

WHAT DRIVES WOMEN'S LABOR MARKET ACCESS IN TUNISIA? A MICROECONOMETRIC INVESTIGATION

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Abstract

Women's participation in the labor market is essential for accelerating economic development and achieving gender equality. This study investigates the socio-economic and demographic factors influencing women's access to employment in Tunisia, using data from the 2023 Employment and Population Survey. A logistic regression analysis illustrates that variables such as age, marital status, education level, diploma, and place of residence significantly affect women's employment opportunities. The results reveal disparities across regions and sectors, with urban residence and higher education improving access to qualified positions. However, structural barriers persist, particularly for older and less experienced women.

Keywords: Tunisia, logit, job market, woman.

JEL classification: J16; J21; C25

INTRODUCTION

Arab women face economic and social vulnerability. Their vulnerabilities are reflected in their inferior positions and access to resources and paid employment. This results in women's lifelong dependence on their male counterparts, and the degradation of their social status in some developing economies. Development theorists therefore propose to improve the situation of women by increasing their participation in the labor market (Basu, S. and Basu, P., 2003). Emphasizing the role of women's participation in the workforce, Bhalotra and Umana-Aponte, (2010) assert that economic development and women's access to the labor market are closely linked, since development helps to reduce gender inequalities and women's work accelerates the development process. According to Sen (2000), society benefits from women's participation in economic activities. Social benefits are obtained through women's freedom and the strengthening of their status.

Tunisia is one of the countries with the most liberal family codes. Since independence (1956), Tunisia has made progress towards gender equality and the reinforcement of women's subordination. Since 1970, Tunisia has made the most rapid

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progress in human development (United Nations Development Programme, 2010). It is close to gender parity in primary and secondary school enrolment rates. The 1990s saw the emergence of new institutional reforms further promoting gender equality. Key elements of these reforms include: equal access to education and compulsory schooling up to the age of 16, adopted in 1991. Similarly, Tunisia amended the Labor Code in 1992 to eliminate all forms of discrimination between men and women in all aspects of employment. In terms of women's rights, Tunisia has been considered one of the most successful countries in the Arab world, and introduced voluntary quotas in 1999 to promote gender equality at political level. In 2024, Tunisia achieved a score of 66.8% on the Global Gender Gap Index, ranking 103rd out of 146 countries. This score marks an improvement compared to 2017, when Tunisia ranked 117th with a score of 65.1%. This progress reflects the efforts to reduce gender disparities in the country. Over the past decade, Tunisia has achieved greater gender parity in education, health and life expectancy. However, despite the remarkable progress made in recent decades to reduce gender disparities at several levels, women's participation rate in the labor market remains low and stagnant (World Bank 2012).

According to the National Institute of Statistics (INS), in the third quarter of 2024, the unemployment rate in Tunisia is equal to 16.0%. By gender, the unemployment rate decreased to 13.3% for men (compared to 13.6% in the second quarter of 2024) and increased to 22.1% for women (compared to 21.3% in the previous quarter). For young people aged 15 to 24, the unemployment rate decreased in the first quarter of 2024, reaching 39.2% (compared to 40.9% in the fourth quarter of 2023). This rate is broken down into 39.5% for men and 38.7% for women.

According to the National Institute of Statistics, among the employed population, 28.5% are women, or 1,000,900 out of a total of 3,511,900. In the third quarter of 2024, the unemployment rate for higher education graduates stands at 25%, with 17% for men and 31.6% for women. This highlights that unemployment affects female graduates more than their male counterparts. The distribution of the employed population in Tunisia by economic sector shows a predominance of the services sector, which employs 54% of the workforce. Manufacturing industries employ 19%, while non-manufacturing industries and the agriculture and fishing sectors account for 14% and 13% of total employment, respectively. It is worth noting that women are particularly represented in the services sector.

In light of this discussion, the aim of this article is to empirically examine the determinants of Tunisian women's labor force participation. The study is organized as follows; section 2 represents the literature review. Section 3 presents the empirical approach. The estimated results are presented and discussed in section 4. Conclusions and policy implications will be provided in section 5.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

The question of factors favoring women's access to employment is the subject of various works that explore the multiple dimensions of this crucial issue. Many studies have identified determinants such as education level, region age, marital status and cultural norms, which play a key role in the integration of women into the labor market.

One of the most important factors that increase women's employment opportunities in Tunisia is access to education. Tunisia is among the countries where women

constitute the majority in higher education. However, despite the high rates of female university graduates, women's integration into the labor market remains limited due to the lack of matching between acquired skills and market needs (**Ben Yahia, Samira ; 2019**). In this context, Sami M. Khalil and Amira H. Elgazzar (2019) examined the effects of educational policies on women's employability in Tunisia and how educational reforms influenced female employment rates.

To analyze the causes of graduate unemployment in Tunisia, Hanène Ben OuadaJamoussi and Maher Gassab (2011) rely on surveys conducted in 2005 and 2007, which focused on graduates from 2004. The survey covers a sample of 4,763 graduates out of a total of 39,052 graduates. An econometric model is used to link qualification indicators (level of education, specialty, etc.) to the unemployment indicator. They concluded that the rapid increase in the number of graduates in Tunisia has not been followed by the creation of job opportunities, which has led to an increase in unemployment. In addition, due to overqualification, some continue their studies, but this paradoxically reduces their chances of integration. Opportunities are limited to a few sectors such as medicine and information technology, while other specialties encounter difficulties, requiring structural reforms of the education system.

In the same vein, Bhorat (2007) has presented a number of factors that determine the likelihood of a person being employed or not. Economic theory asserts that education is one of the determinants of employment. Education is among the factors that strengthen the position of women. Education leads to better employment opportunities, as educated women participate more in the workforce and earn higher incomes. In addition, education enriches women's knowledge to make decisions about their daily lives and to acquire bargaining power. Education is an important determinant of gender-based development and poverty reduction. It increases overall social well-being by improving life expectancy, lowering crime rates, and promoting social cohesion (MARTINAND Jean-Louis 2000). Investment in women's education is essential to breaking the cycle of poverty and equalizing the distribution of wealth, which in turn reinforces social stability. With increased education, women have better access to resources, increased opportunities for employment, and improved ability to make informed decisions about health, marriage and many other social benefits such as lower infant mortality and HIV/AIDS infections, and greater educational opportunities for children who are positively affected by women's education. As for macroeconomic studies, the marginal returns to girls' education are systematically higher than those of boys, and are even greater when the educational attainment of the next generation is considered (Hill and King 1995; World Bank, 2001).

MasoudKarshenas and Valentin M. Moghadam (2021) address the issue of low female labor force participation in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, despite educational progress and economic reforms. They compare the results of several studies to identify common factors affecting women's employment and regional differences. They conclude that factors affecting women's employment include education, family structure, and cultural norms. Economic reforms have affected women's employment, especially in the public sector. Public policies and legislation also play a major role in facilitating or restricting women's access to the labor market.

Furthermore, according to Bhorat(2007), employment is influenced by the choice of use of the day's hours. This is associated with household responsibilities such as fetching water and wood, looking after children and caring for the elderly.... Gender

and culture are among the determinants of employment. Women are more likely to be housewives, dependent on the male head of household. In many countries around the world, employment is also associated with race. According to Bhorat(2007), family composition also determines employment. A household with many teenagers and babies can influence the probability of employment by acting as an incentive to work. Bhorat(2007) also considers marital status as a determinant of employment. Another factor explaining employment is family or household wealth. This can be explained by the fact that a person from a poor family has little or no money to look for a job, leading to migration to areas where jobs are available.

The study by Chaaban and Cunningham (2011) presents the determinants that explain the low rate of participation of women in the labor market in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries. They found as a result that marital status and family responsibilities play a major role in the exclusion of women from the labor market.

RaguiAssaad, Caroline Krafft and Irene Selwaness (2022) examined the impact of marriage on women's access to employment in the MENA region. Two main mechanisms are studied: the influence of marriage on women's probability of entering the labor market, and its effect on the tendency to leave employment. Using an instrumental variables methodology to analyze the marriage decision, the study results show that women's marriage at the median age reduces the probability of paid employment by 47% in Jordan, 30% in Tunisia, and 16% in Egypt. The study shows that it is necessary to adapt working conditions so that women can more easily balance their family responsibilities and their jobs, especially in the private sector.

Hendy's (2015) work analyzes the relationships between marital status, social norms, and women's participation in the Egyptian labor market. She highlights the restrictive impact of marriage on women's employment. Using the Egyptian Labor Market Panel Survey (ELMPS) 2012, the results show that the decline in labor market participation is due to several determinants including factors related to the supply of female labor, family circumstances such as marriage, fertility, women's preferences, as well as demand-side factors, such as the decline in demand for female labor in the public sector and discrimination in the private sector.

Raji Asaad, Caroline Kraft, and Erin Slowanis (2022) studied the impact of marriage on women's access to employment opportunities in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Two important issues were examined: the impact of marriage on women's likelihood of entering the labor market, and its impact on the tendency to leave work. Using instrumental variables approach to analyze the decision to marry, the study results showed that women's marriage at an average age reduces their likelihood of obtaining paid work by 47% in Jordan, 30% in Tunisia, and 16% in Egypt. The study shows that it is necessary to adapt working conditions so that women can more easily balance their family responsibilities with their work, especially in the private sector.

It is claimed that once a person is married, there is an economic and psychological incentive to find a job. Generally speaking, married men are considered to be less risky employees because they have settled down. However, this is highly debatable, as someone may be employed in the first place, and this attracts potential partners to them. We need to know what happened in the first place. Reiffers and Galal (2014) pointed out that region is among the determinants of women's employment with the

employment opportunities available to young people differing significantly depending on the region of residence in the country.

Mounia Achy (2020) analyzed the impact of regional inequalities in Morocco on women's employment. She found that women's access to the labor market is difficult in rural areas since infrastructure and employment services are less developed in these regions.

Rim Ben Ayed Mouelhi and Mohamed Goaid (2017) analyzed the characteristics of women's employment and unemployment in Tunisia and presented the main incentives and constraints to labor market participation and women's employment status. They identified several socio-cultural factors associated with economic determinants that lead to changes in women's labor market participation. Rim and al. (2017) found that marital status is considered a constraint for women's labor market participation decision and employment status. In addition, a woman's level of education has an effect on both her decision to participate and her choice of employment type. For Rim and al. (2017), in Tunisia, the service sector provides the largest share of female employment, particularly in the public sector, which is considered a "family-friendly" sector. The authors show that the female activity rate is very heterogeneous across age groups. The activity rate is low before the age of 20 and increases with age, which can be explained by the fact that women start to leave school and participate in the labor market. The maximum rate is between the ages of 25 and 29. Thus, the activity rate decreases with age. At the age of childbearing, the activity rate begins to decline, because at this age, women leave work to take care of their families.

Assaad, R., & Krafft, C. (2015) used microeconomic data from labor force surveys in the MENA region, particularly in Tunisia, Egypt, and Jordan. They adopted probit regression to study the probability of women accessing employment based on their technological skills. The results show that women with information and communication technology skills are more likely to have paid employment. These skills help women overcome some traditional barriers to accessing employment, such as social and geographical restrictions.

According to Atma Sari et al (2022), the COVID-19 pandemic has had an adverse impact on employment issues in Indonesia, particularly for women. Indeed, the presence of a young child in the household will affect a woman's decision to enter the labor market, as women are faced with a choice between raising children or working. Using data from Susenas 2021, the study aims to examine the determinants of labor participation among women with a young child in East Java during the Covid 19 pandemic. Based on the results of binary logistic regression, age, education, place of residence, Internet use, household poverty status, husband's employment status in East Java are known to have a significant effect on women's participation in employment.

Rabie Nasser and Zaki Mehchy (2012) analyzed the determinants of the labor market participation rate in Syria between 2001 and 2010. They evaluated the gap between the actual and simulated labor force in 2009. Their results show that, at the actual rate of job creation, the unemployment rate would have reached 25.3% instead of 8.6%, as 1,174,000 people are classified as employed labor rather than being excluded. These excluded individuals are rural residents, housewives, or students. The authors used parametric logistic regression and identified the factors negatively influencing labor market participation. These factors include being a woman, a young man, a married woman, a single man, living in an urban area, or having an intermediate level

of education. For the level of urbanization, it has a positive effect on women's participation in the labor market.

Tansel and Taşçi (2004) analyzed the factors that influence the duration of unemployment for men and women in Turkey. Using data from the Labor Force Survey, the authors applied survival models. The results show that age, education level, work experience, and geographic region play a significant role, with notable gender differences. Women, for example, experience a longer duration of unemployment than men, particularly due to discrimination and family responsibilities.

Sahar Khayyat (2019) a analysé l'impact de la région sur l'accès des femmes à l'emploi en Arabie Saoudite, notamment les différences entre les grandes villes comme Riyad et les zones plus reculées. Elle a conclu que les femmes en ville ont considérablement plus de possibilités grâce à des politiques locales qui favorisent l'intégration des femmes sur le marché du travail.

Seema Jayachandran (2021) has identified social norms that inhibit women's labor force participation in developing countries. These include expectations that women focus on domestic tasks, cultural preferences for men in paid work, and restrictions on women's mobility, especially when working away from home. Social pressures to marry and have children also make it difficult for women to work. Concerns about preserving family honor often discourage families from allowing women to work, especially in mixed-sex settings.

While Seema Jayachandran's (2021) research focuses on social norms, she also explores how regional differences in developing countries impact women's employment. The study shows that norms vary across regions and impact women's access to economic opportunities. Some regions appear to maintain norms that force women to remain in the domestic sphere, partly because of deep cultural traditions that value gender segregation, notably in North Africa, the Middle East, and India.

Social norms in Arab countries, including Tunisia, continue to put pressure on women's roles in the workplace, particularly in rural and more conservative areas. The distribution of domestic roles, motherhood, and women's views on the world of work create barriers to equal participation in the labor market.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section presents the model, then the data and the variables of the model.

2.1. Model specification

In order to meet our objective of analyzing the employability of women in Tunisia while analyzing the determinants of their access to the job market, we used two analysis approaches, a spatial one based on the activity rate and an econometric approach based on a logistic regression model. This logistic model calculates the probability of fulfilling the analyzed criteria when the values of individual characteristics X are known.

This model was chosen because it allows the study of certain behaviors, such as job search, by associating circumstantial variables.

The logit model was introduced by Boyd and Mellman (1980) and Cardell and Dunbar (1980).

Logistic regression is defined as a binomial regression model. However, it is a question of modeling as best as possible the fact of associating a binomial random variable denoted y with a vector of random variables (x_1, \dots, x_i) in cases where the binomial random variable is a qualitative variable reflecting the presence or absence of a probabilistic event.

$$Y_i = \alpha X_i + \varepsilon_i$$

With:

Y_i is the variable defining the job opportunity, α is the vector of parameters to be estimated, X_i is the vector of explanatory variables and ε_i is the error term that follows the normal distribution.

The presence of the event is generally coded by 1 and its absence is coded by 0.

In this research work, we attempt to identify the determinants that can explain women's access to employment in Tunisia. To do this, we have constructed a binary variable (y_i) that takes 1 if the woman is in employment and 0 otherwise.

Thus, in all that follows, the qualitative variable y_i will be coded as follows:

$y_i = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if the woman is in employment} \\ 0 & \text{if not} \end{cases}$

To study the probability that y_i is equal to unity ($y_i = 1$), we have:

- a set of i explanatory variables x_1, x_2, \dots, x_i gathered in a vector X_i
- a vector β consisting of $k + 1$ parameters $\beta_0, \beta_1, \dots, \beta_k$

$X_i \beta$ is the matrix form.

- $F(\cdot)$ is the distribution function of the quantity $\beta_0 + \beta_1 x_{i1} + \dots + \beta_k x_{ik}$.

Furthermore, the normalized probability model is as follows:

$$P(y_i = 1) = F(\beta_0 + \beta_1 x_{i1} + \dots + \beta_k x_{ik}) = F(X_i \beta)$$

The Logit model uses the distribution function of the logistic function.

More precisely, assuming that the random variable u_i follows a logistic distribution defined by the following distribution function $F(t)$:

$$F(t) = 1 / (1 + e^{-t}) \quad t \in \mathbb{R}$$

Let us note here that the lack of individual statistical data on employment in Tunisia, particularly by gender, led us to use data from the National Survey on Population and Employment, carried out by the National Institute of Statistics in 2023. This is a survey that provides information on the activity status of individuals as well as gender. In addition, they provide important information on the composition of the household and the characteristics of its members, the education of household members and their main resource.

2.2. Data sources

This study examines the socio-economic and demographic factors affecting women's access to employment in Tunisia, based on 2023 data from the National Institute of Statistics (INS). Our sample consists of women aged 15 and over who are part of the working population, specifically those in employment. It includes 34,726 women, 29% of whom are declared unemployed.

2.3. Presentation of variables

The review of the literature on the study of the determinants of women's employment allowed us to choose our variables.

In order to estimate our model, we have considered the variable access to employment as the variable to be explained in the model. It is this variable which will be the determinant of the various explanatory variables we will discuss in the next section. Access to employment is the fact that a woman is engaged in work. As our model is logistic, this variable will take two forms, depending on whether or not the woman has had access.

In this context, various explanatory variables are used to estimate the logit model, including variables relating to the characteristics of individuals, such as :

Age

Although all are young, outputs surveyed are not all the same age. Their ages range from 15 to 65, so we assume that there will be an age-related difference in access to employment. It is this presumption that justifies the inclusion of the age variable in our model. From the outset, by cross-tabulating the age variable with the explained variable access to employment, we can see the age-related trend with regard to whether or not the woman has access to the labor market.

Marital status;

According to marital status, the sample is made up of 35% single women and 58% married women. Both married and single people are present on the job market, as we have already seen in the analysis of the main characteristics of our sample. Both have access to employment, but not in the same proportions. The decision to include this variable in our model is justified by the fact that marital status is an important factor in access to employment. Married women are assumed to be more responsible than single women, so it would be natural for them to have a much higher probability of access to employment. Another reason for this choice is the fact that in many situations, there are positions of responsibility that are reserved for married women, and to which unmarried women cannot aspire unless they change their marital status.

Level of education

There is no need to justify the importance of including this variable in our model. This study would be flawed if it didn't analyze the influence of educational level on the probability of entering the job market. The graph illustrates that women's education levels vary significantly, which may impact their access to employment.

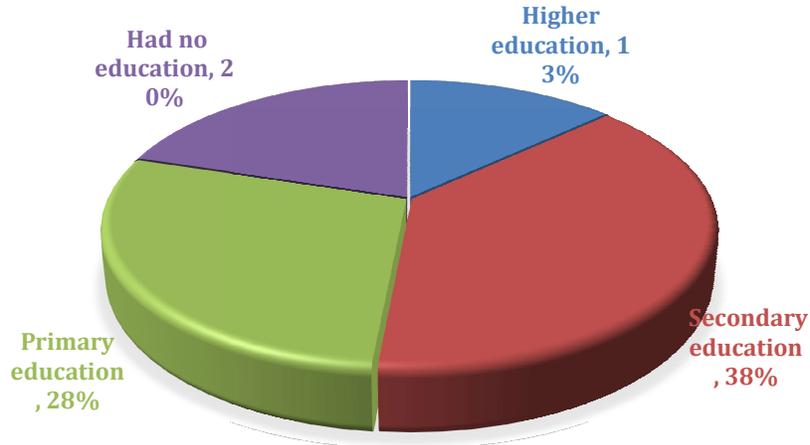


Figure 1. Level of education

Place of residence (urban, rural)

This is a factor that can positively or negatively influence women's access to job markets. In terms of the regional distribution of our sample, the graph below highlights a predominance of employment in urban areas, with a rate of 67.08% compared to 32.92% in rural areas.

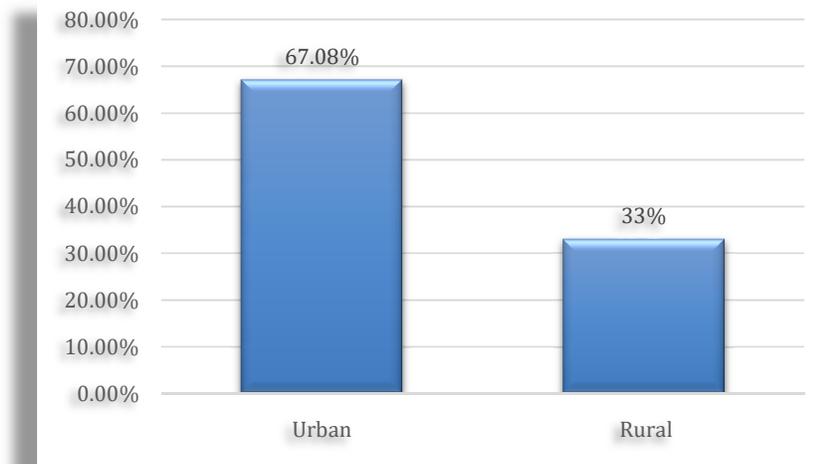


Figure 2. Distribution of employed women by region

The diploma

It constitutes a major asset on the job market. A guarantee of knowledge acquired by the person and an indicator of a productive potential usable by the company, it promotes access to the most qualified and best paid jobs. (Nauze-Fichet and Tomasini, 2002). However, it is an instrument used to position the potential skills of an individual in relation to others. The diploma could then have an economic function in whole or in part distinct from the education it sanctions and relating to the information on a set of skills that it allows to communicate (Arnaud Dupray, 2000)

Sector of Activity

On the professional level, the sector of activity is a factor in access to employment. Indeed, the choice of the sector of activity is generally determined by the skills acquired, that is to say the activity that goes in line with the know-how, the skills acquired during studies or previous jobs.

3. ESTIMATION RESULTS

3.1. Female employment: regional analysis in terms of employment access rates

In Tunisia, as everywhere else, territorial differences in the chances of accessing employment are much more marked than one might imagine, and this at all spatial scales, between municipalities, between governorates or between regions. In this context, we illustrate the persistence of territorial effects on women's access to the job market.

To analyze the territorial disparities that affect women's access to employment, we considered an approach based on indicators applied to data from the Employment survey carried out by the INS in 2023. This allows us to diagnose the extent of regional disparities at the national level.

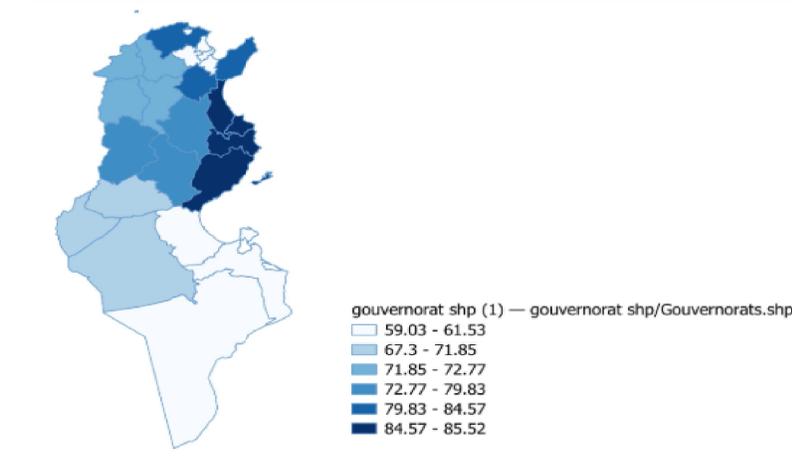


Figure 3. Regional women employment rate

The analysis of the result of the rate of access of women to the labor market implies a great disparity between the different Tunisian regions. However, the region of Center East is placed first with a rate of 85.52% in comparison with the region of South East with an access rate of 59.03. % However, based on this index we can notice that the unequal distribution, the rate of female employability is proportionally high in some regions, which implies the centralization of economic activities in regions compared to others which favors the access of women to employment. In comparison with certain regions of the interior of Tunisia where the activities are oriented towards agriculture, which leaves the employability rate lower.

Furthermore, these regional inequalities in terms of professional integration are characterized by various determinants that can favor the access of women to the labor market.

The analysis of these various determinants will be done on the basis of a logistic regression in what follows.

3.2. Female employment: analysis by the logit model

The results of the multinomial logit model estimation are shown in Table 1. The estimate is globally significant at the 0.000 level, which explains why at least one of the independent variables (age, education level, marital status, etc.) has an influence on the dependent variable.

Table 2. Contribution of circumstance variables to access to employment

Region	Age	Place of residence	marital status	<u>Sector</u> <u>of</u> <u>Activit</u> <u>y</u>	Diplo ma	level of education
TUNIS	0.00554*** (0.00208)	-0.244*** (0.0393)	-0.142*** (0.0328)	- 0.311* ** (0.000)	- 0.112 ** (0.012)	0.255*** (0.0118)
North est	-0.0174*** (0.00545)	0.0670 (0.0962)	-0.128 (0.0901)	- 0.11*** (0.02)	- 0.786 *** (0.024)	0.158*** (0.0324)
Norhw est	0.0341*** (0.00610)	-0.386*** (0.107)	-0.0338 (0.0965)	- 0.421* ** (0.000)	- 0.453 *** (0.051)	0.423*** (0.0349)
Central est	-0.0150*** (0.00493)	-0.610*** (0.104)	-0.268*** (0.0834)	-0. 299*** (0.03)	- 0.899 (0.329)	0.282*** (0.0287)

Central west	0.0352*** (0.00608)	-0.165 (0.105)	-0.149 (0.0911)	- 0.129* ** (0.031)	- 0.622 *** (0.011)	0.191*** (0.0356)
Sud Est	0.0375*** (0.00727)	-0.385*** (0.135)	-0.657*** (0.114)	- 0.428* ** (0.028)	- 0.976 *** (0.000)	0.429*** (0.0390)
Sud west	0.0154** (0.00629)	-0.0785 (0.121)	-0.170* (0.0926)	- 0.321* ** (0.0628)	- 0.119 *** (0.0322)	0.215*** (0.0331)

significant at 1% level, ** significant at 5% level, *** significant at 10% level.

From the estimation results below, we can confirm the fundamental effect of socio-demographic variables on women's access to the job market. These variables include age, marital status, place of residence and level of education, all of which influence access to employment in all Tunisian governorates.

The estimation results of our logit model confirmed that being a woman reduces the probability of entering the job market in certain regions. This is evidenced by the non-significance of certain circumstantial variables, constituting factors that limit their access to the job market. Indeed, in most Tunisian governorates, women cannot work in any sector, unlike men, who are more likely to find a job than women (Camara and Gueye 2013). If we refer to age, the probability of a woman entering the job market decreases with increasing age. We also note that in some governorates, older women are less likely to find a job. So, the older you get, the more mature you become, and the more social pressure makes the need to find a job imperative (Adair et al. 2014). Here again, we should note that the lack of experience apprehended by young women is a brake on their access to employment, and the probability of non-participation (unemployment) decreases more and more as women advance in age.

All other things being equal, the fact of being married reduces the probability of entering the labor market, as well as the chances of choosing a job. Indeed, in some regions, married women tend to work in the agricultural sector. The fact that married women are more likely than others to have access to all segments of the labor market can be explained by a more active search for employment dictated by the need to provide for their needs. However, in some regions, the fact of being married considerably increases the probability of accessing employment. Single people are more likely to remain unemployed, which can be explained by the fact that married people, facing more intense family pressure, are more active in their job search than single people (Camara and Gueye 2013). In fact, being married increases the chances of entering all sectors, since married people tend to look for work more. Where a woman lives has a greater influence on her access to employment. Living in an urban area increases the probability of finding a job. However, living in a rural area increases the likelihood of working in agriculture, while living in an urban area increases the likelihood of working in other sectors. Residing in the city also lengthens the time it takes to find a job, adding to the multiplicity of employment opportunities that exist in the city and in rural areas (Montmarquette, Mourji and Garni, 1996). However, rural

women come to the city to acquire or complete their training in specialized centers. As a result, they are more active in their job search, as they wish to remain in the city.

As for level of education, it plays an important role in women's access to employment: as the level of education increases, the probability of finding an opportunity on the job market decreases Boudarbat (2007). At this stage, an increase in educational level reduces the chances of access to employment. It should also be remembered that, among educated women, those with the lowest level of training are more likely to find a job than other women. It should also be pointed out that the phenomenon of inactivity increases as the level of education rises, which could be a sign of the difficulties of integration.

However, the diploma constitutes a major asset on the job market. A guarantee of knowledge acquired by the person and an indicator of a productive potential usable by the company, it promotes access to the most qualified and best paid jobs. (Nauze-Fichet and Tomasini, 2002). This deterrent is significant, which promotes women's access to employment, particularly for qualified positions or in certain sectors that require specific skills. This implies that the choice of sector in certain regions is highly significant.

CONCLUSION

Tunisia has suffered from a major problem in terms of job supply, and more specifically in terms of equal opportunities for women and men. However, over the last few decades, the country has seen low participation of women in the job market compared to men. While a large body of research has explored the issue of female employment in developing countries, this study has attempted to examine the determinants of Tunisian women's participation in the workforce, with a view to highlighting the barriers to their participation.

The results of this study reveal the fundamental effect of socio-demographic variables on women's access to the job market. These variables influence access to employment in all Tunisian governorates. Indeed, in most Tunisian governorates, women cannot work in any sector, unlike men, who are more likely to find a job than women (Camara and Gueye 2013). On the other hand, the lack of experience feared by young women is a brake on their access to employment, and the probability of non-participation decreases as women get older.

In some governorates, married women are less likely than other types of status to access all segments of the labor market; however, in other regions, being married considerably increases the probability of accessing employment. As a result of more intense family pressure (Camara and Gueye 2013). The impact of place of residence should not be overlooked. Residing in an urban environment increases the probability of finding a job, compared with a rural environment. On the other hand, a higher level of education reduces the chances of finding a job. It should also be remembered that, among educated women, those with the lowest level of training are more likely to find a job than other women. It should also be pointed out that the phenomenon of inactivity increases as the level of education rises, which could be a sign of the difficulties of integration.

Faced with these results, and to encourage women to participate in the labor market, the Tunisian government must intensify its efforts and find solutions to overcome the

crisis of female unemployment which requires enormous resources over several years. This involves promoting equal opportunities between the sexes. Many measures must also be taken to improve the participation of women in the labor market, in particular by creating more jobs in the private and public sectors and by striving to improve the quality of childcare services.

In addition, a culture of entrepreneurship should be created for women and their access to finance should be facilitated to encourage private initiative. This could encourage women to participate in the labor market while ensuring a better balance between work and family life.

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