

The effect of socio-economic and educational characteristics on migration decision in the Maghreb

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Abstract: Migration's phenomenon in the Maghreb became more and more extensive. Women migration increased 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 influence the migration decision in order to better understand the migratory patterns of women and men, in the Maghreb. This paper examines how the socio-economic and educational characteristics influence the migration decision and the return of women and men in the Maghreb. By analyzing the socio-economical characteristics of the migrants - men and women- and the migration reason as well as the return reasons we tried to explain the influence of gender relations on the migration decision. Using the data of MIREM survey about return migration in the Maghreb realized in 2006 by "Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies (Florence, Italy)" we developed a descriptive analysis and an explanatory analysis (multinomial logistic regression). The results obtained show that the migration reasons and the return reasons of women and men are defined by their traditional roles in the society.

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

Introduction:

For a long time migration is seen as a phenomenon which concerns principally young men looking for work or who try to improve their standard of living. Men are perceived like the only actors while women being only accompanying. However, since the 1980s, several research works (Cooke, 2003; Come, 2006) reveal the numerical importance of female migration compared to that of men. Indeed, in the recent years, all the observations show an acceleration of migration feminization. Currently, in the world half of the migrants are women (International organization for migrations (OIM), 2002).

In the Maghreb, mainly because of the insufficiencies of data, research on migration, especially on decision of migration remains an area of research underdeveloped. The studies conducted on migration have focused mainly on the evolution of the migratory flux and the principal reasons of migration (Belhedi 1983; Fourati, 2006; Sadiqi, 2007; Hammouda, 2008). The authors have shown that the migratory flux in the three Maghreb countries (Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco) have an increasing trend. They demonstrate also that men migrate for economic reasons (looking for job), whereas the migration of women are mainly for family reasons.

This work enters in this research field. The aim is to show how gender relations affect the depart conditions and determine the principal migration reason and principal return reason.

Indeed, migration cannot escape the gender relations which confine each sex in specific roles and tasks. The traditional system of gender relations does not appreciate women's migration only when it is made in a family context, i.e. to make a family or to join a family member. While men migration is not submitted to family or social restrictions. The questions which we arise in this paper are: do women and men migrate under the same conditions? For which reasons women and men migrate or return to their countries of origin? How gender relations influence migration reason and return reason of the two sexes?

This article reviews the relationship which can be established between the decision of migration or the decision of return and the gender relations. The data used result from a survey into return migration in the Maghreb (MIREM) carried in 2006 by "Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies (Florence, Italy)".

Migration in the Maghreb

Migration is an old phenomenon in the Maghreb which did not stop to increase. In Algeria, the statistics published by the border police have shown an increase in the output of the Algerian residents (from 1 million in 2000 to 1.5 million in 2005)(Hammouda, 2007)which illustrate the progression of the migratory flux. The principal destination countries of the Algerians are the European countries, in particular France. This migration concerns mostly young people. It is explained mainly by the low standard of living, unemployment and lack of opportunities, and by the social constraints imposed by the society of origin. This context leads young women and men to leave the country to search for more open space and a new lifestyle (Hammouda, 2008).

In Morocco, the statistics show the rapid growth of this phenomenon. The total number of migrants rose from 160 000 in 1960 to approximately 1 343 000 in 1992 (even an average annual growth rate equal to 6.9%) and reaches today, almost 3 million people 2/3 of them

reside in European countries (Maghar, 2007). The structure of the Moroccan migrants has changed. As the case of Algeria, the migration was a phenomenon concerning exclusively the men. Women migration becomes more and more important. But it has been mainly developed within the framework of family reunification. However, recently, the Moroccan women started to emigrate in an autonomous way (Sadiqi, 2007).

In Tunisia, the international migratory flux becomes increasingly important. Net migration is multiplied by 5 between the periods 1994-1999 and 1999-2004. However, this mobility concerns more the men than the women; between 1999 and 2004, 64 000 men have migrated outside the country against only 12 000 women. Men migration was done mainly for economic reasons (78.7% of the male migrants have migrated for economic reasons) (INS, 2006), while women migration occurred mostly for family reasons (45% of female migrants have left the country to make a family or to join family members).

In the Maghreb societies, the roles of women and men have been culturally separated. Men play an economic role: they are the heads of households, the persons in charge who must work and earn money to meet the needs for their family, while the women were confined in their reproductive role.

But society is changing and roles are changing. Currently, women invest, more than in the previous generations, the working and public life. They work and contribute to the family budget. However, until today the migrations of the men and women are developed under the traditional family model. According to the traditional social model, women migrations are essentially made at ages of marriage and they are developed only for socially acceptable reasons (to join a spouse or family members). Women migrate mainly to fulfill their roles as mother, wife or daughter and those who migrate alone are exposed to a negative judgment (Antoine and Sow, 2000). In addition, contrary to men, the decision of migration of women is not autonomous, which explains their low participation in economic migration.

Methodology:

A large part of the theoretical analysis of migration is based on the economic models. This literature stresses that migration is a response to differential spatial income (Sjaastad, 1962) and the imbalance between the place of origin and that of the destination (theory "push and pull") (Lee, 1966). Nevertheless, behind the increase of women migration, several studies have stressed the importance of gender relations in the explanation of migration behaviors of women and men (Cooke, 2003; Come, 2006).

This research studied the role of gender relations in the explanation of migration behavior of both sexes by taking into account the social and cultural contexts. These studies have shown that gender relations influence strongly the migratory behaviors of women and men. The decision-making processes are influenced by factors related to the organization of productive roles and reproductive roles in the household (Chant, 1992, Gregory and Piché, 1985).

The genre is a concept socially constructed. It is a set of social representations of men and women, roles, perceptions, ideologies and behaviors (Véron, 1997). The social norms define the roles, the opportunities and the constraints specific to each sex and they specify what they should be and do (Bidet and Bidet, 2001). Thus gender is the cultural norms and social roles assigned to each sex and determine two different contexts favoring two different migratory behaviors (Tahdani and Todaro, 1984). It acts on the family variables using a set of roles,

norms and constraints that define the depart conditions in migration of men and women (means used, resources, migration strategy) and determine also their migration reason. Indeed the family or the household is not a homogeneous unit; the members of the same family or the same household have different decision-making powers, they have statutes, expectations and different activities (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2003). Therefore, we assume that gender is a key factor explaining the main migration reasons and the main return reasons of women and men. We used the data of MIREM Survey conducted in 2006 by Robert Schuman Center for Advanced Studies (Florence, Italy). This study focused on the return migration in the Maghreb (Cassarino, 2007). The survey was conducted among 992 individuals, men and women. The sample was uniformly distributed among the three countries (332 from Algeria, 330 from Morocco and 330 from Tunisia). The study made it possible to collect information about the migratory path of those interviewed, the conditions before migration, the migration experience in the main countries of migration and finally the return to the country of origin.

In this work we analyze how gender influences the migration reasons and the return reasons. Thus it is necessary to take into account many factors such as marital status, educational attainment, professional qualifications, financial autonomy (...). These variables have a direct effect on migration behaviors of women and men. For example, depending on whether you are head of household, husband or wife, the migration reason is different. Also, it's recognized that the factors related to living conditions, financial situation and the previous place of residence are important elements which influence the migration decision.

We explain in this study the principal migration reasons and the principal return reasons of women and men. For that, we refer to the two questions: What is the principal reason for your migration? And what is the principal reason for your return to your country of origin? And referring to the conceptual framework presented above, we define a set of independent variables that could explain the migration reasons or the return reasons. 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 depart conditions 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.

We define two groups of variables, individual and socio-economic variables. At the individual level, the sex of the individual is the main explanatory variable and it's an indicator of gender relations. Marital status is also an individual variable 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. Finally, we chose the variable level of education 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 which are the access to the labor market and the financial situation before migration. We also chose the residence and the kind of dwelling as indicators of standard of living.

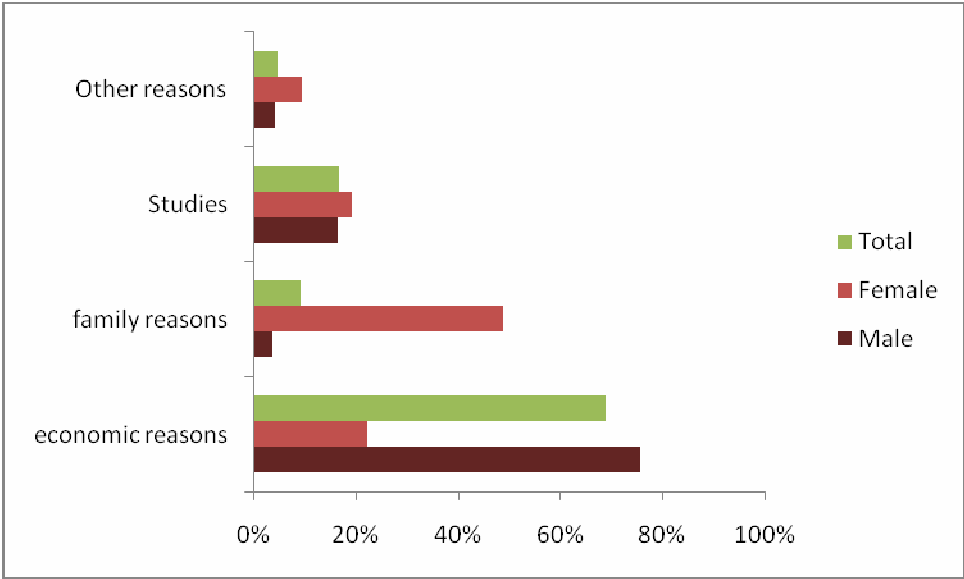
Analytical methods

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 and the return reasons as well as the differences between women and men in the decision to migrate or to return. We developed two parts of analyzes: a descriptive analysis and it's based on graphs and cross tables between the dependent variables and the explanatory variables. And an explanatory analysis based on multinomial logistic regression.

Reason for Migration, the differences between men and women

Figure 1 shows the distribution of the principal reasons of migration by sex. It shows clearly that in general men migrate for economic reasons (look for job better opportunities, improvement of standard of living). More than three quarters of the men made an economic migration, against only 22% among women. These latter migrated mainly for family reasons, to marry, to join their family members (49%). Thus their migration is dependent on their family.

Graphic 1: Migration reasons by sex

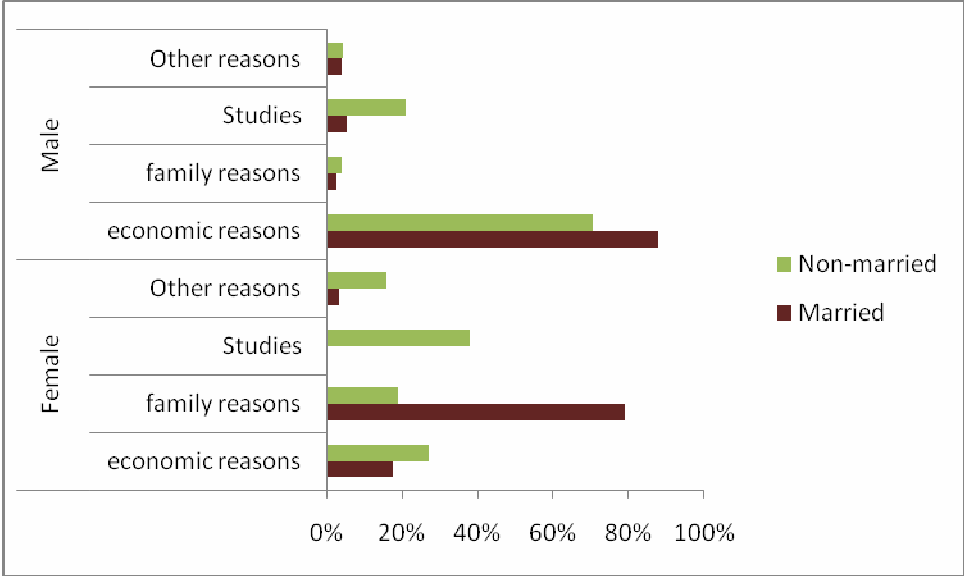


These differences between men and women show that the reason for migration is mainly related to the roles. The principal reason for the migration is before any indicator of the social roles of the men and of the women, in accordance with the matrimonial traditions and to the traditional distribution of the roles of the men and the women, the man migrates looking for work and the woman follows to ensure her role of wife or support for the family.

There isn't a big difference between women and men on age at migration. 61% of women 57% of men interviewed migrated between at age group 20-30 years. Indeed women and men migrate for two different reasons, family reasons in particular marriage and economic reasons, which occur principally at this age. For this reason the majority of men who migrated are single (2/3) contrarily women who migrate are mainly married (50%). Moreover whatever their marital status, men migrate mainly for economic reasons, even more this reason is

advanced when they are married. While the women independently of their marital status migrate for family reasons even if they are married (Figure 2).

Graphic 2: Migration reasons by sex and marital status



In addition, our data demonstrate that both men and women who migrate are mostly from urban areas. Therefore, these initial descriptive results reveal that the autonomy of women in migration is not effective yet. However, we must mention that migratory behaviors of married and unmarried women are different. Single women migrate mainly to study abroad (24 among 54 women (44%) migrate to continue their studies). Also, they migrate for economic reasons more than the married women.

Whether employed or not, the proportion of men who migrate for family reasons is low. 86% of employed men migrate for economic reasons. Undoubtedly they look forward to improve their situation (Table 1). However unemployed men migrate mainly for economic reasons (60%) but also for studies (30%).

Table 1: Women and men according to their migration reason and their occupation before migration

Occupation before migration	Men			Women		
	Unemployed	Employed	Total	Unemployed	Employed	Total
economic reasons	59.7	85.7	75.7	14.8	36.4	22.4
family reasons	4.8	3.0	3.7	53.1	40.9	48.8
Studies	30.4	7.7	16.5	22.2	13.6	19.2
Other reasons	5.1	3.6	4.2	9.9	9.1	9.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

MIREM data

Then it seems that there is no significant effect of the status of origin on migratory behaviors of women and men except, of course, the case of students who migrate mainly to continue

their studies. We should stress the importance of the migration of unemployed persons (16.4% of male respondents were unemployed before their migration). Whatever their activity status, women migrate mainly for family reasons. 41% of the employed women and 53% of the unemployed women migrated for family reasons. It is clear that being active before migration does not influence the importance of migration for family reasons among the women. Thus those who migrate for economic reasons have been employed before their migration. Migration for studies is important among unemployed women (22%) as well as among employed women (14%).

In addition, migration for family reasons remains important among women even if they are highly educated. Nevertheless education has a significant effect on the choice of migration reasons in particular for women. Indeed the majority of women who migrated for economic reasons have at least a secondary level. Thus highly educated women are more likely to do economic migration. However for men the effect of education is not very important. About half of men who have migrated for economic reasons have a primary education level (table 2).

Table 2: Women and men according to their migration reason and their education level before migration

	Men			Women		
	Primary school and less	Secondary school	University level	Primary school and less	Secondary school	University level
economic reasons	96.3	72.4	49.8	16.0	22.2	25.5
family reasons	2.1	6.5	1.8	80.0	53.3	30.9
Studies	0.6	15.8	41.1	0.0	20.0	27.3
Other reasons	0.9	5.3	7.3	4.0	4.4	16.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

MIREM data

The statistics show that migration for studies concerns principally single women. The results illustrate also that there is a strong selection effect on migration for studies. Indeed those who have a high level of standard of living are more likely to migrate for studies. And those who have a bad financial situation migrate mainly for family reasons (women) or for economic reasons (men).

Explanatory factors of the principal reason for the migration

The aim of this second part of analysis aims to explain and to measure the effect of the socio-economic characteristics on migration reasons. Thus we develop a multinomial logistic regression. We distinguish the migrations for family reasons, that for studies and the migration for economic reasons. The other reasons for migration were excluded from the data-base used because they are too few. We chose as reference category the economic migration. Given the small number of women in our database, we couldn't do specific model for each sex but we include in our regression the sex as explanatory variable. The results are presented in Tables 3.

Table 3: Explanation of migration reason (multinomial logistic regression (Odd ratio))

<u>Individual Characteristics</u>	Family reasons	Studies
<u>Sex</u>		
Women	28.86***	2.18**¹
Men	Ref	Ref
<u>Marital status</u>		
Non-married	0.33***	3.81***
Married	Ref	Ref
<u>Education Level</u>		
Primary school or less	0.57	0.08***
Secondary school	Ref	Ref
University level	0.45**	4.37***
<u>occupation</u>		
employed	0.46**	0.22***
Unemployed	Ref	Ref
<u>Indicators of standard of living</u>		
<u>Financial situation</u>		
Good	1.60	4.76***
Medium	1.15	2.05**
Bad	Ref	Ref
I don't know	18.41***	7.95***
<u>Kind of habitat</u>		
Modern	0.87	2.42***
traditional	Ref	Ref
Rural and others	0.84	0.57
<u>Residence</u>		
Urban	2.13*	0.81
Rural	Ref	Ref
<u>Other indicators</u>		
<u>Travel funding</u>		
Migrant receive a help to fund his travel	1.16	1.90**
Migrant don't receive a help to fund his travel	Ref	Ref
<u>Migrate alone</u>		
Migrate alone	0.70	1.92**
Migrate with others persons	Ref	Ref

¹ *** Significant level 1%, ** Significant level 5% * Significant level 10%

In accordance with their reproductive role, women migrate for family reasons, whereas men migrate mainly for economic reasons (find a job) since they are the persons in charge of their family. The multinomial logistic regression shows that relatively to men women are more likely to make migration for family reasons and for studies. The risk to make a migration for family reasons for a woman is 29 times that of men. Also the risk to migrate for studies of women is 2.2 times that of men. Also, the results obtained demonstrate that the determinants of the family migration and those of the migration for studies are different. Thus, our regression illustrate that there is an important selection effect which influence strongly the decision of migration in particular the choice of migration reason. These results confirm the fact that women migrations are developed only when they are done in a socially acceptable context. Thus, married women migrate principally for family reasons even if they are highly educated or they have economic activities. Also, the migrations for economic reasons, as well as for studies, concern much more the unmarried persons.

Moreover the relation between education and migration reasons is significant. Those who have a primary education level or lower are more likely to make economic migration while those who have a higher education level are more likely to make a migration for studies. In addition the financial situation and financial autonomy are two important variables in the explanation of the migration reasons of men and women. Those who do not manage to finance other reasons of migration and those who do not have financial autonomy to pay their migration cost are more likely to migrate for family reasons. Besides to analyze the link between standard of living and migration reasons we chose type of habitat as explanatory variable. We observed also that standard of living have an effect on the choice of migration reasons. Thus those who have modern houses (villa apartment) are more likely to make a migration for studies.

Return migration reasons² in the Maghreb:

The main return reasons for men are the project creation/management, retirement and family reasons. Whereas for women the two main return reasons are family reasons and nostalgia of the country.

² In the questionnaire there are 15 return reasons. We grouped these modalities into 7 modalities as presented below:

Economic reasons (precarious employment in the country of immigration; end of my employment contract in the country of immigration)

Family reasons (family problems in the country of origin; family problems in the destination country)

Retirement (retirement; health problems)

Problems of integration in the country of immigration

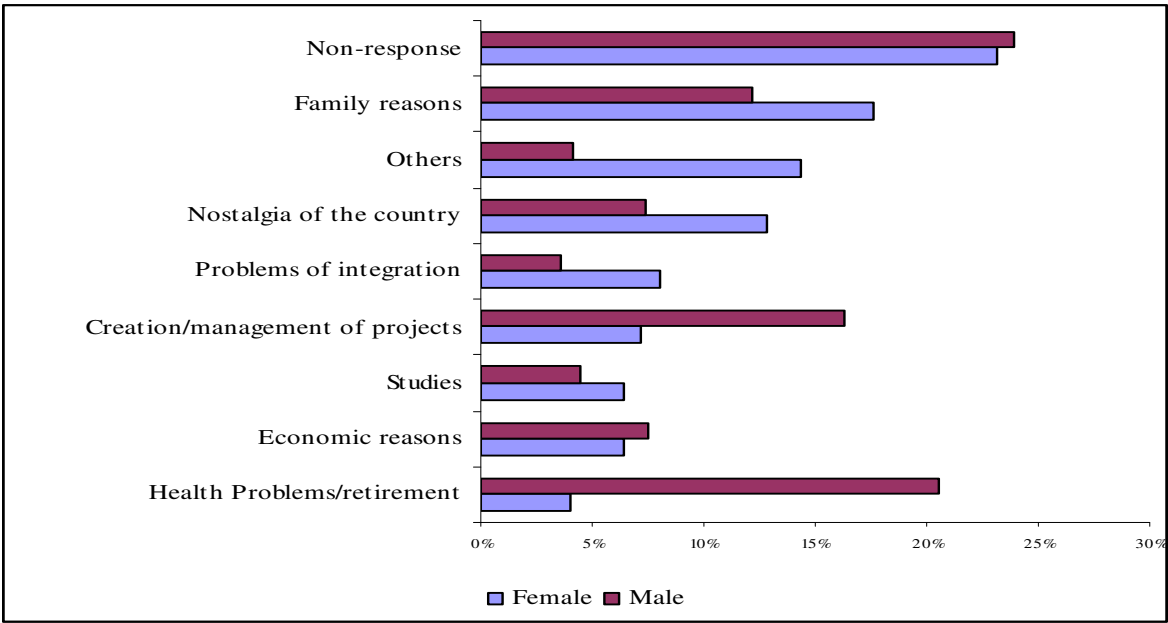
Creation/management of Projects (management of my Business; creation of projects)

Studies (end of my studies; to complete my training)

Nostalgia of the country (nostalgia of my country and my traditions; unfavorable socio-cultural environment)

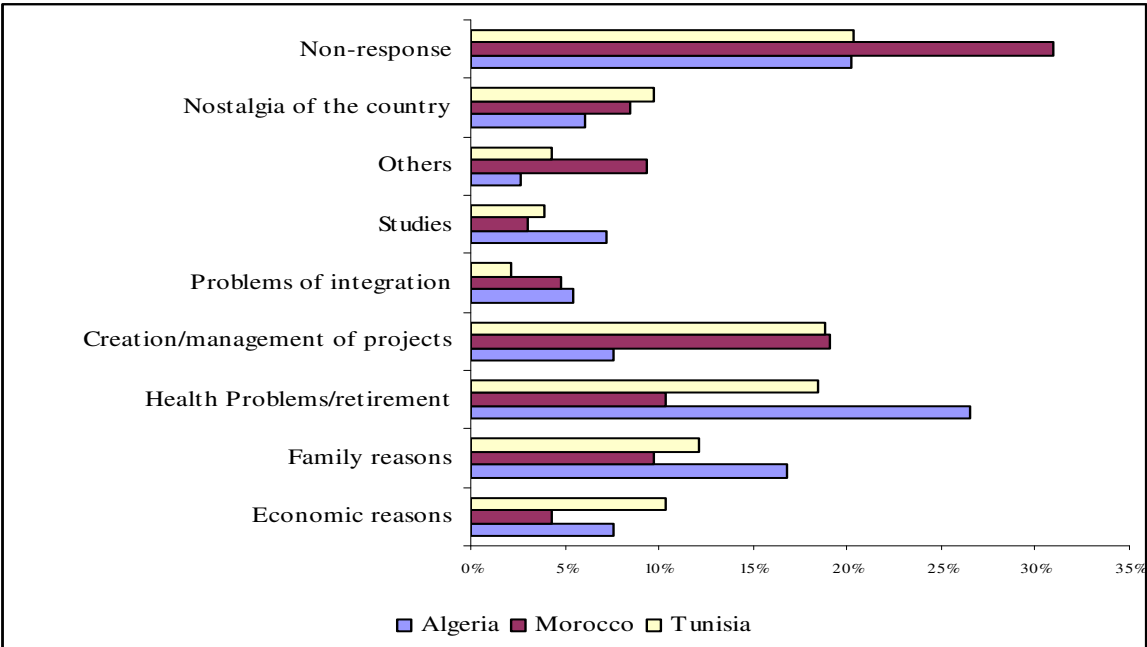
Others (others; to receive financial assistance to return)

Graphic 3: Return reasons by sex



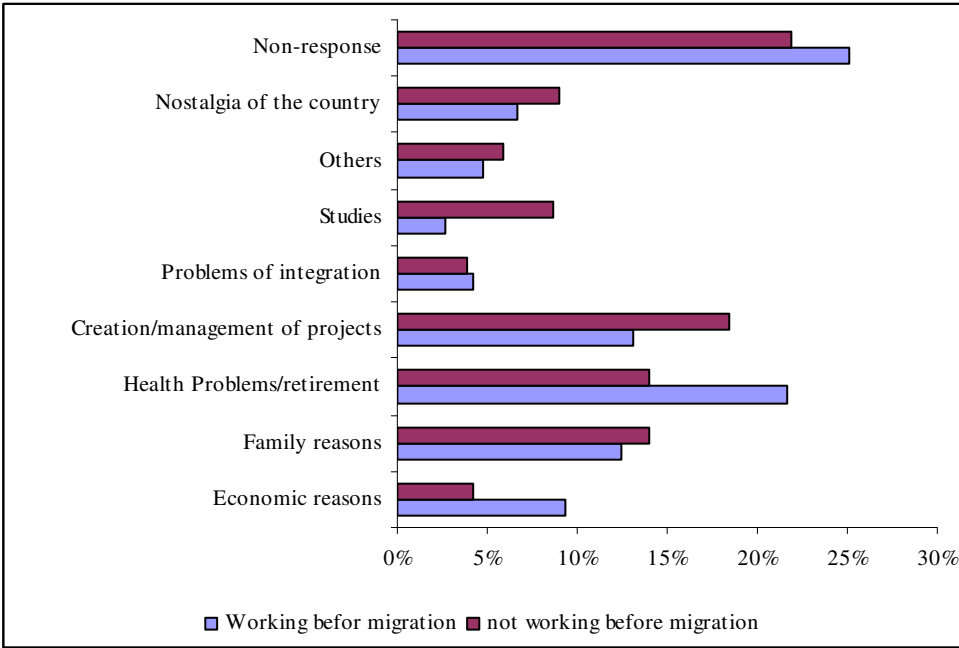
The reasons of returns are differed not only according to the sex but also according to the country of origin. In Algeria, retirement and the family reasons are the two main return reasons. Whereas, the migrants from Morocco and Tunisia returned to their country of origin for family reasons or after their retirement and also to create or to manage projects.

Graphic 4: Return reasons by country of origin



The status before migration doesn't have a significant effect on return reasons. Whatever their status (working or not working) before migration, migrants returned to their country of origin for three main reasons are: retirement, creation or management of projects and family reasons.

Graphic 5: Return reasons according to the status before migration



For both sexes the departure reasons and the return reasons are not the same. Male migration was mainly for economic reasons and female migration was mainly for family reasons. But this is not the case for return migration. Indeed, only 7% of men return to their country of origin for economic reasons. Also, return migration for family reasons of men is not important but it has a significant proportion (12%). Whereas, women return to the country of origin mainly for family reasons (18%), and 6 % of them return for economic reasons.

In addition, only 19% of men who migrated for family reasons returned also for family reasons. 16% of them returned to the country of origin after their retirement and 22% returned to create projects. Also for women, 7% of those who migrated for family reasons returned after their retirement and 8% returned to create or to manage projects. And only ¼ of men and 1/3 of women who migrated for studies returned to their country of origin when they finish their studies or to continue their training. These results show that generally there is a difference between the departure reasons and the status of the migrants in the destination countries.

Table 4: Return reasons according to departure reasons for female migrants

Return reasons	Departure Reasons				
	Economic reasons	Family reasons	Studies	Others	Total
Economic reasons	21%	0%	8%	0%	6%
Family reasons	14%	18%	25%	8%	18%
Health Problems/retirement	0%	7%	4%	0%	4%
Creation/management of projects	7%	8%	0%	17%	7%
Problems of integration	7%	10%	8%	0%	8%
Studies	0%	2%	29%	0%	6%
Others	4%	18%	4%	42%	14%
Nostalgia of the country	14%	15%	8%	8%	13%
Non-response	32%	23%	13%	25%	23%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 5: Return reasons according to departure reasons for male migrants

Return reasons	Departure Reasons				
	Economic reasons	Family reasons	Studies	Others	Total
Economic reasons	8%	0%	8%	3%	7%
Family reasons	13%	19%	11%	6%	12%
Health Problems/retirement	26%	16%	1%	8%	21%
Creation/management of projects	15%	22%	20%	25%	16%
Problems of integration	4%	0%	3%	3%	4%
Studies	0%	0%	24%	3%	4%
Others	3%	3%	6%	19%	4%
Nostalgia of the country	7%	9%	7%	17%	7%
Non-response	25%	31%	20%	17%	24%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Discussion of results and conclusion

The analysis developed in this work show that the decision of migration of women and men are controlled by the traditions and the social values which determine the roles of women and men in the society. These social stereotypes influence the migratory behaviors of women and men and the choice of the reason of migration. The decision of migration of women and men are impregnated by their responsibilities and social roles. The migration of women is dependent on the family and is mainly for family reasons. They migrate to join their family members or their husbands.

Because of this family and social control the level of education don't have a strong effect on the choice of migration reasons of women. It is also necessary to stress the important effect of

the financial autonomy on the choice of migration reasons. Indeed, generally, women who migrate for non-economic reasons are financially dependent to their family. In addition, the results obtained show that the unmarried women are more autonomous than the married women. Also this study shows that men migrate for family reasons, particularly when they do not have sufficient financial autonomy to finance another reason of migration.

For both sexes the departure reasons and the return reasons are different. Moreover the social norms have also a significant effect on return reasons. Indeed women return principally for family reasons however men return mainly because of their retirement or to create/manage projects.

We can conclude that traditional values play an important role in the decision of migration of women and men in the Maghreb. The migration reasons and the return reasons of both sexes are controlled by their social roles attributed by their society of origin.

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