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Shifts Determinations of Illegal
Emigration of Tunisians

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Abstract:

This study addresses a pressing issue: the burgeoning rates of illegal emigration from Tunisia starting from 2020 till now, contrasting with previous years and marked by shifts in patterns. This evolution has ignited a national debate, with perspectives attributing these transformations to social media's impact on migration decisions, exposure to violence and marginalization, and political and economic upheavals within Tunisia. This study thus endeavors to uncover the major factors driving these shifts and escalating rates of illegal emigration.

The study's key findings, derived from statistical and thematic analyses, unveil a number of factors contributing to Tunisia's surging illegal emigration rates. Regression analyses highlight the impact of inflation, political stability, absence of violence, and government ineffectiveness. Thematic analysis uncovers additional factors such as: COVID-19's influence, political and economic deterioration, mistrust in the government, human trafficking and migrant smuggling networks, social dynamics, marginalization, visa restrictions, economic opportunities, social media, and employment prospects.

Moreover, the demographic landscape of irregular migrants in Tunisia has shifted significantly, encompassing diverse groups including highly educated individuals, women, minors, and families. The study delves into comprehensive explanations for this transformation. Notably, Tunisian women's decision to engage in irregular emigration is driven by a blend of economic and social factors, including evolving gender roles, societal perceptions, and migration ideals. Unaccompanied minors, in turn, are swayed by environmental, consciousness-related, and familial influences, along with the impact of social norms and peer pressure. Similarly, family motivations stem from economic disparities, disillusionment, broken promises, and societal reactions, bolstered by collective factors such as familiarity with immigration policies and regional dynamics.

Likewise, the study dissects the motivations of well-educated individuals opting for illegal emigration, attributing their choices to restricted job opportunities, stringent European migration policies, and Tunisia's socioeconomic disparities. Additionally, the study assesses the dual impact of irregular emigrants on Tunisia's economy. Positive aspects include remittances as a vital source of currency and successful emigrants acting as ambassadors. However, challenges emerge, including the loss of skilled labor, demographic shifts, cultural shocks, strains on public services and infrastructure, and localized economic impacts. Critically, the study critiques the Tunisian government's predominantly security-focused approach and advocates for a comprehensive strategy addressing the root causes of illegal emigration. Therefore, the study recommended some recommendations such as: developing and implementing a comprehensive national strategy that addresses the root causes of illegal emigration, focusing on restoring trust in the government to address the state of frustration, enhancing transparency and accountability, Strengthening social safety systems to support vulnerable populations, including families and unaccompanied minors.

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Introduction:

Tunisia has been suffering from a problem that has become a phenomenon because of its recurrence and persistence, despite the State's security efforts to prevent and combat it, which is the phenomenon of illegal emigration or irregular emigration as it is termed in Tunisia. This phenomenon began in the early 1990s when Italy decided to impose entry visas for Tunisian citizens, ⁽¹⁾ so many young people moved since that time to immigrate to Europe in general, and Italy in particular, illegally, due to several factors such as economic problems, unemployment, social injustice, repression and other factors that Created favorable conditions for illegal immigration.

The Tunisian government took several measures to address this phenomenon, which contributed to its decline between 2009 and 2010, but it exploded again in 2011, after the revolution and occupied public opinion in Tunisia, as it became one of the main headlines of the social movement led by the families of the victims of illegal emigration, especially since the waves of emigration after the revolution were unprecedented in the history of Tunisia , the extreme right in Italy described it as the Tunisian invasion and the Tunisian tsunami, because tens of thousands of young people – from different ages and social classes- were thrown out themselves to the sea and endanger their lives to get out of the country. The matter evolved into emigrants burning their identity documents in order to get rid of any legal or administrative obstacles that might prevent their ability to emigrate, which contributed to the widespread use of the term (El-Horka- الحُرقة) in the Tunisian arena to refer to the phenomenon of illegal emigration.

This phenomenon has undergone substantial changes or transformations in recent times. It was male phenomenon, all illegal migrants were males - youth- and it was limited to unemployed and marginalized people, but now Tunisia is witnessing the migration of families ⁽²⁾, women as well as children at increasing unprecedented rates, and it is no longer limited to the migration of those with technical education, but rather it also included the migration of university graduates. According to statistics reported by the Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights, the last year (2021) witnessed the migration of 500 Tunisian families and more than 1,200 women illegally. ⁽³⁾ These types of illegal emigration (Migration of families, women, children, and university graduates) have escalated since the beginning of 2020 in an unprecedented manner. which raises the question about the reasons for these transformations?

Research problem

The research problem lies in several aspects, the first is the increase in the rates of illegal emigration starting from 2020 till now compared to previous years as shown in Figure 1, the second is the occurrence of shifts and changes in the phenomenon of illegal emigration, which was referred to in the introduction, and the third is the national debate about the reason for these transformations, some believe that social media have motivated many women, families, and children to emigrate

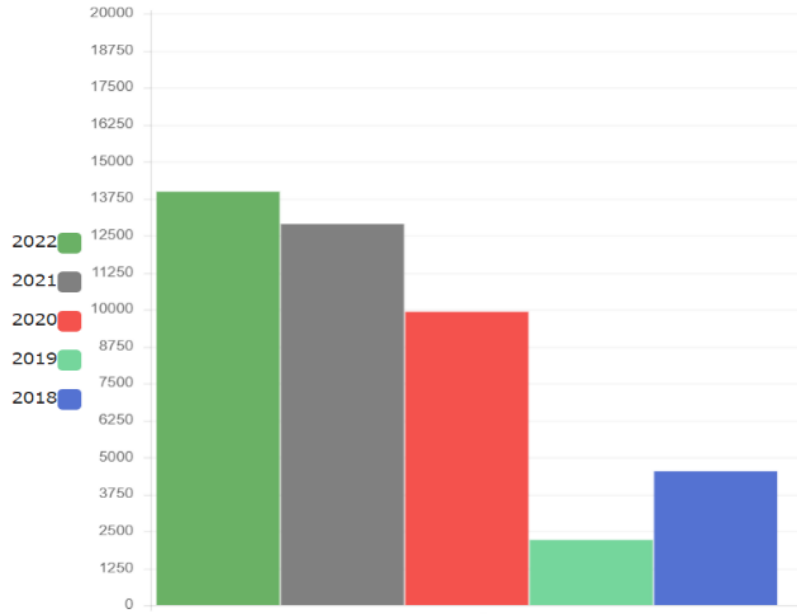
¹ Elena Ambrosetti et Angela Papparuso, "Migrants or Refugees? The Evolving Governance of Migration Flows in Italy during the "Refugee Crisis"," **Revue européenne des migrations internationales**, Vol. 34, No. 1, 2018, pp. 151-171, available at: <https://journals.openedition.org/remi/10265#quotation>

² زهرة فضلي، " تونس: الهجرة غير النظامية تتحول إلى مشروع عائلي"، الميادين، 2020/7/22، متاح على: <https://bit.ly/3MnyRnq>

³ "احصائيات الهجرة غير النظامية 2022"، المنتدى التونسي للحقوق الاقتصادية والاجتماعية، 2022/9/19، متاح على: <https://ftdes.net/ar/statistiques-migration-2022/>

irregularly ⁽¹⁾, others believe that the reason lies in the exposure of some of these groups to violence and marginalization ⁽²⁾, while others assert that the political and economic crises ⁽³⁾, they are witnessing in Tunisia drive citizens to migrate illegally in higher rates than previous years. From this standpoint, the main question of the study becomes: **Why have there been shifts and an increase in the rates of illegal emigration in Tunisia?** In other words: **what are the major factors stand behind the shifts and the increase in the rates of illegal emigration in Tunisia?**

Figure 1 illegal migration in Tunisia



(source: المنتدى التونسي للحقوق الاقتصادية والاجتماعية)

The research sub-questions are:

1. To what extent have the current political crises affected the phenomenon of illegal migration in Tunisia?
2. What is the impact of the economic crisis on the phenomenon of illegal migration?
3. What is the role of social media in increasing the rates of illegal migration?
4. What is the role of social factors such as violence inequality and marginalization in the changes of the phenomenon of illegal migration in Tunisia?
5. What is the impact of the environmental variable on the phenomenon of illegal migration in Tunisia?

The importance of the study

This topic is important for many reasons; first the changes or transformations in the illegal emigration phenomenon in Tunisian is new, and there is a lack of researches that studied and explained in other countries. Second, there is a debate about the factors that stand behind these

¹ سمير حمدي، " عن تصاعد الهجرة غير النظامية من تونس"، العربي، 2022/8/18، متاح على: <https://bit.ly/3SYDdp5>
² " هجرة النساء غير النظامية تزايدت وبلدية تونس تبحث ادماج هذه الفئة"، Tunisia Press، 2022/8/12، متاح على: <https://bit.ly/3rJn0qq>
³ " تونس... مشاركة غير مسبوقة للنساء والأطفال في الهجرة غير النظامية"، سبوتنك نيوز، 2022/9/13، متاح على: <https://bit.ly/3eozAIA>

transformations, so this study will try to determine the factors that affect it. Some scholars tried to explain it but they reached different results as it's mentioned in the literature review section.

Literature review

There are many studies that tried to figure out why people migrate illegally, which could be divided into 3 groups; the first one is the studies that examined national or international determinations, the second one is the studies that examined the personal determinations which related to the migrants, and the last one is the studies that examined local or sub-national determinations.

National and international determinations

These studies are focusing on national and international drivers of migration which are related to the country and the cross-country context like: human rights violations, violence and conflicts, economic situations, poverty and development, migration policies, etc.

The literature generally agrees that political instability, violence and conflict are the primary motivators that lead people to leave their countries. According to quantitative cross-country studies, violence is the most common reason people leave. As dependent variables, these studies used aggregate country-level data on migrants, refugees and internally displaced people. ⁽¹⁾ Moving to the subnational level, and thus taking individual decisions into account, the risk of violence has been found to be a major factor of both international and internal movements. Czaika and Kis-Katos (2009) discovered that conflict is a major push factor for leaving one's home.⁽²⁾ In this regard, some studies indicated that the Arab Spring revolutions and terrorist attacks in the Arab countries led to an increase in illegal immigration flows to Europe, which is considered safer.⁽³⁾

While there is an evidence supporting the importance of violence as a determination of positive migration decisions, there is a notable gap in the literature regarding the interconnection of violence with other potential factors, as well as its significance, for example, to economic stability and opportunities, along with individual-level characteristics (such as educational background, age, and gender) that can illustrate heterogeneous movement decisions.

Political repression and the lack of different human rights - political, economic, social and religious - and discrimination, particularly ethnic and religious are among the determinations of

¹ Clare Cummings, Julia Pacitto, Diletta Lauro, and Marta Forest, "Why people move: understanding the drivers and trends of migration to Europe," Overseas Development Institute, Working paper 430, December 2015, available at: <https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/10485.pdf>; Prakash Adhikari, "The Plight of the Forgotten Ones: Civil War and Forced Migration," **International Studies Quarterly**, September 2012, Vol. 56, No. 3, pp. 590–606; Hein de Haas, "The determinants of international migration: Conceptualising policy, origin and destination effects", **International Migration Institute**, DEMIG project paper 2, March 2011, vol. 32, pp. 1-32; J E Campos, D Lien, "Political instability and illegal immigration," **Journal of Population Economics**, 1995, Vol.8, pp. 23-33.

² Mathias Czaika and Krisztina Kis-Katos, "Civil conflict and displacement: Village-level determinants of forced migration in Aceh," University of Freiburg, Institute for Economic Research, April 2008, discussion papers, available at: http://www.vwl-iwipol.uni-freiburg.de/iwipol/REPEC/fre/wpaper/DP4_czaika-kiskatos_Aceh.pdf.

³ Bilal Bahadir Karaca, "The Positions of the Visegrad Countries Towards the European Policy on Illegal Immigration and Asylum," **Master thesis**, Charles University, Institute of political studies, 2019; Faith Omokegbe Gabriel, "illegal migration in the Mediterranean: who Benefits?," **Master thesis**, Universität Bonn, the Center for European Integration Studies, August 2017, available at: https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/stufo/opus-44730/gabriel%20faith_master%20thesis.pdf.

migration.⁽¹⁾ But in some cases, human rights do not necessarily lead to migration if the economic conditions are good,⁽²⁾ or if the ruling regime is authoritarian and has the ability to limit migration plans, whether legal - by imposing controls to exit the country –⁽³⁾ or illegal migration - by securing borders and taking other measures to thwart migration attempts. These studies used quantitative data, collected at the state level, but there is a lack of qualitative studies that investigate the effects of repression, human rights violations, and the absence of political freedoms on illegal migration at the level of the family or the individual.

Some studies found that GDP per capita, inflation rate, real interest rate, employment rate and public health expenditure, were the key determinants which entice migrants away from their countries and direct them to “better off” destinations.⁽⁴⁾ whereas, other group of literatures that focused on determinations related to the **destination countries** on which the irregular migrants made their decisions, and found that these determinations are: (1) economic factors, which include not only the costs of the migration, but also migrants’ perceptions of the economic environment in the country of destination.⁽⁵⁾ The costs of the migration journey can determine destination choice as migrants can only migrate as far as they can afford.⁽⁶⁾ A strong economy and job opportunities and expected salaries can act as a draw for migrants to a destination country.⁽⁷⁾ (2) **migration policies** which are: border restrictions, police interventions, asylum policies, and return policies, but the evidence on the role of migration policies is inconclusive, as some studies found that migrants are attracted to countries due to favorable asylum policies,⁽⁸⁾ whereas others found that the majority of asylum seekers know very little about asylum procedures in the destination country prior to arrival. Moreover, restrictive migration policies do not decrease the volume of migrants claiming asylum.⁽⁹⁾

¹ Prakash Adhikari, “The Plight of the Forgotten Ones: Civil War and Forced Migration,” **International Studies Quarterly**, September 2012, Vol. 56, No. 3, pp. 590–606;

² Hein de Haas, “Migration and development: A theoretical perspective,” **International Migration Review**, 2010, Vol. 44, No.1, pp. 227-264.

³ David J. McKenzie, “Paper Walls Are Easier To Tear Down : Passport Costs And Legal Barriers To Emigration,” **World Bank Group**, Policy Research Working Paper 3783, December 2005, available at: <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/537841468140948707/pdf/wps3783.pdf>.

⁴ Mulugeta F. Dinbabo and Themba Nyasulu, “Macroeconomic Immigration Determinants: an Analysis of ‘Pull’ Factors of International Migration to South Africa,” **Institute for Social Development**, 2015, pp. 27-52, available at: <https://repository.uwc.ac.za/xmlui/handle/10566/4974>.

⁵ Matt Herbert, “Losing Hope: Why Tunisians are leading the surge in irregular migration to Europe”, **Global initiative against transnational organized crime**, January 2022; Mohammed Aderghal and Mohamed Berriane, “Morocco-Europe Relations through the Image of the Other,” **European policy brief**, January 2013, pp. 1-8; صحفية كيم، "الهجرة غير الشرعية للمرأة الجزائرية بوصفها نموذجًا للمقاومة النسوية: دراسة سوسولوجية لظاهرة الحراقات، عمران، 2018، مجلد 25، العدد 7، ص-ص 101-124.

⁶ Nicholas Van Hear, “Reconsidering Migration and Class,” **International Migration Review**, 2014, Vol.48, pp. 100-121.

⁷ Tsitsi Matose et al., “Pervasive irregular migration and the vulnerabilities of irregular female migrants at Plumtree border post in Zimbabwe,” **Journal of Migration and Health**, 2022, Vol. 5, pp. 1-8, Robert Wiliater Sibarani, **Determinants of Illegal Migration: The Case of Migrant Workers from East Java to Malaysia**, Kassel University press, June 2017.

⁸ Khalid Koser and Alan Gilbert, “Coming to the UK: What do Asylum-Seekers Know About the UK before Arrival?,” **Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies**, September 2006, Vol.32, No. 7, pp. 1209-1225.

⁹ Mathias Czaika and Mogens Hobolth, “Deflection into irregularity? The (un)intended effects of restrictive asylum and visa policies,” **Working paper**, International Migration Institute, February 2014, Vol.84, pp. 1-25.

Personal determinations

These studies are focusing on personal factors that drive a man or a woman to migrate illegally like: age, gender, educational level, and risk aversion and personality traits. So, these determinations might be hope, and **the willing to start a new life**, some illegal migrant women with their husbands said they want to start a new life and obtain better living conditions, especially for their children. ⁽¹⁾

Regarding **Gender**, the previous studies assumed that women are forced to migrate and work in prostitution has brought about protective measures, which sometimes help women but also restrict their choices. Men are often spoken of as being smuggled and women as being trafficked. There are countries today – like Bangladesh, Indonesia, Myanmar (Burma) and Nepal – that have banned or restricted the emigration of women in an attempt to protect them. ⁽²⁾

There are few studies that tried to explain why **Tunisian women** emigrated - legally - to Europe, especially after the revolution, and attributed the matter to women being severely affected by the Tunisian economic crisis, and the difficulty of their access to the labor market - especially well-educated women - is another motive for migration. In addition to the European immigration policies that preferring highly skilled people and the existence of a high demand in those countries for the services performed by female workers, which contributed to the feminization of Tunisian immigration. ⁽³⁾ In addition, some studies added other causes, like insecurity, as some women how migrate illegally said that they didn't feel safe or independent, they feel suppressed and insecure in their home country. ⁽⁴⁾

There is disagreement about the **age**, some studies found that the old people tend to migrate legally whereas the youth who might migrate illegally. ⁽⁵⁾ while other said that majority of migrants are of working age, because those of working age are the most vulnerable to disappointment and despair if local opportunities are insufficient to allow them to earn a living for themselves and their families. ⁽⁶⁾ Furthermore, it appears that people with lower **levels of education** dominate illegal emigration, whereas those with higher skill levels have more opportunities to migrate legally. ⁽⁷⁾

¹ FATMA ÇAKIR, "Afghan women in Ağrı: a case study of irregular migration," **Master thesis**, School of Social Sciences, January 2020.

² Laura Agustin, "Other voices in the trafficking debate," **Migrants in the mistress's house**, Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 96-117.

³ Vera Pober, "Gender-Specific Migration Patterns in the Context of Political and Economic Upheaval: The case of Tunisia", **Master thesis**, Institute Barcelona, 2018.

⁴ FATMA ÇAKIR, "Afghan women in Ağrı: a case study of irregular migration," **Master thesis**, School of Social Sciences, January 2020.

⁵ Joanna Penn, "What are the demographic characteristics of unauthorized immigrants versus legal immigrants?," **the Journalist's resource**, November 5, 2014, available at: <https://journalistsresource.org/politics-and-government/demographic-characteristics-illegal-legal-immigrants/>.

⁶ Hassene Kassar and Paul Dourgnon, "The big crossing: Illegal boat migrants in the Mediterranean," **European Journal of Public Health**, 2014, Vol.24, Vol. 1, pp. 11-15;

⁷ Linguère Mously Mbaye, "“Barcelona or die”: understanding illegal migration from Senegal," **IZA Journal of Migration**, 2014, Vol. 3, No. 21, pp. 1-19; Zunirah Mohd Talib, "The Impact of Education Level on the Desire for Illegal Migration among Foreign Immigration in Libya," **International Journal of Business Society**, 2021, Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 257-269.

But there is no agreement on this result, as some studies concluded that the more educated people tend to migrate illegally. ⁽¹⁾

Community and household determinations:

At this level of analysis literatures are focusing on local, sub-national aspects that related to the community, district, or the province of the migrant. These determinations aren't only related to the migrants and their families or friends but also the smugglers, as there are some studies founded that **migrant smugglers** have been identified as playing a key role in influencing destination choice in three ways: first the destinations that they offer services to, second by making the destination choice decision for the migrant; and finally in breaking an agreement with the migrant and leaving them in a different destination than agreed. The frequency with which each of these situations occurs is unknown. ⁽²⁾

In addition, the **social connections, such as family and friends** in the destination country, are recognized as playing a central role in determining destination choice for both regular and irregular migrants ⁽³⁾, but there is mixed agreement on the role of networks in influencing migrants' destination choice as in some cases it can be a draw⁽⁴⁾, and in others a deterrent as they found that some migrants preferred to migrate via weak ties to a destination country rather than via strong ties to others. ⁽⁵⁾Further, there is little information available on how irregular migrants use social media to form their destination choice.

¹ Joanna Penn, "What are the demographic characteristics of unauthorized immigrants versus legal immigrants?," **the Journalist's resource**, November 5, 2014, available at: <https://journalistsresource.org/politics-and-government/demographic-characteristics-illegal-legal-immigrants/>.

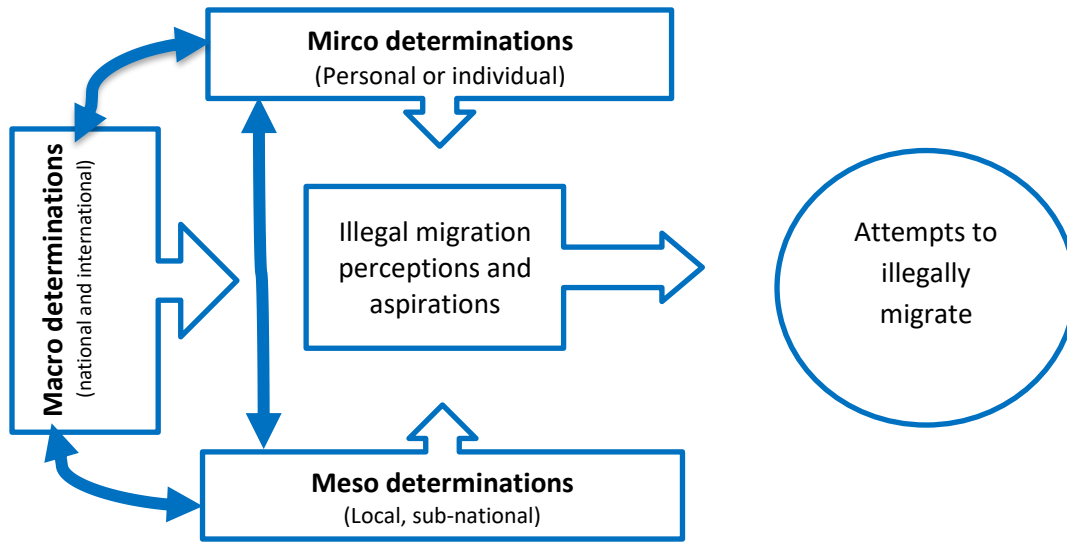
² Heaven Crawley, "Chance or Choice? Understanding why asylum seekers come to the UK," London: **refugee council**, 2010, pp. 1-59; Khalid Koser and Alan Gilbert, "Coming to the UK: What do Asylum-Seekers Know About the UK before Arrival?," **Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies**, September 2006, Vol.32, No. 7, pp. 1209-1225; Ilse van liempt and Jeroen Doomernik, "Migrant's Agency in the Smuggling Process: The Perspectives of Smuggled Migrants in the Netherlands," **International Migration**, October 2006, Vol. 44, No. 4, pp. 165-190.

³ Hein de Haas, "The determinants of international migration: Conceptualising policy, origin and destination effects," **Working paper**, International Migration Institute, March 2011, Vol.32, pp. 1-35; Marie McAuliffe, "Seeking the views of irregular migrants: Decision-making, drivers and migration journeys," in: Marie McAuliffe and Khalid Koser (eds), **A Long Way to Go: Irregular Migration Patterns, Processes, Drivers and Decision-making**, December 2017, Australia, The Australian National University, 2017.

⁴ Kelly Brewer and Deniz Yukseker, "A Survey on African Migrants and Asylum Seekers in Istanbul," In: Kemal Icduygu and Kirisci Ahmet (Eds), **Land of Diverse Migrations: Challenges of Emigration and Migration in Turkey**, Turkey, Koç University Department of Sociology, 2006; Jan-Paul Brekke and Monica Five Aarset, **Why Norway: Understanding Asylum destinations**, Oslo, Institute for Social research, 2009

⁵ Michael Collyer, "States of Insecurity: Consequences of Saharan Transit Migration," **Working paper**, University of Oxford, Centre on Migration, Policy and Society, 2006, No. 31. Pp. 1-32; Rianne Dekker and Godfried Engbersen, "How social media transform migrant networks and facilitate migration," **Working paper**, University of Oxford, International Migration Institute, November 2012, No. 61, pp. 1-21.

Figure 2 Determinations of illegal migration



Through the previous presentation of the relevant literature on the study topic, some gaps become apparent. Firstly, while the literature highlights certain determinants of illegal emigration, such as violence, economic instability, and migration policies, there is a gap in understanding the complex interconnections between these factors. Investigating how migration policies influence migrants' decisions in conjunction with other factors, remains unexplored. Although some studies mention the impact of repression and human rights violations on migration, there's a dearth of qualitative research exploring the lived experiences of individuals and families affected by such circumstances. Delving into personal stories and examining how the absence of political freedoms influences migration decisions at the individual and family levels can provide richer insights.

Additionally, the existing debate about the age and educational background of migrants lacks consensus. Conducting empirical research to discern whether youth are more likely to migrate irregularly, and whether education indeed affects migration decisions, can provide clarity and contribute to the existing literature. Also, there is a lack in studies that figured out why families and women started to emigrate irregularly.

Through addressing these gaps, my study aims to contribute a comprehensive understanding of the complex factors driving the increase and shifts in illegal emigration from Tunisia. This will not only enhance the existing literature but also provide valuable insights for policymakers and stakeholders working towards effective strategies to address this issue.

Variables of the study

1.1. defining dependent variable: illegal emigration

Before defining the main concept of this study “illegal emigration”, we should differentiate between 3 concepts: “migration, immigration, and emigration.

The first concept **-migration-** is referring to “movement of persons away from their place of usual residence, either across an international border or within a State” ⁽¹⁾. The second one

¹ International organization for migration (IOM), International migration law: Glossary on migration, 2019, Geneva, IOM, p. 137.

“immigration”, is from the perspective of the country of arrival, the act of moving into a country other than one’s country of nationality or usual residence, so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence.⁽¹⁾ While the third one “**Emigration**” is from the perspective of the country of departure, which refers to the act of moving from one’s country of nationality or usual residence to another country, so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence. ⁽²⁾

Also, it’s worth to mention that there is a difference between **illegal**, and **irregular** migration. Illegal means doing something outside the laws, regulations or international agreements governing this action, which means that this action carries a criminal connotation, ⁽³⁾ while Irregular status is not a criminal offence but an infraction of administrative regulations, and since the action - juridically and ethically- can be legal or illegal, but a person cannot, irregular is usually used to describe a person while “illegal” is used to refer to a process of doing something.

That’s why the term “illegal migration” is preferred more than “irregular migration, while the term “irregular migrant” is preferred more than “illegal”.

Also, the term ‘irregular’ is problematic since it is not clear to which rules or regulations it refers. Furthermore, the term ‘irregular migration’ leads to confusion, because it is also used to describe migration that takes place at irregular time intervals, as opposed to regular (seasonal) migration. The term can also be understood to mean disorderly, which again has a criminal association.

So, **illegal emigration** is referring to “Movement from one’s country of nationality or usual residence to another country that takes place outside the laws, regulations, or international agreements governing the entry into or exit from the State of origin, transit or destination.” ⁽⁴⁾

1.2. Related concepts:

- **Unaccompanied minors/children:** according to the convention on the rights of child, article 1, they are: “who have been separated from both parents and other relatives and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for doing so”. ⁽⁵⁾
- **Unaccompanied migrant Minors:** “they are children or adolescents -under 18 years old- who travel across country borders without a legal guardian and without legal immigration documents”. ⁽⁶⁾
- **Refugee:** The 1951 Refugee Convention defines a refugee as a person who is outside their country of origin and is unwilling or unable to return due to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion. ⁽⁷⁾ This definition can be broken down into three main characteristics:

¹ *Ibid.* p. 103.

² *Ibid.* p. 64.

³ “EMN Asylum and Migration Glossary,” EU, **Migration and Home Affairs**, available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/european-migration-network-emn/emn-asylum-and-migration-glossary_en. Access, November 13th, 2022.

⁴ IOM, *Ibid.* p.116

⁵ Joanna Apap, “Vulnerability of unaccompanied and separated child migrant,” **European Parliamentary Research Service**, Briefing, December 2016, p. 1, available at: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/595853/EPRS_BRI\(2016\)595853_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/595853/EPRS_BRI(2016)595853_EN.pdf).

⁶ IOM, “Unaccompanied children on the move,” Geneva, 2011, p. 11, available at: <https://www.corteidh.or.cr/sitios/Observaciones/11/Anexo3.pdf>.

⁷ “The 1951 Refugee Convention,” UNHCR, available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/who-we-are/1951-refugee-convention>

- Physical characteristic: Refugees are outside their country of origin. This means that they have been forced to flee their home country and have crossed an international border.
- Psychological characteristic: Refugees are unwilling or unable to return to their country of origin. This means that they fear for their safety if they were to return.
- Causal element: The fear of being persecuted is based on grounds of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion. This means that the refugee is being persecuted because of their identity or beliefs.

These three characteristics are essential to the definition of a refugee. If a person does not meet all three of these characteristics, they are not considered to be a refugee under the 1951 Refugee Convention.

- **Asylum:** it means, at the very least, basic protection - i.e. no forcible return (refoulement) to the frontiers of territories where the refugee's life or freedom would be at risk, with the possibility of staying in the host country until a solution outside that country can be found. ⁽¹⁾
- **Human Trafficking:** The Palermo Protocol defines human trafficking as the act of recruiting, transporting, transferring, harboring, or receiving a person through the use of force, fraud, or other forms of coercion, for the purpose of exploitation. This definition highlights three key points:
 - Act: Human trafficking involves the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring and/or receipt of a person.
 - Means: It can include the threat or use of force, deception, abduction, the abuse of power or a position of vulnerability, or other forms of coercion.
 - Purpose: The purpose of human trafficking is exploitation, which can include the prostitution of others, forced labor, slavery or servitude, removal of organs. ⁽²⁾

Methodology

The type of this research is empirical, and a mixed methodology will be applied as its aims are not only figure out the statistics of illegal emigration and description of it, but also the explaining the reasons of the transformations and changes that happened recently, which values the context of the phenomena and the participants' perspectives, in addition to investigate the relationships between illegal emigration and political, economic, social, environmental variables etc:

1. The **quantitative method** by analyzing **country- level data** about (illegal emigration statistics, political stability/instability, inequality, economic status, corruption, human rights, environmental disasters, etc from international indices and databases like world bank database) and I will analyze them by using **descriptive statistical tests** in addition to **regression test**.
2. The **qualitative method** by collecting data from experts and irregular emigrants or candidates through **interview tool** to know why these people tend to emigrate illegally from their country, and to analyze this data I will use "**content analysis method**".

¹ UNHCR, available at: <https://help.unhcr.org/usa/applying-for-asylum/what-is-asylum/>

² Stephen J. Winkler, "Human Trafficking: Definitions, Data, and Determinants," **World Bank group**, Policy Research Working Paper, No. 9623, 2021, p. 3, available at: <https://ideas.repec.org/p/wbk/wbrwps/9623.html#download>

In addition, the sample of interviewees will be **non-probability and self-selection sample** which relies on participants who voluntarily agree to be part of your research.

1.3. Research design

The design of this study is “**correlational explanatory case study design**”, which combines three types of research designs, the first one is “**Case study design**” which will help in generating deep understanding of illegal emigration in real life matter since it’s a very complex phenomenon that Tunisia is suffering from since a long time. The second one is “**correlational design**” since the study will investigate relationships between the dependent variable -illegal emigration- and independent variables that the literatures mentioned like political and economic factors, without the researcher controlling or manipulating any of them, which will help in figuring out the direction of the correlation either positive or negative or there is no relation. Because the correlation doesn’t mean causation, a third design will be used which is “**explanatory design**” since the problem of illegal emigration is already exist and throughout the study, I am going to interpret it to figure out its causes in Tunisia.

1.4. data collection & Research procedures:

1.4.1. sampling,

This study employed a **non-probability form** of sampling known as **self-selection sample** which relies on participants who voluntarily agree to be part of your research, and in the same time fits the criteria which will be mentioned later. Those participants will be reached by **snowball** method,

- The geographical scope of the study:

Looking at the statistics of the Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights ⁽¹⁾ on the geographical scope of the states exporting illegal emigration, and their numbers as shown in the table (1), the geographical scope of the study will be determined as follows in the table, according to the available statistics (for 2021)

Table 1 geographical scope of the states exporting illegal emigration

Region	Governates/states	percentage of irregular emigrants %
Northeast	Tunis	9%
	Bizerte	2.8%
	Nabeul	12.5%
northwest	Jendouba	0.09%
East Central	Sousse	5.1%
	Monastir	7.4%
	Mahdia	13.9%
	Sfax	41.3%
southeast	Gabes	1%
	Medenine	6.6%

¹ "احصائيات الهجرة غير النظامية 2022"، المنتدى التونسي للحقوق الاقتصادية والاجتماعية، 2022/9/19، متاح على: <https://ftdes.net/ar/statistiques-migration-2022/>

The study population is the irregular emigrants from those 10 governates mentioned in the table above. However, because of the difficulty of studying all of them, and the similarity of the states of the same geographical region, only one state was chosen from each region to be represented in the sample which are: Nabeul from northeast region, Sfax from East Central region, Medenine from Southeast region. Those states were chosen because they have the highest percentage of irregular emigrants comparing to the other states of the same region. Additionally, the Northwest region was excluded from the sample because the percentage of irregular emigrants from it is very small comparing to the other regions.

- The participants:

The study is focusing on only 4 categories of migrants which are: Women, unaccompanied children, well-educated youth, and families. Respondents will be reached through the respondents themselves in what is known as a **snowball** sample, and civil society organizations working in the field of illegal emigration will also be relied upon.

1.4.2. Research tools,

A. Semi structures interview:

In line with the concern of qualitative method for flexibility, a method that would allow adaptability to the interview situation and the informants was chosen which is: **semi-structured interviews** which included **open-ended questions** to give the interviewee the space to talk and give me more information about their experience. (see Appendix No.3). Before the interviews took place a list of questions was prepared and ordered within topics, keeping in mind that they might need to be adapted and reordered later on and during the interviews, according to the informants' answers, while trying to use the same questions and phrasing in all interviews. It is important to use Semi- structured to make sure that the all topics and issues of interest - related to enrolment - would be covered and to strengthen the comparability across the cities.

Before preparing the interview guide, I had narrowed the topic and investigated different concepts, and relevant empirical studies, which I utilized to define main themes and categories and later to formulate questions. I started with phrasing the questions in English to then translate them into Arabic.

The dimensions/ themes of the migrants' interview guide

A. Basic information

This dimension aims to collect data on the demographic characteristics of the participants, which are: age, gender, marital status, level of education, income, known languages, religion

B. Standard of living:

It includes housing status, number of family members, family property

C. Working conditions before emigration

It includes the year of graduation, work status, stability in it, and the attempt to establish a project

D. Reasons for illegal emigration

This dimension includes the reasons for emigration, the reasons for choosing a particular country, the number of previous travels through legal or illegal ways, whether they are related to political, economic, or social reasons or the factors that attract them in the receiving countries, etc.

E. Illegal emigration procedures and means

This dimension includes travel procedures, how it took place, its various means (by sea, or flight), illegal emigration merchants, persons responsible for conducting illegal travel, the documents that

were requested, the cost of travel, the country he chose, the reason for this choice, and the information he knows about it, and the source of his knowledge

F. Description of the travel

This dimension will include a detailed description of the emigration journey, the itinerary from the country until the final destination - if he succeeded - and how the journey ended, how he was dealt upon arrival, and the jobs that were offered to him, whether legal or illegal.

G. Residency in the receiving country (if it is possible to reach people who have succeeded in emigrating)

This section includes questions about residency in the receiving country, the procedures he did to regularize his status in order to correct his emigration into a legal emigration, and whether these attempts succeeded or failed, and when he was arrested

H. Deportation Procedures:

This section includes questions about deportation procedures, was he arrested upon arrival or after arrival, how he was dealt in detention, the duration of detention, and whether he was exposed to any difficulties or not.

I. Procedures following deportation to Tunisia

It includes questions about how he was dealt upon his arrival, in Tunisia, the procedures that were taken, the time taken in these procedures, and whether he was trained or rehabilitated, and what institutions did that?

J. Experience evaluation

This section aims to try to identify the extent of benefiting from this experience, and whether it had positive or negative effects on the level of the individual, the family and society, and whether he will try to travel again in the same way or will he try to travel in a legal way, and what solutions he sees to overcome the problem of illegal emigration, To what extent is he aware of the various penalties for those who attempt to emigrate illegally, and is the emigrant in this way a victim or a violator of the law?

1.4.3. research procedures:

Preparation,

Some non-governmental, governmental organizations and 2 universities mentioned in the table below were contacted to get data about illegal migration of Tunisians, and reach the sample because they are working on migration field, by phone and email before the field work:

Table 2 list of the contacted organization

No.	The organization
1.	Arab institute for human rights
2.	Association la terre pour tous
3.	Tunisian Forum for economic and social rights
4.	Tunisian institute for peace and conflict studies.
5.	National Authority for combating trafficking in persons
6.	Ministry of woman, child, family, and old people, (child protection office)
7.	International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)
8.	Sociology department in The Higher Institute of Human Sciences of Tunis, Tunis el-Manar University
9.	Sociology department in Sfax university

Field work:

During the field work, the political situation in Tunisia became unstable because of many reasons, one of them was the tensions between the European Union and the Tunisian government due to the African illegal migrants in Tunis and the way in which the security dealt with them -mainly by arresting them-. In addition to the dismissal of Esther Lynch, the General Secretary of the European Confederation of Unions, following her participation in a demonstration organized by the Tunisian General Labor Union, during which she delivered a speech criticizing the authorities.⁽¹⁾ The concerns of the Italian government in particular and the European Union in general that the political situation in Tunisia and the deterioration of the public and individual freedoms may have an impact on the flows of Tunisian irregular emigrants.

These conditions made some individuals of the sample refuse to participate in the research, fearing the security authorities despite setting an appointment with them before, in addition to the refusal of some organizations to conduct interviews by requesting many procedures from the researcher, such as security permits from the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Interior, despite their prior approval to conduct the interviews.

As a result, the researcher conducted interviews with experts (Appendix No.2), researchers, and academics specialized in emigration issues, and political sociology, as well as civil society organizations, in addition to irregular migrants who were accessible.

The dimensions/ themes of the experts' interview guide

A. The increase of illegal emigration rates:

This theme includes some questions that aimed to figure out the reasons of the increase in the numbers of irregular emigrants specially after 2020 and the impact of political and economic situations in Tunisia.

B. Shifts in the demographic profile of irregular migrants:

The sub-themes of this theme are: the reasons why each category of Tunisian migrants tend to emigrate irregularly which are: women, unaccompanied minors, families and well-educated individuals.

C. Impacts of illegal emigration

This theme includes some questions that aimed to figure out how the increase and the shifts of the illegal emigration may affect Tunisian society and economy. Also, it aims to figure out the Long-term consequences of irregular emigration for Tunisians.

D. Evaluating the government and the EU migration policies

This dimension aims to evaluate the governmental and European migration policies to decrease the rates of illegal emigration and to address root causes of it, and whether they are effective or not.

E. Solutions

This them includes the potential solutions to reduce irregular emigration from Tunisia.

1.5. data analysis procedures

The methods of analyzing the data will be as the following:

¹ " تونس: سعيد يامر بطرد مسؤولة نقابية أوروبية بعد مشاركتها في مظاهرة لاتحاد الشغل"، فرانس 24، 2023/2/18، متاح على: <https://bit.ly/45iNku0>

a) Content analysis

Once collected, the raw qualitative data was analyzed by using “**content analysis method**”. Before doing that, the interview data which will be used to complete this study will be coded to get a clear-cut analytical methodology to explain the problem at hand. For the coding and analyzing the data, I will use Nvivo-14 software.

b) Statistical methods of analysis:

In addition to content analysis, and since this study’s purpose is more descriptive and exploratory in nature, we analyzed the political and economic data obtained – by applying multiple linear **regression** test. For analyzing these statistics/numerical data, I will use SPSS 25th edition software.

1.6. Validity and reliability

A pre-test and test were conducted to modify the interview guides by adding or reformulation of some questions to obtain information about issues that appeared important from experts and participants’ point of views.

- Pre-test: it conducted by submitting the interview guide of experts and the interview guide of irregular emigrants to experts in emigration and refugees’ issues, to present their opinions suggestions regarding the interview questions. Their suggestions included: linguistic formulations of some questions to make them concise and simplified, as well as replacing closed questions with open-ended ones. (Appendix No. 1: List of experts)
- Test: it conducted by applying the migrants’ interview guide on a preliminary sample (experimental sample) of four individuals - 2 females and 2 males- who met some of the criteria of the targeted sample such as: age, gender, level of education, economic status, desire to emigrate from the country, to ensure that the validity of the questions. This test conducted on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday March 14-16, 2023, and this sample was reached through the Tunisian Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies in Monastir.

1.7. Ethical issues

There is always a concern that participants will not be completely truthful, or comfortable with telling others their experiences which will obviously be a substantial threat to the validity of the findings, so several things will be done to ensure that participants felt comfortable enough with the study to be honest. For this reason, I will assure to the participants their rights of personal privacy, anonymity of their answers will never be violated. Also, they will be informed that their participation is still voluntary and they can decline to answer any question or terminate the interview at any time. Additionally, they will be informed how the information was to be used.

In addition, the participants identities will be fully concealed to make them feel safe and more comfortable, so all names will not be mentioned in the study. The interview guide will be accompanied by a covering letter indicating the purpose of conducting the study, also, all the information they want to know before the interview.

I will take the participants permission to record the interviews, these records will be destroyed after finishing the transcription of the interviews, also I will tell them that they are free to refuse recording if they want, and in that case, I will take notes during our meetings with them.

1.8. limitations

There are many difficulties that may affect conducting this study, some of them are:

1. The language barrier: the researcher took a dialect course to solve this problem.
2. The political situation which made it very difficult to reach out interviewees, even when I succeeded in that, they were afraid because of the decisions that the president took regarding the migration issue.
3. The geographical scope of the study is wide and the cities are far from each other.
4. The limited resource.

Chapter One: Background and the increase of illegal emigration from Tunisia

In the latest national migration census conducted by the Tunisian National Observatory for Migration in 2021, ⁽¹⁾ which included three categories of migrants: current migrants, returning migrants, and resident citizens who have not previously migrated to find out their opinions and intentions regarding migration from Tunisia, several important findings were reached, including:

- One-fifth of citizens stated that they have intention to migrate abroad, motivated by the search for work and opportunities for a better standard of living. This category has several characteristics: they are young men, between 15-24 years old, single, well-educated and unemployed, residing in the Greater Tunis region or in the center-east or south-east of the country. The targeted countries for 7 out of 10 people who intend to emigrate are France, Italy and Germany.
- The estimated numbers of current migrants, who are Tunisian nationals aged 15 and above residing outside the country for a period exceeding three months, is around 566,000 individuals (388,000 men and 178,000 women). Seventy-five percent of them reside in three European countries: France, Italy, and Germany. The main motivations for migration among this group are finding job, income improvement, and family reunification, which was the main reason for 70% of female migrants. In terms of education, the vast majority of them have a high level of education, while only 3.3% are non-educated. Their places of origin are the Northeast region, Greater Tunis, and the East-Central region.
- The number of the returning emigrants -who are any Tunisian national with previous residence abroad for a period of 3 months or more and aged 15 and above at the time of their return to Tunisia, has reached 211,000 individuals (176,000 men and 35,000 women), 80% of them returned from Libya, France and Italy. It is noteworthy that the returnees are predominantly male, and the return rate is higher among the age group of 60 and above, who reached the retirement age, while it is lower among the youth. The reasons for their return included family reasons such as marriage or family reunification, reaching retirement age, and a limited group stated that their return to Tunisia was mandatory due to circumstances in the host countries or the end of contractual agreements or deportation. It is worth mentioning that more than one-third of returnees reported facing difficulties after their return regarding employment and income levels, while women faced social problems such as family disputes and difficulties in integration.

One of the important points in this census is the observation of one of the migration transformations which is the significant increase in the percentage of highly educated migrants and the decrease in the percentage of non-educated individuals. In addition, it explained the reason of the migration of Tunisian women, which is related to family reasons such as family reunification, although there may be other reasons as well.

Despite the importance of these results, the census did not include irregular migrants, which may be due to the difficulty of reaching them in the host countries. However, it could have been conducted on the returning irregular migrants. Furthermore, the census focused on individual economic and social motivations and did not include any pull or push factors related to the Tunisian state or the target countries. It also did not mention political motivations, which may play a role in the migration of some individuals.

To attempt to answer some of the questions left unanswered by the national census and previous studies, this chapter will present the flows of irregular migrants, the numbers of new migrant groups, as well as the political, economic, and social factors in Tunisia to understand their impact on the decision to migrate irregularly outside Tunisia.

¹ "المسح الوطني للهجرة الدولية"، المرصد الوطني للهجرة، 2021، متاح على الرابط التالي: <http://www.migration.nat.tn/images/pdf/2021/rapport-enquete-nationale-migration-internationale-tunisia-hims.pdf>

Section 1: Background of illegal emigration from Tunisia

1. 1 History of illegal emigration from Tunisia

The first major wave of Tunisian migration occurred during World War II when many Tunisians emigrated to France to fill the need for man-labour from the Maghreb region, which includes Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco. These migrants replaced French workers recruited for war or involved in military operations in the Maghreb region. Thousands of Tunisians have found jobs in various sectors such as agriculture, services and construction in France, without the need for advanced skills or university degrees. Factors such as socio-economic ties from the colonial era, proficiency in French and existing social networks made France the target destination of Tunisian immigrants in the decade following Tunisia's independence in 1956. ⁽¹⁾

However, in the 1970s and 1980s, Italy emerged as an attractive destination for many Tunisians. Proximity, favorable income disparities and demographic factors have attracted migrants seeking to escape unemployment and poverty, creating the first generation of Tunisians in Italy. Political events have also affected migration patterns. For example, in 1983, political tensions between Tunisia and Libya led to the expulsion of a large number of Tunisian migrants from Libya, leading to further migration to Italy. ⁽²⁾

Map 1 Tunisia- Italy



(Source: Arab Weekly)³

Tunisian migrants first settled in coastal towns in western Sicily due to their proximity to Tunisia and the existing maritime connections. At the time, the Italian agricultural sector was growing and in need of manual labor. Tunisian migrants found work in agriculture and fishing. Seasonal migration was beneficial for the Mediterranean-style agriculture in southern Italy, which requires a low level of technology and can be carried out by large numbers of unskilled and flexible workers. The influx of Tunisian migrants also filled the vacancies left by local Sicilian workers who had moved to more formal and secure jobs in northern Italy. The fishing industry in coastal Sicilian towns like Mazara del Vallo, Marsala, and Trapani also saw an influx of Tunisian workers.

Overall, early movements of Tunisian migrants to Italy were driven by factors such as geographical proximity, favourable economic differences, political events, and demand for employment in

¹ Jeanne Singer-Kerel, "Foreign workers in France," *Ethnic and Racist Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 3, 2010, pp. 279 -293. (p. 282)

² Françoise De Bel-Air, "Migration Profile: Tunisia," European University institute, Migration policy Centre, Issue 2016/08, December 2016, p. 1-2.

³ "Italy conveys to Tunisia concern about spike in illegal migration," *Arab weekly*, 29/7/2020, available at: <https://theArabweekly.com/italy-conveys-tunisia-concern-about-spike-illegal-migration>

Italy's agriculture and fishing sectors. These factors created opportunities for Tunisians seeking better jobs and contributed to the growth of the Tunisian immigrant community in Italy.

During the 1970s and 1980s, Tunisians had the freedom to travel to Italy without the necessity of obtaining an entry visa. The Italian government at that time actively promoted the immigration of individuals from North Africa, aiming to bolster the Italian economy, especially within the agricultural industry. This policy of unrestricted borders resulted in consecutive influxes of North African migrants, with a primary focus on Tunisians and Moroccans. These migrants were attracted by the promise of improved and more financially rewarding prospects in Italy, causing a shift away from previous patterns of seasonal and irregular migration. ⁽¹⁾

The number of Tunisian migrants in Italy increased significantly by 1985 due to a number of factors, including the political transition in Tunisia in 1987. The new Tunisian president, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, shifted the country's focus away from France and its colonial ties, and towards Italy, with the aim of establishing new bilateral economic and political relations. As Tunisian migrants settled in Italy, they established social networks that were further reinforced by subsequent waves of migrants. The phenomenon of chain migration, in which one migrant facilitates the migration of others, played a significant role in making Italy the second preferred destination for working- and middle-class Tunisians, after France.

However, in 1990, the Italian government had entered the Schengen Agreement, and implemented stricter travel protocols, including the requirement of an entry visa for Tunisian nationals and others. ⁽²⁾ This transformation was triggered by the escalating influx of migrants who arrived on Italian shores, driven by the aspiration to escape poverty and joblessness in search of improved prospects. While a significant portion of these migrants originated from Tunisia, others hailed from nations like Morocco, Senegal, Libya, and various sub-Saharan African countries. The arrival of these fresh waves of migrants ignited political discussions in Italy, propelled by public apprehension and apprehensiveness linked to migration at large. Despite the escalating demand for migrant labor, notably in northern Italy, prevailing public sentiment persisted in connecting heightened immigration rates with elevated crime rates, impoverished conditions, and local unemployment spikes. Consequently, the number of legal migrants dwindled, particularly during the initial half of the 1990s.

To reinforce border control, the Italian government took steps to tighten its visa procedures and enhance maritime frontier security. **This marked the beginning of illegal emigration**, becoming the only alternative for many young Tunisian and African men unable to enter Italy or Europe through official and legal channels. Over the past four decades, Italy has emerged as one of the primary European destinations for an ever-increasing number of irregular migrants, primarily from North Africa and Eastern Europe. Due to these policies, Italy became the main entry point for migrants seeking alternative routes into the European Union.

The current prerequisites for obtaining entry visas to Italy and other European countries within the Schengen zone are rigorous, entailing a series of documentation and procedural requisites. These encompass completing a comprehensive application form, possessing a valid passport, furnishing confirmation of payment for visa fees, supplying round-trip reservations or a comprehensive itinerary with flight details for entry and departure, demonstrating ample financial means for the intended duration of stay, providing substantiation of travel, health, and accident insurance,

¹ *Ibid.*

² Elena Ambrosetti et Angela Paparusso, "Migrants or Refugees? The Evolving Governance of Migration Flows in Italy during the "Refugee Crisis"," **Revue européenne des migrations internationales**, Vol. 34, No. 1, 2018, pp. 151-171, available at: <https://journals.openedition.org/remi/10265#quotation>

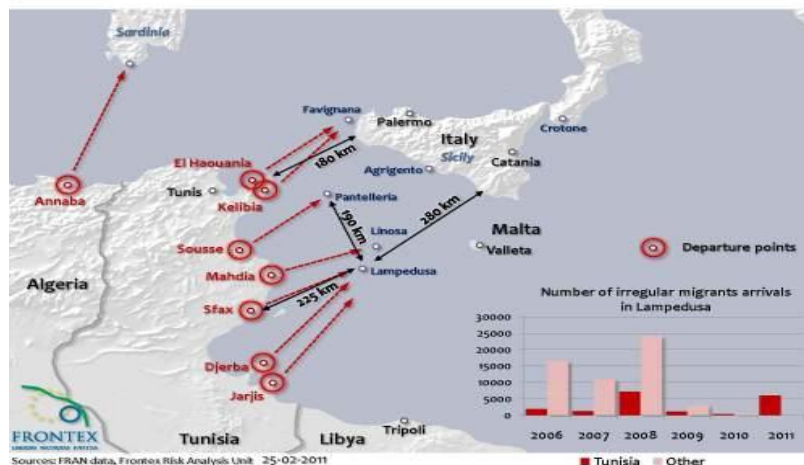
furnishing verification of accommodation arrangements, submitting a certificate of employment and evidence of approved leave, and participating in a personal interview subsequent to the submission of all mandatory documents. Understandably, the process of obtaining a visa to Italy and broader Europe is widely perceived by the majority of Tunisians as a formidable barrier, thus leading to the conclusion that illegal emigration represents the sole viable avenue for entry into Europe.

During the period prior to the uprising, from 2010 to 2011, Tunisia faced a challenging socio-economic landscape characterized by political repression, regional inequalities, pervasive corruption, and the global financial crisis. These factors exacerbated the labor market issues in Tunisia, resulting in a significant increase in the unemployment rate among Tunisian youth. These factors led to an increase in the flows of irregular migrants from Tunisia to Europe in increasing numbers, as will be clarified later. However, migration was still mainly a male phenomenon, but recently other groups began to migrate, which will be explained in this study. ⁽¹⁾

1.2. Migration routes:

The Mediterranean Sea has been the main, if not the only, gateway for illegal emigration for many reasons, one of them is that Italy was the main destination, and its proximity to Tunisia, irregular Tunisians migrants tended to it as a main route, specially (Tunisia- Lampedusa route) as shown in the following map.

Map 2 Major Departure Points from Tunisia to Italy



(Source: Migrants at Sea)²

However, in recent years, there has been an expansion in the use of other land routes, as well as diversification in transit routes to reach European countries. Faced with the closure of maritime borders and Italian migration policies, including forced deportation and legal penalties for those helping migration boats, in addition to worsening conditions in Tunisia, irregular emigrants have been compelled to search for new transit routes such as the Moroccan-Spanish land crossing, Turkey – Serbia route.

¹ Françoise De Bel-Air, *Ibid*, p. 2.

² “Frontex Lampedusa situational map,” **Migrants at Sea**, February 27, 2011, available at: <https://migrantsatsea.org/2011/02/27/frontex-lampedusa-situational-map/>

Table 3 Crossing routes to Europe, and the number of Tunisian who used them

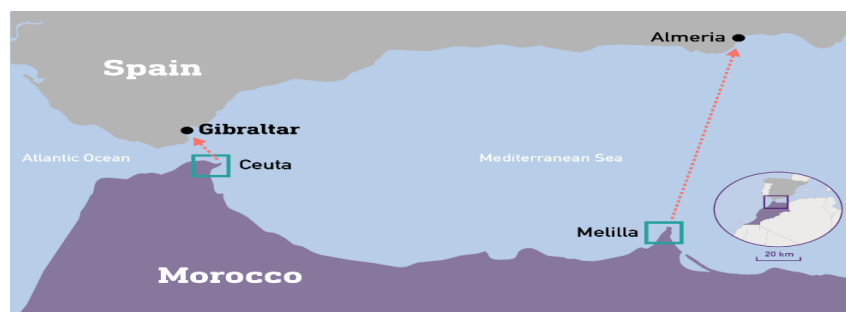
year	Central Basin Mediterranean (Italy and Malta)	Western and Eastern Basin Mediterranean	Terrestrial irregularly (East) Turkey Serbia Romania Balkan States Albania	Terrestrial irregularly (West) Spain
2011	27982	31	815	0
2012	2255	28	434	0
2013	835	21	367	0
2014	1683	14	38	0
2015	880	136	44	0
2016	1207	98	62	1
2017	6415	80	27	4
2018	5444	21	22	519
2019	2681	6	64	1236
2020	12985	9	190	192
2021	15675	3	452	283
2022				

(source: FTDS) ¹

1.2.1 Moroccan-Spanish route:

The migrants travel from Tunisia to Morocco, then enter Melilla border crossing - between Morocco and Spain-, because Melilla and Ceuta are the only European borders in Africa, since after Morocco gained independence, France refused to incorporate them to Morocco. Some migrants have indicated that this route has become safer than Italy, as they can enter Spain through it and immediately request political asylum upon arrival, making it difficult for security forces to return them to Tunisia. Others have resorted to entering Spain by bicycle because Spaniards practice cycling and cross into Morocco with their bicycles during weekends. Additionally, some have mentioned that smuggling networks in Morocco facilitate obtaining forged passports to enter Spain. It is worth noting that in 2019, 23.09% of irregular migrants that in 2019, 23.09% of irregular migrants who arrived in European territories entered through the Morocco-Spain route. ⁽²⁾

Map 3 Moroccan-Spanish route



(Source: Middle East Eye)³

¹ Khaled el-tababi, “Annual report on irregular migration – Tunisia 2021”, FTDS, 2022, p.6, available at: <https://ftdes.net/rappports/en.migration2021.pdf>

² خالد طبابي، "التقرير السنوي للهجرة 2019، المنتدى التونسي للحقوق الاقتصادية والاجتماعية، 2020، ص 17.

³ Edna Mohamed, “Explained: Melilla, Ceuta, and the western Mediterranean migration route,” **Middle East Eye**, July 4, 2022, available at: <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/morocco-spain-melilla-ceuta-western-mediterranean-migration-route-explained>

1.2.2. Turkey- Serbia Route:

During the period spanning from 2020 to 2022, there was a substantial increase in the influx of irregular Tunisian migrants to Western Europe via Serbia, as they actively sought alternative pathways to the perilous sea journey across the Mediterranean.

Through this route, migrants travel from Tataouine (a Marginalized area in Tunisia) to Turkey (as they do not require a visa for entry), and then smuggling networks facilitate their transportation from Serbia to Hungary and other targeted countries. This route offers several advantages, including greater safety and less monitoring compared to alternative routes. Serbia, in particular, hosts a significant number of well-established smuggling networks, which utilize social media platforms to reach their intended migrant targets, facilitating the journey. Additionally, the financial, transportation, and accommodation procedures along this route are relatively straightforward. ⁽¹⁾

Map 4 Turkey- Serbia route



(Source: Middle East Eye)²

1.3. Profiles of illegal Tunisian emigration

After the 2011 revolution, the numbers of irregular migrants were relatively limited despite the security breakdown in the country and the weakened border controls, which facilitated the process of leaving the country compared to the pre-revolution period. In 2012, the number of irregular migrants was 1,717, gradually decreasing to 1,223 in 2013. It slightly increased to 1,735 the following year, but then declined again to 1,060 migrants in 2015. Subsequently, there was a slight increase in the following years, reaching 2,654 in 2019.

However, in 2020, there has been a significant upsurge in illegal emigration from Tunisia, reaching the highest level seen in the past ten years with a total of 12,883 irregular migrants as shown in the table below that provides an overview of the numbers and categories of Tunisian irregular migrants, highlighting key trends and patterns observed in the migration flows.

¹ Hamza Meddeb, “Leveraging Lives: Serbia and Illegal Tunisian Migration to Europe,” **Carnegie Middle East Center**, March 2023, p. 6.

² Souhail Khmira and Faisal Edroos, “Tunisians turn to online smuggling networks for land route to Europe,” **Middle East Eye**, December 1, 2022, available at: <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/tunisia-kazawi-army-smuggling-network-europe>

Table 4 Tunisian Irregular Migrants and Their Categories

Year	Males	females	Accompanied minors	Unaccompanied minors	Total
2011					1500
2012					1717
2013					1223
2014					1735
2015					1060
2016					1367
2017	5455	135	17	544	6151
2018	4143	107	154	940	5344
2019	1953	72	111	518	2654
2020	10701	353	398	1431	12883
2021	12356	584	655	2076	15671
2022	13899	850	995	2404	18148

(Source: FTDS)¹

In addition to the unprecedented increase in the number of irregular Tunisian immigrants, another shift has occurred represented in the rapid increase in the migration of other groups such as women and children, accompanied and unaccompanied, with the start of the emergence of new groups such as families and holders of higher degrees, for which there are no official statistics on their numbers yet.

- Male Migrants:

According to the table, the category with the highest number of irregular migrants from Tunisia is males. In 2019, there were 1953 Male migrants, which rose to 10701 in 2020, and became 12356 in 2021. In 2022, their numbers reached 13899 migrants. The significant presence of males among the Tunisian irregular migrant population suggests that men are more likely to undertake illegal emigration in search of better opportunities or to support their families.

- Female Migrants:

While the number of female irregular migrants is lower than males, it is still a substantial portion of the overall migrant population. The presence of female irregular migrants highlights the diverse reasons and motivations for migration, including economic, social, or personal factors.

- Accompanied Minors:

According to the table, the number of accompanied minors how emigrate irregularly with one of the family members or more was very few (it was 17 in 2017). Gradually it increased by the time till it became 995 in 2022.

- Unaccompanied Minors:

The data demonstrates a gradual increase in the number of unaccompanied minors among Tunisian irregular migrants. In 2019 there were 518 unaccompanied minors, that became 1431 in 2020, while in 2021, there were 2076 unaccompanied minors, which rose to 2404 in 2022. This category

¹ Khaled el-tababi, “Annual report on irregular migration – Tunisia 2021”, FTDS, 2022, available at: <https://ftdes.net/rapports/en.migration2021.pdf>

highlights the vulnerable situation of children who embark on dangerous journeys, often in search of a better life or to reunite with family members.

Section 2: The increase of illegal emigration rates:

To explain the increase of illegal emigration rates, 2 methods are applied. The first one is multilinear regression test, and the second one is thematic analysis for some of the interviews questions that were asked to the participants in the field work.

Table 5 political, and economic factors

Years	X1 Political stability and absence of violence ¹	X2 political rights ²	X3 civil liberties	X4 Political participation ³	X5 Control of Corruption	X6 Government Effectiveness	B1 GDP (billion \$) ⁴	B2 Inflation, consumer prices (annual %)	B3 Un-employment	B4 Economic growth ⁵	Y migration
2011	-0.35	3	4	6.67	-0.02	0.01	48.12	3.24	18.33	-2.047	1500
2012	-0.72	3	4	6.67	-0.03	-0.04	47.31	4.6118	17.63	4.2167	1717
2013	-0.9	3	3	6.67	-0.04	-0.05	48.68	5.3162	15.93	2.4299	1223
2014	-0.85	1	3	7.22	-0.02	-0.06	50.27	4.6256	14.26	3.0903	1735
2015	-0.96	1	3	7.78	-0.05	-0.07	45.77	4.4374	15.16	0.9675	1060
2016	-1.14	1	3	7.78	-0.14	-0.17	44.36	3.6294	15.56	1.118	1367
2017	-1.02	2	3	7.78	-0.13	-0.02	42.16	5.3088	15.33	2.2443	6151
2018	-0.87	2	3	7.78	-0.09	0.03	42.68	7.3076	15.46	2.5904	5344
2019	-0.87	2	3	7.22	-0.11	0	41.9	6.7201	15.13	1.5034	2654
2020	-0.58	2	3	7.22	-0.08	-0.16	42.53	5.6342	16.373	-8.621	12883
2021	-0.7	3	3	7.22	-0.23	-0.17	46.68	5.7064	16.264	4.3228	15671
2022	-0.7	4	3	6.11	-0.23	-0.17	46.66	8.3065	16.124	0	18148

2.I. Regression Test

To figure out whether the political, and economic factors in Tunisia explain the increase of Tunisian irregular migrants' numbers in recent years or not as the previous literatures has stated, multilinear regression could be calculated according to the following equation by using SPSS 25 software:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1x_1 + \beta_2x_2 + \dots + \beta_px_p + \varepsilon$$

¹ The Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI), World Bank, available at: <https://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/>

² Freedom in the World, Freedom house, available at: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world#Data>

³ Political participation index, Our world in data, available at: https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/political-participation-index-eiu?region=Africa&fbclid=IwAR0ecTBKgDOTAx8u_LierO5KVqVJCamva71Q0YA_xSYpdeCbVfoeTjebOng

⁴ World Bank, available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/country/tunisia>

⁵ Economic growth, Macro trends, available at: <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/TUN/tunisia/economic-growth-rate>

y is the predicted value of the dependent variable

x_1, x_2, \dots, x_p are the independent variables

β_0 is the constant

β_1, \dots, β_p are the coefficients of each variable

ε is the error term.

It should be noted that the assumptions of multiple linear regression must be verified before performing it, including the absence of outliers for the variables, so the variables (x_3 - b_4) were deleted because they have outliers.

Table 6 Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
x1	12	-.8050	.649	.637	.844	1.232
x2	12	2.2500	.136	.637	-.770	1.232
x3	12	3.1667	2.055	.637	2.640	1.232
x4	12	7.1767	-.466	.637	-.641	1.232
x5	12	-.0975	-.860	.637	-.247	1.232
x6	12	-.0725	-.310	.637	-1.538	1.232
y	12	5787.7500	1.217	.637	-.054	1.232
b1	12	45.5933	.044	.637	-1.297	1.232
b2	12	5.4037	.547	.637	-.021	1.232
b3	12	15.9626	.903	.637	.901	1.232
b4	12	.9846	-2.095	.637	5.243	1.232
Valid N (listwise)	12					

Also, there is no high correlation (Multicollinearity) between the independent variables, , and this was verified by calculating the value of (VIF). That's why I kept only the variables (x_1, x_6, b_2) because the values of (VIF) lie between one and ten, and the rest of the variables were excluded because the values of (VIF) are greater than 10, which indicates a high correlation between them.

Table 7 Coefficients^a

Model		95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-204392.984	128799.986		
	x1	-3939.267	30963.612	.113	8.830
	x2	1577.005	19671.905	.020	49.758
	x3	-2793.185	33278.034	.031	32.151
	x4	2484.834	24146.694	.043	23.455
	x5	-62908.930	48201.990	.090	11.097
	x6	-110643.108	-13063.873	.112	8.926
	b1	-1341.498	1816.032	.077	12.993
	b2	-1647.461	3353.073	.113	8.876
	b3	-16576.368	-106.728	.018	55.186
	b4	-2050.595	529.822	.075	13.327

a. Dependent Variable: y

It is also assumed to verify that the dependent variable and the independent variables are distributed in the normal distribution and that the relationship between them is linear, as well as checking the homogeneity and independence of the residuals, and all of them were verified by examining the spread form of the residuals. (¹)

The regression analysis was carried out by choosing the stepwise method because it is distinguished from some methods such as the Enter method, which requires that the independent variables not exceed the number of the sample items (as it requires that the number of items be twenty times the number of the independent variables), and the introduction of a large number of independent variables leads to a loss The ability to apply regression, as well as the results and estimates will be incorrect. In order to address these problems, stepwise regression was used, which is carried out in several steps, so that in the first step, the independent variable with the strongest correlation is introduced with the dependent variable, provided that this correlation is significant, statistically significant, that is, it fulfills the entry condition into the regression equation, and in the following steps The independent variable with the highest statistically significant partial correlation is entered with the dependent variable after excluding the effect of the variables that entered the equation, and then examining whether the variables in the regression equation still meet the conditions of staying in the equation - that is, statistically significant - or not, (²) As follows:

¹ إيهاب عبد السلام، " فرضيات نموذج الانحدار الخطي"، موقع كلية الإدارة والاقتصاد بجامعة بابل، 2016\6\17، متاح على الرابط التالي: <http://business.uobabylon.edu.iq/lecture.aspx?fid=9&lcid=19125>

² نافذ محمد بركات، التحليل الإحصائي باستخدام البرنامج الإحصائي SPSS، (الجامعة الإسلامية: كلية التجارة، 2013)، ص115.

Table 8 coefficients, T values, R2

variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
constant	8649.981599- (1.503-)	11127.448257- (-2.751)	2895.584973- (-.679)
B2 (inflation)	2671.844 (t2.593)*	2486.585 **(3.479)	2510.588828 (4.640356)**
X6 (Government Effectiveness)		47979.866- **(3.450171-)	49114.386883- (4.662-)**
X1 (Political stability and absence of violence)			-10489.222298 (2.776118)*
R	0.634	0.862	0.932
R2	0.402	0.743	0.869

** significance is less than 0.01

*Significance is less than 0.05

In the first step of the regression analysis, the value of the constant was (-8649.9), which is the value of the dependent variable - illegal emigration - when we isolate the effect of the independent variables of the model, that is, when the value of all the independent variables in this model is equal to zero. Only a variable (b2-inflation) was added, which means that inflation is the largest independent variable associated with the rate of illegal emigration, and its significance level was (0.027), which indicates the existence of statistically significant differences between the categories of the variable. The value of the inflation regression coefficient was (2671.8), meaning that the change in the rate of illegal emigration as a result of the change in the inflation variable is one unit equal to (2671.8). The value of the square of the correlation coefficient (R2) is equal to (0.40), which means that the first model explains (40%) of the data.

In the second step of the regression analysis, the value of the constant decreased to (-11127.4), and the variable (X6- Government Effectiveness) was added in addition to the inflation variable, and the values of the regression coefficients were respectively (-4797.8 & 2486.5). The significant level of both variables was (0.007), less than 0.05, which indicates the existence of statistically significant differences between the values of the two variables. The value of the square of the correlation coefficient increased from the previous model to (0.74), which means that this model is more capable of interpreting the data than the previous model, as it interprets (74%) of the data.

In the third step of the regression analysis, the value of the constant increased to (-2895.5), and the variable (X1 political stability and absence of violence) was added in addition to the variables of inflation and government effectiveness. The significance level of the variables inflation and government effectiveness was (0.002), while the level of significance of the variable political stability and absence of violence was (0.02). The value of the square of the correlation coefficient increased from the previous two models to (0.86), meaning that this model is more capable of interpreting the data than the previous two models, as it interprets (86%) of the data.

Then the regression equation becomes:

$$Y = (-2895.5) + (2510.5) B2 - (49114.3) X6 - (10489.2) X1$$

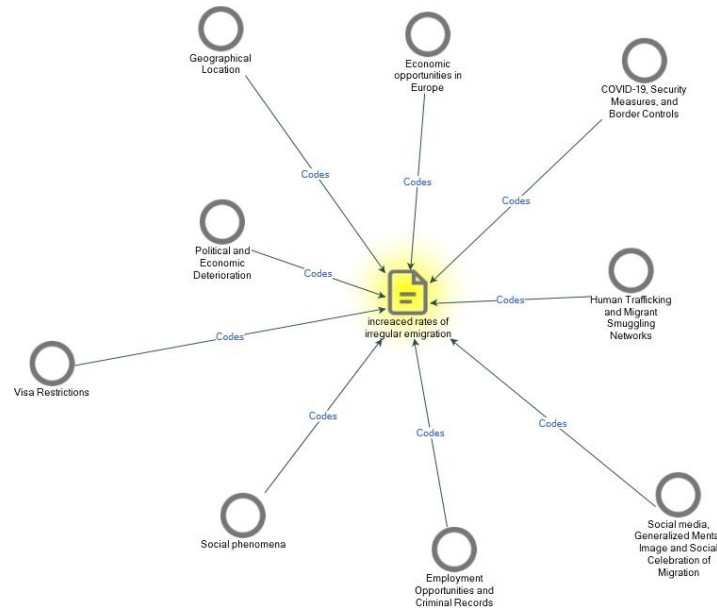
$$Y = (-2895.5) + (2510.5) \text{ Inflation rate} - (49114.3) \text{ Government Effectiveness} - (10489.2) \text{ Political stability and absence of violence}$$

It means that the rate of illegal emigration increases by the increase in the rate of inflation, and the decline in the effectiveness of the government, as well as the decline in rates of political stability and the increase in the rate of violence in the country.

2.2. Thematic analysis of the interviews

The thematic analysis of the interview responses suggested that there are a number of factors that contribute to the increase in illegal emigration of Tunisians in general. These factors are:

Figure 3 factors that contribute to the increase in illegal emigration of Tunisians



2.2.1. COVID-19, Security Measures, and Border Controls

During the COVID period, there were eased security measures and border controls, making illegal emigration easier. After that, it became more restricted. Nasser mentioned the contrast between eased security measures during the COVID period and the current tightened security measures during Qais Saied's period. The changes in security levels on both sides, Italy and Tunisia, have contributed to illegal emigration.

Amina stated, “During the COVID period, security efforts were directed elsewhere, resulting in neglect in securing the borders and making illegal emigration easier.”

Aicha also agreed with that, she explained that the deterioration of security in the years following the revolution has contributed to increased migration rates.

2.2.2. Political and Economic Deterioration

Political and economic deterioration has an impact on illegal emigration. Samir suggests that the extensive spread of the phenomenon is due to political and economic deterioration.

Amina explained that the political context in Tunisia is unstable, with unsuccessful governments and democracies. This, coupled with the economic situation resulting from political instability, contributes to illegal emigration. Unemployment, lack of political clarity, also play a role.

“The economic situation, as a consequence of the political instability, does not provide a decent standard of living.” (Nasser)

2.2.3 Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Networks:

Amina pointed out the existence of human trafficking and migrant smuggling networks that exploit vulnerable migrants, providing them with job opportunities or facilitating their illicit journeys.

“Some networks exploit migrants by either providing them with job opportunities or trafficking them.” (Amina)

2.2.4 Social phenomena:

Aicha mentioned an increase in spinsterhood, cases of rape, higher age of marriage, and other social phenomena casting shadows on illegal emigration and driving some individuals to migrate. Some people are also fleeing from justice.

Social Stigma and Marginalization are also reasons for the increase in illegal emigration rates. Emad introduced the concept of social stigma against residents of poor neighborhoods, such as Solidarity (Tadamon) in the Tunis Governorate. The portrayal of these individuals as social criminals creates push factors for them to migrate irregularly, seeking better opportunities and escaping social judgment. This highlights how cultural and social dynamics within Tunisia itself contribute to illegal emigration decisions.

It is worth noting that the participants agreed that religious factors have no impact on illegal emigration from Tunisia anymore. For instance, Nasser acknowledged that religious factors, specifically Jihadist migration from Tunisia, were once a driving force for illegal emigration. However, he emphasized that currently, religious motives do not significantly influence illegal emigration, except for motivating some individuals to go to Syria for jihad. This suggests that while religious motivations were more prevalent in the past, they are less influential in recent migration trends.

2.2.5 Visa Restrictions

External factors such as visa restrictions and stringent conditions for migration have also contributed to making regular migration more challenging.

Amina highlighted that obtaining a visa has become more difficult, with a reduction in the number of visas granted to Tunisians. She stated, “Nowadays, obtaining a visa has become more difficult, with a reduction in the number of visas granted to Tunisians. Even those who get a visa receive it for a limited period.”

2.2.6 Economic opportunities, seeking hope:

The responses from multiple speakers provided valuable insights into the significance of economic factors in migration decisions.

One of these factors is the **economic attractiveness of Europe**. Bassam highlighted that economic reasons are one of the most crucial drivers of illegal emigration. Poor neighborhoods in Tunisia

are influenced by misinformation about successful migration stories to Europe, portraying it as an easy path to luxury and wealth. The allure of European prosperity, including the ability to own a house, a car, and get married quickly, create an aspiration for a better life abroad. He pointed out that the government is absent in providing awareness in these neighborhoods about the realities of life in Europe. This lack of information contributes to the perception of Europe as a promised paradise, despite the challenges and risks of illegal emigration. However, once some irregular migrants reach Europe, they realize that the European dream is a deception, and their living conditions become difficult. The reality of their situation pushes them to engage in illegal work to meet basic needs, leading to disillusionment with the initial perception of Europe's prosperity.

Nasser emphasized that economic opportunities have decreased in Tunisia and other countries, prompting people to seek hope abroad. Despite the challenging circumstances, low-paying work in Europe may still offer better income and a higher standard of living compared to opportunities available in Tunisia.

“It is true that economic opportunities have decreased in all countries without exception, but there is still hope abroad. The low-paying work in Italy would yield much more income than jobs in Tunisia.” (Nasser)

Aicha noted that while migrants believe they will find better job opportunities in Europe, the economic conditions there have also deteriorated. Despite this, some migrants feel a sense of desperation and aspire to work irregularly or marry foreigners to improve their status, as it may still be more economically advantageous than the situation in Tunisia.

Another factor is the **shift in work culture and aspirations**. Moncief observed a shift in the work culture in Tunisia, where individuals are now seeking constant improvement and faster-paced lives. The desire for stability and strong belonging is no longer as prevalent as before, influencing the decisions of some to explore better economic prospects outside Tunisia.

2.2.7 Social media, Generalized Mental Image and Social Celebration of Migration

Social media is a role in allowing people to compare European life with life in Tunisia. Emad said that social media has allowed people to discover opportunities in Europe, making it desirable. Emad stated:

"What is forbidden becomes desirable. Social media allows people to compare European life with life in Tunisia. People have discovered the opportunities in Europe." (Emad)

Emad also mentioned the impact of a false image of life in countries like Italy, where illegal emigration is common. The few success stories of those who have achieved better living conditions abroad, though rare, can influence others to attempt illegal emigration. This perception of better opportunities abroad contributes to the decision-making process for potential irregular migrants.

Nasser also mentioned the impact of a generalized mental image of migrants in society. Families and communities now encourage illegal emigration, perceiving it as the right path to a better life. When individuals successfully migrate irregularly, they are celebrated, creating positive social

reinforcement for illegal emigration. This shift in societal attitudes has diminished the influence of religious and cultural factors on migration decisions.

2.2.8 Employment Opportunities and Criminal Records

Emad highlighted that anyone who enters prison in Tunisia, especially for political reasons, finds it almost impossible to find work after release due to the criminal record. This makes them potential irregular migrants as they cannot find employment in Tunisia, in addition to the social stigma. The state's lack of implementation of policies to integrate and economically empower these individuals further contributes to this theme.

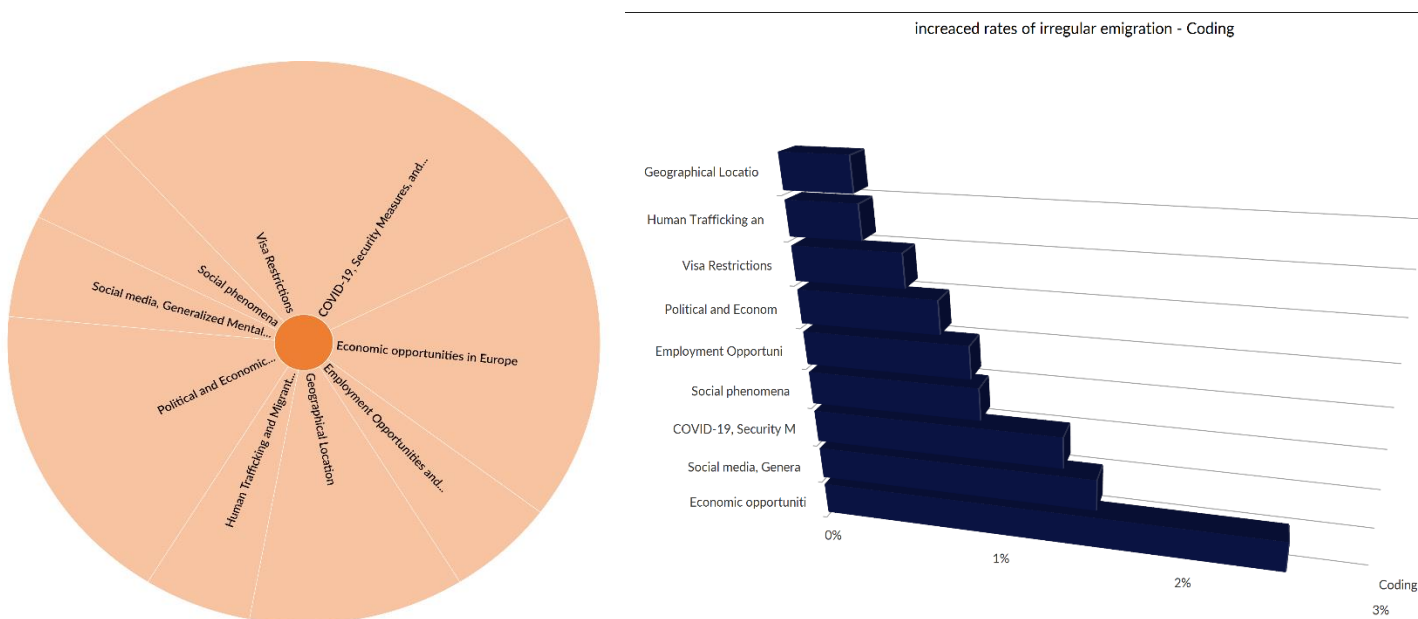
“Anyone who enters prison in Tunisia, for any reason, especially political, finds it almost impossible to find work after release. ... The state has not implemented a policy to integrate and economically empower these individuals.” (Emad)

2.2.9 Geographical Location

Bassam explained that geographical location plays a significant role in migration phenomena. Tunisians choose to migrate irregularly to Europe due to Tunisia's close proximity to the northern coast of the Mediterranean. Geographical factors influence migration patterns and destination choices.

“Why do Tunisians choose to go to Europe and not Australia? Because Tunisia is geographically close to Europe, on the northern coast of the Mediterranean.” (Bassam)

Figure 4 The proportions of the influence of the independent variables on the increase in illegal emigration of Tunisians



Despite the multiplicity of independent variables that affect the increase in illegal emigration rates mentioned by experts, the relative weights of the impact of these variables are not equal. In other words, all of these variables had an effect on increasing the rates of illegal emigration, but they are not equal in this effect, as some of them affected to a greater extent than others on the dependent variable.

According to the rates of frequency of mentioning the independent variables in the answers of all the experts, it was found that the variable of economic opportunities was the most frequent and the most influential on the increase in illegal emigration rates in Tunisia starting from 2020, followed by the role of social media. In the third rank - in terms of the degree of impact - came the Covid-19 crisis, which caused lax border security control, and in the fourth rank came the "social phenomenon" variable, by which experts meant the transformation of emigration from a secret phenomenon to a social phenomenon accepted by society. In the fifth rank came the variable of unemployment and limited job opportunities, followed by the variable of political and economic conditions, and in the seventh rank came the restrictions on obtaining a visa. The least influential variables were the spread of migrant smuggling networks that facilitated the illegal emigration process for individuals, and the geographical location of Tunisia, which made it close to Europe.

Chapter two: Shifts in the demographic profile of irregular migrants: results and discussion

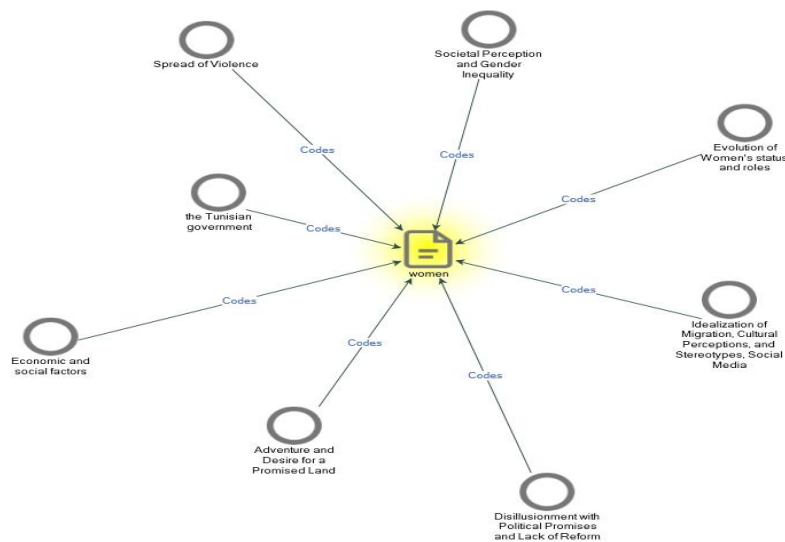
Illegal emigration was previously selective, involving young males with limited education, poor backgrounds, and unemployment. However, the phenomenon has now expanded to encompass all categories, including highly educated individuals. The expansion includes women, minors, and even families. In this chapter, the reasons for these shifts are discussed by conducting a thematic analysis of the interview responses, and the data is analyzed and visualized by Eviews.10th software.

Section 1: Reasons of the demographic profile's shifts

1.1 Reasons why Tunisian women tend to emigrate irregularly

The thematic analysis of the interview responses suggests that there are a number of factors that contribute to the illegal emigration of Tunisian women. These factors are complex and interrelated.

Figure 5 factors that contribute to the illegal emigration of Tunisian women



1.1.1 Economic and social factors:

The economic crisis in Tunisia has led to increased unemployment and job loss, especially for women. This has made it difficult for women to find suitable employment and support themselves and their families. Tunisian society is still patriarchal, and women often face discrimination in the workplace and in other areas of life. This can make it difficult for women to achieve their full potential and can lead to feelings of frustration and hopelessness.

In this regard, Bassam pointed out that women's roles in Tunisia have evolved, with increased responsibilities in the family and greater participation in the economy. However, unemployment rates among women have risen due to a decrease in employment opportunities. Nasser added that the economic crisis in Tunisia, exacerbated by global events like COVID-19, has led to job losses and a lack of future prospects for many Tunisians, including women. The **uncertainty** about the future and lack of governmental initiatives to address economic challenges contribute to feelings of anxiety, pushing individuals towards illegal emigration.

Moncief, further emphasized the impact of the economic crisis on women's employment opportunities. He stated, "Women's chances of employment are significantly lower than men's. There is still a societal perception that merit is not the primary criterion for employment; rather, gender plays a role. Women's wages in certain sectors are lower than men's, as are their chances of promotion." (Moncief)

1.1.2 Evolution of Women's status and roles, and Increased Independence:

Tunisian women have made significant gains in education in recent years. Emad noted that women's education has improved significantly, and they view themselves as equal to men. This has led to a greater number of women who are qualified for employment, but it has also created a mismatch between the skills of educated women and the available jobs.

Aicha stated, "Perhaps the improvement in women's education, where many of them have degrees but lack suitable job opportunities, might have contributed to their migration."

(Aicha)

Tunisian society is becoming more open and accepting of women's rights. This has led to a greater number of women who are independent and who are not afraid to challenge traditional gender roles. The sense of equality leads women to think like men, including considering migration as a viable option.

Emad, explained that freedoms in Tunisia have grown, and women's responsibilities are now the same as men's. He states, "Women have achieved significant gains and see themselves equal to men, which makes them think like men." (Speaker 6, Emad)

Bassam, agreed with Emad on that women's roles in Tunisia have advanced over time, and they now take on many responsibilities within the family and play a larger role in the economy. This increased independence has led to women migrating without their spouses, either to join their spouses abroad or to seek better employment opportunities. Bassam states, "Just as we talk about unaccompanied child migration, we also discuss women migrating without their spouses." (Bassam)

Nasser, also acknowledged the increased independence of Tunisian women and their desire to seek their own future. He stated, "Tunisian women, like other groups, are not confined to their homes. Young women are becoming more independent and engaged, and they are compelled to seek their own future, whether through regular or irregular means." (Nasser)

1.1.3 Societal Perception and Gender Inequality

Moncief and Amina highlighted that despite significant gains in women's rights and education, equal opportunities have not translated into equal representation in the workforce. Women face wage gaps and limited chances of promotion, leading to frustration and a desire to seek better opportunities abroad.

He stated, "There is still a societal perception that merit is not the primary criterion for employment; rather, gender plays a role. Women's wages in certain sectors are lower than men's, as are their chances of promotion." (Moncief)

Moncief also stated, "When women learn and understand their social status and potential, it brings them hope, but they are shocked by the reality that doesn't offer them suitable opportunities." (Moncief)

1.1.4 Idealization of Migration, Cultural Perceptions, and Stereotypes: The role of social media:

Social media can be a powerful tool for spreading information and images of life in other countries. This can lead to unrealistic expectations about what life is like abroad, which can make women more likely to consider illegal emigration. Social media can also be used to connect with people who have already migrated, and these networks can provide information and support to those who are considering illegal emigration.

In this regard, Bassam, Samir, and Nasser agreed that a stereotypical image of Europe exists in the minds of Tunisian women, especially in countries like France, Italy, and Germany that receive Tunisian immigrants. This image influences women's psyche, and they perceive better living conditions and job prospects abroad, contributing to their decision to migrate irregularly.

Samir, also mentioned the stereotypical image of Europe in women's minds, influenced by social media, which contributes to their desire to migrate. He states, "Cultural reasons play a part, such as a stereotypical image of Europe in women's minds, especially in countries like France, Italy, and Germany that receive Tunisian immigrants. This image has influenced women's psyche." (Samir)

Additionally, the idealization of migration on social media is identified as a factor contributing to illegal emigration among Tunisian women. Moncief, mentioned that social media play a role in idealizing migration and that Tunisian women are looking for alternatives, especially after the revolution. He stated, "Social media also play a role in idealizing migration. Nowadays, Tunisians are looking for alternatives, especially after the revolution." (Moncief)

1.1.5 The role of the Tunisian government:

The Tunisian government has not done enough to create economic opportunities for women. This has made it difficult for women to find suitable employment and has contributed to the problem of illegal emigration. The Tunisian government has not done enough to protect women's rights. This has made it difficult for women to challenge traditional gender roles and has contributed to the problem of illegal emigration.

1.1.6 Disillusionment with Political Promises and Lack of Reform

The political climate in Tunisia emerges as a contributing factor to illegal emigration. Nasser mentioned that the uncertain political situation leaves people feeling uneasy about the future, prompting them to consider migration as an alternative.

The disillusionment with political promises and the lack of reform in Tunisia is pushing individuals, including women, towards illegal emigration. Aicha pointed out that after the revolution, political promises of a better Tunisia were not fulfilled, leading to disillusionment among the population. This sense of being deceived by political speeches pushes individuals towards seeking a "promised land," either within extremist ideologies or in Europe.

"The slogans and political promises were expected to turn Tunisia into a promised land, which didn't happen, leading to a clash with a different reality. People feel deceived by political speeches, and there is no real reformist thinking." (Moncief)

Samir, also mentioned the uncertain political and social climate in Tunisia, which contributes to individuals feeling uncertain about the future and pushes them towards migration. He stated, "The uncertainty about the future and the overall situation, with no real promises from the government to resolve the crises and improve conditions, has left people in a state of anxiety." (Samir)

The resulted depression led to the brain drain phenomenon, where educated individuals, including women, leave Tunisia in search of better opportunities abroad, is mentioned as a factor contributing to illegal emigration. Amina, explained that women aspire to find their rights and freedom abroad due to a misunderstanding of the living conditions in Tunisia.

She stated, "The overall context, politically and economically, includes limited sources of income, unemployment, and rising taxes. Women aspire to find their rights and freedom abroad because there is a misunderstanding of the living conditions in Tunisia." (Amina)

1.1.7 Access to Healthcare:

One of the reasons stated by the interviewee is seeking health care. Emad, Nasser, and Bassam agreed that many youth women migrated irregularly because they didn't get health care for their diseases as the health sector in Tunisia isn't developed, and surgery costs a lot of money that poor people can't afford. In addition, some diseases have no treatment in Tunisia, which prompts women to migrate to European countries that are more advanced in the health sector. Facing difficulties in obtaining visas, leading them to resort to illegal emigration, specifically dangerous migration by sea.

"Some women from Sfax migrated to Italy to access healthcare. One of them had a child with a heart condition, and due to the high cost of surgery in Tunisia and difficulties in obtaining free or subsidized treatment, she irregularly migrated with her son to France to get him treated and stayed there until his treatment was completed." (Bassam)

1.1.8 Spread of Violence:

The spread of violence and psychological/social concerns are mentioned as factors contributing to illegal emigration among Tunisian women. Samir, states that the reality of high prices and limited job prospects in Tunisia leads to psychological and social concerns, which contribute to the spread of violence and the resort to migration.

He states, “Women find themselves facing the reality of high prices and limited job prospects, leading to psychological and social concerns, contributing to the spread of violence and the resort to migration.” (Samir)

1.1.9 Adventure and Desire for a Promised Land

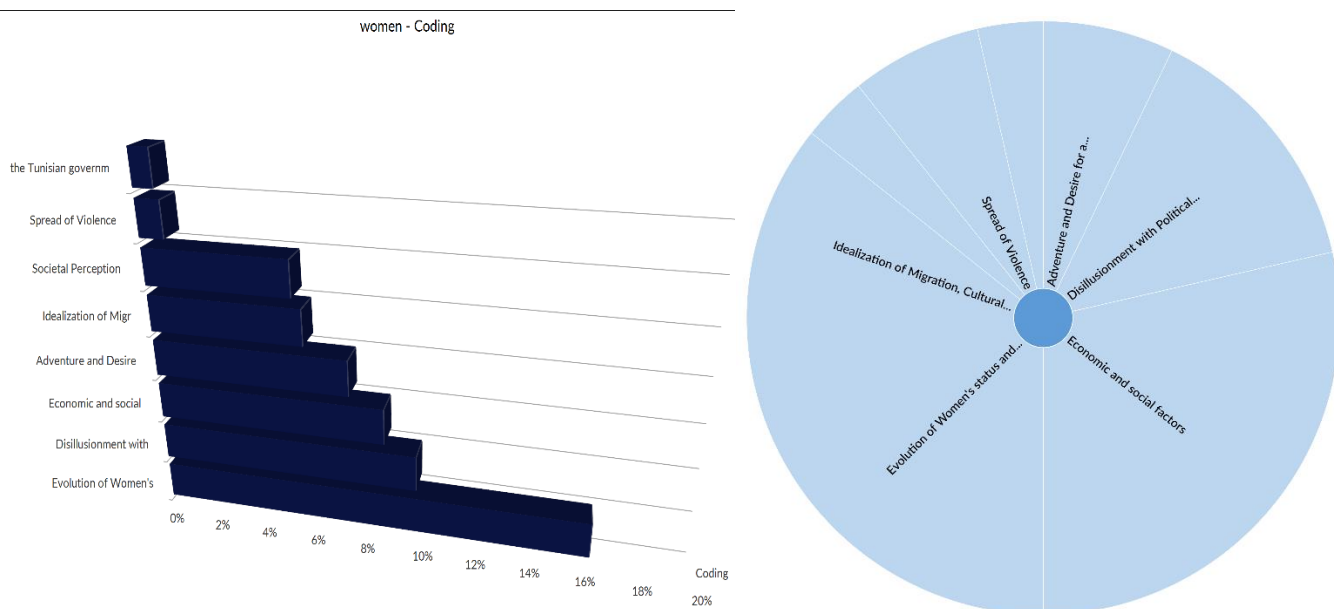
The desire for adventure and the search for a promised land are identified as motivations for illegal emigration among Tunisian women. Moncief, mentioned that life has become more challenging in Tunisia, creating a desire for adventure.

He stated, “Life has become more challenging, creating a desire for adventure.” (Moncief)

Moncief also mentioned that people across all groups in Tunisian society are searching for a promised land, whether it is the land of ISIS or Europe. He stated, “Radicalization has become ideological, and a comprehensive ideology dominates Tunisian society across all groups. They all search for a promised land, whether it is the land of ISIS or Europe.” (Moncief)

In this regard, Emad mentioned that women are naturally adventurous, which adds to their willingness to take the risk of illegal emigration.

Figure 6 The proportions of the influence of the independent variables on illegal emigration of women



Despite the multiplicity of independent variables that affect the illegal emigration of women mentioned by experts, the relative weights of the impact of these variables are not equal, as some of them affected to a greater extent than others.

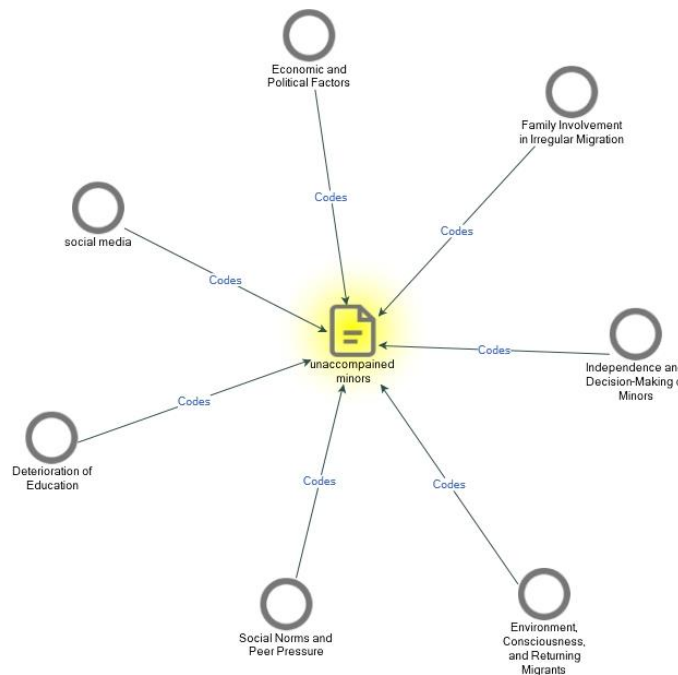
According to the frequency rates of mentioning the independent variables in the answers of all the experts, it was found that the variable “the evolution of women status in society and their roles” was the most frequent and the most influential on the illegal emigration of women, followed by “disillusionment with political promises and lack of reform”. in the third rank - in terms of the

degree of influence - came the economic and social factors, and in the fourth rank came the variable "adventure and desire for a promised land". in the fifth rank came the variables "idealization of migration, cultural perceptions, and stereotypes", followed by the variables "societal perception and gender inequality", and the least influential variables were the prevalence of violence, and the policies of the Tunisian government.

1.2 Reasons why Unaccompanied minors tend to emigrate irregularly

The interviewees provided valuable insights into the factors that contribute to unaccompanied minors' likelihood to emigrate irregularly from Tunisia. These factors can be grouped into several themes:

Figure 7 factors that contribute to the illegal emigration of unaccompanied minors



1.2.1 Economic and Political Factors

Economic and political reasons play a significant role in influencing unaccompanied minors to emigrate irregularly. Nasser, said that these factors affect children who witness their families' struggles, motivating them to plan and act for migration. He explained that the **ideal successful young person has shifted**, and now, the model of success is the one who migrates and returns with a car and plenty of money. This change in perception has made education and obtaining degrees less appealing to children, especially those from marginalized groups. They see education as fruitless and believe that migration is the path to success.

Mihar, further supported this factor by mentioning that limited educational opportunities, where children see their highly educated siblings without job opportunities, lead them to consider illegal emigration, especially those who have received vocational training. The worsening political and economic conditions in Tunisia have contributed to the attraction of illegal emigration for children.

It makes some families see illegal emigration as the only way to secure a better future for their children.

1.2.2 Influence of Environment, Consciousness, and Returning Migrants

The environment (“El7oma- “الحومة” the neighborhood where they leave) and consciousness of children play a significant role in their decision to emigrate irregularly. Nasser, explains that the migrant model has become accessible to children through manipulative influences from their environment and consciousness.

The high rate of poverty, inequality, and the low standard of living in poor areas in Tunisia (such as the Helal district and Tadamon district), as well as the lack of social services, can create a sense of hopelessness and despair among youth and minors. This can make them more likely to see illegal emigration as a way to escape their current situation and find a better life elsewhere.

Moncief, added that in the streets, the culture of illegal emigration is circulated, and children living in environments where smugglers operate may have a connection with them. Social media also plays a role, making it easy for children to learn about migration routes.

Additionally, the success and financial stability of returning migrants influences the decision-making of families regarding illegal emigration for their children. Mihar, mentioned that families are motivated to migrate their children because of returning migrants to Tunisia with good financial status, fancy cars, and a parallel trade in foreign goods brought by Tunisians returning from abroad. These returnees accumulate significant financial resources in a short period, which serves as a motivation for families to invest in illegal emigration for their children.

It should be noted that their interpretation of the role of the surrounding environment in motivating minors to irregular migration is consistent with what (**migrant 1**) said, as he mentioned that talk about immigration in his neighborhood was raised on a daily basis, and that he was fascinated by immigrants returning from abroad, and he wanted to become successful like them. He also stated that the families in his neighborhood were encouraging their children to migrate as the easiest way to achieve success, and urging them to follow the example of returning immigrants, which prompted him to immigrate irregularly twice. The first, when he was 15 years old, he went with his "older than him" children in an immigration boat and provided money from his mother, but this time it failed because the Italian Coast Guard returned the boat and informed the Tunisian authorities. The second time, he was seventeen years old, and he said that he had traveled to Italy through a government travel office, and upon his arrival, he escaped from the trip supervisor and sought refuge with some of his relatives who work in illegal businesses.

1.2.3 Influence of Social Norms and Peer Pressure

Social norms and peer pressure play a significant role in shaping the decision of unaccompanied minors to emigrate irregularly. In some areas, illegal emigration became a norm. Bassam, mentioned that many young people and minors in Kerkennah lead the boats themselves without paying fees to smuggling organizers.

"Many youth and minors in Kerkennah, who are familiar with the sea and use GPS, lead the boats themselves, without paying fees to smuggling organizers, as they take charge of navigating the boats. This method is widespread and can be considered the norm." (Bassam).

Samir, added that the spreading phenomenon of dropping out of education and migrating irregularly are indicating the influence of social norms on children's decisions.

Mihar, highlighted the influence of Western ideas on children, such as sexual freedom and the idea of marrying a foreigner to achieve stability in a European country.

"Lack of communication between children and parents creates tension, and the child becomes influenced by Western ideas, sexual freedom, and the idea of marrying a foreigner to achieve stability in a European country." (Mihar)

This suggested that peer pressure and exposure to different cultural norms influence the decision-making of unaccompanied minors regarding illegal emigration.

1.2.4 The role of social media:

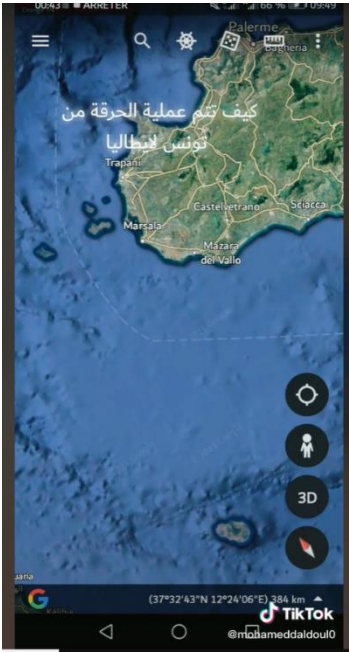
As mentioned above, the knowledge of illegal emigration routes and methods became widespread among children and adults alike. And it became more easier to migrate due to social media. Moncief, mentioned that social media makes it easy for children to learn about migration routes. This indicates that social media platforms provide access to information and resources related to illegal emigration, influencing children's perceptions and decision-making.

I agree with Moncief, that the social media platforms are playing crucial role in motivating individuals to emigrate irregularly. One can just search by key word like (7ar9a) and he will get many information that he needs to migrate.

1.2.5 Family Involvement in Illegal Emigration:

Families play a crucial role in the illegal emigration of unaccompanied minors. In some cases, families may pressure their children to migrate in order to improve the family's financial situation. In other cases, children may feel that they have to leave their families in order to protect them from violence or abuse.

Bassam, explained that children either pay fees to migrant smugglers, provided by their parents, or they participate directly in the illegal emigration process. Samir, mentions that some families have become smuggling networks, with each member playing a role in the migration process, not only their children but also Africans. This indicates that families are actively involved in organizing and supporting the migration of their children.



Emad, added that families now send their children and support them in their migration to secure a better future for them. This highlights the significant influence and involvement of families in the decision-making and facilitation of illegal emigration for unaccompanied minors.

The desire for protection and care motivates families to smuggle their children irregularly. Amina, mentioned that families are aware that Italy provides protection and care for children, which is why they smuggle their children there. This indicates that the perception of better protection and care in destination countries influences the decision of families to migrate their children irregularly.

1.2.6 Deterioration of Education

The deterioration of education in Tunisia is a significant factor contributing to the likelihood of unaccompanied minors emigrating irregularly. Nasser, explained that education and obtaining degrees are no longer appealing to children, especially those from marginalized groups. They see education as fruitless, particularly if they witness their highly educated siblings struggling to find job opportunities. Emad, added that education in Tunisia has deteriorated, and there is neglect in education.

Mihar, further emphasized this factor by stating that limited educational opportunities, coupled with unemployment, lead children to consider illegal emigration. This suggests that the lack of quality education and job prospects contribute to the attractiveness of illegal emigration for unaccompanied minors.

1.2.7 Independence and Decision-Making of Minors

The independence and decision-making of minors play a significant role in their likelihood of emigrating irregularly. Bassam, explained that children who irregularly migrate between the ages of 15 and 17 cannot be described as children but rather as minors lacking legal capacity.

Mihar, mentioned that according to Tunisian law, children have the right to participate in the decision-making regarding personal matters concerning them from the age of 8, and parents cannot force them. This indicates that minors have the ability to make decisions regarding their migration.

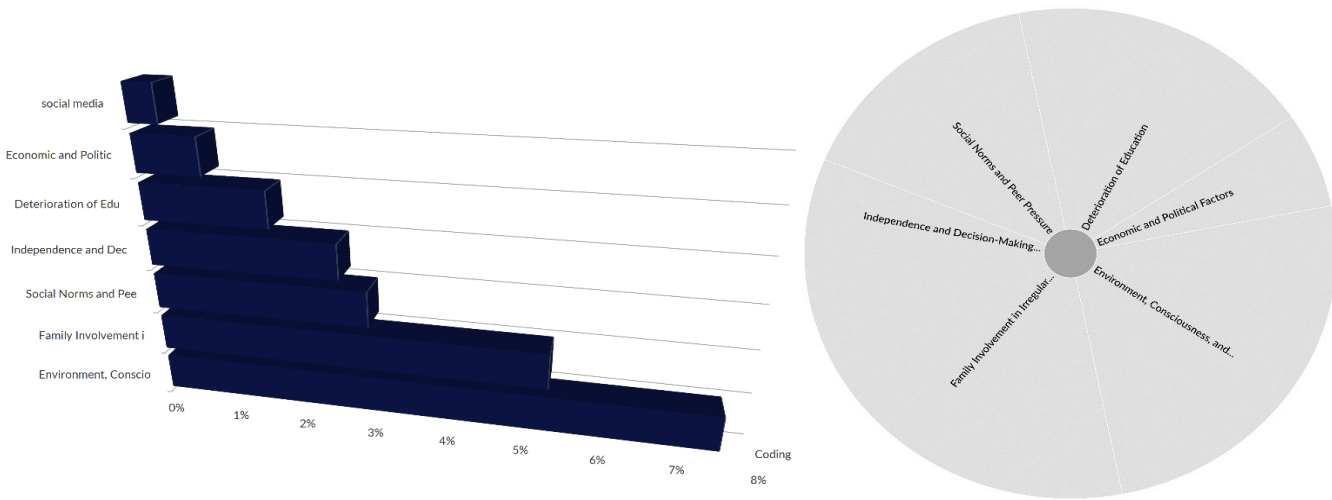
"A child aged 13 to under 18 is considered capable of acting and making decisions." (Mihar)

1.2.8 Geographical Location and Proximity to Europe

The geographical location and proximity to Europe contribute to the likelihood of unaccompanied minors emigrating irregularly. Mihar, stated that migration is natural in Tunisia due to its geographical location and proximity to Europe. Moncief, added that Sfax and Nabeul are transit areas, with Nabeul being closest to the Italian islands. This suggests that the geographical proximity to Europe makes illegal emigration more accessible and attractive for unaccompanied minors in Tunisia.

Figure 8 The proportions of the influence of the independent variables on illegal emigration of unaccompanied minors

unaccompanied minors - Coding



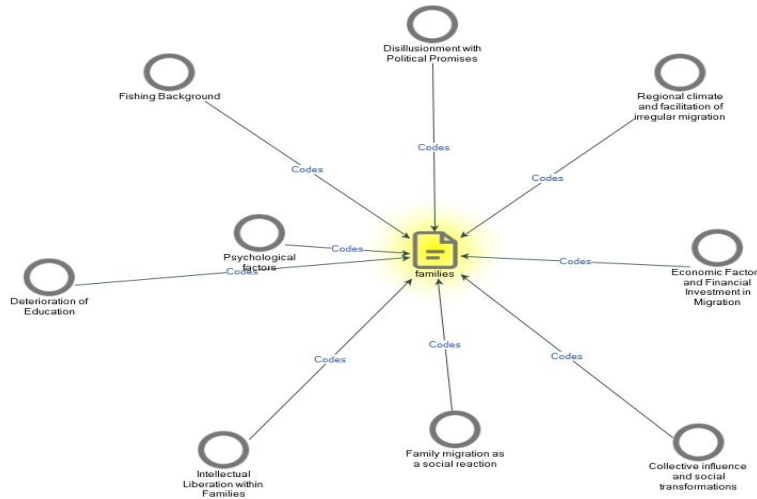
Despite the multiplicity of independent variables that affect the illegal emigration of unaccompanied minors mentioned by experts, the relative weights of the impact of these variables are not equal, as some of them affected to a greater extent than others.

According to the frequency rates of mentioning the independent variables in the answers of all the experts, it was found that the variables “Environment, Consciousness, and Returning Migrants” were the most frequent and the most influential on the illegal emigration of unaccompanied minors, followed by “family involvement in illegal emigration”. In the third rank - in terms of the degree of influence - came the social norms and peer pressure, and in the fourth rank came the variable "independence and decision-making of minors". in the fifth rank came the variables "deterioration of education", followed by the variables " the economic and political situations", and the least influential variable was the social media.

1.3. Reasons for illegal emigration of the families:

The thematic analysis of the interviews highlights key factors that influence this migration phenomenon, including socio-economic considerations, educational aspirations, regional climate, collective influence, psychological impact, and societal perceptions.

Figure 9 factors that contribute to the illegal emigration of Tunisian families



1.3.1 Psychological factors:

The decision to migrate irregularly can also be influenced by psychological factors, such as a sense of hopelessness or despair about the future in Tunisia.

Additionally, the interviewees mention that leaving Tunisia is viewed as a way to gain a sense of dignity and societal recognition, even if it means facing challenges abroad. There is a perception that individuals are treated better and valued more as human beings when they migrate. This stands in contrast to the treatment by authorities in Tunisia, which contributes to the general climate encouraging migration as they see it as a means of achieving human dignity and respect.

“They feel that they become human beings when they migrate, based on how they are treated abroad, even if they are arrested.” (Nasser)

“There is a general feeling that everyone wants to escape the country.” (Aicha)

“The future is uncertain for families.” (Amina)

1.3.2 Disillusionment and Broken Promises

The hope for political prosperity and better living conditions after the revolution did not materialize, resulting in disillusionment with the political elite. This disappointment further drives families to seek a more comfortable and prosperous life elsewhere for their children.

“People became greatly disillusioned because their hopes and aspirations were not fulfilled..... Promises became hollow, and there is now a separation between families and Tunisian citizens from politics.” (Samir)

Nasser also stated “After the revolution, society expected prosperity, good education, and healthcare, and they anticipated the political elite would share in the fruits of the revolution. However, this did not happen in Tunisia. People became greatly disillusioned because their hopes

and aspirations were not fulfilled. Trust in politicians vanished, and the gap between the government and citizens widened.” (Nasser)

1.3.3 Family migration as a social reaction

Families' decisions to emigrate irregularly can be influenced by the prevailing socio-economic conditions in their regions. As highlighted by Bassam, the protest against an oil company on Kerkennah Island resulted in clashes and dissatisfaction with the government's policies on youth employment. This situation may have contributed to around 20 families attempting illegal emigration as a response to limited prospects and economic challenges on the island.

1.3.4 Economic Factors and Financial Investment in Migration

The interviews revealed that family migration is perceived as a significant investment in a better future for their children.

“Families consider migration as a project, meticulously planning and strategizing to secure a better future for their children. The motivation behind this project-like contemplation is to provide children with more opportunities and prospects outside Tunisia, especially with the availability of grants for families in other countries.” (Nasser)

Families in Tunisia face challenges in terms of limited economic opportunities, an unstable education system, and a lack of dignity, especially in marginalized areas. The deteriorating infrastructure and high education costs push families to seek better prospects abroad.

Samir explained that many families invest substantial amounts of money in migration, selling their properties and family assets to finance the journey. Some even intentionally go into debt or resort to theft to gather the required funds. Families calculate the costs of illegal emigration and view it as a means to secure a better future for their children. They aspire to provide their children with a better lifestyle and improve their circumstances amid economic disparities in Tunisia.

“Families now look at the vast disparity between economic classes and strive to provide their children with a wealthy lifestyle..... families want to improve their children's circumstances.”
(Emad)

Migration, in this context, is seen as a means of improving the social and economic status of the entire family.

It worth noted that there was a disagreement on the impact of the economic factors. It might not affect the decision of migration, as there are families who have assets and good income, and migrate irregularly from Tunisia.

“Economic reasons cannot explain the phenomenon because those who migrate have money (around 20,000 dollars). Sometimes, they sell their property or family assets.” (Aicha)

1.3.5 Intellectual Liberation of the Tunisian Families:

Family dynamics in Tunisia are characterized by a high level of intellectual liberation. Nasser observed that families in Tunisia differ from other countries, displaying a high level of intellectual liberation. Families view migration as a project aimed at securing a better future for their children. Parents no longer wish for their children to remain in Tunisia, where education and opportunities are perceived as limited. The intellectual liberation within families allows them to contemplate migration as a viable option for their children's prosperity.

1.3.6 Collective influence and social transformations

Family migration is not only an individual decision but is also influenced by collective factors. Families familiarize themselves with immigration laws and policies in European countries, indicating a collective effort to plan and coordinate the migration process. Smaller groups within larger collective movements are influenced by shared motivations and aspirations. Social transformations, such as the breakdown of the social contract in Tunisia, also play a role in families' desire to seek better circumstances for their children outside the political sphere.

1.3.7 Regional climate and facilitation of illegal emigration

The interviews point out that illegal emigration is influenced by regional factors, such as conflicts in neighboring Libya and the involvement of non-Tunisian smugglers. International gangs have facilitated family migration, making the process seemingly easier and more secure, with bribes paid to coastguards. Additionally, campaigns targeting minors and young people encourage migration. This regional climate, coupled with the perception that everyone wants to escape the country, creates an environment that encourages and normalizes irregular family emigration.

“There is a regional climate encouraging illegal emigration, and it occurs on a daily basis.....Conflicts in Libya and networks and organizers facilitate migration.” (Aicha)

1.3.8 Education System:

Education emerges as a crucial aspect influencing family migration decisions. The education system in Tunisia is facing a crisis with teacher strikes, subject cancellations, and disruptions, leading to a lack of opportunities for the youth. These challenges contribute to a perception that prospects for children in Tunisia are limited. As a result, families invest in migration as they view it as an opportunity for their children to receive better education and societal recognition abroad which they believe are scarce in their home country.

"The education system faces a significant crisis, ...this, coupled with a lack of dignity, especially in poor and marginalized areas, pushes individuals to migrate in search of a better societal perception." (Moncief)

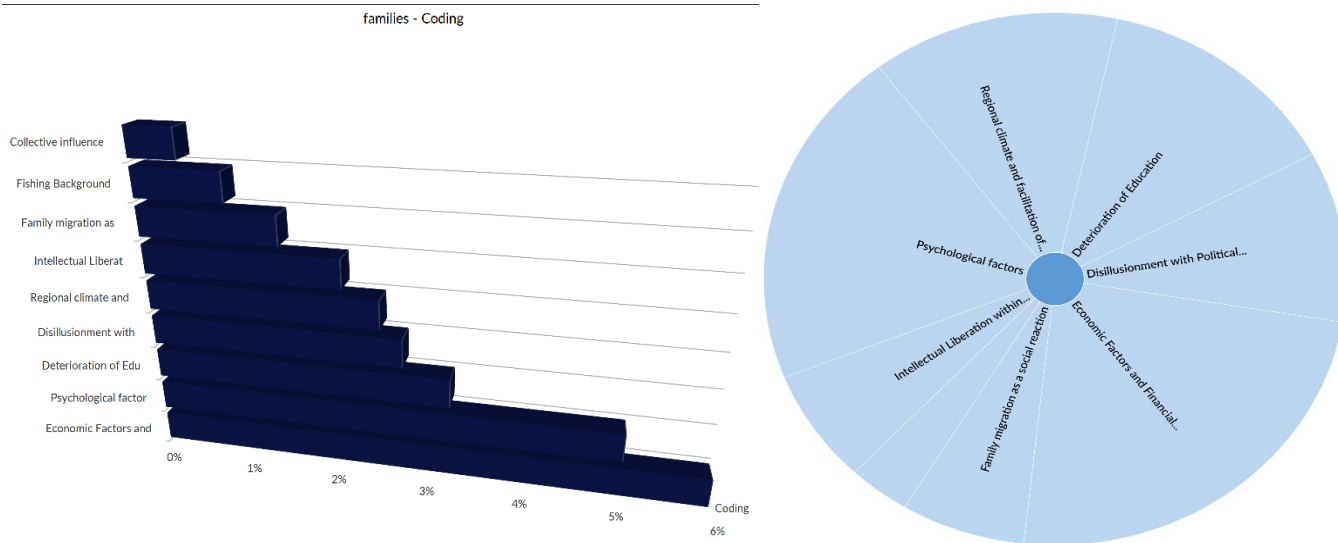
1.3.9 Fishing Background

Bassam pointed out that family migration, particularly in coastal regions, often involves families with a fishing background. The ownership of boats enables these families to attempt illegal

emigration by using their own vessels. The lack of significant funds to pay smuggling organizers leads families to utilize their own resources, which makes illegal emigration an accessible option.

"Families that migrate as a whole come from coastal regions, and typically, the head of the family owns a boat and works in fishing... Sometimes, they coordinate with smugglers, negotiating for discounts, but these cases are limited." (Bassam)

Figure 10 The proportions of the influence of the independent variables on illegal emigration of families



Despite the multiplicity of independent variables that affect the illegal emigration of families mentioned by experts, the relative weights of the impact of these variables are not equal, as some of them affected to a greater extent than others.

According to the frequency rates of mentioning the independent variables in the answers of all the experts, it was found that the variables “economic factors and financial investment in migration” were the most frequent and the most influential on the illegal emigration of the Tunisian families, followed by “the psychological factors”. in the third rank - in terms of the degree of influence - came the deterioration of education, and in the fourth rank came the variable "disillusionment and broken promises". in the fifth rank came the variables "regional climate and facilitation of illegal emigration", followed by the variable "intellectual liberation of Tunisian families", and the least influential variables were: family migration as a social reaction, fishing background, collective influence and social transformations.

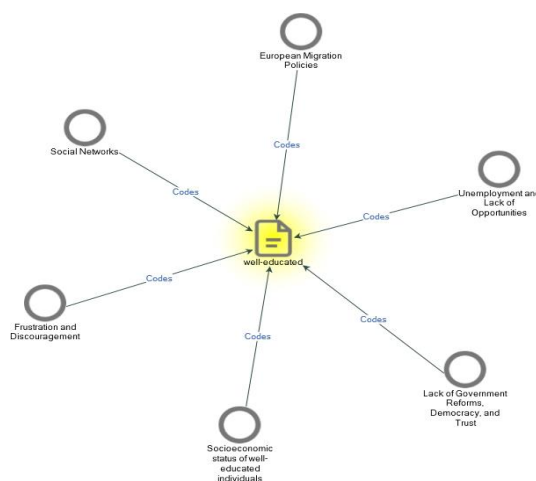
1.4. Reasons why well-educated people migrate irregularly:

The interviews reveal various aspects of the migration trend, including the reasons behind the choice of illegal emigration, the impact of EU policies, the influence of communication with migrants abroad, etc.

Before explaining the reasons, it is worth noting that there was disagreement on whether well-educated people started to migrate irregularly or not. Bassam argued that the number of well-educated individuals irregularly migrating is limited and not as significant as portrayed in the media. He claimed that such news is misleading and false propaganda. Moncief agreed with Bassam, he mention that regular migration for such professionals is easier, for instance, foreign universities are welcoming many Tunisian academic teachers, and because their soqcal and economic status in Tunisia is poor compared to Europe they migrate but regularly. However, **political activists have a different situation and choose illegal emigration due to travel bans.**

While others stated that well-educated people started to migrate irregularly due to these factors:

Figure 11 factors that contribute to the illegal emigration of well-educated individuals



1.4.1 Frustration and Discouragement

The frustration and discouragement experienced by Tunisian youth, contribute to their decision to emigrate irregularly. Nasser highlighted that many young people migrate despite having good financial conditions and family wealth because they feel discouraged. This frustration arises from bureaucratic obstacles that hinder their projects or developmental initiatives, as well as the arrests made by security forces.

1.4.2 Unemployment and Lack of Opportunities

While illegal emigration was previously associated with young males from poor and unemployed backgrounds, it has now expanded to encompass all categories, including highly educated individuals. The lack of suitable job opportunities after the revolution has pushed well-educated individuals to join the ranks of irregular migrants.

“Previously, illegal emigration was selective, involving young males between 17 and 30 years old with limited education.” “The phenomenon has now exploded, encompassing all categories, including highly educated individuals.” (Samir)

The interviewees highlighted that illegal emigration among well-educated Tunisians is primarily driven by the limited job opportunities and high unemployment rates in Tunisia. Despite being

highly educated, many individuals struggle to find suitable employment that matches their qualifications and expectations. As a result, they opt for illegal emigration as a means of seeking better career prospects and economic opportunities abroad.

“They feel that they have exhausted themselves in the education process without reaping the rewards.” "There are no suitable job opportunities.” (Emad)

1.4.3 European Migration Policies

Participants in the interviews mentioned that illegal emigration has become more attractive due to the perceived strictness of European migration policies. The reduction in the number of entry visas to Europe has made regular migration increasingly difficult, leading well-educated individuals to explore illegal emigration routes as an alternative.

“Legal individual migration has become complicated.” (Emad)

“Regular migration has become difficult due to European strictness and reducing the number of entry visas to Europe....This has led highly educated individuals to opt for illegal emigration.” (Nasser)

“European migration policies have closed borders.” (Aicha)

The participants mentioned that Europe now controls and decides migration matters, not Tunisia which worsens the situation.

1.4.4 Socioeconomic status of well-educated individuals

The socioeconomic status of well-educated individuals in Tunisia is cited as a contributing factor to illegal emigration. Many of them are specialists, including medical and engineering professionals. While legal migration for such specialists is relatively easier, there are still disparities in their social and economic status compared to Europe. The allure of better opportunities and living conditions in Europe encourages some to choose illegal emigration, particularly when they face travel bans or other barriers to legal migration.

1.4.5 Lack of Governmental Reforms, Democracy, and Trust

The analysis identified a lack of reassurance or meaningful reforms from the Tunisian government as a significant factor driving illegal emigration. Participants express disillusionment with the government's handling of the post-revolution period, with perceived slow progress in terms of democratic transformation and institutional development. This lack of trust in the government's ability to address socioeconomic issues further motivates well-educated Tunisians to seek better prospects outside their home country.

Emad stated, “There is uncertainty, and the people have lost trust in the government.”

Additionally, the context of freedom in Tunisia has not become democratic, due to procedure S17. That pushed many activists to migrate irregularly otherwise they would be arrested by the regime.

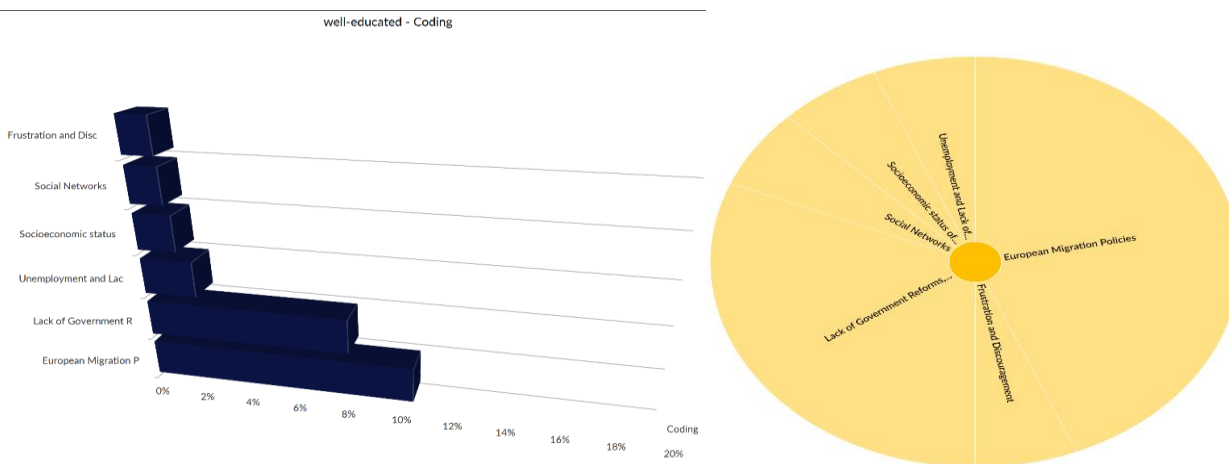
1.4.6 Social Networks

Communication with individuals who have already migrated plays a crucial role in encouraging illegal emigration. Migrants abroad share positive experiences and reassure potential migrants about their basic needs being met in foreign lands. Such communication creates a sense of hope and security, making illegal emigration a more viable option for well-educated Tunisians seeking better living conditions.

“Communication with people who migrated abroad reassures them that their basic needs are met in foreign lands.” (Nasser)

Migrant 2, (Who emigrated irregularly to Germany through Turkish route) mentioned that his friends in Germany encouraged him to emigrate, where he could easily marry and obtain citizenship, as well as work there. He stated that he had a criminal record, so it was not easy to get a job in Tunisia or obtain a work contract in Germany and then travel to it, so he immigrated irregularly to Germany via Turkey. He asserted that it would not have been easy for him to do so without the help of his friends and relatives who know guaranteed ways to emigrate.

Figure 12 The proportions of the influence of the independent variables on illegal emigration of well-educated individuals



Despite the multiplicity of independent variables that affect the illegal emigration of well-educated individuals mentioned by experts, the relative weights of the impact of these variables are not equal, as some of them affected to a greater extent than others.

According to the frequency rates of mentioning the independent variables in the answers of all the experts, it was found that the variables “the European migration policies” were the most frequent and the most influential on the illegal emigration of the well-educated individuals, followed by “the lack of governmental reforms, democracy, and trust”. the least influential variables were:

unemployment, the socioeconomic status of well-educated individuals, social networks, and Frustration and Discouragement.

Section 2: The Impacts, Evaluation and Solutions

2.1. Impacts of illegal emigration:

The thematic analysis explores the multifaceted impact of irregular emigrants on Tunisia, considering both positive and negative effects. The responses provide valuable insights into the consequences of illegal emigration from Tunisia, including demographic changes, labor shortages, remittances, brain drain, and cultural diversity.

2.1.1. Economic impacts:

- **Population Decline and Labor Shortages:**

Bassam highlights the negative impact of illegal emigration, resulting in population decline in certain regions of Tunisia, as youth choose to migrate, leaving behind an aging population.

“Among the negative effects is the resulting population decline in some regions, such as Tataouine and Medenine in southern Tunisia, where most of the population has become elderly because the youth from those areas have chosen to migrate, either legally or illegally.” (Bassam)

This demographic shift can exacerbate labor shortages, particularly in labor-intensive sectors such as farming and construction. The loss of skilled workers, including farmers and craftsmen, creates significant gaps in the job market for these professions.

“There is also a loss of many skilled individuals, not just brain drain but also migration of skilled workers”. (Bassam)

Aicha agreed with Bassam, she said that illegal emigration affected on certain professions, such as olive harvesting and farming, where a shortage of available workforce becomes apparent. This loss of skilled workers can hinder economic activities in sectors where the state has invested in education and training.

- **Economic Imbalance and Loss of Human Resources:**

Nasser said that, in the long run, illegal emigration can lead to an economic imbalance due to the loss of human resources and labor force. The large number of migrants, while presenting an opportunity for economic development, also poses challenges as these migrants may not contribute through taxes to the state, potentially straining public services and infrastructure.

- **Remittances and Inflow of Hard Currency:**

Despite the negative effects, Bassam pointed out the positive aspect of illegal emigration: emigrants who work abroad send remittances back to their families in Tunisia. These remittances contribute to the Tunisian economy by increasing the availability of hard currency, providing financial support to recipient families, and bolstering local economies.

Nasser also stated, “Migrants will work abroad and send remittances back to their families in Tunisia. This will positively impact the Tunisian economy through the inflow of foreign currency.” (Nasser)

2.1.2. Demographic Changes and Cultural Diversity:

Moncief discussed the social and cultural shocks resulting from illegal emigration, particularly as Tunisia may not be culturally prepared to deal with the influx of African migrants. While irregular migrants help fill labor shortages in certain sectors, their presence can lead to significant cultural diversity and demographic changes. However, Tunisia lacks institutions and efforts to preserve core values, leading to potential social and cultural challenges.

Nasser agreed with that, he stated, “Some job sectors experience a labor shortage ... where African migrants from sub-Saharan regions fill in the gaps.” (Nasser)

He also said that intermarriage between Tunisian migrants and foreigners will lead to demographic changes in the society which Moncief described as a cultural shock.

“We are facing more social and cultural shocks in Tunisia due to illegal emigration since we are not culturally prepared to deal with this diversity”. (Moncief)

Additionally, Aicha pointed out that illegal emigration will lead to an increase in the spinsterhood rate. She stated, “In the long run, there may be several social effects, like an increase in the percentage of unmarried individuals, villages becoming male-less, and demographic shifts in Tunisia, which will increase with the rise of illegal emigration.”

2.1.3. The impact on bilateral relations

Aicha acknowledged that there are economic partnerships between Tunisia and the European Union. Illegal emigration is a significant factor influencing bilateral relations between Tunisia and the EU. Europe has dictated measures to Tunisia to prevent illegal emigration, and Tunisia complies with these measures to maintain harmonious positions with the European Union.

She stated, “Europe provides many dictates to Tunisia to prevent migration and halt the flow, and Tunisia complies with these dictates.”

2.2. Evaluating the government and the EU migration policies

2.2.1. Evaluating the current governmental policies

The interviewees mentioned some of the governmental programs to combat illegal emigration. For instance, Amina highlights **initiatives to combat illegal emigration that focus on vulnerable groups**, particularly victims of trafficking. The National Commission to Combat Trafficking in Persons is an example of a specific initiative that aims to protect and support individuals who have fallen victim to trafficking, either during their migration journey or after their arrival. Such

initiatives address the vulnerabilities faced by migrants and underscore the importance of providing specialized support to those in need.

Expanding and strengthening initiatives targeted at vulnerable groups is crucial in ensuring their safety and well-being. This could involve enhancing victim identification and protection mechanisms, providing access to legal assistance and support services, and promoting awareness among potential migrants about the risks of trafficking and exploitation. By prioritizing the protection of vulnerable migrants, Tunisia can demonstrate its commitment to human rights and dignity in migration management.

Bassam Added that there is a national mechanism called 'Tunisna,' which is a strategy for reintegrating irregular and regular Tunisian migrants returning from abroad.

Mihar also mentioned that there are programs implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the International Organization for Migration to combat illegal emigration among youth and children. The "Hilm-dream" program and the Child Protection Office are examples of initiatives aimed at providing support to youth and children who are at risk of or have attempted illegal emigration. These programs recognize the unique vulnerabilities of young migrants and the importance of providing tailored assistance to address their specific needs.

By investing in similar programs that support youth and children, Tunisia can empower the next generation and provide them with viable alternatives to illegal emigration. This could involve offering educational and vocational training opportunities, creating safe spaces for dialogue and engagement, and providing mentorship and guidance for young people. Supporting youth and children can foster a sense of hope and optimism for their future in Tunisia, reducing the appeal of illegal emigration.

- **Insufficiency of Security Policies: (Security-centric approach)**

Nasser and Emad criticized the current policies for being overly reliant on a security-centric approach to illegal emigration. This means that the primary focus is on strengthening border security and implementing measures to deter illegal emigration. While security is undoubtedly an important aspect, solely emphasizing this approach may not effectively address the underlying root causes of migration. A security-centric approach may also be seen as reactive, responding to the symptoms of illegal emigration rather than addressing the drivers that push individuals to migrate irregularly in the first place.

“It is merely a pure security approach, and some might boast about being content with it.”

(Nasser)

“The security approach is not a solution to address the phenomenon; it has led to an increase in the crisis.” (Emad)

Bassam pointed out that security policies alone are insufficient to address illegal emigration effectively. While strengthening border security and implementing security frameworks may reduce illegal emigration, they do not address the underlying reasons that push people to migrate

irregularly. A comprehensive approach is necessary, taking into account the socio-economic factors contributing to migration.

“Security policies are not sufficient to address illegal emigration because they do not provide solutions.” (Bassam)

In this regard, he mentioned that the official narratives are not true regarding illegal emigration and the effectiveness of the security procedures. He stated, “They might claim that the numbers have decreased due to border tightening to secure more funding from donor countries, but that is not true.”

To complement the security approach, Tunisia needs to adopt a more comprehensive strategy that considers the socio-economic factors contributing to illegal emigration. This could involve creating employment opportunities, promoting economic development in marginalized regions, and investing in education and skill development to address unemployment and lack of prospects. By adopting a more balanced approach that combines security measures with efforts to address the socio-economic root causes of migration, Tunisia can develop a more sustainable and effective response to illegal emigration.

- **Insufficiency of Initiatives:**

Building on the critique of a security-centric approach, Nasser further highlighted that the current initiatives to address illegal emigration are insufficient. While some sectoral programs, such as microloans and project support (da3m-عم-د), aim to tackle unemployment, they do not adequately address the complexities of illegal emigration. These initiatives may offer short-term solutions to specific economic challenges, but they may not effectively address the broader issues driving illegal emigration.

“There are other programs trying to directly tackle the root causes of migration, However, these policies are not enough and are not the solution.” (Nasser)

Tunisia needs to develop initiatives that are more targeted and comprehensive in addressing the underlying push factors for illegal emigration. This could involve implementing programs that support economic development in vulnerable regions, provide vocational training and skill-building opportunities, and create an enabling environment for entrepreneurship and innovation. Additionally, initiatives should focus on raising awareness about the risks and dangers of illegal emigration, providing potential migrants with accurate information, and offering alternatives to irregular pathways.

- **The Absence of a Unified National Strategy**

The third criticism is the absence of a unified national strategy for addressing illegal emigration from Tunisia. Bassam emphasized that while there are several sectoral strategies and initiatives related to migration, there is a lack of cohesion and coordination among them. This fragmentation of efforts results in a disjointed approach to managing illegal emigration, making it challenging to provide comprehensive solutions. The absence of a unified strategy indicates a need for a more

holistic and integrated approach that takes into account the various aspects of illegal emigration, including its root causes, prevention, and reintegration of returnees.

“There is no national policy for illegal emigration; there is a national strategy to combat illegal emigration that was prepared in 2015. However, it has not been officially adopted by the government..... in 2019, the government prepared a new strategy to combat illegal emigration, but it also has not been adopted.” (Bassam)

A unified national strategy would provide a coherent roadmap for addressing the complexities of illegal emigration and align the efforts of different government agencies and stakeholders involved in managing migration. Such a strategy could include comprehensive measures to tackle the socio-economic factors that drive illegal emigration, enhance border management, combat human trafficking, and support the reintegration of returning migrants. By bringing together various institutions and organizations working on migration-related issues, Tunisia could better leverage its resources and expertise to address illegal emigration effectively.

- **Inconsistency in Managing Illegal emigration**

The Participants highlighted the significance of illegal emigration as an important issue for the Tunisian state. However, they also pointed out an inconsistency in the management of this issue. The lack of a unified and coordinated approach to illegal emigration is evident in Tunisia's governance. The responsibility for managing the migration file is divided between two ministries: The Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigration. This division leads to fragmented efforts and a lack of cohesion in addressing illegal emigration effectively. In practice, it is the Ministry of Social Affairs that predominantly manages the migration file, rather than the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This further reinforces the lack of a coherent strategy for dealing with illegal emigration.

The issue of illegal emigration is complex and multifaceted, involving socio-economic, security, and human rights dimensions. The division of responsibilities between ministries might lead to a focus on specific aspects of migration management while neglecting others, potentially resulting in an inadequate response to the challenges posed by illegal emigration.

“There is no real reformist vision, and even if it exists on paper, there are no real mechanisms to implement that vision.” (Moncief)

- **Dependency on Foreign Funding:**

Moncief highlighted that some of Tunisia's migration policies are subordinated to foreign funding and influenced by the global market. He stated, “The policies followed in Tunisia to deal with the migration issue are subordinated and not national policies; they are subject to foreign funding and the global market.”

This dependency on external support may limit Tunisia's autonomy in developing and implementing migration strategies that align with its unique context and needs. It may also subject

Tunisia's policies to external pressures, which could impact the effectiveness and sustainability of these initiatives.

“Tackling these problems requires substantial funding beyond the capabilities of the Tunisian government.But, borrowing is not the solution. we need to get rid of dependency policies.” (Moncief)

To address this challenge, Tunisia needs to strike a balance between cooperating with international entities and retaining its autonomy in shaping migration policies. While external collaboration can bring valuable resources and expertise, Tunisia should prioritize the development of autonomous and sustainable strategies to tackle illegal emigration. This may involve diversifying funding sources and seeking international cooperation based on shared objectives rather than relying solely on foreign funding.

- **Limited Capacity and Resources:**

Aicha acknowledged the efforts made by the Tunisian government to combat illegal emigration but highlights the overwhelming nature of the challenge. The influx of migrants not only from Tunisia but also from Libya and other African countries often exceeds the state's capacity to handle the situation effectively. This strain on resources, both financial and human, poses a significant obstacle to adequately managing illegal emigration.

To address this limitation, Tunisia may need to seek support from international partners, regional organizations, and humanitarian agencies to manage the flow of irregular migrants effectively. International cooperation can help alleviate the burden on Tunisia's resources and enhance its capacity to provide essential services, protection, and support to migrants, particularly vulnerable groups. Collaboration with international entities can also facilitate the sharing of best practices and expertise in migration management.

2.2.2. Evaluating the European policies:

- **Restrict the right to Migrate as a Fundamental Human Right:**

Bassam pointed out that the right to migrate is a fundamental human right applicable to all individuals. He argues that individuals have the right to move from one country to another, just as Europeans have the right to enter other countries. Restrictive migration policies and border controls, such as the Schengen system, contribute to illegal emigration by limiting access to regular migration channels for individuals from southern countries.

“When comparing migration before and after the Schengen system, we can observe that before Schengen, there was no illegal emigration because borders were open.” (Bassam)

In this regard, Emad, Nasser, and Samir believed that as long as the visa system exists, illegal emigration will persist. The visa system restricts legal migration opportunities, leading some individuals to resort to irregular channels to seek better prospects abroad. They suggest that rethinking the visa system is essential to address illegal emigration more effectively.

“Just as Europeans have the right to enter our countries, we also have the right to enter theirs.”
(Emad)

- **Responsibility of European Countries:**

According to Bassam, European countries bear responsibility for some of the conflicts and crises in Sub-Saharan African countries, which push people to migrate irregularly.

“European countries are responsible for many wars in Sub-Saharan African countries, leading to crises.....the war in Mali and Chad caused by France to seize diamond reserves and other natural resources in these countries.....the war and instability in Libya are caused by several European countries.” (Bassam)

He highlighted the role of European countries in causing wars and instability in various regions and argues that they should support the economies of southern countries to enable individuals to choose to stay in their home countries.

“European countries must support economies in the southern countries so that individuals choose to stay in their countries rather than attempting to reach Europe.” (Bassam)

2.3. Solutions

The responses from various speakers highlight several potential solutions to reduce illegal emigration from Tunisia. These solutions encompass multiple dimensions, including comprehensive national strategies, international agreements, economic development, political stability, visa regulations, and addressing the structural causes of migration.

2.3.1. Solutions that could be implemented by the government

- **Alternatives to Security Approach:**

Emad advocated for exploring alternatives to the security-centric approach in addressing illegal emigration. He suggested that recognizing freedom of movement as a fundamental human right, protected by international agreements, could offer a more rights-based and inclusive approach to migration management. Emphasizing the rights of individuals to move freely could shift the focus from solely deterring illegal emigration to addressing the socio-economic factors that push people to migrate irregularly.

A more rights-based approach would entail providing regular and safe migration pathways for individuals seeking opportunities abroad, while also addressing the root causes of illegal emigration. This could involve creating legal channels for labor migration, family reunification, and study abroad programs, among others. By embracing a more rights-based perspective, Tunisia can strive for a migration system that respects human rights, fosters socio-economic development, and offers viable alternatives to illegal emigration.

- **Comprehensive National Strategy:**

The participants argued that a comprehensive approach to migration management that goes beyond a singular sectoral perspective is necessary to effectively combat illegal emigration.

Their suggestion of a comprehensive national strategy is crucial to address illegal emigration effectively. By consolidating all sectoral approaches and involving various national and international organizations, Tunisia can develop a unified and coordinated response to migration. Such a strategy would encompass economic, social, political, and other aspects of migration management, recognizing that illegal emigration is a complex and multi-faceted issue. This holistic view would go beyond a singular security-focused perspective and focus on addressing the root causes of migration while providing adequate support and protection to vulnerable migrants.

“Migration is a multidimensional issue encompassing economic, social, political, and other aspects. Therefore, a comprehensive view of the file is necessary, not just a singular sectoral perspective.” (Bassam)

“Due to the multiple causes, the solutions must consider all of them, and the approach should be comprehensive.” (Aicha)

- **Reintegration programs for unsuccessful irregular migrants**

Implementing reintegration programs for unsuccessful irregular migrants would also discourage future attempts at illegal emigration and provide alternatives for those returning to Tunisia.

Nasser stated, "Additionally, implementing reintegration programs for unsuccessful irregular migrants, offering opportunities like projects, could gradually reduce migration rates, as these migrants are less likely to attempt migration again.”

- **Addressing Structural Causes:**

Generating job opportunities and addressing price issues, especially in the informal economy, can contribute to reducing migration rates.

Moncief suggested focusing on real initiatives and addressing the informal economy which is essential in reducing illegal emigration. Creating new job opportunities and generating economic dynamics can empower citizens and reduce the allure of illegal emigration.

“There are alternatives such as creating new dynamics, generating job opportunities, and monitoring prices, as the state cannot raise wages.” (Moncief)

A fair tax policy and emphasis on the rule of law contribute to a stable economic environment, enhancing confidence among the populace and curbing migration based on economic desperation. Moncief stated, “A fair tax policy is required, as certain categories, like doctors and lawyers, have lobbies that prevent the imposition of fair taxes on them compared to other groups.”

Additionally, the government's efforts to provide social care and improve economic conditions can address some of the underlying factors that drive people to migrate irregularly. By addressing these structural factors, Tunisia can create a more favorable environment for its citizens, encouraging them to stay and contribute to the country's development. The participants also argued that political stability, both internally and externally, can contribute to finding solutions to illegal emigration.

- **Migration Law and Regulatory Structures:**

Amina pointed out that there is a need for a migration law and enhancing regulatory structures to manage migration. Having clear guidelines and regulations can help address illegal emigration more effectively by providing a legal pathway for migration and ensuring the protection of migrants' rights. Creating new structures, such as a National Commission to combat illegal emigration, can enhance coordination and support in managing migration issues, allowing for a more efficient response to illegal emigration challenges.

- **Education as a Catalyst for Change:**

Education has a crucial role in transforming the perception of success and promoting human dignity. The participants pointed out that the current educational system needs reform to stimulate human creativity and instill a sense of self-efficacy in individuals. By empowering students with the belief in their own abilities to succeed in their local context, they may be less likely to view illegal emigration as an easy way to achieve success or seek quick gains. Education can provide individuals with the necessary skills, knowledge, and confidence to explore new opportunities, change their field of study or work, and adapt to evolving socio-economic conditions in Tunisia. Fostering a culture of self-efficacy and resilience through education can discourage reliance on illegal emigration as a perceived shortcut to improved living standards.

- **Tailored and Early Awareness Initiatives:**

The participants emphasized the importance of awareness initiatives that are tailored to specific groups and initiated at an early age, preferably starting from school. These awareness programs should be designed with a solid foundation, considering the diverse needs and challenges faced by different segments of the population.

A one-size-fits-all approach may not effectively address the unique drivers and motivations behind illegal emigration for each group. Early awareness can help instill a sense of responsibility, understanding, and critical thinking in young minds, making them more conscious of the consequences and risks associated with illegal emigration. By targeting different demographic groups, such as youth, parents, and communities, with specific messages, these tailored awareness campaigns can help individuals make informed decisions about their future and contribute to reducing the allure of illegal emigration.

2.3.2. Solutions that could be implemented by the international parties

- **International cooperation and Development Support:**

The participants suggested engaging in international efforts, such as international agreements, to organize international migration. They argue that this can improve bilateral relations, and introduce other aspects beyond security.

For instance, Nasser's pointed out that international efforts and agreements to organize migration are significant in promoting regular and safe migration pathways. By formalizing migration processes, such agreements can improve bilateral relations, create balanced negotiations, and offer more opportunities for legal migration.

Aicha stated, "The solution is not solely in Tunisia's hands because the problem is regional involving the European Union and Mediterranean countries like Libya, Tunisia, and Morocco."

She pointed out that illegal emigration is a regional issue that's why there is a need for cooperation and joint solutions among Mediterranean countries and the European Union. By working together to address migration challenges, these countries can share responsibilities and resources, ultimately leading to more effective and coordinated efforts in managing illegal emigration. Regional cooperation can also help address issues related to human trafficking and smuggling networks, as well as the shared socio-economic challenges that contribute to illegal emigration.

Moreover, there is a need to consolidate the efforts of all international organizations because there are many financial resources being used to implement the same projects in Tunisia. Therefore, the efforts of these organizations should be unified.

Additionally, the participants argued that European countries should support the development, of the economy, and stability in Tunisia through international cooperation that can address the structural causes of migration, offering citizens better prospects at home and reducing the push factors for illegal emigration.

Negotiating with European countries for joint solutions demonstrates the importance of collaboration in managing migration challenges and seeking mutually beneficial outcomes.

"The government should negotiate with Europe from a position of strength and find joint solutions." (Emad)

In my opinion, this solution is crucial to reduce the illegal emigration rates and to address some of its causes. Additionally, it has many pros such as: providing structured and legal pathways for individuals to migrate through the international agreements that aim to organize the migration. Also, International cooperation allows for balanced negotiations between countries of origin and destination. This can lead to agreements that consider the interests of both parties, ensuring fair treatment of migrants and better labor market opportunities. Additionally, Collaborative approaches acknowledge that irregular migration is a multifaceted issue that requires joint efforts. Sharing responsibilities among Mediterranean countries and the European Union can lead to more

effective management of migration flows. Unifying the efforts of various international organizations working in Tunisia can prevent duplication of projects and optimize the allocation of resources. This enhances the impact of interventions aimed at addressing migration challenges. I think that Developing initiatives supported by international cooperation can offer Tunisian citizens better prospects at home, reducing the economic and social pressures that drive them to consider irregular migration.

On the other hand, this solution has some cons. In many cases, negotiating international agreements and cooperation took a lot of time, and it's a complex process as it involves multiple stakeholders with varying interests which may be conflicting. Sometimes the immigration policies contradict with the state sovereignty. Additionally, the level of commitment and contribution from different countries can vary, potentially leading to imbalances in the distribution of responsibilities and resources. It is worth noting that migration issues are often intertwined with domestic politics of the European countries specially after the rise of far-right parties across Europe, and international cooperation can be influenced by political changes and priorities. In addition, receiving countries might prioritize their own economic and political interests over the development needs of sending countries, potentially leading to imbalanced agreements.

- **Cancelation of Visas:**

Emad suggested cancelling visas which can help individuals understand the reality of life in Europe and potentially deter some from attempting illegal emigration. By providing citizens with opportunities to experience life in Europe legally and safely, they may gain a more realistic understanding of the challenges and opportunities present.

“We believe that the solution lies in removing visas. When we talk to families we assist, they say the situation was not as they thought. Europe should cancel visas, and people will realize the reality of life there and understand the necessity of returning to Tunisia.” (Emad)

While Amina suggested that increasing the number of visas allocated for Tunisians by the European Union can help in solving the problem.

I disagree with this solution, also, may not be a sustainable long-term solution. It might only offer a temporary pause in irregular migration without effectively addressing the root causes that drive people to leave their home countries. Also, it's unrealistic or inapplicable for many reasons. First, it would limit the ability to regulate and control the movement of people. Second, cancelling visas without careful planning could place a significant burden on European Union (EU) member countries. They would have to deal with an influx of individuals seeking temporary experiences without a clear plan for their stay or reintegration back into their home countries.

Third, Large numbers of people moving temporarily to Europe without a well-defined purpose or job prospects could strain social services and infrastructure. It might lead to resentment from local communities and create social tensions. Additionally, implementing such a policy would involve significant logistical challenges, including setting up mechanisms for temporary stays, ensuring security and public order, and addressing issues related to healthcare, employment, and social

integration. Forth, such a move could strain diplomatic relations between Tunisia and the EU. It might be perceived as an attempt to offload the responsibility of managing migration onto the EU, potentially leading to tensions and strained cooperation on other issues.

Conclusion and Recommendation

1. Key findings:

Through the statistical and thematic analysis, the study found that there are several factors that contribute to the increase in illegal emigration of Tunisians. The results of the regression test were that the factors that affected the rate of illegal emigration are inflation, political stability and the absence of violence, and government ineffectiveness. While the result of the thematic analysis was that the factors include: the impact of COVID-19, security measures, border controls, political and economic deterioration, human trafficking and migrant smuggling networks, social phenomena, social stigma and marginalization, visa restrictions, economic opportunities and seeking hope, social media influence, employment opportunities and criminal records, geographical location, and shifts in work culture and aspirations. It's worth noting that according to the rates of frequency of mentioning the independent variables in the answers of all the experts, the variable of economic opportunities was the most frequent and the most influential on the increase in illegal emigration rates in Tunisia starting from 2020, followed by the role of social media and Covid-19 crisis, The least influential variables were the spread of migrant smuggling networks that facilitated the illegal emigration process for individuals, and the geographical location of Tunisia, which made it close to Europe.

The demographic profile of irregular migrants in Tunisia has undergone a significant shift, with individuals from all categories, including highly educated individuals, women, minors, and families, now participating in illegal emigration. This study tried to provide a detailed explanation of the various factors contributing to the increase in illegal emigration from Tunisia, and the shift in the demographic profile of the irregular migrants.

Through thematic analysis, the study found that:

- Tunisian women are increasingly choosing to emigrate irregularly due to a combination of economic and social factors. The evolution of women's status and roles in Tunisian society has led to increased independence, which in turn has influenced their decision to migrate irregularly. Societal perception and gender inequality also play a role, as women may face limited opportunities and discrimination in their home country. The idealization of migration, cultural perceptions, and stereotypes further contribute to the decision of Tunisian women to emigrate irregularly. Additionally, the role of the Tunisian government in shaping migration policies and opportunities for women cannot be overlooked. It is worth noting that according to the frequency rates of mentioning the independent variables in the answers of all the experts, the variable “the evolution of women’s status in society and their roles” was the most frequent and the most influential on the illegal emigration of women, followed by “disillusionment with political promises and lack of reform”. The least influential variables were the prevalence of violence and the policies of the Tunisian government.

- Unaccompanied minors in Tunisia are also prone to illegal emigration due to a variety of factors. Economic and political instability, as well as the influence of their environment, consciousness, and returning migrants, contribute to their decision to migrate irregularly. Social norms and peer pressure also play a significant role, as minors may feel compelled to follow the path of their peers. The role of social media in shaping their perceptions of migration cannot be underestimated. Family involvement in illegal emigration, deterioration of education, independence, and decision-making of minors, as well as geographical location and proximity to Europe, further contribute to their decision to emigrate irregularly. However, the variables “Environment, Consciousness, and Returning Migrants” were the most frequent and the most influential on the illegal emigration of unaccompanied minors, followed by “family involvement in illegal emigration”. The least influential variable was the social media.
- Families in Tunisia often choose to emigrate irregularly as a means to secure a better future for their children and improve their circumstances amid economic disparities. Psychological factors, disillusionment, broken promises, and family migration as a social reaction all contribute to their decision to migrate irregularly. Economic factors and financial investment in migration also play a significant role. Intellectual liberation within families allows them to consider migration as a viable option for their children's prosperity. Collective factors, such as familiarity with immigration laws and policies in European countries, as well as regional factors like conflicts in neighboring Libya and the involvement of non-Tunisian smugglers, further facilitate illegal emigration for families. However, the variables “economic factors and financial investment in migration” were the most frequent and the most influential on the illegal emigration of the Tunisian families, followed by “the psychological factors”, and the least influential variables were: family migration as a social reaction, fishing background, collective influence and social transformations.
- Well-educated individuals choose illegal emigration due to limited job opportunities and high unemployment rates in Tunisia. European migration policies, particularly strict entry visa regulations, have made regular migration difficult, leading to an increase in illegal emigration. Moreover, the socioeconomic status of well-educated individuals in Tunisia compared to Europe plays a role in their decision to migrate irregularly. The lack of reassurance or meaningful reforms from the Tunisian government also drives illegal emigration. Communication with migrants abroad is another significant factor that encourages illegal emigration. However, the variables “the European migration policies” were the most frequent and the most influential on the illegal emigration of the well-educated individuals, followed by “the lack of governmental reforms, democracy, and trust”. The least influential variables were: unemployment, the socioeconomic status of well-educated individuals, social networks, and Frustration and Discouragement.

Additionally, the study concluded that there is a dual impact of irregular emigrants on the Tunisian economy. On the positive side, remittances sent by emigrants serve as a vital source of hard

currency, supporting families and local economies. Moreover, successful emigrants can act as ambassadors, promoting Tunisia through their activities and expertise abroad.

Conversely, illegal emigration poses several challenges to the Tunisian economy. The loss of skilled workers and a declining workforce in certain professions can hinder economic growth. Demographic changes and cultural diversity, while potentially enriching society, may also lead to social and cultural shocks, as Tunisia lacks institutions to maintain stability and preserve core values. Additionally, the strain on public services and infrastructure due to a large number of migrants who may not contribute through taxes can lead to economic imbalances. Furthermore, population decline in certain regions may exacerbate labor shortages and impact the economy at the local level.

The Tunisian government's policies to combat illegal emigration have been criticized for their heavy reliance on a security-centric approach and the lack of a unified national strategy. To address this issue, potential solutions include recognizing freedom of movement as a fundamental human right, developing a comprehensive national strategy, engaging in international cooperation and development support, addressing structural causes, implementing reintegration programs, and improving education and awareness initiatives. European countries also bear responsibility for some of the conflicts and crises in Sub-Saharan African countries that push people to migrate irregularly, highlighting the need for international cooperation in addressing illegal emigration.

2. Comparison with the previous literatures:

The literatures I've reviewed in the introduction focuses on various determinants of illegal emigration and provides an overview of the factors that have been discussed in previous studies. It categorizes these determinants into three groups: national and international determinants, personal determinants, and community and household determinants. Additionally, it highlights the significance of factors such as political instability, violence, economic conditions, migration policies, human rights violations, gender, age, social networks, and economic opportunities in influencing migration decisions. It emphasizes that these determinants can vary in their impact depending on the context and individual circumstances.

On the other hand, key findings of this study provide insights specific to the case of illegal emigration from Tunisia. The study utilizes statistical and thematic analysis to identify the factors contributing to the increase in illegal emigration. The results indicate that inflation, political stability and the absence of violence, government ineffectiveness, COVID-19 impact, security measures, border controls, and economic deterioration are among the factors affecting the decision to emigrate irregularly.

Furthermore, this study delves into the demographic shift of irregular migrants in Tunisia, encompassing highly educated individuals, women, minors, and families. It specifically explores how each of these groups is influenced by various determinants, such as economic factors, social norms, psychological aspects, and communication with migrants abroad.

While the previous literature provides a comprehensive overview of general determinants of illegal migration, the key findings of this study offer a more in-depth and context-specific understanding of the factors influencing illegal emigration from Tunisia. It analyzes these factors within the Tunisian context and draws on statistical and thematic analysis to highlight the most influential variables and their specific impacts. This depth of analysis allows this study to offer actionable recommendations tailored to the Tunisian situation, including solutions for the Tunisian government and international cooperation.

3. Recommendations:

I agree with the experts on the importance of developing and implementing a comprehensive national strategy that addresses the root causes of illegal emigration. This strategy should encompass economic development, social inclusion, job creation, and education reform to provide viable alternatives to migration.

In addition, I recommend focusing on restoring trust in the government to address the state of frustration that afflicted many citizens as a result of government policies and the absence of real reform. It could be achieved by enhancing transparency and accountability, and applying effective governance and responsive policies that can mitigate disillusionment that leads to illegal emigration. Also, the government should Focus on creating economic opportunities, particularly for youth and well-educated individuals, through targeted investment in sectors with high growth potential. Encourage entrepreneurship, vocational training, and skill development to improve employment prospects.

To mitigate reasons for illegal emigration among Tunisian women, the government in cooperation with civil society can implement policies and programs that promote gender equality and empower women in society. In addition to providing equal access to education, economic opportunities, and social support. Also, I recommend Strengthening social safety systems to support vulnerable populations, including families and unaccompanied minors. Providing financial assistance, educational support, and mental health services can reduce the incentive for illegal emigration.

For further research I recommend the following:

1. Conducting study that aim to investigate in-depth the psychosocial factors and their influence on the decision to emigrate irregularly.
2. Investigating the role of institutions in shaping migration decisions, including educational institutions, governmental bodies and community organizations, and how their policies can either discourage or promote illegal emigration.
3. Conducting study on the potential connection between climate change, environmental factors, and illegal emigration, particularly in regions affected by environmental degradation and resource scarcity such as Kairouan.
4. Conducting longitudinal study to assess the long-term impact of illegal emigration on both sending and receiving communities, including economic, social, and cultural repercussions.

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Appendices

1. list of experts (for the pre- test)

No.	Name	Position
1.	Dr. Hajer Gueldich	Law professor at Carthage University (the supervisor) - Tunisia
2.	Dr. Mounir Saidani	Researcher at the Center for economic and social studies and research - Tunisia
3.	Dr. Ayman Zohry	Migration professor at AUC and Cairo University - Egypt
4.	Mr. Khaled El-Nakkady	Head of migration unit at the national committee for combating illegal migration and human trafficking - Egypt
5.	Mr. Hazem Mizyed	Child protection officer at USJ- Lebanon

2. interview guide for experts

Dear participant,

I am conducting a study entitled “**Determinations of illegal emigration transformations of Tunisians**”, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master’s degree. To achieve the research goals, I designed an interview guide to figure out the reasons why there have been transformations and an increase in the rates of illegal migration in Tunisia. Previously, all illegal migrants were unemployed and marginalized male youth, but now Tunisia is witnessing the migration of families, women as well as unaccompanied children at increasing unprecedented rates, and it is no longer limited to the migration of those with technical education, but rather included the migration of university graduates. The study will only include Tunisians nationals.

Therefore, I would like to invite you to participate in my study by conducting an interview that may last for one hour. In this interview, some questions related to the phenomenon will be asked.

Your contribution to this study is highly valuable and appreciated as it will offer me the insights needed to further deepen understanding of the phenomena.

I would like to point out that that the interview will be recorded, but the records will be destroyed once the transcription is done, and it will only be used for this study.

With sincere thanks and appreciation for your kind contribution.

عزيزي المشارك،

تقوم الباحثة بإجراء دراسة بعنوان "محددات تحولات الهجرة غير الشرعية للتونسيين"، وذلك ضمن إجراءات رسالة الماجستير. ولتحقيق أهداف الدراسة تم تصميم استمارة مقابلة للوقوف على أسباب حدوث تحولات في ظاهرة الهجرة- بعد أن كانت ذكورية وتشمل العاطلين والأقل تعليمًا، أصبحت تتضمن المرأة، الطفل غير المصحوب، الأسرة، وذوي التعليم المرتفع- بالإضافة إلى زيادة معدلات الهجرة غير الشرعية بمعدلات غير مسبوق في تونس. وتتمثل عينة الدراسة في حاملي الجنسية التونسية فقط باعتبارهم حالة الدراسة. لذا، أود دعوتك للمشاركة في دراستي حول أسباب تحولات الهجرة غير الشرعية للتونسيين، عبر إجراء مقابلة تستغرق ساعة واحدة فقط، سيتم فيها طرح بعض الأسئلة المتعلقة بالظاهرة.

مشاركتك ذات أهمية كبيرة لأنها ستقدم للباحثة الرؤى اللازمة لفهم الظاهرة بشكل معمق.

أود التنويه إلى أنه سيتم تسجيل المقابلة لكن سيتم التخلص من التسجيلات فور الانتهاء من تفرغ محتواها، ولن يتم استعمالها إلا في هذه الدراسة.

A. Reasons:

1. In your opinion, what are the primary reasons why Tunisian women tend to emigrate irregularly? في رأيك ما هي الأسباب الرئيسية التي تدفع المرأة التونسية للهجرة بشكل غير نظامي؟
2. What are some of the factors that make unaccompanied minors more likely to emigrate irregularly? ما هي الأسباب التي تجعل الأطفال يهاجرون بشكل غير نظامي، وبمفردهم؟
3. How do family dynamics play a role in the decision for families to emigrate irregularly? كيف تلعب ديناميات الأسرة دورًا في اتخاذ قرار الهجرة غير النظامية؟ من يكون صاحب القرار؟
4. Are there any specific socioeconomic factors that contribute to the trend of illegal emigration among well-educated Tunisians? هل توجد أسباب اجتماعية أو اقتصادية محددة تساهم في انتشار ظاهرة الهجرة غير النظامية بين التوانسة المتعلمين تعليماً عالياً؟
5. How does the political, social and political situation in Tunisia impact the decision for people to emigrate irregularly? كيف يؤثر الوضع السياسي والاجتماعي والاقتصادي في تونس على قرار الأفراد بالهجرة غير النظامية؟
6. Are there any cultural or religious factors that may influence the decision for Tunisians to emigrate irregularly? هل توجد أي عوامل ثقافية أو دينية تؤثر على قرار التوانسة بالهجرة غير النظامية؟
7. What role do economic opportunities (or lack thereof) play in decisions to emigrate irregularly? ما الدور الذي تلعبه الفرص الاقتصادية (أو نقصها) في اتخاذ قرار الهجرة غير النظامية؟

B. the impacts of illegal emigration:

13. How do irregular emigrants impact the Tunisian economy (both positively and negatively)? كيف يؤثر المهاجرون غير النظاميون على الاقتصاد التونسي، بالسلب والإيجاب؟
14. What are some of the long-term consequences of illegal emigration for Tunisians? ما هي الآثار بعيدة المدى المترتبة على هجرة التوانسة بشكل غير نظامي؟
15. How does the international community view illegal emigration from Tunisia? What are the procedures they took to deal with this issue? How does it impact the bilateral relations? كيف يقيم المجتمع الدولي وبخاصة الأوروبي الهجرة غير النظامية من تونس؟ ما الإجراءات التي يتخذونها للتعامل مع هذه القضية؟ وكيف أثرت على العلاقات المتبادلة مع تونس؟

C. Solutions:

16. Are there any government policies or initiatives aimed at reducing illegal emigration from Tunisia? What are they? Are they enough and effective? هل توجد أي سياسات حكومية أو مبادرات تهدف إلى تقليل الهجرة غير النظامية من تونس؟ وما هي؟ وهل هي كافية وفعالة في رأيك؟
17. What are some of the potential solutions to reduce illegal emigration from Tunisia? في رأيك ما هي الحلول المحتملة أن تؤدي إلى تراجع الهجرة غير النظامية من تونس؟

18. What role can education and awareness play in reducing illegal emigration from Tunisia? ما الدور الذي يمكن أن يلعبه التعليم والتوعية في تراجع الهجرة غير النظامية من تونس؟

19. How can the Tunisian government effectively address the root causes of illegal emigration? كيف يمكن للحكومة أن تعالج الأسباب الحقيقية للهجرة غير النظامية؟

20. What measures can be taken by international organizations to address the root causes of irregular migration? ما هي الإجراءات التي يمكن أن تتخذها المنظمات الدولية لمعالجة الأسباب الحقيقية للهجرة غير النظامية؟

3. interview guide for migrants

Interview Consent Form

Research title: Determinations of illegal emigration transformations of Tunisians/ Analysis of the transformations of Tunisian illegal emigration

As part of a study conducted by me, a student in the Arab Master's for Democracy and Human Rights Program, at the Faculty of Law and Political Science of the Université Saint Joseph, Lebanon, and the Faculty of Law and political science in Carthage University, Tunisia, I would like to invite you to participate in my study on the Determinations of illegal emigration transformations of Tunisians.

Through this study, I aim to better understand the reasons why there have been transformations and an increase in the rates of illegal migration in Tunisia?

Your contribution to this study is highly valuable and appreciated as it will offer me the insights needed to further deepen understanding of the phenomena.

The interview will take (one hour). I do not expect any risks associated with your participation, but you have the right to stop the interview or withdraw from the research at any time.

Ethical procedures for academic research require that interviewees explicitly agree to being interviewed and how the information contained in their interview will be used.

This consent form is necessary to ensure that you understand the purpose of your involvement and to showcase your agreement to do this interview/process

Would you therefore read the following:

- the interview will be recorded and a transcript will be produced, but your name will not be mentioned in any part of my research.
- the transcript of the interview will be analysed by me (the researcher).
- the actual recording will be destroyed.
- All the content of your interview will be used in my thesis which may be published.

By signing this form (by the first letters only) I agree that;

1. I am voluntarily taking part in this research. I understand that I can stop the interview at any time;
2. The transcribed interview may be used as described above;
3. I don't expect to receive any benefit or payment for my participation;
4. I have been able to ask any questions I might have,

Participants Signature/

parents Signature on behalf of their children

Date

Thank you for being a part of my study

نموذج الموافقة على إجراء المقابلة

عنوان البحث: أسباب تحولات الهجرة غير الشرعية للتونسيين

مُجري المقابلة:

اسم المشارك في البحث (الحروف الأولى فقط، أو الأسم الأول):

كجزء من الدراسة التي تجريها الباحثة في برنامج الماجستير العربي للديمقراطية وحقوق الإنسان، في معهد العلوم السياسية في جامعة القديس يوسف ببلنات، وكلية الحقوق والعلوم السياسية في جامعة قرطاج بتونس، أود دعوتك للمشاركة في دراستي حول أسباب تحولات الهجرة غير الشرعية للتونسيين.

تهدف الدراسة إلى فهم أسباب تغيير الفئات المهاجرة بشكل غير نظامي وكذلك وزيادة معدلات الهجرة من تونس بشكل أفضل؟

مشاركتك في هذه الدراسة ذات أهمية كبيرة لأنها ستقدم للباحثة الرؤى اللازمة لفهم الظاهرة بشكل معمق.

ستستغرق المقابلة (ساعة واحدة). لا أتوقع أي مخاطر مرتبطة بمشاركتك، ولكن لديك الحق في إيقاف المقابلة أو الانسحاب من البحث في أي وقت.

لاعتبرات أخلاقيات البحث العلمي، أطلب منك الموافقة على إجراء المقابلة معك، وعلى استخدام المعلومات الواردة فيها في بحثي.

بتوقيعك على استمارة الموافقة على إجراء المقابلة فأنت توافق على ما يلي:

- تسجيل المقابلة صوتيًا، ولكن سيتم حذف التسجيل فور الانتهاء من كتابة/تفريغ التسجيل.
- سيتم استخدام المعلومات التي تقدمها في أطروحة الماجستير، والتي قد يتم نشرها، ولكن لن يتم ذكر اسمك أو أي معلومات يمكن من خلالها الاستدلال عليك.
- مشاركتك في البحث تمت بمحض إرادتك، وتعرف إن بإمكانك التوقف في أي وقت، وبإمكانك الامتناع عن الإجابة عن الأسئلة التي لا تريد الإجابة عليها.
- لا تتوقع الحصول على أي مقابل مالي لمشاركتك في الدراسة، أو أية منافع أخرى.
- للوالدين: أوافق على إجراء المقابلة مع ابني/ولدي

توقيع المشارك في المقابلة/ توقيع الوالدين نيابة عن أطفالهم:

.....

التاريخ:.....

شكرًا جزيلاً على مشاركتك في الدراسة

Interview Guide

Interviewee NAME's letters		INTERVIEW NUMBER	
INTERVIEW DATE		INTERVIEW START TIME	INTERVIEW END TIME
Consent for the recording of the interview?			
<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes			
REGION		GOVERNATE/CITY	

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Basic Information/ Demographic Characteristics معلومات أساسية

Please introduce yourself/ من فضلك عرف بروحك

Age/ العمر

Gender/ النوع

Marital Status/ الحالة الاجتماعية

Level of Education/ لأي مرحلة قريت

The year of graduation: وقتاش اخرجت:.....

known languages/ كم لغة بتعرف

Religion/ الديانة

(Monthly income)/ كم مدخولك الشهري

Standard of Living مستوى المعيشة

Could you describe your Housing status? ? شنية وضعية دارك: كاري أو ملاك

Homeowner tenant Prefer not to answer others (mention.....)

Number of family members living in the house, with who you live? قداش من واحد انتوما في الدار

Family Property عندكم أملاك

Are you the sole or main provider for your family? Are you financially responsible for other people outside of your household? Do you have any debts? هل انت ألي تصرف على عايلتك؟ هل تصرف على ناس آخرين؟ هل متسلف؟ هل قادر توقّر التعليم والصحة ليك وإلا للعائلة؟ هل عندك تغطية اجتماعية سي أن أس أو منحة من الدولة؟ فلوس من حد؟ يلزمك تدفع ديون؟

Do you have access to: education services, health services, financial services/aids from the government? هل قادر توقّر التعليم والصحة ليك وإلا للعائلة؟ هل عندك تغطية اجتماعية سي أن أس أو منحة من الدولة؟

Working Conditions Before Emigration حالة العمل

what is your main source of income? what was your work status before emigration? Was your situation stable in the workplace? (whether he was unemployed- part-time employee – full-time employee- student,

etc), Is your income/resources considered enough to meet your obligations? عندك شهرية؟ شنوا؟ كانت خدمتك قبل ما تهاجر؟ هل كانت أمورك مستقرة في الخدمة؟، هل كان مدخولك يكفيك؟

هل فكرت تحل مشروع خاص؟ Why didn't you attempt to open your own business instead of emigrating illegally? وحدك في عوض تحرق؟ علاش؟

أسباب الهجرة غير الشرعية Reasons for Illegal Emigration

- Why did you decide to emigrate? (ex: Lack of work opportunities, seeking good education, Promised a job, Promised an education, Conflict, insecurity, Bad family situation, Persecution, Romantic relationship/marriage, Look for health care, Family reunification, Natural disaster, Others.....) علاش قررت تهاجر؟
- Why did you choose the illegal method to exit Tunisia? علاش اختارت الحرق/الهجرة غير النظامية وتخرج من تونس؟
- What was your intended destination? And why? Do you have relatives there? وبين قررت تحرق، وعلاش؟ عندك أقارب يعيشو غادي؟
- How many time did you travel (legally& illegally)؟ كم مرة سافرت، حرقه وبأوراقك؟
- were these travels related to political, economic, or social reasons? what were the factors that pulled you to choose this receiving country? شنوا كانت لسباب اقتصادية، سياسية أو اجتماعية؟

Special Questions for women:

- Have you been subjected to physical or psychological violence? هل تعرضتي للعنف الجسدي أو النفسي؟
- Have you ever been detained in the past by the government or police services for any reason? هل احتجزتني في الماضي من قبل الحكومة أو الشرطة؟
- Do you have a political orientation? (political affiliation)؟ ما هو؟
- Did you emigrate alone or with a member of your family? Was it your first time? سافرتي لوحديك ولا مع حد من العائلة؟ هل كانت أول مرة؟
- Was it your own choice to travel or someone else forced you? حبيت تسافر وقتها ولا حد أجبرك؟
- How were you affected by covid-19, economic crisis, current political situation in Tunisia? كيفاش أثر عليك الكوفيد، والأزمة الاقتصادية والوضع السياسي في تونس؟
- Do you think you have been lied to, tricked, manipulated, indebted, given false promises or otherwise deceived in order to get you to travel/move? هل غمك؟ كذب عليك؟ خدعك؟ عطاك وعد كاذب لتسافري؟
- What do you believe are the skills that will help you land a job at your intended destination? برأيك شنوا المهارات اللي تساعدك تخدم في الدولة اللي نويت تسافري لها حسب رايك شنوا الصنعة والا الحاجات اللي تقول كان تعلمتهم يعاونوك تخدمي في الدولة اللي نويت تسافري لها
- Do you feel that you are isolated from the rest of the community? هل تحس روحك تعيش تهميش مش كيف باقي المجتمع

Special Questions for unaccompanied children (from 14 to less than 18 or youth who tried to emigrate when he was a child) or their parents (if the child's age is below 14) أسئلة للأطفال غير المصحوبين (سيتم مقابلة 14 إلى أقل من 18 عام، والأطفال الأقل من 14 سيتم إجراء مقابلة مع آبائهم)

For the child:

- What is your father's and mother's Job? Where do your father and mother live now? شنوا يخدم أبوك وأمك؟ وبين يعيشوا؟
- Do you have siblings? How many? عندك أخوات؟ قديش عددهم؟
- Could you tell me how you travelled? With whom? To which country? نتجم تحكي لي كيفاش حرقت؟ مع شكون؟ كنت تعرف وبين ماشي؟
- Did your parents tell you that you were going to travel by sea? حالك أبوك وبين باش تحرق؟ أسنيا قالك؟
- What did you do during the trip? أسنيا عملت وقت اللي حارفين؟

- Did you carry identity documents/papers with you? **كأم معاك أي أوراق؟ مضمون، بطاقة هوية؟**
- Are you aware of what might happen during this journey? /Have they told you what to do in the event of danger? Did they warn you of the possibility of danger? **كنت عارف أن الرحلة صعبة؟ قالك أبوك أن فيه خطر؟**
- Did your parents warn you about not to anyone your name and country?/Did your parents ask you to keep your name and country of origin anonymous? **هل نبهك أبوك باش ماتحكي لحد أسمك ومن وين أنت؟**
- Did you have any copies of your parents' identity documents with you? (passport, birth certificate, etc) **هل كان معاك بطاقة تعريف ولا أي ورقة متاع والديك؟**

For the parents: للوالدين:

- Why did you decide to send your son abroad illegally? **علاش قررت تخلي ولدك يحرق؟**
- What do you know about the expected risks? **شئنا اللي تعرفه عن الخطر الموجود في الحرق؟**
- What was the intended country? Why did you choose it? **علاش اختارتها بالتحديد؟**
- Was your son alone there? **هل بعثت لوحده ولا معاه حد؟**
- Did your son have identity documents with him? If no, could you please explain why he didn't have any travel documents or identity documents with him? **كان معاه بطاقة تعريف أو مضمون؟ إذا لا، علاش ماعطيتوش أي وثيقة هوية؟**
- What did you tell your son about the journey? **أشئنا حكيت لولدك على الحرق في وقتها؟**

Special Questions for well-educated:

- Have you ever been detained in the past by government or police services for any reason? **هل احتجزت في الماضي من قبل الحكومة أو الشرطة؟**
- What are the skills or education you have and necessary to get a job at your intended destination? **هل شك الحاكم في الماضي، عديت حبس؟**
- What are the skills or education you have and necessary to get a job at your intended destination? **برأيك**
- How were you affected by covid-19, economic crisis, current political situation in Tunisia? **شئنا المهارات اللي تساعدك تخدم في الدولة اللي نويت تسافر لها**
- what opportunities and benefits you think you will get in host country compared to home country? **والا الحاجات اللي تقول كان تعلمتهم يعاونوك تخدم في الدولة اللي نويت تحرقها؟**
- How were you affected by covid-19, economic crisis, current political situation in Tunisia? **كيفاش أثر عليك الكوفيد، والأزمة الاقتصادية والوضع السياسي في تونس؟**
- what opportunities and benefits you think you will get in host country compared to home country? **شئنا الفرص والمكاسب اللي أعتقدت إنك هاتحصل عليها في البلد دي مقارنة بتونس؟**
- what difficulties may do you -as a well-educated person- face when they stay abroad? How the polices of host country may help you? **شئنا الحاجات اللي تصورت تحققهم في البلاد اللي زعمة حرقها وموش ممكنة في تونس؟**
- What is the balance between key barriers and benefits that influence decisions to emigrate illegally? **شئنا المصاعب اللي تواجهها في الخارج؟ كيفاش سياسة البلد ممكن تساعدك؟**
- What is the balance between key barriers and benefits that influence decisions to emigrate illegally? **شئنا المكاسب والمخاطر اللي أثرت على قرارك لتسافر بشكل غير نظامي؟**
- What is the balance between key barriers and benefits that influence decisions to emigrate illegally? **شئنا الحاجات اللي أثرت على قرارك بش تحرق؟**

Special Questions for families:

- To what extent do you -as a family- expect to get better life in the destination country? **() لأي مدى تعتقدوا أن حياتكم باش تكون باهية وأفضل في الدولة**
- To what extent do you -as a family- expect to get better life in the destination country? **() كيفاش تتخيل حياتك في البلاد اللي خمتت تحرقها؟ باهية؟ خابية؟**
- To what extent do you -as a family- expect to get better life in the destination country? **قداش الحرق تستحق تخاطرو. And for what? بحياتكم؟ وعلاش؟**

Illegal Emigration Procedures and Means إجراءات ووسائل الهجرة

- Could you tell me more about the travel procedures, how it took place, its various means (by sea, or flight), / Can you please tell me how did you prepare for and organized the trip, before you left your home country? **ممكن تقلي كيفاش حضرت للحرق؟ شنية الإجراءات والخطوات اللي عملتهم؟ على ثنية البحر أو طيران**

- شكون عاونك في الحرقه؟ كيفاش؟ اتعرفت عليه؟
- From where you knew illegal emigration merchants/ smugglers, persons responsible for conducting illegal travel? how did they help you to travel? Could you tell me some information about them? Were they Tunisians?
من فين عرفت المهريين اللي سفروك؟ كيفاش كانت مساعدتهم ليك؟ بتقدر تحكي لي تفاصيل أكثر عنهم؟
كيفاش لقيت الخيط بش حرقت؟ كيفاش عاونك الحراق؟ تتجم تحكي لي تفاصيل أكثر؟
- Did they travel with you? How did you communicate with them? Did they also provide food and accommodation? (did they asked you to pay any additional costs (which currency), هل سافرو معك؟ كيفاش، كنت تكلمهم أثناء السفر؟ هل طلبوا فلوس زيادة غير اللي اتفقوا عليها؟
هل الحراق كان معاك؟ إذا لا كيفاش كنت تتواصل معاه في وقت الحرقه؟ هل طلب منك الحراق تزيد فلوس بعد ما تفاهمتوا؟
- What were the documents that were requested if there? طلب عليك الحراق أوراق معينة؟
- How much money did they take from you? /what was the cost of the travel? and how did you obtain that money? Were you able to negotiate the price?
- (savings, selling of assets, borrowing from family or community members, borrowing from strangers, payment only on route, in instalments or upon arrival?) قديش الفلوس اللي خدوها منك؟ كيفاش دبرت الفلوس؟ هل نجمت تفاوضهم على السعر (على سوم الحرقه)؟
- What do you know about the country you chose? What were the sources of your knowledge?/ where did you look for information. شنيا بتعرف عن الدولة اللي تحرقها، كيفاش عرفت هذه المعلومات.

Description of the emigration journey وصف رحلة الهجرة

- Could you describe in detailed your emigration journey? the itinerary from the country until the final destination? Which countries and cities did you travel through? How long did it take to get to [destination country]? Can you please describe your experiences in each country? تتجم تحكي لي بالتفصيل سفرتك من تونس إلى البلد اللي نويت تسافر لها؟ إيه المدن والدول اللي سافرت من خلالها؟ قديش الوقت اللي اخدته السفره لتوصل؟ تتجم توصلي تجربتك في كل بلد؟
- Did anyone help you during your journey? How the journey ended? هل فمة شكون عاونك خلال الحرقه؟ وكيفاش وفات الرحلة (انتهت)؟
- How were you dealt upon arrival? كيفاش اتعاملت عند وصولك؟
- In case of success, what were the jobs that offered to him, whether legal or illegal? بعد وصولك أشنوا الوظائف اللي نجمت تلافيها؟ كانت قانونية أم غير قانونية؟ مين عرض عليك الخدمة؟ كي وصلت أشنوا الخدم اللي لقيتهم؟ خدم عادية أو غير قانونية؟ فمة شكون عرض عليك خدمة؟

Residency in the receiving country (if it is possible to reach people who have succeeded in emigrating)

الإقامة في البلد المستقبل

- How is your residency in the receiving country? The house he stayed in, is he secured, safe, his financial situation? كيفاش كانت إقامتك؟ وصفلي الدار اللي سكنت فيه؟ كنت بآمان؟ كيفاش كان وضعك المادي؟
- What are the procedures he did to regularize his status in order to correct his emigration into a legal emigration, and whether these attempts succeeded or failed, and when he was arrested? شنوا الإجراءات اللي عملتها لتقن وضعك لمهاجر شرعي؟ محاولتك نجحت؟ وقتاش قبضوا عليك؟

شنوا الإجراءات اللي عملتها تورق (تعمل أوراق)؟ نجمت تعمل أوراق؟ وقتاش شدوك ورجعوك

Deportation Procedures إجراءات الترحيل

- Could you tell me about the deportation procedures, were you arrested upon arrival or after arrival? تتجم تحكي لي عن إجراءات كيف رجعوك؟ هل شدوك أول ما وصلت أو بعد فترة؟
- How you were dealt in detention, how long was the detention? كيفاش تمت معاملتك في الحجز؟ شنوا كانت مدة الحجز؟
- What were the difficulties you faced? Have you been subjected to violence, torture? شنوا الصعوبات اللي قابلتك غادي؟ هل تعرضت للعنف أو التعذيب؟

الإجراءات اللاحقة على الترحيل إلى تونس Procedures following deportation to Tunisia

- كيفاش تعاملوا معك كي وصلت تونس؟ How have you been he was dealt upon your arrival, in Tunisia?
- شنوا كانت الإجراءات اللي اتعملت معاك ()؟ اللي طلبوا منك تعملها في المطار كي رجعت؟ قديش خذا منك وقت؟ What were the procedures that were taken with you? How much time did it take?
- هل اتعرضت للعنف أو عاملوك بطريقة مش باهية؟ ومن شكون؟ Have you been subjected to violence, torture or rehabilitated, and what institutions did that?

تقييم التجربة Journey evaluation

- لأي مدى اتعلمت/استفدت من التجربة؟ To what extent did you benefit/ learn from this experience?
- شنوا الفايده من التجربة متاع الحرقة؟ حاجة تعلمتها؟ فايده حصلتك؟ In your opinion, what is the impact of illegal migration? whether it had positive or negative effects on the level of the individual, the family and society, في رأيك الحرقة عندها تأثير إيجابي ولا سلبي على الفرد، الأسرة، المجتمع؟
- لو تجيك فرصة أخرى تعاود تحرق؟ أو تجيك فرصة تمشي بأوراقك؟ تمشي؟ will you try to travel again in the same way or you will try to travel in a legal way? And why?
- رأيك شنوا الحلول اللي تبعد الناس عن الحرقة؟ In your opinion, what are the solutions to overcome the problem of illegal emigration?
- تعرف العقوبات للأشخاص اللي بيحاولو يهاجروا بشكل غير شرعي؟ تعرف القانون اش يقول على الأشخاص اللي يحاولوا يحرقوا؟ To what extent are you aware of the various penalties for those who attempt to emigrate illegally?
- في رأيك المهاجر غير الشرعي ضحية وأم مخترق للقانون؟ وعلاش؟ في رأيك الشخص اللي يحرق شنية انجموا نقولوا عليه؟ هل هو ضحية؟ أو إنسان عمل جريمة تجاوز الحدود بطريقة غير قانونية؟ وعلاش؟ In your point of view, is the emigrant a victim or a violator of the law? And why?

4. list of researcher, academics, and CSOs who were interviewed

No.	Name	Position
1.	Mr. Mihar Hammady	Ministry of woman, child, family, and old people, (child protection office)
2.	Mr. Abdelnaser Nasraoui	Researcher in Migration and refugees affairs at the Arab Institute for Human Rights
3.	Mr. Bassam Souissi	Researcher at International Center for Migration and Policy Development (ICMD)
4.	Dr. Mounir gabsi	Head of Sociology department at Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences, Sfax University
5.	Dr.. Samir Rouis	Researcher specialized in migration studies and professor of sociology at the Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences, Sfax University
6.	Dr. Aicha Al-tayeb	Sociology professor at The Higher Institute of Human Sciences of Tunis, Tunis el-Manar University, and Researcher specialized in migration studies.
7.	Ms. Amina bo-kamsha	National Authority for combating trafficking in persons
8.	Mr. Emad El-Sultany	Director of Association la terre pour tous
9.	migrants 1	Tunisian Irregular emigrant in Italy, (unaccompanied minor)
10.	Migrant 2	Tunisian Irregular migrant in Germany, (well-educated youth, Male)