

In the framework of **IEMed. Seminar Series “Aula Mediterrània”** entitle *Hacia una nueva agenda mediterránea: dinámicas y Actores en juego*

GRITIM-UPF organizes the round table:

Moroccan Transnational Entrepreneurs: new social patterns, new narrative policies

Date: 31 March 2017

Time: 11.30-14h

Place: Institut d'Estudis Catalans- Carrer del Carme, 47, Barcelona

Framework of the roundtable

There is an emerging field of research on Migrant Transnational Entrepreneurs (MTE) developed basically from business studies, which analyses this trend as one specific attribute of the globalisation process, linked to the increase of human mobility. Migration scholars have already discussed the migrant entrepreneur for long, but basically only in the country of residence and as part of the integration process. The transnational dimension of the migrant entrepreneur, which involves a cross-border business activity relying on resources and opportunities in the countries of origin, has however been unexplored. This emerging profile is capturing the attention of scholars working on transnationalism and on entrepreneurship aspects within migration studies. At the moment, there is little done linking both fields of research, and when it is done, focus lies on analysing patterns and defining hypotheses on the favourable and non-favourable factors promoting these new dynamics in the country of residence, but there is less research on how home countries are capturing this new trend within the migration/development nexus policy framework. MTE are being seen as a resource and an opportunity both for the home country (who begins to develop a new focus, the traditional one being remittances management) and the migrant (who develops a new activity seeing his or her country of origin as a resource rather than as a constraint, as was the case of his/her parents). This is being discussed in terms of explanatory variables to understand this new dynamic, the distinctive features of its profile (sharing two cultures and social and cultural capital), but also in terms of the effects on their country of origin (social, economic, political, cultural effects). There is also a new research trend of brain gain policies for countries of origin, who attract the skilled migrants, but less on how this brain gain operates as a policy for the home countries and targeting their own diaspora. This will be the focus of this roundtable, considering Morocco as the main case study.

The main purpose is to discuss the main trends and governance aspects that follow of this concrete profile of Moroccan migrants living abroad: those who take an entrepreneurship initiative and decide to focus on Morocco. Current research shows that factors that relate to generation, education and their sense of identity shape how enterprises are created, as this is an essential part of fully comprehending the benefits of migrant transnational entrepreneurship. We are also interested in discussing how to justify political intervention in these new dynamics, and how to frame this intervention beyond legal and administrative services and assistance; what are the main programmes, policies and structures that are being developed; the main policy focus; the network of actors involved; the intercultural aspects of these initiatives linking economically, politically and culturally both the country of origin and the country of immigration.

The concrete idea is to discuss how this profile is being incorporated into the external policy agenda of Morocco, what programmes, structures and policies are being developed, and what policy narratives are being constructed within the already existing Moroccan approach of their migrants living abroad. We would like also to promote an open debate on the main favourable and constraining factors involved, and the first outcomes (if any) of this new migration dynamics. Some issues we would like to discuss:

- 1) *Methodological issues*: Even if Morocco is incorporating the MTE trend into their policies, how much is this policy evidence-based? It seems that this policy and scholarly discussion is based on the assumption that this phenomenon is emerging, but what are the key-data we have? Where do the assumptions leave room to reality? Are migrants becoming transnational entrepreneurs to a larger extent or are these transnational entrepreneurs, rather than returning migrants, part of a mobile elite in their countries of origin? Exploratory research in Morocco based on interviews indicates that migrant transnational entrepreneurship is taking place combining formal and informal channels. Some policy-makers who were interviewed say that their policy is drawn following the complaints of the MTE, and then it is a complaint-based policy. Moreover, we are interested in what relationship there is between experts and policy makers on these issues. Some stakeholders assert that this is a growing and relevant phenomenon, and advice policy makers, but without strong evidence. It seems that policies are targeting potential trends rather than actual ones, and then policies have a mobilisation dimension rather than a management dimension of current trends.
- 2) *Profile*: Moroccan young generations and their link to Morocco: most transnational entrepreneurs are young people with a national attachment to their country. They can be entrepreneurs by necessity or by option, but in both cases there is a social mobility opportunities factor and specific skilled competences developments
- 3) *Networks* working as a resource to promote Transnational Entrepreneurship (TE). These networks provide access to resources, advice, and support that may result in economic, political and cultural exchanges
- 4) *Intercultural aspects*: We expect that most MTE have a social and cultural capital focused on intercultural links and diversity advantages. They may see their country of origin as a resource and an advantage rather than as something inconvenient and constraining as their parents. Intercultural skills are expected to be decisive in their entrepreneurship decision, as well as intercultural promotion in their entrepreneurial activities.
- 5) *Migration and development nexus*: beyond the remittances focus, how can TE capacities be mobilized and utilized in development activities? TE exploit opportunities in diverse homeland contexts to create businesses and jobs, stimulate innovation, create cross boarder social capital and channel political and financial capital towards development.
- 6) Effects of this concrete TE in their countries of origin in economic, social and political terms.

This roundtable is an activity linked to EU Horizon 2020 project Diaspora Link
(<http://diasporalink.org/>)

Chair: **Ricard Zapata-Barrero**, Director GRITIM-UPF

Discussant: **Oriol Amoros** (General Secretary for Equality, Migration and Citizenship, Catalan Government)

- **Karim Basrire**, General Secretary of Maroc Entrepreneurs
Title: A new generation of immigrant Moroccan Entrepreneurs
- **Fatima Tigratine**, Head of Moroccans Living Abroad. Investor Support, Dep. Communication and Skills mobilization, Ministry of Moroccans Living Abroad and Migration Affairs
Title: The policy of mobilizing the competences of the Moroccans Living Abroad (MLAs):
- **Zouhair El Hairan**, GRITIM-UPF researcher and Secretary of Euro-Arab youth organization
Title: The Moroccan Youth diaspora transnational entrepreneurship in Catalonia



Karim Basrire, General Secretary of Morocco Entrepreneurs (www.marocentrepreneurs.com), a network in Europe contributing to social and economic development by encouraging Moroccans abroad or people strongly attached to Morocco to set up their business in Morocco. Karim created several companies in telecommunication and distribution. He serves also as a consultant and expert on related issues to entrepreneurship and contributed to the last study and survey of Moroccan entrepreneurs living in Europe launching by the Ministry of Moroccans living abroad through the EU-Morocco Sharaka project. Sharaka is a support project for the EU-Morocco Mobility Partnership and also for the mobilisation of Moroccans living in Europe for the development of the country.



Zouhair El Hairan, GRITIM-UPF Researcher and the Secretary of Euro-Arab youth organization (www.euroarab.eu), which is a network of young European and Arab researchers and professionals interested in the Euro-Arab relations and dialogue. His research interests are related to the Moroccan Youth transnational entrepreneurship in Catalonia and Spain, as well as the Moroccan political transnationalism participation, and the Immigration and Media. He is also a member of the Journalists Institute of Catalonia and the young group of the UNESCO's inter-religious association (AUDIR). He has given lectures on issues related to immigration, the Islamic-Arabic world and the media.



Fatima Tigratine, Head of Moroccans Living Abroad. Investor Support, Department Communication and Skills Mobilization, Ministry of Moroccans Living Abroad and Migration Affairs. Miss Tigratine holds a degree in Economy Science from the University of Mohamed V AGDAL, Rabat and specialization degree on International Economic Relations and International Economy from the University of Mohamed V, AGDAL. She also has extensive formation of migration for development and advance techniques for business development and financial management for economic development. She is an expert in the fields of economy and business organization, in Moroccan corporate taxation regime, in Social and Commercial legislation and statistics.

In 2012, she has been member of the selection committee of projects received by 'Rabat incubateur' – Regional Delegation of the Association of Moroccan Entrepreneurs Women. Also, in 2011, she was member of the selection committee under the 'Paceim' Program of Assistance to the Creation of Innovative Enterprises in the Mediterranean Initiated by the Institute of Research for Development in France.



Oriol Amorós, General Secretary of Equality, Migration, and Citizenship

Agricultural engineer from the Polytechnic University of Catalonia and agronomist from the University of Lleida. Postgraduate in agrarian economics and the European Union, and in managerial public administration from ESADE.

He was a secondary school professor of technology and economy from 1997 through 2000, deputy president of the Barcelona Zoo, and has also worked in the private sector in gardening and distribution.

He was a member of the Catalan Parliament from 2003 to 2006 and from 2010 to 2016, where he worked as a member, spokesperson, and secretary on diverse commissions including those dealing with immigration, political territory, the environment, health, business and employment, the interior, road safety, schedule reform, public security and order, and the fight against unemployment. He has also been a member of various investigation commissions, including for the tunnel collapse in the Carmel neighborhood, the bankruptcy of Spanair, possible fraud in the health field, and the commission against fraud and the practice of corrupt politics. He has also been deputy speaker of the parliamentary group ERC.

As a parliamentarian he has drafted laws for guaranteed income, the occupation system, industrial security, simplification and better regulation of economic activity, protection of animals (in favor of the prohibition of bullfights and the use of animals in circuses), the creation of the Institute for Public Security of Catalonia, and measures for the environment, among others.

From 2006 to 2010 he was Secretary of Immigration of the Government. During this period he pushed for the National Pact for Immigration, the law for the reception of immigrants and refugees to Catalonia. He created the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration, and also participated in the negotiations for the transference of the authorization of work permits to the Government of Catalonia.

As a part of ERC he has been President of the Federation of Sant Andreu, of the Federation of Barcelona, Vice Secretary General of Communication, and is currently a member of the national executive.

On the 26th of January 2016 he was nominated Secretary of Equality, Migration, and Citizenship, a position in which, among other assignments, he steers the Committee for the Reception of Refugees.



Ricard Zapata-Barrero, Professor, teaches at the [Department of Political and Social Sciences](#),

Universitat Pompeu Fabra (Barcelona-Catalonia-Spain). His main lines of research deal with contemporary issues of liberal democracy in contexts of diversity, especially the relationship between democracy, citizenship, human mobility and immigration. He is director of [GRITIM-UPF](#) (Interdisciplinary Research Group on Immigration, founded in 2009, recognised by the Catalan research council, scored 6,8/7 in social sciences, www.upf.edu/gritim) and the [Master Programme on Migration Studies UPF](#) (8 editions, double degree with University Liege and CEDEM in

Immigration Studies). He is member of the Board of Directors of the largest research network on Immigration in Europe [IMISCOE](#), and lead two Standing Groups according to its lines of research related to Cities and Multi-level Governance, and Diversity and Cultural policy. He is a member of several European projects, among others, current “Diasporalink Transnational Diaspora Entrepreneurship as a Development Link between Home and Residence” (2015-2018, H2020-MSCA-RISE-2014). He founded the Intercultural Cities Network in Spain in 2014 (now composed by 16 cities), as expert of the intercultural cities program, and of Compendium (cultural policies) of the Council of Europe. He is also member of editorial boards of several academic journals, and member of several government advisory boards, and occasional contributor to media and policy debates.

For more information about his publications and research findings:

- See personal website: <http://dcpis.upf.edu/~ricard-zapata/>
- See also GRITIM-UPF Research Group website: <http://www.upf.edu/gritim/>