample is fairly representative of the population of Tirana, as it matches most of the characteristics found in official statistics. We collect also intention to migrate along with stated ranking preferences for 5 destination countries. We find that 72% of Albanians expressed their desire to migrate in the future. Germany turns out to be the most preferred European destination, while the US are the first choice when individuals are allowed to choose worldwide. The survey suggests that economic factors such

as earnings, cost of living and unemployment rate are the most important attributes in the decision making process. Indeed, our basic statistics suggest that some additional information about destinations lead 26% of individuals to change their most preferred destination. Interestingly, the data suggest that this change is more prevailing for intended stayers (43%) than for intended movers (19%). Finally, at first glance, giving additional information about some variables other than earnings does not lead individuals to adjust their most preferred destination more often.

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