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Migration decision in the Maghreb: which difference between women and men?

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Résumé: *Migration's phenomenon in the Maghreb became more and more extensive. The migrations of women increase showing a significant improvement of their status. However, women and men do not migrate under the same conditions. The main objective of this paper is to study how gender relations influences the migration decision in order to better understand the migratory patterns of men and women, in the Maghreb. By analyzing the socio-economical and educational depart conditions of the migrants - men and women- we tried to explain the influence of gender relations on the migration decision. Using MIREM data (2007) we developed descriptive and spatial comparative analysis between women and men and simple logistic regressions to explain the decision of migration in particular the main reason for migration.*

Key words: migration international, Maghreb, gender, migration decision

The first investigations on migration are based primarily on economic explanations. This theoretical approach aims to explain labor migration and it defined the decision of migration as a rational choice based on the "cost-gain" (Sjaastad, 1962) independently of the individual characteristics of those who migrate. Since 1980, following a significant integration of women into the labor market and the gradual increase of female migration, numerous studies have highlighted, at the same time, the importance of female migration and the role of gender relations on migration behavior of both sexes. Indeed the importance of female migration has raised several questions about the influence of gender relations on the migratory patterns of men and women. Migration is analyzed in a broader approach that takes into account not only the economic aspect but also the social, institutional, family and personal framework, which is greatly different from one individual to another and from one society to another (Zlotnik, 2003). The undertaken studies showed that the roles, the relations and gender inequalities influence the migration decision of men and women and determine who migrates and for which reason (Oishi, 2002; Piper 2005). The two sexes do not have the same conditions, the same constraints and the same possibilities to migrate and they have two different migration patterns (the United Nations, 1995; Pailhé and Solaz, 2007). This difference in behavior is strongly related to their status within the household that influence directly or indirectly their power and decision-making autonomy and determines their expectations and their migration strategies (Hugo, 1993, song, 1992). Indeed, the migration patterns of men and women depend on their position within the household (daughter, wife, mother, or head of household), the distribution of resources and negotiations between the household members (Trager 1988) (Curran, 1996; DeJong et al. 1995).

A quick overview on the statistics of emigration in the countries of Maghreb shows quantitative and qualitative differences between men and women. These differences reflect gender inequalities which should be analyzed especially in societies which are currently live big changes and have made important steps towards gender equality.

The states of the three Maghreb countries have shown political will for the integration of women in the sustainable human development. Several measures have been implemented on all levels in particular in the social and economical areas. These policies aimed to improve the situation of the women and to enhance their powers and their capacities in the different areas. Following these efforts, the promotion of female education was one of the great advances in recent decades. In addition, the empowerment of women and their integration in economical development was one of the principal political objective that resulted an increased presence of women in the political and economical activities. Thus, significant socio-demographic changes have occurred in recent decades: the fertility rate has declined, the size of the family has reduced the age at first marriage has declined, the age differences between spouses are reduced and the participation of women in migration is more and more important. All

these socio-demographic changes show the promotion of the women situation.

However, this progress, while real, hidden deficiencies that attest to the persistence of inequality between men and women and the precariousness of women in the Maghreb. Moreover, the involvement of women in economic activity remains limited: the activity rate for women is very low compared to men and the unemployment rate for women is higher than that of men irrespective of their level of education and especially for those with higher education. Moreover, women occupy low-paid jobs and they represent only a small proportion of entrepreneurs. Thus, the evolution of the woman is confronted by a socio-cultural heritage against the emancipation and gender equality.

This discrimination is confirmed and transferred by the family, the school, the media (...). - the school system continuous to reproduce the sexual prejudices through the examples contained of the school handbooks (Bouchoucha, 2008) - the current statute of the women still depends on an immutable cultural heritage which was observed in particular on migration behaviors. Indeed, until today the migration of the men and women is influenced by the traditional model of the family. According to the traditional social model, women migration is developed only if it's done for socially acceptable reasons (migrate to join the family or for marriage)

Migration is a phenomenon in North Africa which has not ceased to grow (Maghar, 2007; Fourati, 2006; Hammouda, 2007). In Algeria, the statistics of the police force of the borders showed an increase in the national output (from 1 million in 2000 to 1,5 million in 2005). In Morocco, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation has recorded more than three million Moroccans resident in other countries. In Tunisia, actually there's in average 30 000 emigrants every year for a population of 10 million habitants. This emigration concerns primarily young people and it is explained mainly by the low standard of living, unemployment and the lack of the job opportunities. Also, this emigration is explained by the social constraints imposed by the society of origin which lead young women and men to leave the country and to search for more open space and a new lifestyle.

The migration was a phenomenon which concerns exclusively the men. However, today, the female emigration is more and more important. Nevertheless, we observe a quantitative and qualitative difference between men and women on the level of the emigration. Indeed, although, the desire of emigration is high at both sex (Hammouda, 2008; Sadiqi, 2007; Fourati 2008), the men migration is more important comparing to women. In addition, although women are increasingly likely to leave, their participation in economic migration remains relatively limited. The migration of women is mainly developed in family setting (join the family, marriage) while men migrate mainly for economic reasons (looking for work, improvement of living conditions)

I. Migration Reasons, the differences between women and men:

1. Data and methodology :

We used MIREM survey data. This survey is realized in 2006 by “Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies (Florence, Italy)”. The main objective of this study is to analyze return-migration in three countries of the Maghreb are Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia (Cassarino, 2007). The survey was conducted among 992 individuals, men and women. The sample was divided in a uniform way between the three countries (332 for Algeria, 330 to 330 for Morocco and Tunisia). The study made it possible to collect information on the socio-economic situation (age, marital status, the household structure, education and the qualification, the professional situation, etc) of the migrant. The information collected cover the different stages of their migration: the conditions before migration, migration experience in the principal country of migration and finally the return to country of origin and the post-return condition.

We explain in this study the principal migration reasons of women and men. For that, we refer to the following question “*what is the principal reason for your migration?*” And referring to the conceptual framework presented above, we define a set of independent variables could explain the migration reasons. 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. But we don’t have a concrete indicator that can measure the effect of social norms and family on the decision of migration. Indeed the questionnaire contains several questions about the condition before migration but we do not have information concerning social and familial context. And there aren’t questions which allow us to analyze the relationship between women and men and the gender relations within households and / or in society in general. But we suppose that the explanatory variables presented below, are controlled by the family and the social standards.

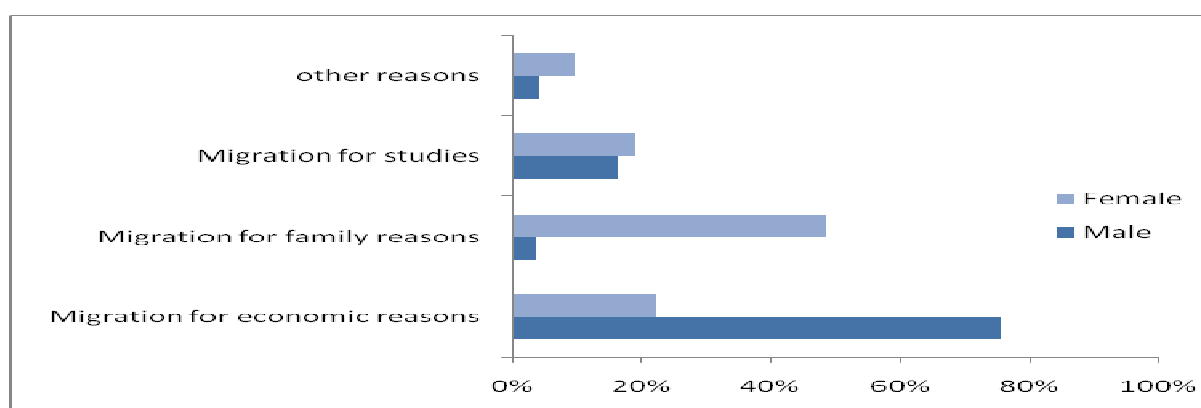
Our analysis is based on a comparative approach between men and women according to the different socio-economic factors. The aim is to study the link between socio-economic conditions and the migration reasons as well as the differences between women and men in the decision to migrate. We developed in this part of analyze descriptive analyses based on graphs and cross tables between the dependent variables and the explanatory variables. We chose a set of socio-economic variables sex, marital status, level of education and activity. We chose the variable marital status to measure the constraints or the opportunities of being single or married and to analyze whether the migratory behaviors of men and women are influenced by their marital status. Also, we selected the variable level of educational to study the effect of education on

migration behaviors. We consider that the educated women have more decisional power and they are more likely to migrate for economic reasons. Concerning the economic aspects, we chose two variables to measure the financial autonomy of the migrants are the access to the labor market before migration. These variables are not concrete indicators to measure the effect of gender relations but we assume that they are determined according to the family and social norms.

2. Results:

More than 75% of men have migrated for economic reasons, against only 22% of women. Female migration is dependent on their families. They migrate primarily for family reasons (to marry or to join their spouses or their families (Figure 1).

Graph 1: Migration reasons of women and men in the Maghreb

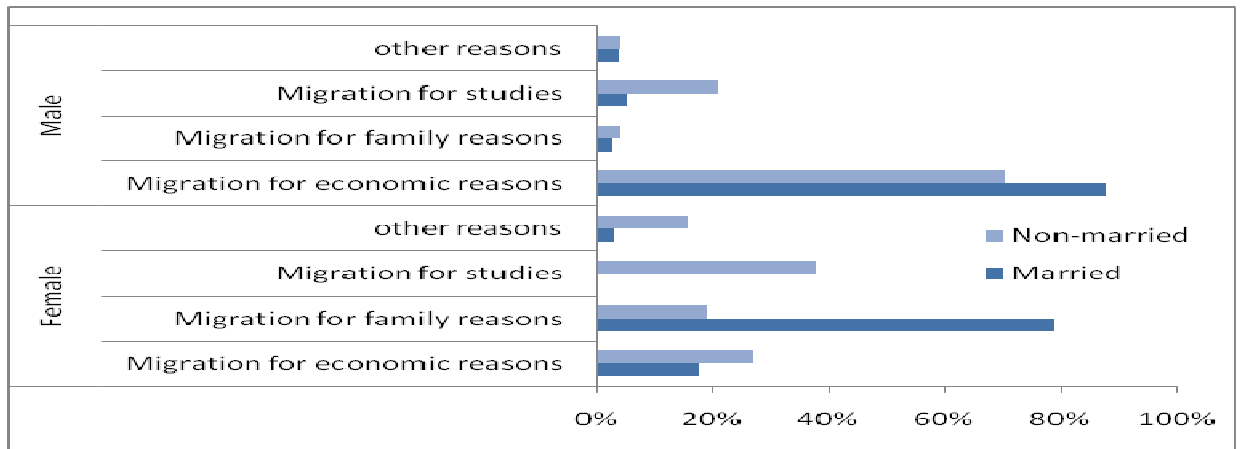


MIREM, 2006

These differences between women and men show that the reason for migration is mainly related to the roles of the two sexes. The main reason for migration is an indicator of social roles of women and men. Indeed, according to the traditional division of male and female roles, men migrate to find a job and the women join them in the future to ensure her role as a wife.

The majority of women (61%) and men (57%) interviewed have migrated in the age group 20 - 30 years. Migrants, especially men, are usually single. 2 / 3 of men who migrate are single 50% against women. Whatever their marital status, male migrations are mainly for economic reasons. And this reason is even more advanced when they are married (Figure 2). These initial descriptive results reveal that the autonomy of women in migration is not yet effective. However, unmarried women have a different migratory behavior. They migrate for study (24 women out of 54, or 44%, migrate to continue their studies). Also, they migrate for economic reasons more than married women.

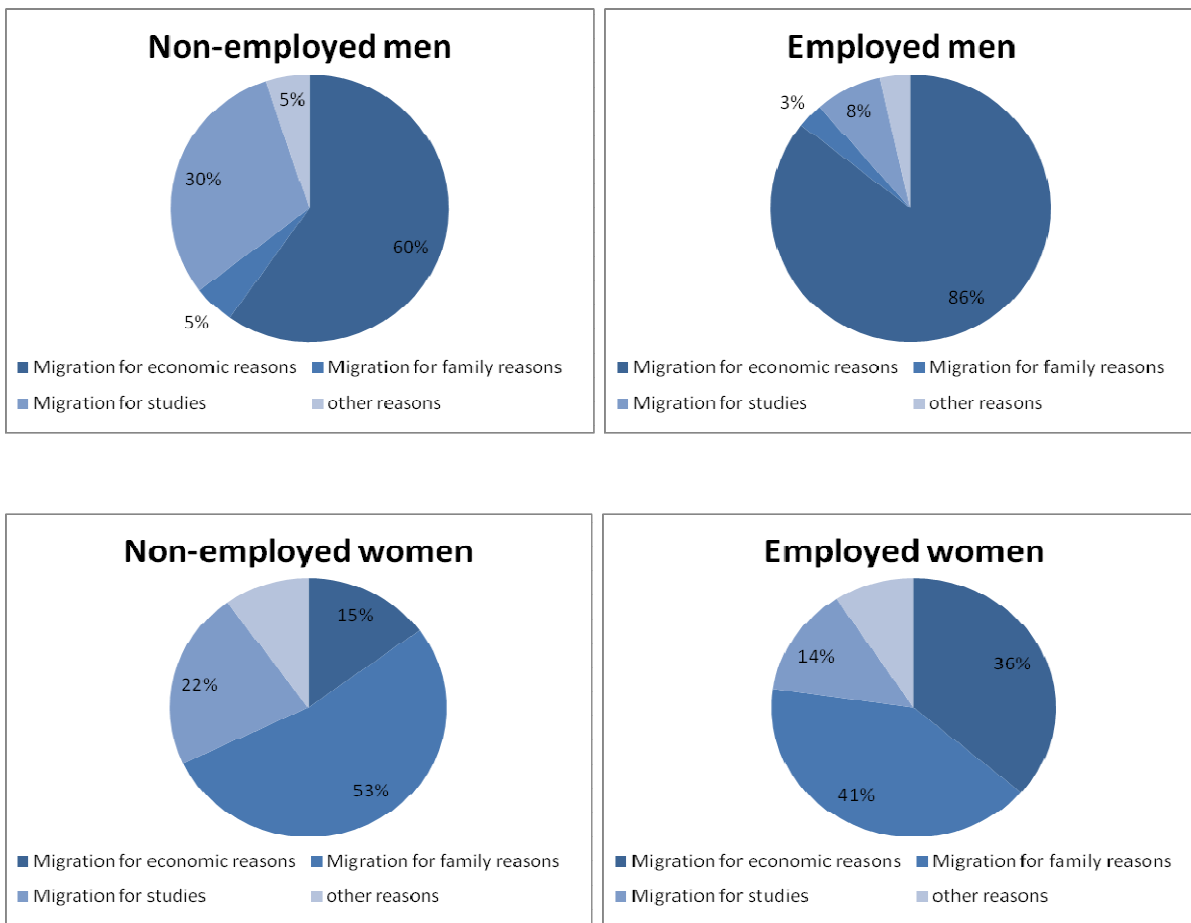
Graph 2: Women and men according to their migration reasons and their marital status before migration



MIREM, 2006

Whether employed or not, the proportion of men who migrate for family reasons is low. 86% of employed men migrate for economic reasons, certainly in the hope to improve their situation (Table 1). Nevertheless, the migration for studies is relatively high among the non-employed (30%). The migratory behavior of men is the same independently to their statute of origin, except of course the case of students who migrate mainly to continue their studies. Thus, we should mention the importance of the migration of unemployed persons (16.4% of male interviewed were unemployed before migration). However, women migrate primarily for family reasons, whatever their statue of activity. 41% of working women and 53% of non-employed women has migrated for family reasons. Thus it is clear that having a pre-migration activity may increase the likelihood of an economic migration, but it does not have a significant effect on migration reasons. Moreover, Migration for education is important among non-employed women (22%).

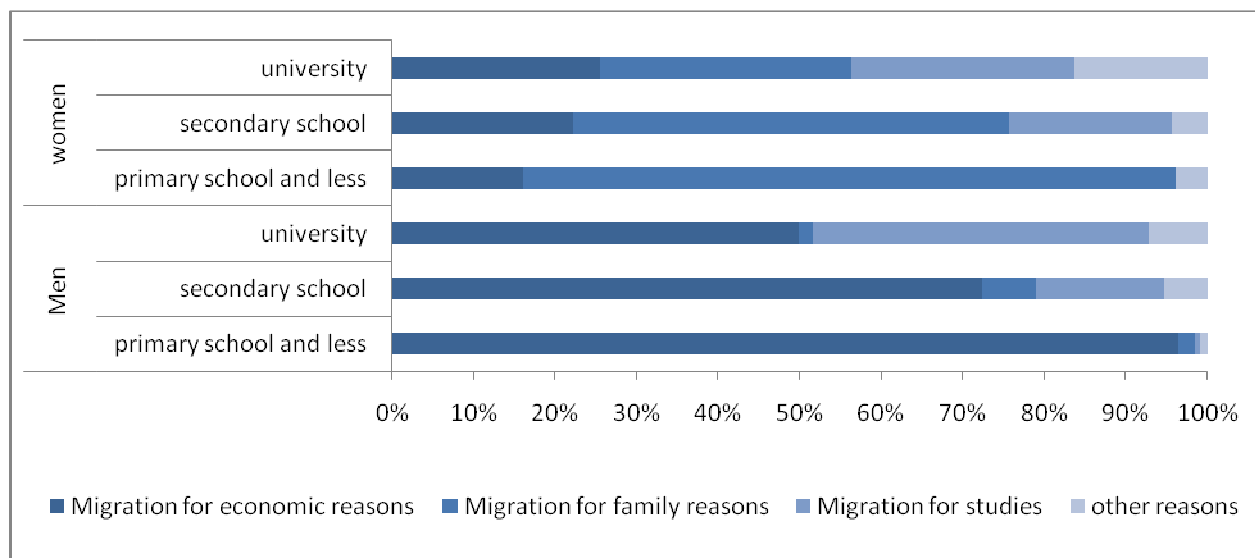
Graph 3: Women and men according to their migration reason and their activity before migration



MIREM, 2006

Nearly half of men who have migrated for economic reasons have at most a primary education. It is clear that education does not influence very much the migration reasons of men. However, the persons have a high level of education are more likely to migrate for studies. For women, migration for family reasons remains important even if they are highly educated. But we observe that migration for family reasons decreases if the level of education is high. For those highly educated the difference between the three migration reasons is not significant (economic reasons (25.5%), family reasons (30.9%) studies (27.3%)). It seems, therefore, that women who have high level of education are more likely to migrate for work. Furthermore, migration for studies concerned mainly the single people particularly for women. It seems reserved for those who have high level of living standard. Those who their financial situation does not allow them to finance other type of migration, migrate mainly for family reasons.

Graph 4: Women and men according to their migration reason and their level of education before migration



MIREM, 2006

II. Zoom on the case of Tunisia:

1. Data and methodology:

We use data from the national survey of population and employment (ENPE). It is a national survey of 65000 households; its main objective is to produce statistical information on socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the population in Tunisia. In order to measure the internal and international migration and provide some information on the general mobility of the Tunisian population, a sub-sample was selected to be interviewed twice for two successive years (2005 and 2006). This allows us to measure the migration that took place during one year (between 2005 and 2006). Our sub-sample contains 27,904 households (43% of the total sample which allows us to interview more than 126,000 people). This sample allows us to estimate the number of migrants and their socio-economic characteristics before migration.

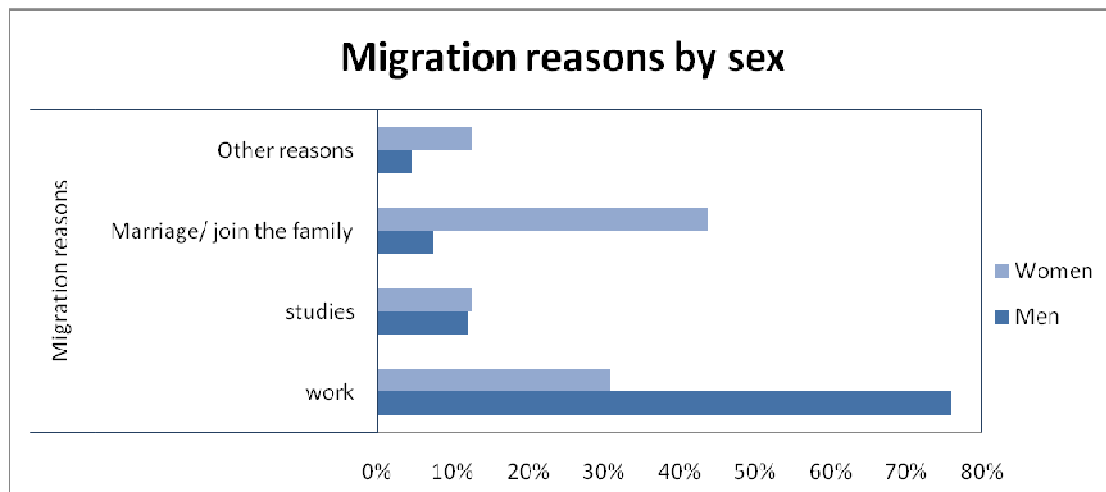
We developed in this section two parts of analyzes: descriptive and comparative analysis which allows us to have an idea about the differences between migrants' women and men in Tunisian and multivariate analysis based on logistic regression that allows us to explain the decision of migration.

2. Descriptive analysis:

The statistics of migration of the National Survey of Population and Employment (2005 - 2006) have demonstrated a big gap between the two sexes, in Tunisia. These differences illustrate an important influence of gender relations

on the migratory behavior of men and women. The male migration is much higher than that of women (the number of men emigrant between 2005 and 2006 is three times that of women). Thus, although female migration for economic reasons is considerable (31%), women migration is usually dependent on the family. Nearly half of women have migrated to marry or to join the family. However, for men, employment is the main reason for migration.

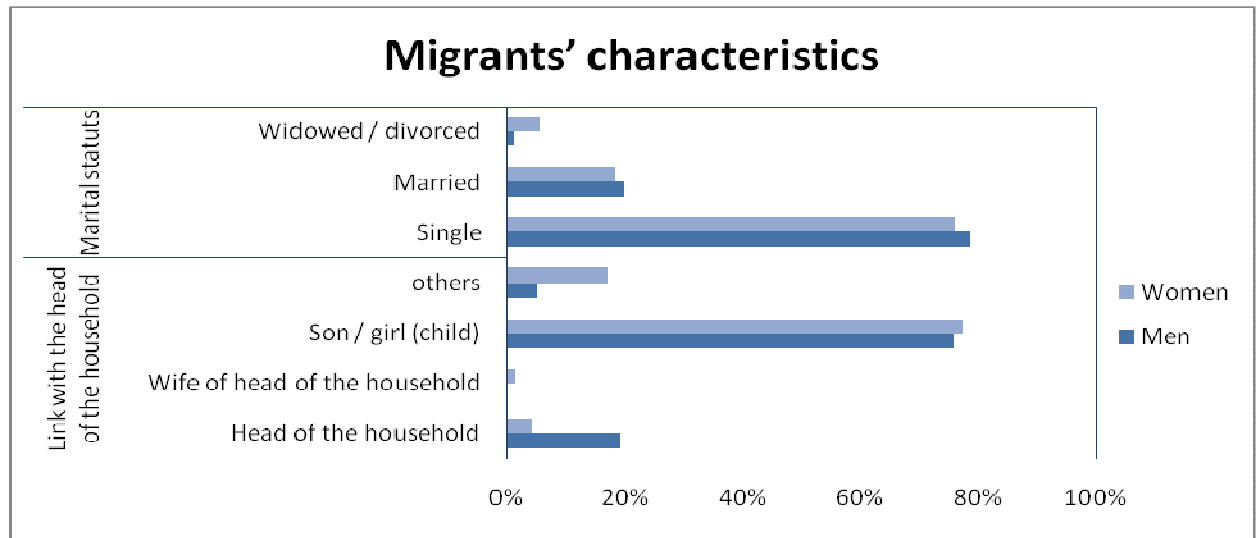
Graph 5: Women and men according to their migration reason before migration, Tunisia 2005- 2006



INS, ENPE 2005- 2006

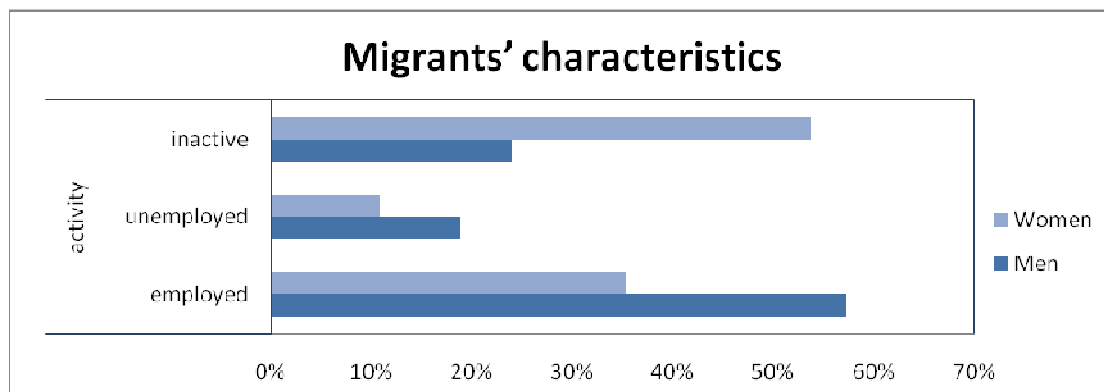
The distribution of the migrants according to the relationship with the head of household has shown that the traditional family model is still representative, in Tunisia. Indeed, between 2005 and 2006, 4600 heads of household have migrated against only 100 wives. So, according to the traditional model it is usually men who migrate to assure their economic role leaving their wives in the country of origin to take care to the family. Thus, for women or for men, emigration concerns mainly the singles. In fact, more than half of women are inactive against only 24% of men. This explained the low participation of women in economic migration. But it should be mentioned, also, that 35% of migrant women are employed prior to their migration.

Graph 6: Women and men according to their migration reason, their marital status and their link with the head of the household before migration, Tunisia 2005- 2006



INS, ENPE 2005- 2006

Graph 7: Women and men according to their migration reason and their activity before migration, Tunisia 2005- 2006



INS, ENPE 2005- 2006

3. *Explicative analysis:*

To study the effect of gender relations on the probability of migrating we develop below logistic regressions for men (table 1) and for women (table 2). We chose as reference category the decision “to migrate”. We developed a model for each variable (model 1 to model 5) and in the last model we included all the variables (model 6). We choose as an indicator of gender relations the quarter following variables:

- **Marital status:** it's a binary variable which is equal to 1 if the person is not married, 0 if not.
- **Aged persons:** it's also a binary variable which is equal to 1 if there is at least

one elderly person at home, 0 if not.

- **Rich person**¹ : it's a binary variable which is equal to 1 if the person belongs to a riche household, 0 if not.

- **Autonomous Person**: it's a variable that contains 4 modalities according to the autonomy level of the person: Very autonomous person², autonomous person³, dependant person⁴ and very dependant person⁵

- **Sex ratio in the household**: it's a variable that contains 3 modalities: 1 if the number of women and of men are equal, 2 if the number of women is less than that of men and 3 if there are more female than male.

Logistic regressions of the probability to migrate for men (Odd ratio))

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
<u>Marital status</u>						
Not-married	<i>Ref</i>					<i>Ref</i>
Married	0.33 ***					0.55 ***
<u>Aged persons</u>						
There are aged-persons in the household		<i>Ref</i>				<i>Ref</i>
There aren't aged-persons in the household		1.59 ***				1.11
<u>Rich person</u>						
Not riche household			<i>Ref</i>			<i>Ref</i>
Riche household			2.35 ***			2.99 ***
<u>Autonomous Person</u>						
Very autonomous person				<i>Ref</i>		<i>Ref</i>
Autonomous person				0.64		1.11
Dependant person				0.29		0.73
Very dependant person				1.91		2.51 **
<u>Sex ratio</u>						
Number of men = Number of women					<i>Ref</i>	<i>Ref</i>
Number of men > Number of women					1.35 *	1.12
Number of men < Number of women					1.02	1.14

¹ **To create this variable (riche household)** : we used most of the indicators about the equipment of the dwelling. The riche households are the households having at least one car and a washing machine, and/or air conditioner, and/or dishwasher and/or central heating

² **Very autonomous person**: if the person is single and has higher levels of education and he is currently employed

³ **Autonomous person**: if the person is single and employed and he has a primary or secondary education, or if the person is single and unemployed, whatever their level of education

⁴ **Dependant person**: if the person is single and inactive whatever his level of education or if the person is married and unemployed or if the person is married and inactive and having a secondary or higher education

⁵ **Very dependant person**: if the person is married and has primary education and he is currently inactive

Logistic regressions of the probability to migrate for women (Odd ratio)

	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3</i>	<i>Model 4</i>	<i>Model 5</i>	<i>Model 6</i>
<u>Marital status</u>						
<i>Not-married</i>	<i>Ref</i>					<i>Ref</i>
Married	0.23 ***					0.38 **
<u>Aged persons</u>						
<i>There are aged-persons in the household</i>		<i>Ref</i>				<i>Ref</i>
There aren't aged-persons in the household		1.82 **				1.41
<u>Rich person</u>						
<i>Not riche household</i>			<i>Ref</i>			<i>Ref</i>
Riche household			1.93 **			2.22 **
<u>Autonomous Person</u>						
<i>Very autonomous person</i>				<i>Ref</i>		<i>Ref</i>
Autonomous person				0.11 ***		0.22 ***
Dependant person				0.05 ***		0.19 **
Very dependant person				0.32 **		0.42 *
<u>Sex ratio</u>						
<i>Number of men = Number of women</i>					<i>Ref</i>	<i>Ref</i>
Number of men > Number of women					1.45	1.65
Number of men > Number of women					3.45 ***	2.65 **

The gender indicators are very significant especially for women showing that the decision to migrate is controlled by gender relations. Unlike women, for men, the variable autonomy with its different modalities is not significant. Similarly for the variable "sex ratio", the correspondent coefficients are very significant for women, but it's not the case for men. The variables "not-married," "aged persons" and "riche household" are significant for both sexes. Indeed, for women and for men the probability to migrate is higher among unmarried persons and those who are belong to rich households that do not contain the elderly. Nevertheless, we see clearly the effect of gender relations on the decision of migration through the results for the variables autonomy and "sex ratio". Indeed, women who are very autonomous (they are single, they have a high level of education and they are currently employed) and those who belong to households where the number of women exceeds that of men are more likely to emigrate.

Discussion of results and conclusion:

The analysis developed in this work show that the migration of women and men is influenced by the tradition and the social values that determine the roles of women and men. These social stereotypes influence the migratory behavior of both sexes and determine the choice of their migration reasons. Migration of women and men are impregnated by their responsibilities and social roles. According to their reproductive role women migrate for family reasons, while men migrate, mainly to work as they are responsible for their families. According to their reproductive role women migrate for family reasons, while men migrate, mainly to work as they are responsible for their families. Women especially those who are married migrate mainly to join family or their husbands. In addition, migration for economic reasons, as well as for studies, concerns mainly the unmarried persons. We must also highlight the effect of degrees of individual autonomy on the decision of migration. Indeed, the results show that single women are more autonomous and they are more likely to emigrate. However, dependent women have low chance to emigrate. Furthermore, regardless of their capacities and their qualifications, women, especially those who are married, bring forward their reproductive role. For this reason, the married women, even if they are highly educated and employed, their migration is mainly for family reasons. This is showed that the choice of the migration reason is influenced by the socio-economical and familial context in which the decision of migration is developed.

The traditional values played an important role in the decision of migration of women and men in the Maghreb. The 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 a significant effect on the migratory behavior of women if the gender roles are defined by traditional social and cultural norms.

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