

# **Internal migration of unemployed women and men in Tunisia: a traditional model of migration in a transitional society**

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## ***Introduction***

A large literature has shown the link between employment and migration (Sjaastad, 1962; Todaro, 1969; Lambert, 1994). According to this theoretical framework, migration is largely related to the economic requirements. It concerns in general young people who are looking for a job. Thus, the decision of migration is an individual rational decision based on economic model "cost-gains". But, the gradual increase of female migration raises many questions about the effect of gender relations on migratory behaviors of women and men. Thus, many studies show that migration couldn't be explained only by the economic model and they highlighted the role of gender relations on migration decision (Cook, 2003, Como e, 2006). Our work is focused on internal migration of unemployed persons, women and men. The main objective is to study how gender relations influence the migration probability of unemployed persons, in order to better understand the migratory patterns of men and women, in Tunisia. By analyzing the macro and the micro departure conditions of the migrants, men and women, in particular the economic context, we will try to explain the influence of gender relations on the migration decision (migrate or not and migration reasons). We will try through our work to see **who migrate? And, for which reasons women and men migrate?**

## ***Socio-economic Development in Tunisia***

Since independence Tunisia, has known important economic and social changes. In economic terms, it has been engaged in a continuous process of reform. Three major policies were adopted successively: the program of structural adjustment, privatization and liberalization. On the social level, employment, education and the equality between men and women have been the first priorities of the decision-makers. Several measures were adopted to define a pertinent educational system assuring skilled human resources fulfill the requirements of the national and the international labor market. Thus several programs were implemented in order to promote the employment in particular women's work such as the national program of employment 21-21 and the micro credit program. Following these efforts, promoting education, especially that of women, was one of the great advances in the last forty years. Hence, during the post-independence period, the improvement of the education in particular

for girls was fast and remarkable. Currently, the schooling rate of the girls is almost total and their presence in the various cycles of education is equal and sometimes greater than that of the boys; the rate of schooling for the girls 6-16 years old is 99% in 2007 (source NIS<sup>1</sup>) and the girls represent today 59% (source NIS) of the students in Tunisia in 2007. Moreover, women's emancipation and their integration in the development was also the main political objective. Thus due to these political orientations the presence of women were increased in all the fields, in the political life as well as in the economic one; they represent, in 2004, 29% of the magistrates, 31% of lawyers, 34% of the journalists, 42% of the doctors, 40% of the academics, the rate of women is 21% in the public sector (source NIS 2004) ... However, these advances hidden some deficiencies which demonstrate the persistence of inequality between men and women and the precarious status of women in Tunisia. The illiteracy rate among adult women remains high (the illiteracy rate of the women aged 15 and more is 35 % in 2004 (source NIS 2004)). In addition, gender inequalities in the labour market persist. The participation rate of women in 2004 is 24% (it is only 1 / 3 of that of men), the unemployment rate is 13.1% for men against 17.3% for women and the number of job creation, for men, is 56200 against only 17600 for women (source NIS 2004).

In parallel, internal migration become more and more important. The proportion of migrants inside the country compared to the total of population has increased from 3.3% in 1994 to 4.5% in 2004. This evolution of migratory flows which were in context of strong unemployment pressure demonstrates the link between the economic situation and migration and illustrates the fact that migration represents a chance to find a job. However the migration for economic reasons concerns mainly men and the participation of women is quite limited. In 2004, 49 % of internal male migration was for economic reasons. In contrast 70% of women have migrated inside the country to join the family or the spouse and only 14% migrate for economic reasons.

### ***Data and methodology:***

Our data is a sub-sample from the National Survey of Population and Employment (NSPE 2005-2006) contains 27,904 households (43% of the total sample which allows us to interview more than 126,000 people). This sample was selected to be interviewed twice for two successive years (2005 and 2006) which allows us to measure the migration that took

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<sup>1</sup> NIS: National Institute of Statistic

place during one year (between 2005 and 2006) as well as the socio-economic characteristics of the migrants before their migration.

The objective of this work is to explain the probability to migrate and the principal migration reasons of women and men. So, it is necessary to take into account many factors such as marital status, educational attainment, professional qualifications, financial autonomy (...). Also, it's recognized that the factors related to living conditions, financial situation and the previous place of residence are important elements which influence migration decision. To take into account the gender effect we create some variables such as sex-ratio in the household, presence of grand parents, level of education of the head of household (...) Our analysis is based on a comparative approach between men and women according to the different socio-economic factors. We developed a descriptive analyses based on graphs and cross tables between the dependent variables and the explanatory variables. And a multivariate analysis based on logistic regression and Principal Component Analysis to explain the migration probability and the migration reasons.

### ***Results:***

Our results show that women migrations face social and cultural constraints. It is accepted when it is done in tolerable social context, whereas men benefit from the positive discrimination of the society. Migration of women and men is influenced by the tradition and the social values that determine the roles of women and men. Indeed, even if they are unemployed women migrate mainly for family reasons and their probably to migrate for economic reasons is very low comparing to men. According to the traditional role of women and men, the economic migration concerns mainly the men who must migrate to find work to satisfy the family needs, while women migrate for family reasons.

The traditional values played an important role in the decision of migration of women and men in Tunisia. Indeed, even if they are unemployed women migrate mainly for family reasons. Their probably to migrate for economic reasons is very low comparing to men. Migration decision and the type of migration of both sexes are controlled by their social roles defined by their society of origin. A high level of education or professional experience does not have an important effect on the migratory behavior of women if the gender roles are defined by traditional social and cultural norms.

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