

Interest of the Algerian diaspora for entrepreneurship in homeland: proposal of a model for its concretisation

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Abstract

In the era of globalisation, diaspora is seen as a driving force for economic development in the countries of origin and for positive changes in the host countries. The Algerian diaspora represents a real opportunity and potential of entrepreneurs that are not exploited. This article attempts to explore the factors that encourage or hinder the entrepreneurial activities of the Algerian diaspora in its country of origin through a field survey based on 142 entrepreneurs from the studied diaspora. To do this, a logistic econometric modelling has been implemented to explain the entrepreneurial event (business creation), and the explanatory variables are the following factors: psychological (experience, training), contextual (discrimination, opportunities, and patriotism) sociological (help of relatives and other contacts) and economic (personal resources and those of the state). It appears that the probability of the project in Algeria is stronger as its leader from the Algerian diaspora has a great entrepreneurial potential and financial means, is an opportunist and patriot, benefits from the help of the state and knows how to activate, in case of difficulties, their personal contacts.

Keywords

Diaspora, Algerian diaspora, entrepreneurship, creation of business, determinants, explanatory variables, homeland

For citation: Haddad A., Lassoued R. (2024) Interest of the Algerian diaspora for entrepreneurship in homeland: proposal of a model for its concretisation. *Vestnik universiteta*, no. 9, pp. 154–162.



Интерес алжирской диаспоры к предпринимательству в стране происхождения: предложение модели для конкретизации

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Аннотация

В эпоху глобализации диаспора рассматривается в качестве движущей силы экономического развития в странах происхождения и позитивных изменений в принимающих странах. Алжирская диаспора представляет собой реальную возможность и потенциал предпринимателей, которые не используются. В этом исследовании предпринята попытка изучить факторы, которые поощряют предпринимательскую деятельность алжирской диаспоры в стране ее происхождения или препятствуют ей, путем проведения обследования на местах на основе данных исследования 142 предпринимателей из изучаемой диаспоры. Для этого было реализовано логистическое эконометрическое моделирование, чтобы объяснить предпринимательское событие (создание бизнеса), а пояснительными переменными выступили следующие факторы: психологический (опыт, обучение), контекстуальный (дискриминация, возможности и патриотизм) социологические (помощь родственников и другие контакты) и экономические (личные и государственные ресурсы). Как представляется, вероятность осуществления проекта в Алжире тем более велика, что его руководитель из алжирской диаспоры обладает огромным предпринимательским потенциалом и финансовыми средствами, является оппортунистом и патриотом, пользуется помощью государства и знает, как активизировать в случае трудностей его личные контакты.

Ключевые слова

Диаспора, алжирская диаспора, предпринимательство, создание бизнеса, детерминанты, пояснительные переменные, страна происхождения

Для цитирования: Хаддад А., Лассауде Р. Интерес алжирской диаспоры к предпринимательству в стране происхождения: предложение модели для конкретизации // Вестник университета. 2024. № 9. С. 154–162.



INTRODUCTION

In an era of globalisation, diaspora is now seen as an agent of economic development in their countries of origin and positive changes in their host societies. They therefore play a leading role in strengthening cooperation between the two origin and host societies and make positive contributions.

Several countries have seen the development of certain sectors of activity thanks to the return of their diaspora to their countries of origin (India, China, Taiwan, South Korea) [1]. Publications and case studies (A. Saxenian, J.-B. Meyer, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) have examined the role of the diaspora in different countries. [2; 3].

80% of the Algerian diaspora living in North America (United States of America and Canada) is composed of high graduates, according to sociologist H. Khelfaoui [4]. The Network of Algerian graduates of French universities and universities and the International association of the Algerian diaspora, identified, in Europe and particularly in France where the Algerian community is much more imposing between 300,000 and 400,000 Algerian or Algerian-born executives and entrepreneurs who generate tens of billions of euros in tax revenue each year. A priori, if this diaspora is well encouraged and accepted in their host country, it should be an asset for the national economy.

To this end, this study is looking for ways and means to increase the participation of the private sector in the recovery of an economy, long dependent on oil revenues. It analyses the results of a survey conducted among the Algerian diaspora returned to their country of origin or still living abroad. The general objective of this survey is to provide details on the determinants of entrepreneurial creation of the Algerian diaspora wishing to get involved in the development of their country of origin.

To better analyse the subject in question, we are conducting this study in order to provide an answer to the following question: what are the determining factors of the entrepreneur of the Algerian diaspora in its country of origin, Algeria?

The present study suggests, through the models of the formation of the entrepreneurial act, the interaction of several factors. Four dimensions can be considered of a psychological, sociocultural, economic and contextual (structural) nature. Thus, let us assume the following research hypothesis.

The following determinants of the entrepreneurial act, psychological (P: experience, schooling), contextual (C: discrimination, opportunity and patriotism), sociological (S: strong ties and weak ties) and economic (E: personal resources and state aid), significantly predict the decision to set up a business in the Algerian diaspora (Y).

To answer this question, this paper is structured as follows: first, it will explain the general framework of the state of research on diasporic entrepreneurship and the definition of the explanatory variables used. Secondly, the study presents the research methodology, presents the results and provides a discussion.

GENERAL RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

DIASPORA AND DEVELOPMENT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Diaspora contributions to the development of the country of origin are numerous, including the transfer of technology, knowledge and skills, transfers of funds that help increase foreign currency reserves, investment and entrepreneurial activities.

Countries such as China and India have achieved achievements, including increasing the share of foreign investment in their economies. This has had the effect of accelerating the economic and social growth and development of these countries of origin. And diasporic skills are therefore the main actors of this advancement [4].

However, very little research has been conducted on how diaspora entrepreneurs contribute to the economic development of their country of origin, through what is sometimes called diaspora direct investment. A study by the Migration Policy Institute in Washington argues that diaspora entrepreneurship can potentially contribute to development in four different ways:

- fostering business development, job creation and innovation;
- creating economic, social and political capital through global networks [5];
- engaging the social capital of the country of origin through cultural and linguistic understanding [6];
- developing economic growth [7].

However, not all forms of entrepreneurship contribute equally to economic development [5]. Entrepreneurs by necessity – who create their own small businesses because they cannot find other jobs – have a minimal effect on economic development. At best, they support each other and help reduce overt unemployment. Moreover, “entrepreneurs of opportunity are those who reform or revolutionize the production model” [8, p. 132]. They are much more likely to have a positive impact on economic development as they seize and take advantage of market openings [9].

It is also recognised that a number of migrants do not have entrepreneurial reflexes. This observation has been reinforced by the fact that it is even more difficult to undertake at a distance, in a country left for more than 10 years, and therefore the daily realities and constraints of companies have necessarily changed.

In addition, a number of empirical studies have reached a consensus on the positive relationship between return migration and migrant entrepreneurship. M.-A. Benaïssa's thesis focuses on the return migration of the Moroccan diaspora from France and the creation of innovative projects in Morocco [10]. The survey was conducted among 200 return migrants including 43 entrepreneurs. The study proposes a model explaining the probability that a qualified Moroccan migrant from France has an entrepreneurial intention upon his return to Morocco. The explanatory variables that can affect this decision are related to the situation in the country of origin (in Morocco), the experience in the host country (in France), possibility of a return to Morocco, and entrepreneurial intention, then its realisation through the implementation of a business creation project possibly innovative in the country.

According to the Return Migration to the Maghreb survey (Fr. Migration de retour au Maghreb, hereinafter referred to as MIREM) which targeted three Maghreb countries, including Algeria, the decision to set up businesses by North African return migrants is influenced by several explanatory variables including the impact of the migration experience (duration, vocational training, investment abroad), the environment and the context of the country of origin.

Concerning the work done in Algeria on the subject in question, they are few and often limited to the analysis of remittances and brain drain. In addition, their information is based on data from the MIREM survey. Thus, very few studies have been conducted on the other consequences of the emigration process, precisely the aspect of business creation by the Algerian diaspora in its country of origin. Empirical data and available statistics are almost absent except for the study conducted by researcher A. Nafa who studied the contribution of the Algerian diaspora to investment in Algeria. The questionnaire survey was conducted among 138 entrepreneurs (active, intent, discontinued) and led to the observation that the diaspora has financial means, technical expertise, are entrepreneurs or heads of large companies or multinationals in the host country and they operate in high technology sectors [11].

THE ENTREPRENEURIAL DETERMINANTS

The work of the business start-up psychologist A. Shapero, certainly the most influential in the scientific community, have resulted in a general model which explains business creation by a combination of four factors: psychological (strength and relevance of motivations, personal qualities of the entrepreneur); sociological (influences from different environments known and frequented by the entrepreneur: family, schools, society, companies, professions, territory); economic (access to the necessary resources to undertake: information, technologies, materials and equipment, personnel, money, relations, support state); situation, or contextual, factor (psychological and/or material ruptures that precipitate the decision) [12].

According to this theoretical model, the existence of specific motivations and qualities of the individual (psychological factors) makes the act of undertaking credible. The valorisation by the individual and their circles or reference groups of the image of entrepreneurship (socio-cultural factors) makes the act of undertaking

desirable. The ability of the individual to gather the means or resources necessary to realise his project (economic factors) makes this act feasible. Finally, the situation (pull, push and/or intermediary) which precipitates the course of things by pushing the individual to act (contextual factors) is a trigger of the act of undertaking.

The transition from entrepreneurial intent to the act of entrepreneurship is caused by the irruption in the process of positive or negative triggers. However, of course, even if the individual presents a willingness to undertake (psychological factors), if they have undergone a “displacement” (situation factors) and if they have in their entourage credible examples (socio-cultural factors), it is also necessary, in order for it to take action, that it be able to dispose of or gather the necessary resources to undertake (economic factors: material, human and financial resources).

DEFINITION OF THE EXPLANATORY VARIABLES USED

1. The psychological variable. It refers to the willingness to undertake. In this variable we find the personal characteristics of the individual that are supposed to have an influence on entrepreneurial success. Regarding our model, we hypothesise that two factors (the level of training and previous work experience) would be relevant to explain the psychological variable of successful entrepreneurs in the Algerian context.

2. The contextual variable. The art of entrepreneurship cannot be isolated from the context in which it occurs or in relation to which it is situated. The context acts on the act by causing psychological and/or material ruptures that can precipitate the entrepreneurial decision. “It is therefore clear that an important event affecting the life of a potential entrepreneur can serve as a catalyst for entrepreneurial action” [13, p. 69]. For A. Shapero, most entrepreneurs initially experienced a “displacement”, that is, an accident in their personal or professional lives [12].

In this research, it was discussed with the respondents to identify the factors that triggered their decision to undertake. Is business creation in Algeria perceived by migrants as a strategy to circumvent the discrimination and frustrations experienced in the host country (negative factors), or is it the result of a logic of exploitation of the opportunities identified in the environment of the country of origin (positive factors), or is it perceived as a duty to contribute to the development of the nation?

The analysis of the writings dealing with the entrepreneurship of emigrants in their country of origin (E. Santelli and M. Madoui), allowed us to identify three situations motivating the act of undertaking: opportunity, discrimination, and patriotism [14–17].

3. The sociological variable. Several recent studies in entrepreneurship emphasise the importance of the entrepreneur's personal relationships for the success of their approach. The term “network” in the economic literature describes certain economic developments such as alliances and partnerships between firms, the increasing use of interpersonal contacts, etc. In entrepreneurship, the network provides the resources of all kinds (social capital) that the entrepreneur needs to create and develop the business.

The research conducted by M.S. Musette as part of the MIREM project, provides a relevant explanatory framework, “Human and social capital have a definite impact on the socio-professional reintegration of migrants in their country of origin, as well as on their ability to invest after return” [18].

Also for the start of their project, the first people who are able to provide them with logistical support, accommodation, skills or even their collaboration, are family members [14].

4. The economic variable. Business creation is feasible when the potential entrepreneur is able to raise start-up capital, find a competent and cheap workforce, surround himself with a team of competent collaborators, access the market and have the support of the State.

The availability of financial resources as well as support and aid of different kinds from the political and economic environment directly influence the propensity to undertake according to A. Shapero and L. Sokol. The financial resources needed to start, survive and grow a business have many origins. They are generally divided between the entrepreneur's personal finances, family, financial institutions (banks) and government agencies [19].

Various researches conducted in the Maghreb and Algeria shows that when starting, entrepreneurs from the diaspora tend to rely largely on their personal resources. However, institutional support concerns few return

migrants who come to invest in the country. Self-financing, family support and networks of knowledge or mutual aid, both in the country of immigration and in the country of origin, are resources that describe the potential that migrants have been able to benefit from by investing in their country of origin [20]. This is what M. Madoui reports about Algerian immigrant entrepreneurs, where he mentions that their transfers of funds serve not only to satisfy the consumption needs of the family but also to finance certain initiatives and especially the creation of businesses. Emigrants reinvest this money in the opening of small businesses or to help their family members create small businesses that offer young people in the region, often unemployed and without qualifications, work opportunities [17].

METHODOLOGY

In order to confirm or refute the hypotheses of our study, the methodology followed is that of econometrically modelling the probability of the existence of a business creation project by the Algerian diaspora using logistic regression to examine the association of explanatory variables with the variable explained based on A. Shapiro's entrepreneurial event model [12] enriched by the contributions of the sociologists M. Madoui and E. Santelli.

Logistic regression therefore allows to model the probability of an event occurring (dichotomous or binary variable, that is to say that can take only two 0/1 values, for example, Pass/Fail, Yes/No) given the values of a set of quantitative and/or qualitative (continuous or categorical) descriptive variables. Mathematically, regressive variables are arithmetic means of explanatory variables [21]. Once the regressive variables have been generated, the link between the dependent variable (entrepreneurial event) and the explanatory variables of the model (the different parameters) will be described using the following binary logistic regression model:

$$\hat{Y} = \text{Logit } P(Y = 1 | X_i) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \cdot X_1 + \beta_2 \cdot X_2 + \beta_3 \cdot X_3 + \beta_4 \cdot X_4. \quad (1)$$

Thus, by elaborating the logistics function, we can determine the probability of undertaking (Y – business creation: achieved or desired) of a potential entrepreneur, given the perception of its intrinsic characteristics (X_1 – psychological factors), its discriminations and disadvantages, its business opportunities and patriotism (X_2 – contextual factors), its social capital (X_3 – sociological factors) and its financial means and the various supports of the state (X_4 – economic factors). This logistics function is calculated as follows:

$$P(y = 1 | X_i) = \frac{e^{\beta_0 + \beta_1 \cdot X_1 + \beta_2 \cdot X_2 + \beta_3 \cdot X_3 + \beta_4 \cdot X_4}}{1 + e^{\beta_0 + \beta_1 \cdot X_1 + \beta_2 \cdot X_2 + \beta_3 \cdot X_3 + \beta_4 \cdot X_4}}. \quad (2)$$

ANALYSIS OF ECONOMETRIC RESULTS

By estimating the β_i by maximum likelihood under the null hypothesis $H_0: \beta_i = 0$, the analogy of the R^2 of the least squares regression is, in the case of our model, the pseudo- R^2 , also called Nagelkerke's R^2 , which provides information on the explanatory power of the model. This statistic is between 0 and 1. If this pseudo- R^2 is 0, we will say that the variations of Y_i are not explained by the X_i . If this R^2 is 1, the variations of Y are explained by the X_i (table 1).

Table 1

Model recap

Step	Log-likelihood-2	R-two Cox and Snell	R-two Nagelkerke
1	16.809a	.390	.851

Note: Log-likelihood – determination of the optimal values of the estimated coefficients (β); R-two Cox and Snell – pseudo- R^2

Compiled by the authors on the materials of the study

From the log-likelihood statistic obtained, we can say that the model is significant. Thus, in the case of our modeling, the value of Nagelkerke's R2 is 0.851. These results confirm the validity of the model that was developed to explain business creation by the Algerian diaspora in its country of origin since 85% of the variance of the variable Y (business creation) is explained by the four main families of variables advocated by A. Shapero in his theoretical model, namely, psychological, contextual, sociological and economic variables. The remaining 15% is explained by the other variables not considered in this model. Moreover, according to the confusion matrix, this model has a good predictive power since it correctly predicts 97% of cases, which is more than acceptable. In other words, the forecasts made will be 9.7 times out of 10 correct (table 2).

Table 2

Variables in the equation

Variable		B	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1a	Psychological	2.536	6.991	1	.008***	12.625
	Contextual	2.493	2.325	1	.127	12.101
	Sociological	2.571	3.462	1	.063*	13.078
	Economic	2.788	4.321	1	.038**	16.256
	Constant	-20.464	8.343	1	.004***	.000

Note: B – coefficient; Wald – test statistic; df – degrees of freedom; Sig. – significance; Exp(B) – exponentiated coefficient; * – signification at 90%; ** signification at 95%; *** signification at 99%

Compiled by the authors on the materials of the study

All the variables of the model seem significant; we see their positive impact on business creation with the exception of the context variable. Indeed and contrary to what one can imagine from A. Shapero's study, there are weakly significant interactions ($p > 0.1$) between the entrepreneurial event and the contextual factor on the one hand and sociological on the other hand. This is justified by the fact that the majority of the entrepreneurs studied stated that they did not perceive discrimination likely to precipitate the decision to undertake. It is rather the desire to exploit opportunities and contribute to the development of the country that seems to significantly influence this decision. Regarding the sociological factor, the influence is not significant ($p = 0.063$), this is due to the fact that a small proportion inquires about the economic potential of the project and the necessary steps to create a business through their weak contacts. On the other hand, we found highly significant interactions between the decision to set up a business and psychological ($p < 0.01$) and economic ($p < 0.05$) factors.

MARGINAL EFFECTS

In addition, we can calculate the marginal effects that measure the sensitivity of this probability to changes in the explanatory variables. And it is precisely in this sense, that the use of a logit model can help the analysis of these marginal effects. Thus, we will focus our attention on the odd ratio since it measures the association of variables with the probability in question (the exponential coefficient of an explanatory variable interpreting itself as its odd ratio). To measure the marginal effect in a more concrete way and to know the impact of an explanatory variable (per unit) on the probability of the variable explained, in this case the creation of an enterprise, the coefficients shall be interpreted by the following formula:

$$\Delta probability (Y = 1) = \beta_i p (1 - p)$$
 (3)

where β_i – estimated coefficient of variable i ; p – the average of the binary variable to explain $Y = 0.91$; valid $N = 142$.

The probability (indicated by the average) that an individual in our sample creates a company in Algeria is 91% (table 3).

Table 3

Marginal effects

Variable	B	Exp (B)	Δ prob, %
Psychological	2.536	12.625	21
Contextual	2.493	12.101	20
Sociological	2.571	13.078	21
Economic	2.788	16.256	23

Compiled by the authors on the materials of the study

Concerning odds ratio, these results confirm a positive correlation between the dependent variable Y and all explanatory variables X, because all odd ratios are more than 1.

The psychological variable has an odd ratio of 12.625. This indicates that the fact that an individual has entrepreneurial potential (high level of education and previous professional experience) is 12 times more likely to create a business. This probability thus increases by 21% (an improvement of one point in the psychological variable induces a 21% increase in the probability of undertaking).

For a context odd ratio of 12.101 means that migrants who have been motivated by exploiting the opportunities of the country of origin and contributing to its development or by the perception of discrimination in the host country are 12 times more likely to conduct a business creation project.

The sociological variable has an odd ratio of 13.078, which can be interpreted that migrants who are helped by their personal contacts (strong ties) and impersonal (weak ties) are 13 times more likely to undertake in their country of origin. In other words, if you increase the potential entrepreneur's contacts by one point, then their chances of starting a business increase by 21%.

Concerning the economic variable, the migrant who has the means or resources necessary to conduct their project and who receives assistance from the state is 16 times more likely to create a business. Financial means and state support increases the probability of business creation by 23%.

CONCLUSION

Countries of origin can reap many benefits from the return of their diaspora only if the economic and social prospects of these countries can provide the framework and context for their development. Indeed, many timely factors, both in the countries of origin and in the host countries, contribute to enhancing the development potential of return migration. These factors concern not only the characteristics of the migrants themselves, but also the policies implemented in the host countries and the socio-economic and institutional environment of the countries of origin.

The Algerian diaspora represents a real opportunity and a very little exploited potential. It is willing to participate in the economic development of its country. It wants to put its know-how at the service of the country, create wealth and create jobs. Not only that, it also brings innovation.

As several studies confirm, potential entrepreneurs in the diaspora are discouraged from investing or starting businesses if their country of origin is economically unstable. Peace, stability, the construction of basic infrastructure and the discovery of ways of adjusting between the proposed projects and the needs in terms of national sectoral and regional development strategies are prerequisites for substantial investment by the diaspora.

Our contribution focused on the establishment of a conceptual framework to study the formation of the entrepreneurial act in the context of Algerian emigration. The conclusions of our logistic model show that the probability of undertaking in Algeria is higher when the project leader stemming from the Algerian diaspora has a great entrepreneurial potential and financial means, is opportunistic and patriotic, receives the help of the state and knows how to activate in case of difficulties their personal contacts.

For mentors, this model may prove relevant, insofar as it allows, from an accompanying perspective, to identify potential entrepreneurs from the diaspora who are more likely to become creators, through a simulator that once filled in indicates the probability of a business creation by a member of the diaspora.

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