

Immigrant self-employment and transnational practices: the case of Moroccan entrepreneurs in Amsterdam and Milan

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1. Introduction: the subject and the authors

In recent years, the transnationalism of immigrant entrepreneurs¹ has emerged as one of the most promising areas of research in the studies of migrants and their economic activities (Ambrosini, 2009). Our project focuses on this particular kind of migrant entrepreneurial activity, namely transnational businesses owned by migrants. This subject also involves the issue of the different kinds of immigrant transnational practices: economic, political, and social/relational ones.

Our general aim is to understand the relationship between transnational practices and immigrant self-employment. More specifically, our objectives are:

- 1) Understanding how transnational businesses are affected by personal skills, social resources (social networks, embeddedness in different groups, or relational embeddedness), and the context (embeddedness in different scale levels, or structural embeddedness).
- 2) Understanding the connection between different kinds of transnational practices and the way transnational business affects migrants' actions and belongings.

The research will be conducted in two different contexts, Milan and Amsterdam, in order to study how institutional factors, namely socio-economic and legislative differences, play a role in the processes under investigation. Comparing practices within a single group of migrant entrepreneurs, Moroccan self-employers, across two different locations, allows us to control for differences that may exist between distinct national groups.

This research project resulted from collaboration between Giacomo Solano (University of Milan-Bicocca), who conceived and wrote up its original version, and Raffaele Vacca (University of Florida), who reviewed and integrated it.

Giacomo Solano is a PhD student in the European doctoral programme “Urban and Local European Studies” (*URBEUR*) at the Department of Sociology and Social Research of University of Milan-Bicocca. He is currently doing research on immigrant transnational entrepreneurship for his doctoral dissertation under the supervision of Professors Enzo Mingione and Alberta Andreotti (University of Milan-Bicocca). Solano has developed strong skills in qualitative and quantitative methods through both formal methodological training, and his personal research experiences at the University of Genova and the University of Milan-Bicocca. His skills include the quantitative analysis of social networks, in particular personal networks. In this area, Solano participated to courses on “The measurement of personal networks”, organized by the Personal Networks Laboratory in the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology at the Autonomous University of Barcelona. Finally, Solano has an extensive knowledge of migration studies, a field in which he participated to several research projects and publications².

Raffaele Vacca is a Post Doctoral Associate at the Bureau of Economic and Business Research and the Clinical and Translational Science Institute, University of Florida. He recently obtained his PhD degree in “Urban and Local European Studies” (*URBEUR*) at the University of Milan-Bicocca, with a dissertation on social networks and assimilation patterns of transnational migrants in Milan and Barcelona³. Vacca is currently working on migration networks and several other projects involving social network methods, metrics and models. The consistence between their research paths and interests, Vacca's expertise in social network analysis and quantitative methods, and

¹ In this project we use the terms ‘entrepreneur’ and ‘self-employed’ interchangeably, although we are well aware that different meanings could be attached to them. In general, aside from the legal and ISTAT definitions (for which entrepreneurship is a particular form of self-employment), we use the two terms for any person «who runs a business with employees, or carries out a task with a certain degree of autonomy on the market» (Codagnone, 2003:34).

² See the attached Curriculum Vitae.

³ Vacca, R. (2013). Bridging across nations. The social capital of diversity, brokerage and closure in transnational migrant networks: a study on assimilation patterns in Milan and Barcelona. Dissertation for the Doctoral Program in Urban and Local European Studies (*URBEUR*), University of Milan-Bicocca.

Solano's substantive knowledge in migration studies and social science methods, make their collaboration very promising and potentially very successful.

The research project presented here is inherently interdisciplinary, and will be carried out in close connection with diverse research organizations and researchers from different disciplines. Solano will conduct the main field research in Milan and Amsterdam: in Milan, for approximately one month, he will be hosted at the Department of Sociology and Social Research of the University of Milan–Bicocca with Professor Enzo Mingione; in Amsterdam he will be hosted at the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies of the University of Amsterdam with Professor Jan Rath, for five months. In addition to the two institutions that will host Solano, the authors of this project are already involved in international collaborations with sociologists, anthropologists, economists and social network analysts from several academic institutions across Europe and the USA: namely the Autonomous University of Barcelona (in particular: Professor José Molina, EgoLab-Grafo), Sciences Po Paris, Utrecht University (in particular: Professor Schutjens), and the University of Florida. Thus, Solano and Vacca's collaboration on this project would add to, and be sustained by, an existing and wide research network.

The presentation of the project is structured as follows. In the first part, we define the key concepts used in the research, and briefly review the existing literature on the subject. In the second part, we illustrate the aims of the study. Thirdly, we present the research methods, the study timeline and the proposed budget for the project. Finally, we discuss the expected output of the research.

2. Theoretical Background

Two main theoretical concepts underpin this project: transnationalism and embeddedness. Since both of them are broad and widely debated notions, in the following we will specify how they will be used. In this section, the existing literature about these concepts will be briefly summarized.

2.1 Globalization, migration and transnationalism

The increasing opportunities for mobility (e.g. low-cost flights) and communication (e.g. Skype, social networks such as Facebook, Twitter etc.) allow people to maintain social relations in distant places across the world, and to find information on different places and contexts.

These changes also affect the way we perceive reality. People understand these new opportunities, and have today a wider space of reference: they often act taking into account a larger space, namely the worldwide scale rather the city or the country of residence.

These changes influence people's movements. Contemporary society is characterized by an increasing number of people moving across borders. In this context of heightened mobility and communication, migration paths have changed as well. The action of migrating is less definitive than in the past, and migrants can more easily stay in contact with their home country without compromising their life in the receiving society. Moreover, migrants can now develop migration trajectories that unfold across different countries, beyond the traditional dichotomy between home and host country.

The notion of transnationalism tries to account for this new reality: migrants can now develop multi-located paths of migration and multisite belongings and frames of reference. In this regard, Vertovec (2004) introduced the concept of *bifocality* to describe how migrants' membership and everyday practices take place today on more than one social field. In particular, migrants' lives and actions are not only influenced by their context of arrival, but remain also deeply affected by their

context of origin. In fact, migrants' lives increasingly develop in several countries, so we could even use the term *multifocality*, rather than *bifocality*.

The new migration paths and the increasing ease of movement and communication also affect migrants' sense of belonging. Transnational practices tend to redefine traditional inclusion paths, with immigrants developing forms of belonging that cut the traditional fixed and monolithic categories. These new sense of belonging has a multi-level form. Migrants establish affiliations with different places and at different levels (Ehrkamp and Leitner, 2003). Thus, the process of identity development among (transnational) migrants should be understood as «an emerging embedding and disembedding in different social spaces» (Pries, 2001:20). Transnationalism implies the recognition of migrants as agents who are able to forge their own identity and feelings of belonging, out of the classical dichotomy between "assimilated" and "unassimilated".

In addition, transnationalism takes place within different spheres: economic (e.g. transnational businesses), political (e.g. political participation in different kind of associations, political parties etc.) and social/relational (e.g. social contacts across national borders). In this respect, Levitt (2001) distinguishes comprehensive versus selective transnationalism. A migrant can engage in transnational activities in a single particular area (economic, for example), which would be a case of selective transnationalism; or he/she may be transnationally active in multiple spheres, which would be described as comprehensive transnationalism.

Transnationalism has also been observed at different degrees of intensity. Guarnizo (2000) labels as "core transnationalism" those activities that form an integral part of the individual's habitual life, and are undertaken on a regular basis. On the contrary, "expanded transnationalism" extends to occasional transnational activities.

In addition, Itzigsohn *et. al* (1999) distinguish between transnational practices in a strict sense (or "narrow transnationalism"), and in a broader sense (or "broad transnationalism"). The two types of transnationalism represent opposite poles of a *continuum* of different transnational practices. These two poles can be distinguished according to their degree of: (1) institutionalization, (2) individual involvement, (3) physical mobility (Itzigsohn *et al.*, 1999:317). Hence, a migrant could be deeply involved in a certain transnational economic activity and, at the same time, also experiment weak forms of transnational practices in another sphere.

Another dimension of variation in transnational activities involves space. Transnationalism is not a deterritorialized phenomenon: it relies on several geographical spaces at different levels. In fact, transnationalism is a multi-scale phenomenon, which stretches to many fields and contexts (local, regional, national): these different spatial layers, combined with each other, give rise to transnational social spaces.

At the same time, migrants' transnationalism and their transnational businesses are strictly connected with their embeddedness in several contexts and at different levels: in the home country, in the receiving country, and possibly in third countries (Levitt, Glick Schiller, 2004; Pries 2005). Starting from the definitions given by Portes (1995)⁴, we use both the concept of *structural embeddedness* and *relational embeddedness*. *Structural embeddedness* refers to settlement in the (political, economic, etc.) context in which immigrants operate. In this regard, we will analyze the socio-economic and political-institutional situation, and how entrepreneurs face that structure and take advantage of it. As for *relational embeddedness*, we consider immigrants' social networks,

⁴ With particular reference to immigrants, Portes (1995) defined the embeddedness, distinguishing between *relational embeddedness* and *structural embeddedness*. For Portes, *structural embeddedness* refers to the «limits and the possibilities offered by the polity and the society» (Portes, 1995:26), while «the assistance and constraints offered by the co-ethnic community, mediated through social networks, can be defined as instances of relational embeddedness» (*ibidem*). *Structural embeddedness* refers to the intertwining of politics and society, including government policies and what Portes calls societal reception (the attitudes of public opinion towards the newcomers). In Portes' definition, *relational embeddedness* refers to the relationship between co-ethnics, with particular reference to the constraints and resources that inclusion in the co-ethnic networks entails (an inclusion that allows them to mobilize resources and gain opportunities that would not otherwise be available).

including of co-ethnics, other immigrants and/or native contacts. In particular, in analyzing the relational embeddedness of transnational entrepreneurs, we will investigate the characteristics and size of such networks.

Migrants could experiment a *mixed embeddedness* (Kloosterman et al., 1999; Kloosterman, Rath, 2001; Kloosterman, 2010), that is, both a structural and a relational embeddedness. Following Kloosterman and Rath's definition, in our research the concept of mixed embeddedness refers to multiple levels of "inclusion": first of all, the structural conditions of the market (the opportunity structure at different levels: national, regional, urban and local/district one), how migrants are integrated into civil society and how they intervene in its social, economic and cultural dynamics. Embeddedness also refers to migrants' integration into social networks (not only co-ethnic networks), as well as their ability to take advantage of "ethnic" market niches.

2.2 Transnational entrepreneurship

In the world we described, with a heightened mobility, multifocal involvements and perspectives, and multisite migration paths, transnational businesses represents a case of transnationalism *par excellence*. At the same time, the topic of transnational businesses creates a connection between transnationalism and migrants' self-employment. Transnational entrepreneurs establish economic activities that use their contacts and knowledge beyond the borders of the country of immigration (Portes *et al.*, 1999). In this case, embeddedness in different contexts and at different levels provides the entrepreneur with the resources necessary for cross-border businesses (Drori *et al.*, 2009).

Transnational businesses exploit opportunities across national borders (Chen, Tan, 2009). Portes *et al.* (2002) define as "transnational" a business owned by migrants who depend on contacts and associates in another country, primarily the country of origin, for the success of their firms. A business can be transnational in various ways: exporting, importing, or mobilizing resources across borders of nation states. Thus, migrant transnational entrepreneurs are interesting cases of people who engage in a transnational economic activity. Analysing this kind of self-employment activity can be useful for understanding how migrants use their transnational practices and their multi-level embeddedness in different contexts in their business.

Chen and Tan (2009) developed a useful and complete model (Fig. 1) for studying immigrant transnational entrepreneurs (TEs). This model «takes into account factors at the macro, meso, and micro levels, and articulates the interplay of glocalised networks with both local and global connections and TE» (Chen, Tan, 2009:1081).

At the "macro" level, the focus is on the impact of the context (in particular, but not exclusively, the institutional context), in both the country of origin and the country of destination. Chen and Tan define the following as macro factors: globalization, market conditions in the country of arrival, ethnic pluralism and pre-migration context (in the country of origin). Government policies, which represent the institutional infrastructure of transnationalism, are also very important.

Through these policies, "receiving" States affect the number, origin and "type" of immigrants. State policies in the country of origin may be equally relevant, in that they determine economic agreements and benefits for expatriates. Another factor to consider is the economic development of the country of origin, which can profoundly affect the choice and the type of transnational activity.

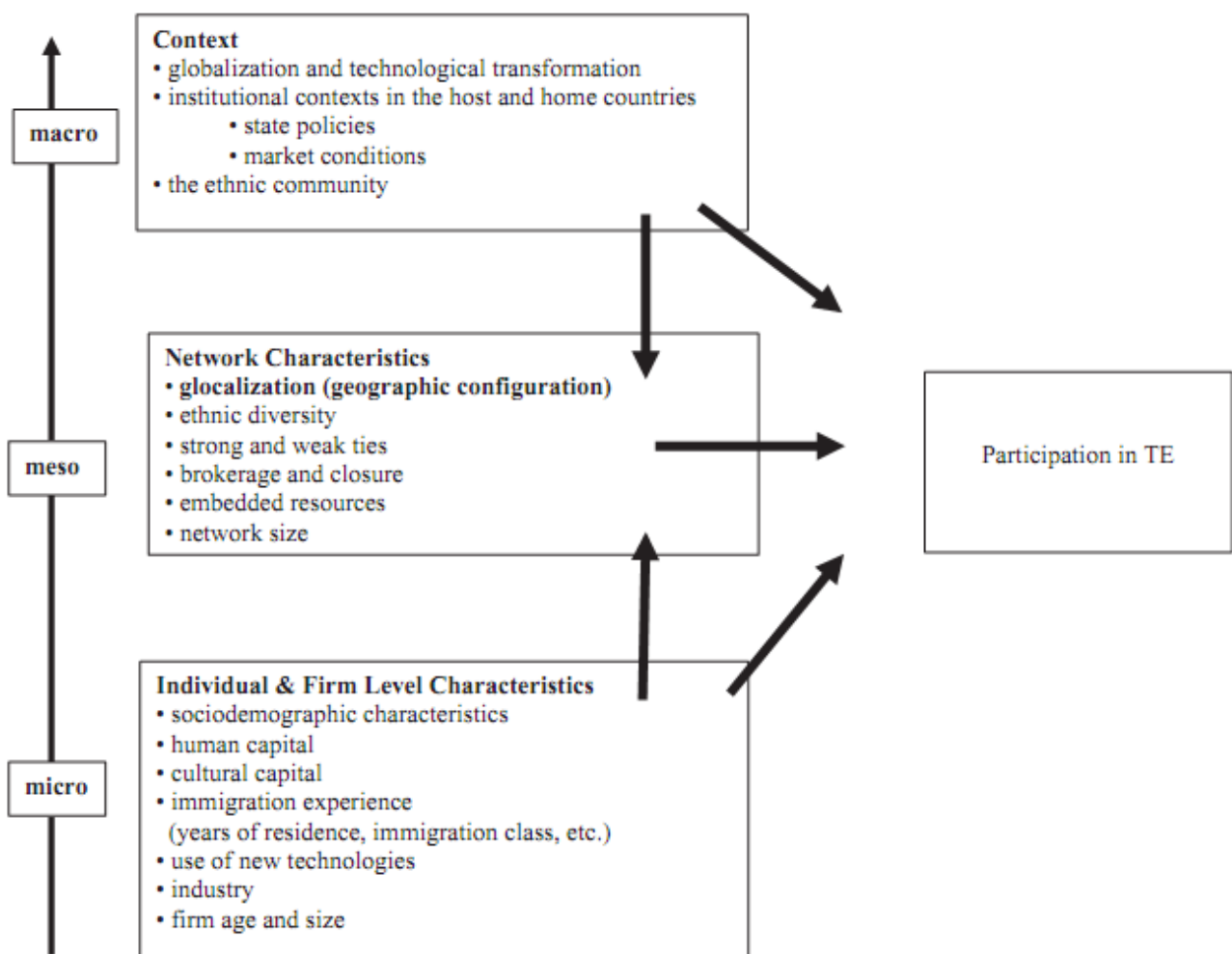
At the "micro" level, the focus is on individual forms of capital that transnational entrepreneurs mobilize, sometimes called "human capital". In particular, Chen and Tan emphasize the need to analyse the immigrants' general socio-demographic characteristics, skills, cultural capital and previous work experience.

Finally, the "meso" level refers to the social networks that TEs rely on for their business. In this regard, Chen and Tan introduce the concept of glocalised networks, i.e. networks with both local and global connections: «Challenging the 'deterritorialization' or the 'death of the geography' thesis that highlights how the local is overwhelmed or homogenized by the global, the term

'glocalization' is used to capture the multiple outcomes of the interaction between the local and the global» (Chen, Tan, 2009:1082). By *glocalized networks*, the authors mean networks of local embeddedness and global connections.

In conclusion, Chen and Tan's model shows a relevant theoretical progress in the research field of transnational immigrant businesses, which also moves closer to the Mixed Embeddedness theory. In fact, with regard to the resources that immigrant entrepreneurs activate to start and develop an independent business, there is an undeniable need to integrate an analysis of the networks and the different territorial levels where such networks are located (local, urban, national, transnational), with an analysis of personal skills and structural factors (e.g. the economic system, the labour market and the institutional structure). In this research, we draw on the notion of structural embeddedness to integrate these three levels.

Fig. 1. An integrative model of TE



Source: Chen, Tan (2009:1082)

3. Research goals

As mentioned above, the research we propose has two fundamental aims:

- 1) Understanding how transnational businesses are affected by personal skills, social resources (social networks, embeddedness in different groups, or relational embeddedness), and the context (embeddedness in different scale levels, or structural embeddedness).
- 2) Understanding the connection between different kinds of transnational practices and the way transnational business affects migrants' actions and belongings.

Since the topic of transnational businesses established by migrants involves studies of both transnationalism and migrants' self-employment, our project intends to contribute to both these fields of research.

Firstly, we intend to study what kind of resources (personal skills, personal contacts and context opportunities) are relied upon by immigrant entrepreneurs who do transnational business. In particular, we focus on the influence of structural characteristics and institutional conditions (e.g. labor market and economic status), mainly of the country of destination and the country of origin; the role of the contacts (personal social networks); and the personal skills used. At the same time, we will also research where (at what level, from which groups) migrant entrepreneurs with a transnational business obtain these resources. In this regard, we will study the embeddedness of Moroccan entrepreneurs in different scales (country of origin, country of immigration, other countries; local, regional, national, and transnational level) and groups (natives, co-ethnics, other immigrants, other people in other countries etc.).

Secondly, this project contributes to the discussion about the different kinds of transnationalism and belongings. The level at which transnational businesses obtain their resources is strictly connected to the embeddedness of migrant entrepreneurs in different places and groups. For this reason, our research also focuses on the different forms and intensities of transnational behaviors (see Section 2). By studying a particular kind of transnational practices, namely migrants' transnational businesses, our research seeks to further disentangle the interconnections and interplay among different types of transnationalism (economic, social/relational, and political). In particular, we will be able to observe whether transnational businesses are affected by other forms of transnationalism, like the social/relational one: for example, do migrants with many transnational contacts develop transnational businesses that rely on their networks? If so, why is this?

Moreover, we will analyze how different forms of belonging relate to transnational practices. Specifically, we are interested in verifying whether immigrants who own transnational businesses develop different belongings than those who do not.

Scientific relevance

This research will further our knowledge in to different, yet strictly interconnected fields: transnational business and economics, and immigrant transnationalism.

As suggested by Chen and Tan's (2009) model, this project combines the macro (economic and politic context), meso (social networks) and micro (personal characteristics) level. While accounting for all these three levels is surely a challenging goal, this strategy would yield substantial advances in our understanding of migrant transnational businesses.

Secondly, this research is innovative in that it explicitly focuses on the social networks of immigrant entrepreneurs. As discussed by Chen and Tan (2009), few studies have rigorously analyzed the social network structure of entrepreneurs with a transnational business.

Thirdly, the comparison between entrepreneurs with a transnational business and entrepreneurs with a not transnational business provides an advance in the field, better clarifying the particularities that characterize entrepreneurs with transnational businesses.

By focusing on both transnational and non-transnational businesses, we can understand what is different about the resources activated by transnational immigrant entrepreneurs, and the level at

which they mobilize these resources. In this regard, one of the aims of our research is to partially fill a gap within the current strand of literature on migrant transnational entrepreneurship: it is not still clear how the characteristics and resources on which transnational migrant entrepreneurs rely are different in comparison with non-transnational entrepreneurs.

Furthermore, we this study will contribute to the field of immigrant transnationalism. Firstly, we use both quantitative measures and a social network approach. The latter is still not frequently used in studies on the topic, but certainly a fruitful perspective⁵.

Secondly, we take into consideration not just one, but all the three main aspects of immigrant transnationalism, namely economic, political, and social/relational transnationalism. Only few studies have encompassed all these dimensions.

Thirdly, our analysis will not be limited to immigrants' home and host countries, it will also account for the possibility that migrants operate and establish networks and businesses in third countries.

This study will be innovative in another regard: it will study one national group across two cities in two national contexts. While comparisons have usually been made between different national groups in the same city, or different cities in the same state, to our knowledge there is no existing study that compares the same national groups across different cities and states. However, this kind of comparison is crucial to address the issue of immigrants' structural embeddedness.

Societal relevance

This research has a strong societal relevance. Immigrant entrepreneurship and transnational entrepreneurship in particular, is one of the way in which policy-makers could tackle immigrant marginalization and facilitate immigrants' economic integration.

Hence, the project has a societal impact for two main reasons:

- 1) With cross-border movements and communication increasingly widespread and accessible, we can expect that more and more migrants in the future will try to establish businesses connecting different places in the world. Transnational entrepreneurship could also be a way to exit from unstable and low profitable forms of small business. In this context, our research will hopefully help decision-makers to better understand the immigrant transnational entrepreneurship, and eventually implement policies that support it as a way towards immigrants' economic integration.
- 2) Immigrant entrepreneurs themselves would benefit from knowing which resources and social contacts can help them develop transnational businesses. Of course, our findings would be relevant not only for immigrants who directly participated in the research, but for other immigrant entrepreneurs as well. For example, they could compare their networks with the ones of the most successful transnational entrepreneurs.

⁵ See: Molina, Herz, Petermann 2012, *Defining and Measuring Transnational Fields* and Vacca R. 2013, *Bridging across nations, the social capital of diversity, brokerage and closure in transnational migrant networks: a study on assimilation patterns in Milan and Barcelona*, Ph.D dissertation.

4. Research design and methods

In this section we will mainly refer to Chen and Tan (2009) and the Mixed Embeddedness theory.

Our strategy is to carry out a comparative study based on the “contrast of contexts” method (Skocpol, 1984:177), so as to properly assess the role of structural embeddedness. We intend to compare two populations from the same national group (Moroccan) across two different contexts, in order to understand how certain conditions (policies, differences in legislation, economies, etc.) play a role in the processes investigated. This method will allow us to evaluate how transnational business practices vary according to structural and institutional conditions. We chose Amsterdam and Milan as research sites because these two cities are very different contexts, specifically with regard to policies, social environment, size of immigrant populations, diffusion of entrepreneurial activities. We expect such differences to affect transnational and entrepreneurial practices among immigrants.

Studying exclusively migrants from Morocco will allow us to control for nationality as a variable. In this way, our analysis will be cleared from the confounding effect of possible variations across immigrant nationalities, and rather focus on variations between the two cities and national contexts, and their effects on transnational entrepreneurship.

We chose to study Moroccan migrants for two main reasons:

- i. They are one of the most significant immigrant groups in both Amsterdam and in Milan, for history of migration, time of settlement and size of the population.
- ii. Nonetheless, their population has different sizes in the two cities: they are 71,000 in Amsterdam (9% of the total population), only 8,000 in Milan (0.6% of the total population). Thus we will be able to investigate whether and how the size and strength of their co-national community plays a role for immigrant entrepreneurs. Is a large and strong co-national community in the host city an advantage or a source of competition for immigrant entrepreneurs? Does it provide support or rather create constraints to transnational businesses?

Both transnational and non-transnational entrepreneurs will be sampled. The latter group is defined here as a residual category, including immigrant entrepreneurs who do not engage in transnational economic activities. This distinction will allow us to study the differences between migrants who are involved in transnational economic activities, migrants whose business is strictly local. Since our main focus is on transnational economic activities, and the non-transnational businesses are basically used as a control group, the number of interviews will be higher among transnational than non-transnational entrepreneurs.

As for the definition of transnational business, we will consider as transnational those companies that import and export goods, and those that import products from their country of origin (or from third countries) in order to retail them directly in their country of settlement, even without the immigrant owner regularly moving across national borders.

We will divide the sample in potentially transnational businesses (import/export activities and similar) and potentially non-transnational businesses. This distinction will allow us:

- i. To verify if transnational economic activities *per* definition (i.e. import/export businesses) entail transnational practices for the immigrant self-employer.
- ii. To focus selection on transnational businesses while at the same time balancing the sample, so as to have a sufficient number of cases in the two sub-groups and be able to compare them. This criterion will be used only for selecting the businesses.

Self-employed immigrants with different levels of education will be interviewed. We will include in the "medium-high" education level respondents with at least a high school degree. Reaching respondents with various levels of education will allow us to see whether and how the owner's human capital (education and previous work experience) plays a role in the start-up of a transnational business. It should be noted that the level of education is also a factor that may

influence the composition and structure of the self-employer’s social network, and the way social networks are mobilized.

This sampling strategy will allow us to analyze different profiles of immigrant entrepreneurs, in order to see how the use of networks and opportunities (resulting from the integration in a given context) changes as a function of the education level (and human capital in general), and type of economic activity (transnational vs non-transnational).

This is the first step of the research. In this phase, we plan to interview about 100 immigrant entrepreneurs (50 for each city), distributed as follows:

Potentially transnational Businesses (I/E)		Other Businesses	
<i>Education level qualification</i>		<i>Education level qualification</i>	
<i>medium-low</i>	<i>medium-high</i>	<i>medium-low</i>	<i>medium-high</i>
<i>Milan</i>			
15	15	10	10
<i>Amsterdam</i>			
15	15	10	10

Interviews will be based on a questionnaire that alternates closed questions, social network analysis items, and open-ended questions. Open-ended questions will be answered orally, so as to encourage fluidity and provide more details.

The interview/questionnaire will be divided into five sections:

- i. *Socio-demographic characteristics* (written questionnaire). This part collects information about gender, year and place of birth, place of residence, nationality, marital status, nationality of the spouse (if any), children, year of arrival in the country, year of starting current business activity.
- ii. *Entrepreneurial business in general* (interview). This will investigate previous work experience (in both the home and host countries), business start-up (sector choice and motivation for transnational dealings), support for start-up and consolidation (with particular attention to institutional policies and support from social contacts, including co-ethnics, other immigrants, and natives), and employees.
- iii. *Business transnationalism* (questionnaire and interview). This section will obtain data on resources and support for the respondent’s transnational business, business trips, business relationships, co-workers and employees, as well as suppliers and customers.
- iv. *Social networks* (questionnaire, and social network collection methods). This part will investigate the composition and characteristics of respondents’ networks (distinguishing between networks specifically mobilized for the business and “general” networks), and the frequency of relationships with friends and acquaintances.
- v. *Transnationalism/bifocality (in general)* (questionnaire). These questions will be based on a number of indicators on transnational practices among immigrant entrepreneurs. For example: frequency of trips to the home country (excluding business trips), time spent in the home country in one year, communications with the home country (excluding business communications), economic aid to relatives and friends (and money transfers to the home country), sending and/or receiving goods and products to and from the home country (other than for business), investments and property ownership in the home country, participation in activities, associations, etc. related to or located in the country of origin, participation in activities, associations etc. related to the host country, identification with the values and

traditions of the host country, life satisfaction in the host country, discrimination perception, and plans for the future.

The second step of the research consists in further interviews in both cities. In the second stage we plan to interview other 50 entrepreneurs in each city (100 in total), chosen randomly in order to increase the sample for statistical robustness. In this second stage we will use a different approach, without distinguishing in advance between entrepreneurs with a transnational business and entrepreneurs with a non-transnational business. In this part, the interviews will be composed only by the questionnaire (only closed questions, no open questions) and personal network sections.

In this phase, the researcher will be assisted by two more interviewers, one in Milan and one in Amsterdam. In both cases, the selected interviewer will also be a young researcher.

To determine if an immigrant entrepreneur can be considered transnational, we follow Portes et al.'s approach (2002), with two key questions:

Is there a considerable part of your business related with your country of origin or other countries?

0. No
1. Yes

To what extent does the success of your business depend on regular contacts with people (or other companies) in your country of origin or located in other countries (no country of immigration)?

0. Does not depend at all
1. Depends somewhat
2. Depends much/very much

We will define as transnational entrepreneur a respondent who answers “Yes” to the first question, and/or “1” or “2” to the second one.

5. Expected output

This research will have three main kinds of output.

The first one is connected to the scientific impact of the study. In order to show the findings of the research a report of the results will be done (in Italian and in English). The report will be written around two months before the end of the research (end of August/beginning of September).

An additional outlet for our results will be academic publications, in relevant scientific journals, both Italian (e.g. *Mondi Migranti*) and international ones (e.g. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, etc.).

The second kind of output is related to the societal relevance of this project. We would like to produce a short free e-book (in Italian and in English) presenting the research, illustrating the cases of some successful entrepreneurs (in particular in terms of personal skills and social network), and showing how immigrant entrepreneurs could check and update their skills and social networks. We could do that in order to allow immigrant entrepreneurs to better develop their business⁶. In addition to e-books, this kind of publication could have further venues, including web sites and booklets or posters for community associations. The key to this sort of output is the open-access nature of the result. In this sense, we intend to give back the research results to the immigrant community that participated to the project.

The third output is connected to the international collaborations that this research is based upon. Our project is inherently interdisciplinary, and stems from a wide and rich network of international

⁶ An example of this kind of initiative is the following book: Molina, Valenzuela García, Pampalona, 2012. *Autodiagnóstico de las redes personales de emprendedores de origen emigrante*.

collaborations across European and American universities, as discussed in section 1. As such, it could serve to establish and consolidate a European and American network of social scientists interested in researching and suggesting policies on immigrant entrepreneurship and transnationalism. The authors of this project are already collaborating and creating connections among American and European migration and social network scholars. This research would be a significant step forward in this direction, by strengthening such connections and expanding the work that this research network has already completed.

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