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Experiences with using data from the 2010 round of censuses for measuring migration

Measuring International Migration through census 2014 in Tunisia: what improvements have been adopted?

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Introduction

As the international migration grows in global magnitude, the need to improve the collection and quality of information related to migration is also becoming increasingly urgent. This need is due to several factors, including the difficulty of accepting common definitions of migration, issues related to data collection given that migration is a rare event (only 3,2% of the worldwide population are international migrants, in 2013¹), the difficulties in measuring the true extent of migration and the lack of information to assess the impact of migration on receiving as well as emitting countries.

Given its geographic location, the northernmost country in Africa, bordered by Algeria to the west, Libya to the southeast and the Mediterranean Sea to the north and east, at 140Km from Italy,

¹ *Les migrations internationales en chiffres OCDE - Nations Unies/DAES octobre 2013*

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Tunisia has known different waves and types of migration throughout its history, especially after the revolution of 2011. The migratory context in Tunisia after the revolution has been characterized by (i) a massive departure of Tunisian youth to Europe (20,258 Tunisians landed in Lampedusa between January-March 2011²), (ii) a massive exodus of Tunisian and foreign workers from Libya to Tunisia, and (iii) exile of Libyan families as a result of conflicts in Libya. The new context has had a political, economic and social impact on Tunisian society, therefore the establishment of migration policy based on good migration governance that takes into account the current and future circumstances of the country has to be taken into consideration. The challenge faced by policy and decision makers is the lack of accurate and reliable data about migration. To bridge this information gap, the household survey has played an important role in collecting and improving data on international migration in Tunisia.

To this effect, a module about international migration was included during the 2000 round of censuses (Tunisian Census 2004), while an improved module was also included during the 2010 round (Tunisian Census 2014), which provided an opportunity to enhance information about migration stocks and flows in Tunisia.

Main sources of international migration for the NIS

Censuses, sample surveys, and administrative sources are the main sources of information on international migration in Tunisia.

✓ Census

As the Tunisian population census represents a snapshot of a population resident in the country at a given point in time (23, April 2014, round 2010), it is best suited for measurement of the stock of migrants, as well as their characteristics, at that given date. The most distinctive strength of the population census lies in its full coverage of the country, permitting the generation of statistics at low geographical levels which is very important since migrants are a rare element of the population.

Migration through census is measured over a reference period of five years: 1999-2004 for the census 2004, 2004-2009 for the mini-census of 2009 (the inter-census survey aimed to update the census database, covering about 162,500 household), and 2009-2014 for the census 2014. Learned

² Frontex Rapport 1^{er} trimestre, 2011

lessons from each census allowed for the improvement of the methodology and content of migration modules in the 214 census.

Given the time interval between censuses and inter-census surveys in Tunisia (usually 10 years), there is a possibility of examining long-term trends through comparisons of statistics from more than one census to allow decision makers to identify shifts in migration over time.

✓ **Labor force survey: (household survey)**

Since 2001, a migration module has been included in the labor force survey using household panel sample surveys interviewed at Year “Y” and year “Y+1 year”, half of the sample interviewed in “Y” are re-interviewed in “Y+ 1 year”. Migration is observed and identified by a score on list, individual by individual. It has been ensured that migration is well reported by the person interviewed.

- The sample: designed for migration is about 45,000 households (1.6% of the total number of households in Tunisia).
 - Frequency: between May in year “Y” and May in year “Y+ 1 year”
 - For immigrants: in addition to socio-economic characteristics, information about country of origin and the reason of immigration are collected.
 - For emigrants: the main reason for migration, as well as the destination, month and year of departure, and obviously other socio-demographic characteristics already collected since the date of the survey in year “Y”, when the immigrant was part of the resident household and lived in Tunisia.
 - Results: are representative at the national level.
 - Advantage: it does not depend on people’s declaration and memory to capture emigration, but it is related to the household individual list from the previous year’s survey.
- ✓ **Administrative sources:** a monthly report is delivered by the Ministry of Interior to the NIS containing statistics about passengers’ movement across different border points. These statistics are disseminated in the Annual Statistical Yearbook. However, these statistics suffer from some weaknesses (e.g. multiple counting of passengers) and need to be improved by better developing the frontier data collection system.

Collecting data on Immigration in census2014

The population census is the best source for collecting data on the immigrant stock and its characteristics. The key advantage of identifying migrant stock in censuses is that it is possible to cross tabulate migrant characteristics against a wide range of social, demographic and economic variables collected in the census enumeration. Such an extent of information about migrants is rarely available from other data sources.

The question about immigration is formulated as follows:” *In April 2009, were you resident in this housing unit?*” if “no”, the following variables are collected:

- Country of origin
- Year of arrival (new variable introduced in 2014 census)
- Reasons for move (search for job, end of contract, having a contract, change job location, purchase house, better condition of housing, marriage, join family, voluntary return to Tunisia, non-voluntary return (forced return), study, end of study, and other).

Note: Detailing the reasons of immigration especially after the various trends of international migration in Tunisia during the last three years will provide more opportunities to understand and study the migratory context.

Census 2014 allows the identification of these types of population stocks:

- Immigrant stock
- The foreign-born population
- The foreign population born in Tunisia
- The foreign population resident
- Return migrants

Collecting data on Emigration in census 2014

The way emigration has been detected in censuses is through asking the following question: “*are there any members of your household who reside currently (the reference day of the census) outside Tunisia, and was resident in this household in April 2004*”. Thus, information is collected about emigrants from other household members who were present at the moment of the interview.

The census emigration modules do not provide many choices for cross tabulation by immigration, the only information collected are:

- Relationship with the head of household
- Gender
- Year of migration
- Reason for migration (same reasons cited for immigration module)
- Country of destination
- Level of education before departure (new variable introduced in 2014 census)

Although it has drawbacks, detecting emigration through census modules was an important source of information to study the migration flows over a period of 5 years (76,000 Tunisian emigrants in 2004 Census). Some learned lessons from census 2004 and the 2009 mini-census, allowed for a reduction in underestimation caused by the following problems: memory of interviewees, departure of all household members without leaving behind any one to report, and the non-declaration of irregular emigrant and tourists or students with expired visas.

Which improvements were adopted in census 2014 ?

Some aspects of census planning have impacted the coverage and quality of data collected on international migration. These include:

- Improved enumerator training tools: In addition to the definition related to migration, a detailed table dealing with different situations of migrants could be found in the country and their respective questions illegible to be asked, in order to avoid long discourse and focus only on practical and operational issues.
- Provided a full explanation to enumerators about the migratory context and its concepts, in addition to emphasizing the urgent need of decision makers for such information in Tunisia
- Choice of a good position and sequence of items within the census questionnaire to reflect the importance of the modules. The migration modules appears in the 7th position among 14 position in the individual questionnaire of 2014 census, the earlier it appears on the census form, the more attention it is given.
- Formulating easy and clearly worded questions

- Meeting with national partners working on migration issues in order to revise the migration modules, they expressed a need to include additional variables on both modules, such as detailed reasons for move (13 reasons instead of 6 in census 2004) , in order to capture migrants, such as irregular migrants, those with expired visas, forced migrants, etc.
- The new variable introduced in the immigration module “arrival year,” allows for the study of migration trends, especially around the revolution date.
- The new variable introduced in the emigration module “education level before migration,” allows more information about which category of migrants are leaving the country and why?

General results from Census and Household surveys

✓ Population and housing census 2004 and inter-census survey 2009

Table 1: Tunisian immigrants and emigrants by age group and gender, April 1999 – April 2004 and April 2004 – April 2009

	Emigrants	Immigrants	Net Migration
April 1999 April 2004	75773	17766	-58007
April 2004 April 2009	41200	17100	-24100

Table 2: Tunisian immigrants by age group and gender, April 1999 – April 2004

Age group	Number			% of total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
0-4	1297	1216	2513	12,9 %	15,8 %	14,2 %
1-5	1867	1811	3678	18,5 %	23,5 %	20,7 %
15-29	1343	1479	2822	13,4 %	19,1 %	15,8 %
30-44	3255	2263	5518	32,4 %	29,3 %	31,1 %
45-64	1820	836	2656	18,2 %	10,8 %	14,9 %
65+	464	115	579	4,6 %	1,5 %	3,3 %
TOTAL	10046	7720	17766	100,0 %	100,0 %	100,0 %

Table 3: Tunisian Emigrants by age group and gender, April 1999 – April 2004

Age group	Number			% of total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
0-4	107	56	163	0,2 %	0,5 %	0,2 %
1-5	356	168	524	0,5 %	1,4 %	0,7 %
15-29	34833	7108	41941	54,4 %	60,7 %	55,4 %
30-44	23775	3616	27391	37,1 %	30,9 %	36,2 %
45-64	4724	693	5417	7,4 %	5,9 %	7,1 %
65+	266	71	337	0,4 %	0,6 %	0,4 %
TOTAL	64061	11712	75773	100,0 %	100,0 %	100,0 %

Table 4: Tunisian Emigrants and Immigrants by country of origin/destination, April 1999 – April 2004 and April 2004 – April 2009

Country	April 1999 – April 2004			April 2004 – April 2009		
	Emigrant	Immigrant	Net migration	Emigrant	Immigrant	Net migration
Libya	5368	1761	-3607	3400	900	-2500
Saudi Arabia	1946	1989	43	4200	700	-3500
Other Arab countries	3618	4040	422	15300	2800	-12500
France	31955	4444	-27511	10500	4600	-5900
Italy	16973	2067	-14906	2000	2600	600
Germany	4933	871	-4062	3100	800	-2300
Other European countries	5642	1453	-4189	3100	1900	-1200
Others countries	5338	1141	-4197	2700	2800	100
Total	75773	17766	-58007	41200	17100	-24100

✓ Labor force survey

Table 6: Tunisian immigrants and emigrants issued from the Labor force survey from 2001 to 2012

	Emigrant	Immigrant	Net migration
May 2011- May 2012	50931	17351	-33580
May 2007- May 2008	26600	10500	-16100
May 2006- May 2007	23800	8790	-15010
May 2005- May 2006	31200	14860	-16340
May 2001- May 2002	29700	11690	-18010

Conclusion

Census 2014, results which will be available by the end of December 2014, provides a substantial amount of information about migrant stocks and flows in Tunisia during the period 2009 and 2014.
