FIELDWORK BRIEF

HOUSEHOLD SURVEY IN BÉNI-MELLAL-KHÉNIFRA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the scope of the MIGRADEMO project, this brief presents selected descriptive findings from an individual survey conducted with 1909 respondents in Morocco. The survey focused on the topics of migration experiences, migration history in the family, financial and social remittances, and socio-political attitudes and behaviours. The goal is to disentangle how remittances and migration experiences influence outlooks and behaviour on a variety of socio-political issues. Our preliminary analysis shows that migration is a common experience for many families, with nearly 60% of all respondents having at least one family member abroad. We also find that recipients of financial and social remittances are more likely to vote overall, and that respondents who lived abroad in the past - but do not receive financial remittances - demonstrate higher levels of support for gender equality.

INTRODUCTION

Both international migration and democratic development are important contemporary academic and policy concerns. Recent studies of transnational migrant practices have uncovered how migrants influence democratic participation in their homelands through the remittance of both money and newfound ideas about democracy from afar or through return. The MIGRADEMO project seeks to unpack these processes at the level of the political elite, civil society, and among households in regions of high outmigration. This brief deals with the analysis of a probability survey that was conducted in the context of this project, making an initial assessment of how return migration and the reception of financial and social remittances impact socio-political attitudes and behaviour.

THE SURVEY

Socio-demographic profile of the respondents

This survey took place in **December 2023** in the provinces of **Béni-Mellal, Fquih Ben Salah, and Khouribga**, which are part of the Béni-Mellal-Khénifra region. This region is one of the highest migrant-sending regions in the country, with an estimated 14.9% of Moroccan citizens residing abroad coming from there (Haut -Commissariat au Plan, 2020). It holds special importance originally come from Béni-Mellal-Khénifra (Haut-Commissariat au Plan, 2020). The main destinations for these migrants are currently Italy and Spain (Haut-Commissariat au Plan, 2020).

This probability survey is based on a **multi-stage stratified random sampling design.**

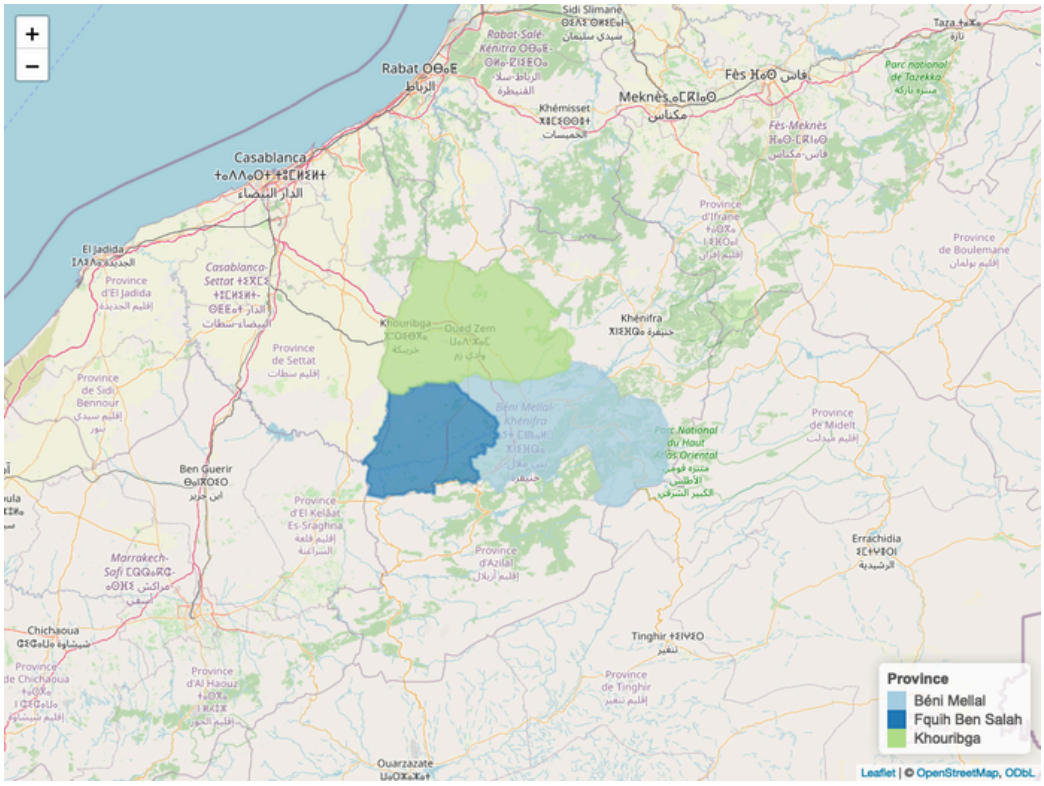

Fig. 1. Location of the provinces of Béni-Mellal, Fquih Ben Salah and Khouribga on the Moroccan map

A total of **1909 interviews** were conducted, with equal distribution between the three provinces. The sampling included stratification at the provincial and urban-rural levels, as well as an oversampling of the interviews in the municipalities/communes with the highest levels of immigration. The allocation of the interviews was made with **probability proportional to population size (PPS)**, meaning that the probability of selecting a municipality/commune was as high as its population size. This ensured that larger municipalities/communes also had a larger contribution to the sample. The survey was preceded by a pilot conducted a few weeks earlier in the same provinces and carried out by the Global for Survey and Consulting company (GSC).

Questionnaire

The survey questionnaire was developed by the MIGRADEMO team to cover a range of topics related to migration. These topics include the **migration history of the respondents and their families, as well as questions about financial and social remittances, social-political attitudes, and behaviours**. It also includes two vignettes and two list experiments on the topics of **financial and social remittances, corruption, and vote-buying.**

PRELIMINARY OUTCOMES

Socio-demographic profile of the respondents

A total of **1909 people** participated in the survey, corresponding to a **response rate of 94.88%**. The collective profile of the respondents is quite **balanced in terms of gender**, with 45.1% of the respondents being women and 54.9% men. The median age is **38**

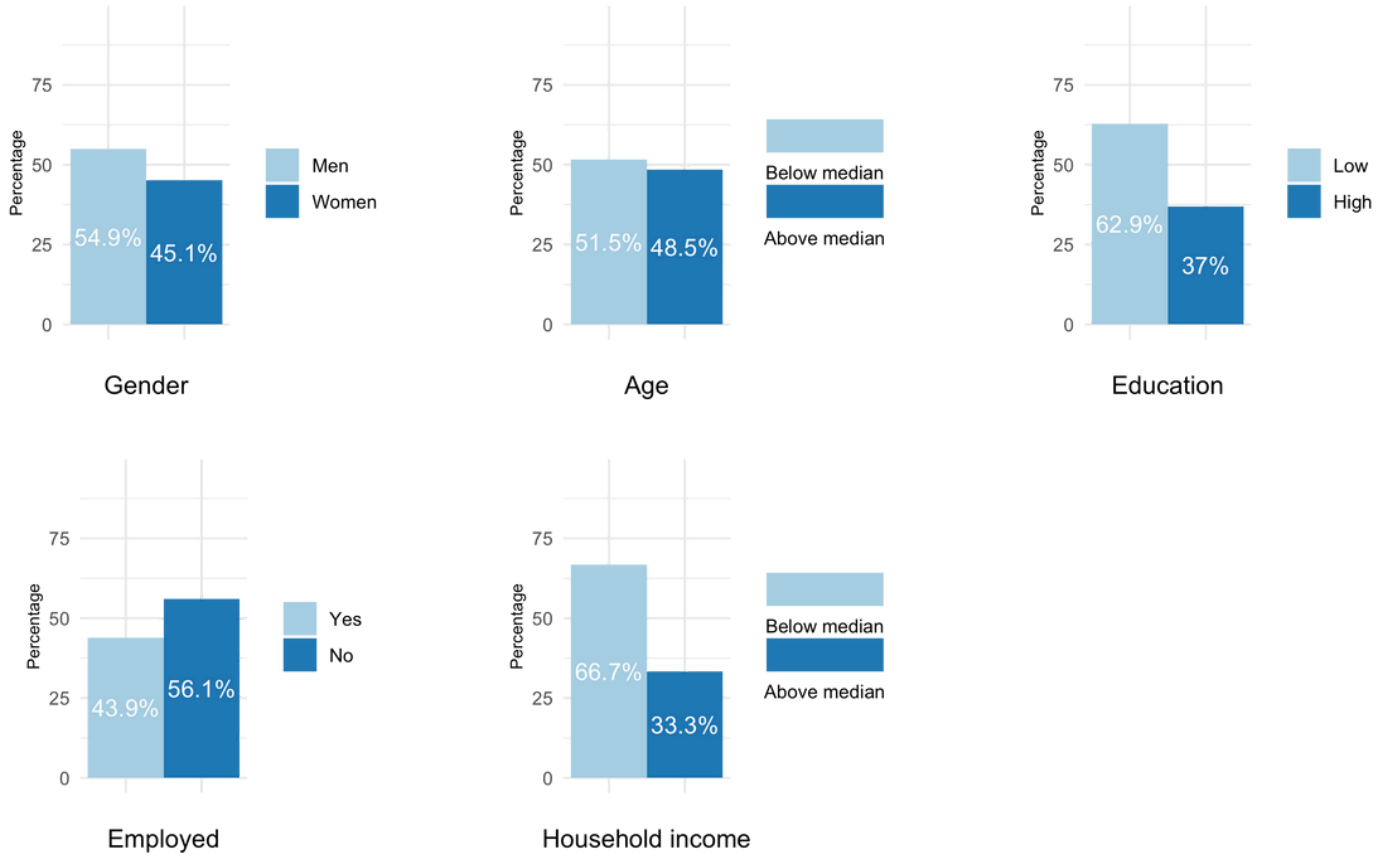

Fig. 2. Demographic characteristics of the respondents

years old, and the level of education is on the lower side, with 62.9% of the respondents having reached a level of education lower than high school. Moreover, 56% of the participants are unemployed and 66.7% have a monthly household income below the median range of **2,501 - 3,500 DH**, equivalent to between 250€ and 350€ a month.

Fig. 3. GSC team members in one of the communes of Béni Mellal-Khenifra. On the wall behind them, it reads "Migration is an idea, and ideas never die".

Migration profile of the respondents

Most of the respondents who answered the survey declare having no prior migration experiences themselves - only **23.1% of the respondents had lived in another city in Morocco** in the past, and only **6.7% had lived abroad**.

However, **a considerable proportion of the households surveyed have migrant links**. The respondents have at least one immediate family member (31.59%) or extended family member (49.82%) abroad. In total, most of the research participants (59.6%) had at least one member from their immediate or extended family abroad at the time of the survey. The figures corresponding to the returned family members are lower: only 10.1% of the interviewees have at least one immediate family member who has returned from abroad; 11.1% of the respondents have at least one

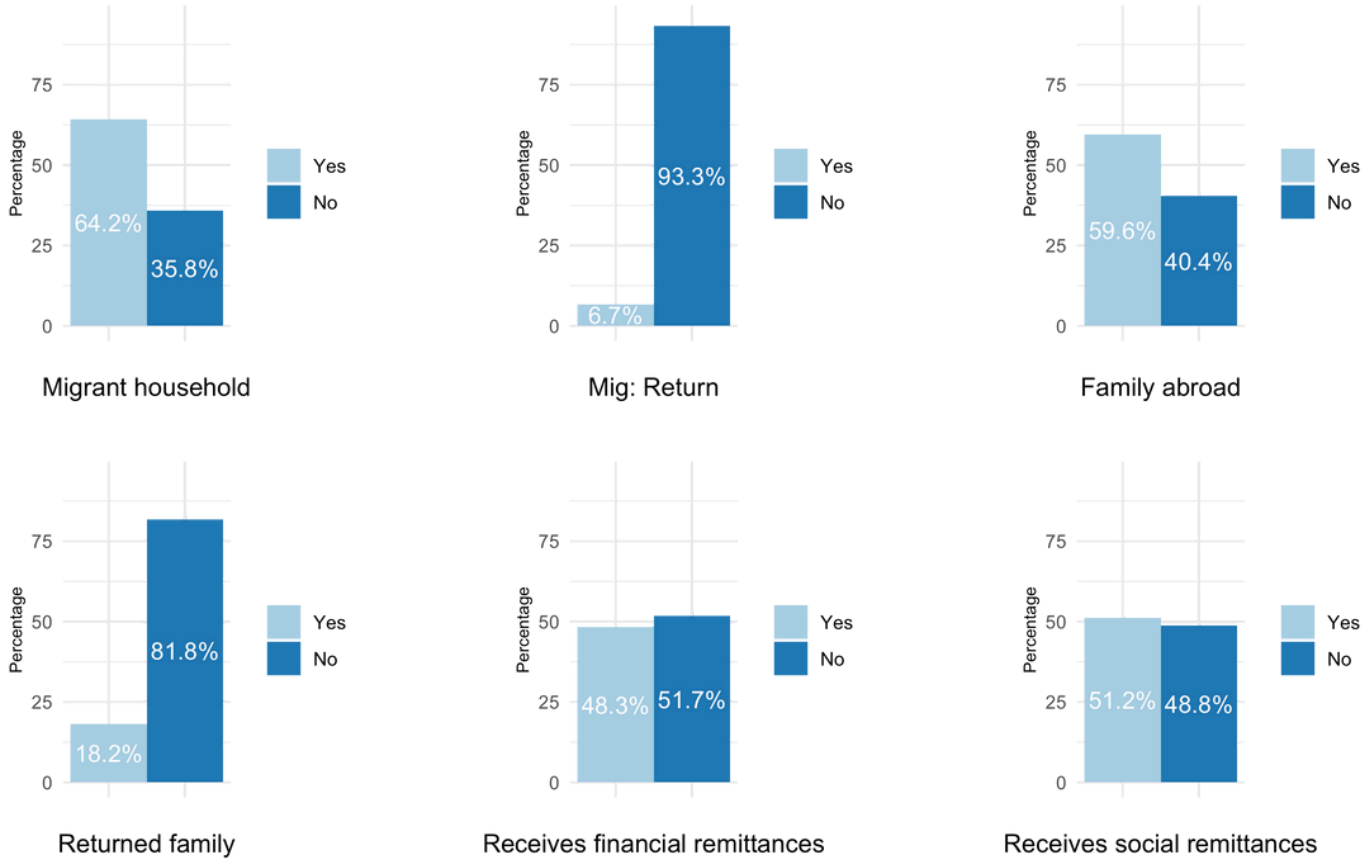

Fig. 4. Migration profile of the respondents

returned extended family member; 18.2% have at least one family member overall who has returned from abroad. Altogether, **64.2% of the interviewees belong to what we refer to as a "migrant household"**, which means that they live in a household that has one or more family members currently residing abroad or who have returned.

Financial and social remittances are quite present in the relationship between the respondents and their families. Among those who have family members abroad, **48.3% declare that they receive money from them**, with 47.5% receiving more than 1500DH a month (140€).

Regarding social remittances, most of the respondents with family abroad say **they are currently in regular contact with them (88.9%)**, with half of them communicating either daily or weekly (50.2%). Besides, a large percentage of the respondents stated that they have discussed social or political issues with their family members abroad. Around 51.19% of those who kept in touch with their family always, frequently, or at least occasionally discussed themes such as economics, environmental protection, gender equality, or politics.

Social-political attitudes

When analysing the relationship between the respondents' experiences with migration and their social and political attitudes, it is possible to identify some differences between those who have migration experiences and receive financial and social remittances, and those who do not. Here are some examples at a descriptive level.

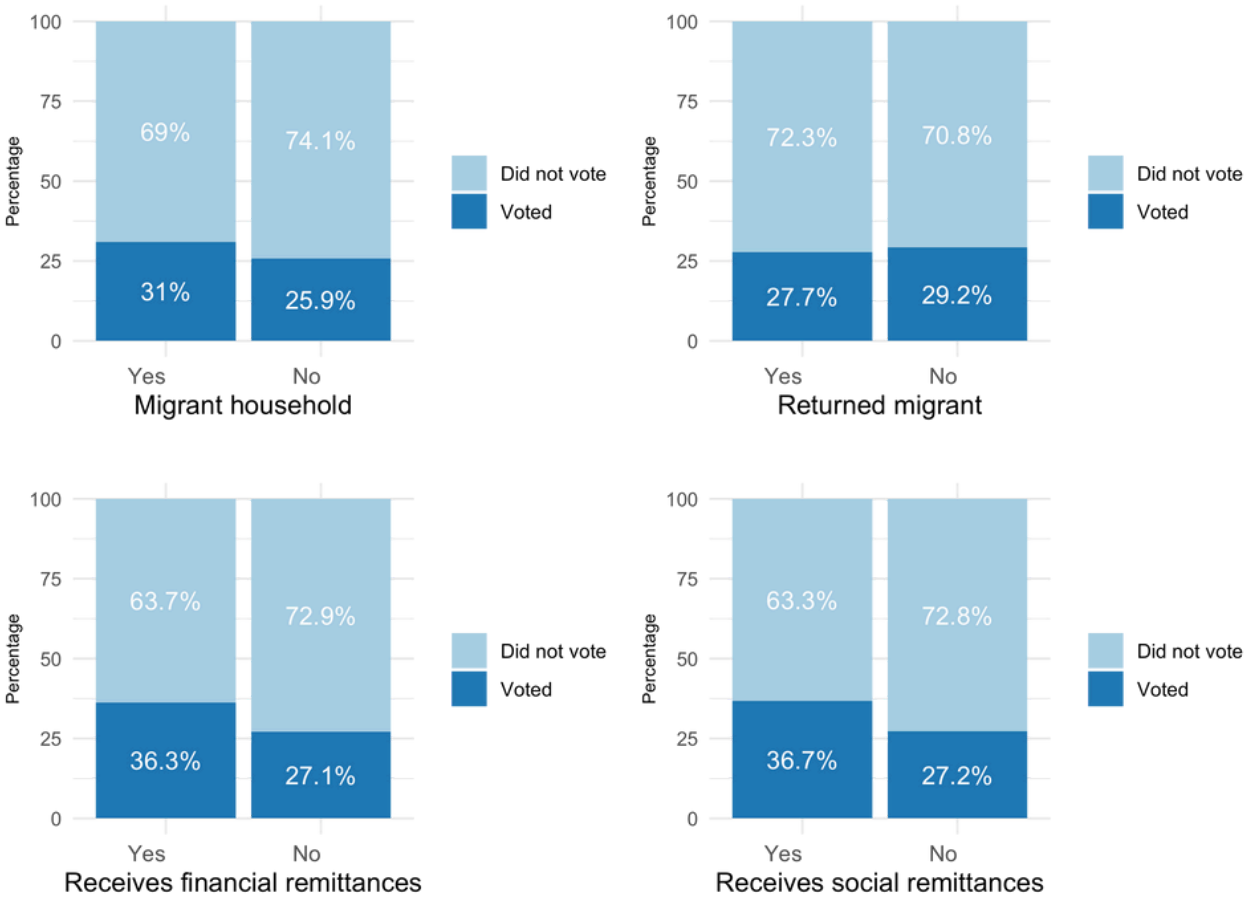

Fig. 5. Group differences in turnout in the 2021 local elections

Turnout in the 2021 Moroccan general elections was more or less the same regardless of whether the respondent belonged to a migration household was a returned migrant or received financial and social remittances.

However, **differences can be observed in terms of the 2021 local elections**. On one hand, those from a migration household voted at a higher rate than those who did not - 31% compared to 25.9%. On the other hand, those who receive financial remittances also voted at a higher rate - 36.3% compared to 27.1%. Similarly, those receiving social remittances had a higher turnout than those who did not, with 36.7% having voted in these elections compared to 27.2%.

When analysing the attitudes on gender equality of the respondents at a descriptive level, there are not as many differences between the different groups. Those that stand out the most when asked about whether men are better leaders than women are the respondents who receive financial remittances - 46.7% of the respondents who receive financial remittances agreed that men were better leaders than women, compared with 37.1% of those who receive nothing. Nonetheless, support for the promotion of gender equality is higher among respondents who have lived abroad in the past (46.3%) versus those who have not left the country (39.2%).

Finally, there are different perspectives on environmental protection among the respondents. When asked whether the environment should be a priority over economic growth, respondents living in a migrant household (60.4% vs. 54.3%), returned migrants (64.4% vs. 58%), and respondents who receive financial remittances (60.4% vs. 56.8%) prioritize protecting the environment to

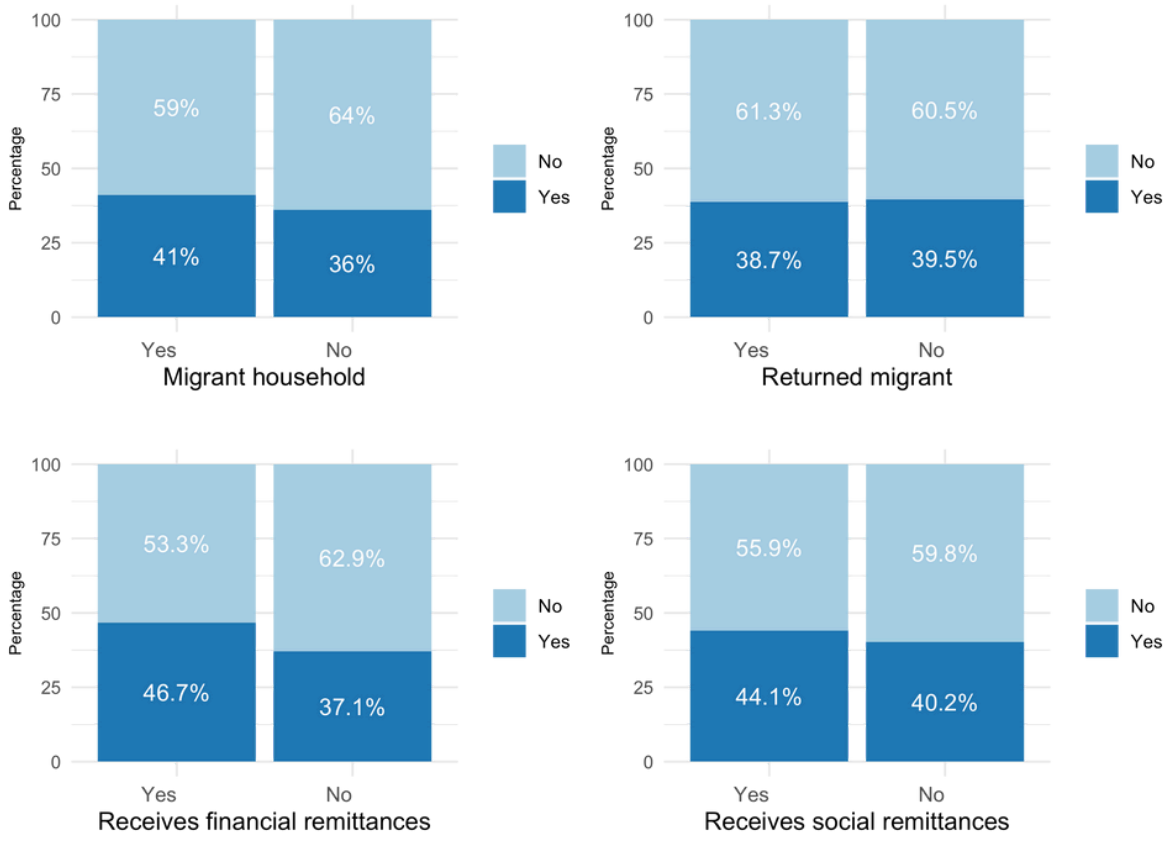

Fig. 5. Group differences when asked whether men are better than women in government

a greater extent than those who do not. However, when it comes to recycling, the trend is not as clear. It appears that respondents who have lived abroad in the past claimed to always recycle (14.5%), compared to those who have not (7.9%). On the contrary, those who receive financial remittances also reported a higher rate of not recycling compared to those who do not (44% versus 37.5%).

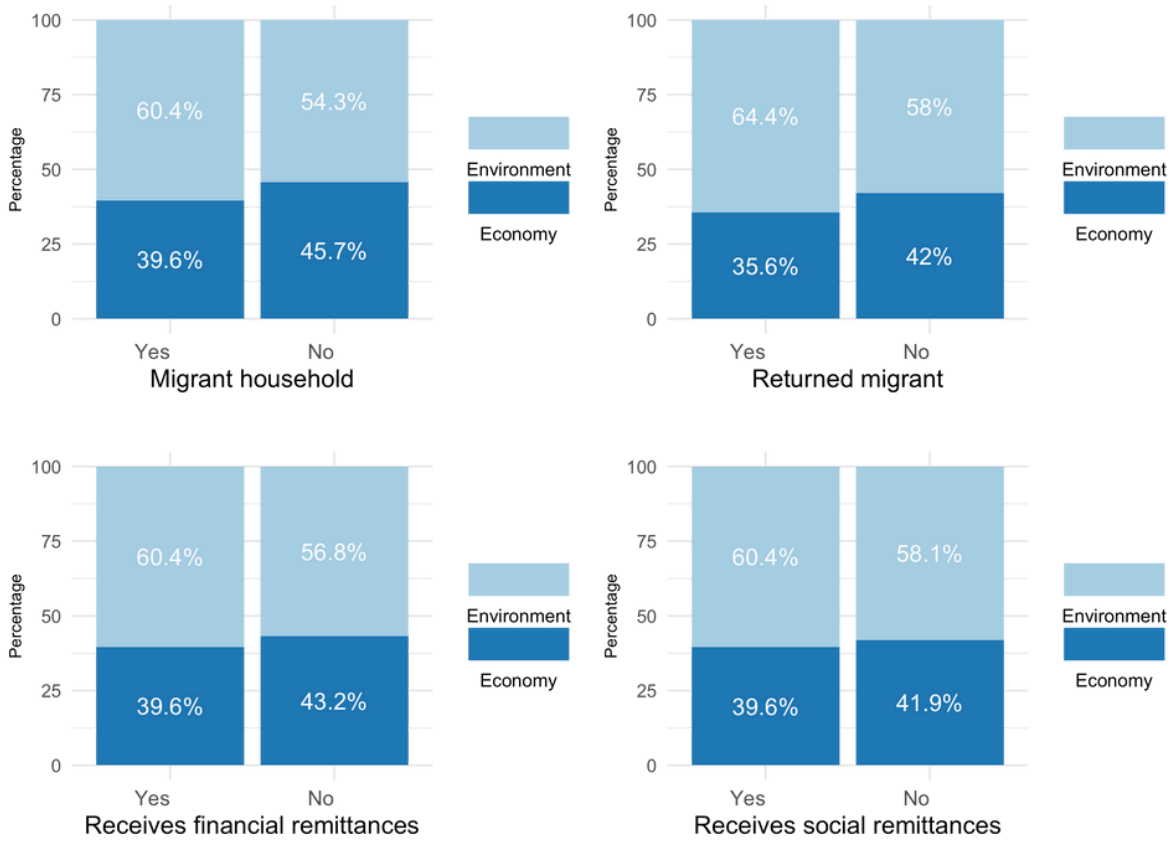

Fig. 6. Group differences in environmental protection

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Haut-Commissariat au Plan Maroc. (2020). *La migration internationale au Maroc – Résultats de l'Enquête Nationale sur la Migration Internationale*. Haut-Commissariat au Plan.

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