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IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEURS IN FRANCE

in European overview *

The increasing visibility of foreign businesses in the commercial web of cities, their entry into the usual street scene, the reactions of French society and the socio-political issues knotted around urban perception of immigration have provoked and even forced the interest of researchers and also public powers, territorial communities and political parties. This interest is particularly enhanced by the fact that the emergence of immigrants in the field of entrepreneurship naturally poses the important question of the integration of immigrants in French society and how to get there - question henceforth publicly situated at the heart of French society with the creation in February, 1990 of the "Haut Comite a l'integration! ,(High Comity for **Integration**)

The geographer is naturally tempted to approach these questions through the angle of space and the relations that foreign entrepreneurs maintain with it at different echelons. So it would be that for a shopkeeper the choice of an urbanized area or a dynamic neighborhood, the seeking-out of a good location at an advantageous point in a system of streets and thoroughfares constitute elements as important for the strategy of an individual or group as the application of appropriate methods of management. Spatial strategies have rapidly evolved since the outset of the 80s, and new plans for action are being elaborated within French and European space in the perspective of the great single market of 1992. But before taking up this important point, it would appear helpful, in the framework of this international colloquium in this mecca of research on the ethnic enterprise, to provide

* the mans are not included

a run-through on the progression of research in France dealing with this subject and to venture a brief synthesis of our most recent findings concerning the upsurge and characteristics of ethnic entrepreneurship in France.

I - A NEW FIELD OF RESEARCH ON IMMIGRATION IN FRANCE

Scientific studies of ethnic entrepreneurship in France got underway fifteen years ago: they coincided with the triggering of the economic crisis and its implications in migration. Naturally this is not a sheer coincidence, for the crisis has favored the transfer of foreign salaries into the independent sector, and given an impetus to work commencing on this theme.

So much said, a thematic reading of this scientific advancing reveals the convergence of three types of approaches emanating principally from geographers, sociologists and anthropologists, economists seeming to stand somewhat aside, on this theme.

1) Approach deriving from societies of origin

A first series of studies proceeds from knowledge of the **sending country** and its migratory and professional relations with the receiving country. It is indeed on the basis of our knowledge of groups of tradespeople originating from Southern Tunisia and pursued in Parisian space, that we have begun to render apparent at one and the same time the process of the installation of grocers and pastry shops-eateries in Paris, the transfer of professional and community practices established at the heart of Maghreb societies for several centuries, and their positive adaptation to the commercial and social tissue of large urban conglomerations (SIMON 1976 and 1979). The role of community resources - "community" is

meant culturally and financially - in the settling in France of tradesmen issued from highly specific communities of the pre-Saharan regions of Maghreb (Jerbians and Ghomrasni from Tunisia, Mozabits from Algeria and Soussi from Morocco), the practice and mastery of a transnational migratory space (for ex. Concerning investments), the effects of such community migrations in the countries of origin --- all of these topics we amply developed in the studies of H. BOUBAKRI (1983, 1985, 1986) and in the recent (1989) thesis of R. AIT. OUAZIZ> (1989)

2) Urban analysis

The second approach is based upon the ever more visible presence of foreign shops in the spatial, economic and social web of the large French conglomerations of the Paris-Lyons-Marseilles axis, the major vector of Mediterranean and Maghreb immigration in France.

This is the most largely explored research path.. The overall study of a neighborhood or the business tissue in an immigrant neighborhood constitutes the most frequently used approach: in Marseilles "La Porte d'Aix" (HAYOT 1976, DAHAN 1986), in Lyons the old downtown neighborhoods (BELBAHRI 1986, ARIESE 1987), and in Paris "La Goutte d'Or (KHELIPA 1979, VUDDAMALAY 1985, TOUBON and MESSAMAH 1988), "le Temple" (ADELES 1981), and "le Sentier", "le Marche d'Aligre" (DE RUDDER and GUILLON 1986), the Chinese district of the 13th arrondissement (GUILLON and TABOADA-LEONETTI 1986). These many studies founded on the neighborhood have enabled researchers to refine concepts tied to ethnic businesses, to spotlight the multiplicity in forms of marking and appropriation of space,

and to elaborate upon the modalities of ethnic settling and investing of the city.

The interests of political (Ministries of Social Affairs, Equipment, and Culture) as well as economic (Chambers of Commerce) power have turned out to coincide with those of researchers already committed to urban analysis; this has - thanks to the financial and technical means put to work - paved the way for investigations dealing with geographically and demographically extended fields. So it is that the study effectuated by the MIGRINTER team on behalf of the "Ministere des Affaires Sociales" (1986) is based upon over 300 surveys of establishments in a typology of professional and urban situations in the Parisian urban district (Paris and its 1st "crown") and the provinces (the regions of Eastern France - Lorraine, Alsace - in the throes of crisis or mutation). Recently updated and published (MA MUNG and SIMON 1990), this research sheds new light upon the economics of Maghrebian and Asian businesses in France (start-up capital, turnover, profits) and upon the quite considerable mobility of these businessmen within this ethno-economic circuit.

3) Research on the artisan class and attempts at theorizing

The third recent research approach focuses upon the foreign artisan class, its renewal through contact with the industrial system and the underground economy, its booster role in professional success and social integration (MOROKVASIC 1987 and 1988, PALLIDA 1987 and 1988, AUVOLAT and BENNATIG 1988).

While dozens of colloquiums on worker migration have taken place since 1970, it was only at the end of 1987 (Dec. 17-18 ARIESE Lyon) that the first scientific gathering on "the migrant as economic actor" at long last took place. This meeting and its preparation (BATTEGAY and JOSEPH 1987) are at the origin of the first attempts at theorizing ethnic entrepreneurship with a cultural and comparative approach pertaining to Europe (WERBNER'S studies of Manchester and America (LIGHT)).

The relative newness of interest and the lack of critical distance in French research on ethnic entrepreneurship explain the gaps and backlogs of reflection on certain themes in comparison with investigations conducted in Great Britain and the United States, particularly as regards historical analysis of the phenomenon and the role of these communities as intermediating (or "middleman") minorities.

II A NEW "RACE D'ENTREPRENEURS" ?

The rapid development of foreign entrepreneurship in France has aroused acute interest in the various spheres of political, economic and social life. So it is that the high visibility of foreign (notably Maghrebian) businesses in the town center of DREUX has been perceived by a sizable percentage of the local population as the expression of an excessive presence of immigration in this symbol of a city. Some observers have deemed this minority domination of the business sector to be one of the principal factors explaining the success of the National Front candidate in the most recent local elections. We are dealing here with a long-standing French debate, going back as far as immigration in this country, as is illustrated by this statement of a xenophobic deputy during the

presentation and defense of a bill hostile to foreigners, exactly a century ago: "The foreigner is everywhere, he invades banks, high finance, and even the liberal professions, he profitably monopolizes certain business, certain industries which up until now, were in the hands of the French". ("Assemblée Nationale" November 25, 1889).

1) A long-existing phenomenon in the French economic web

The political debate is one expression of the reality of a phenomenon which has long since existed in the economy of the magnetic centers of immigration; this is confirmed by censuses of the past. The number of foreign managers in industry and commerce was in fact superior to the present-day figure (121000 in 1911; 60830 in 1982, 89945 in 1988, INSEE source), and the percentage of self-employed foreigners in the active foreign population was four times greater than today's: 20.4% of active foreigners in 1911, 5.8% in 1988.(fig. 1)

Prior to World War I, the overwhelming majority of craftsmen (67000) and foreign businessmen (43000) was composed of Europeans generally coming from neighboring countries (1/3 were Belgians generally specializing in hotels and Cafes; 1/3 were Italians traditionally installed in the construction sector, the remaining third consisted of Swissmen (hotels, watches and clocks, woodwork), Germans, Jews issued from Eastern Europe. In the aftermath of World War 'I ensues the arrival of Russians driven out and away by the Revolution of 1917 (the history and fate of aristocrats converted into taxi drivers is common knowledge), the installation of the first Chinese in Parisian businesses at the outset of the 1920s, the arrival of Algerian and Moroccan shopkeepers in

Marseilles and the industrial suburbs north of Paris: all of these events shall help to diversify the ethnic landscape of France as it is between the two world wars. From that time onwards, more than half of the foreign entrepreneurs reside in the Parisian urban district. And it is within pluri-ethnic neighborhoods ("Sentier", "Goutte d'Or") that highly active shopping and workshop areas are constituted; garment-making and garment-marketing activities mark off the space of these neighborhoods in such a way that even today, the imprint is there (J.C. TOUBON and Kh. MESSAMAH 1988).

The 1929-1930 crisis, the protectionism it yields (the special identity card bearing a "tradesman" mention dates from November, 1938), the occupation of France by the Germans, the persecutions which hit hard at the businessmen and artisans of the Parisian urban district who are Jewish: to a large extent, these factors explain the overall decline in the number of foreign entrepreneurs after World War II (there were but 40700 in 1968). Two structural factors add on their effects: the constant decline of independent labor in proportion to salaried labor (the latter has taken on particular importance for immigrants), and also the integrative role of independent labor (or self-employment) in French society.

2) Revival and mutations of foreign entrepreneurship since the economic crisis

a) A very recent upsurge

The upsurge of foreign entrepreneurship in France was particularly marked in the 1970s and the 1980s; according to official sources, the number of industrial and commercial managers doubled (40724 in 1968, 50185 in 1975, 60830 in 1982,

89945 in 1988: source INSEE. R.G.P. Enquetes sur l'emploi). Foreign managers presently represent 5.8% of the active non-French population, while 5% of industrial and commercial managers are foreign. But if we take into account the projected number of entrepreneurs of foreign origin a generation from now, we had better double the just-cited figures. So it is that in 1982, the number of naturalized managers -whose ethnic origins often remain distinctly perceptible - is slightly superior to that of foreign self-employed (68000 as opposed to 62000. Source INSEE). On the basis of this, our estimate is that there exist in France as of 1989 around 160000 entrepreneurs who are foreign or of (recent) foreign origin. And this category constitutes an incontestably dynamic element in the animation and renewal of the economic web. And if we set aside buyouts or takeovers of agricultural concerns - this movement has long since existed in the agriculture of northern and southwestern France, and has taken on new vigor with the imminence of the single European agricultural market -, present-day estimates attribute 5 to 10% of the set-tings-up and buyings-out of business and artisan-dominated establishments to entrepreneurs who are either immigrants or of recent immigrant origin.

The upsurge of foreign entrepreneurship is particularly appreciable at a time when overall employment trends are diametrically opposed. Look at INSEE statistics which illustrate the continued decline in France of the self-employed: 1,955,000 in 1968, 1,738,000 in 1982. From the last census (1982) through 1987, the number of French entrepreneurs declined by 3.0%, while that of foreign entrepreneurs

registered in overall increase of 46.7%: 30.2% for artisans (30476 in 1983, 39697 in 1987), + 64% for businessmen (23138 in 1983, 39697 in 1987), + 88% for other services of which the number (2288 in 1983, 4315 in 1987) is admittedly markedly weak.

Several sorts of factors help to explain this revival in France of immigrant entrepreneurship and the consequently increased visibility of the phenomenon, particularly in the most important French cities.

b) The crisis in immigrant employment

In France as in the other immigrant-receiving countries of the EEC, the economic crisis has had quite important effects on the number and nature of salaried jobs traditionally held by immigrants. Areas in which the proportion of foreigners was the greatest are often those in which the crisis has been the most rampant. Mining, the iron and steel industry, and construction lost hundreds of thousands of job slots between 1975 and 1982; many of these were occupied by foreigners. The ongoing restructuring of the automobile industry due to the automation of assembly lines has also entailed the disappearance of numerous unskilled jobs. The unemployment of foreigners has grown superior to that of the French: 11.7% (end of 1988) as opposed to 10%. The primary and secondary sectors have emptied out, while tertiary (and particularly independent) activities have achieved fullness. Layoff bonuses and indemnities in the automobile industry ("la Regie RENAULT") have served to finance Moroccan Workers' setting up of a business concern. (MIGRINTER 1986). Our own surveys in

business establishments have shown that for numerous immigrants -Maghrebians in their majority- , it was less the loss than the fear of losing a salaried job that triggered the conversion of the salaried to independent work. Prior to setting up on their own behalf, nearly half of the Moroccan businessmen in Paris had been on the payroll in the coal mines of the North (7%) and especially in industry (36%) for over ten years on the average. No doubt, the realization of a business project in France was often part and parcel of the migratory project of the ethnic group (the Berbers of southern Morocco or the southern Moroccans from Souss) but the crisis in immigration employment most surely spurred this form of evolution. The phenomenon is less strikingly accentuated for Asians, of whom the overwhelming majority (83%) of interviewed businessmen had never received a pay check in France prior to their setting-up on their own.

c) The role of the regulatory system

The turnaround in French migratory policy - the replacement of 'laissez faire' by strict regulation - and curtailing - of worker immigration has paradoxically proved favorable to the installation of immigrants in the independent (or self-employed) sector. Up until the strict regulation stemming from the laws dating from July 17, 1984 and May 22, 1987, the administrative status of foreign entrepreneurship was especially complex and acutely confusing. No less than circulars, often mutually contradictory, had been drawn up by the various concerned Ministries (Trade, Justice, Home Affairs, Finances...) between 1964 and 1975. If one took subtle advantage of the loopholes in the regulations, it was

at times easier to obtain a tradesman's card than a residency permit! So much said, such ways of using the rules were especially beneficial to members of groups which already, before leaving for France, had a trading tradition; they were also aware of the "culture" of the French system of administration, that is to say its intricacies . . . and the areas into which it doesn't reach. (MA MUNG et SIMON 1990)

Following upon the 1984 law, legislative devices have been simplified; an overwhelming majority of the immigrants no longer has got to apply for the aforementioned tradesman's card: such at least is the case for "residents" under general jurisdiction (for ex.: Moroccans, Turks), Algerians, EEC nationals, American citizens...

Exercising certain professions remains prohibited for foreigners under general jurisdiction, and non-sedentary business activities are strictly regulated. Nonetheless, this recent evolution of rules and regulations..has provided the non-initiated would-be tradesman with free access towards independent activity it has also favored the strong increase of requests registered by the "Chambres de Commerce et de Metiers" at the tail end of the 1980s.

d) The introduction of new ethnic groups

In comparison with the period between the two World Wars, the human composition of the population practicing independent activities in France has profoundly evolved, in accordance with transformations having taken place within immigration -taken as a whole- in France. Except for the Italians, whose proportion remains considerable (24% of the self-employed), the change in nationalities is utter. (fig. 2)

In 1982, about 2/3 of the immigrant entrepreneurs were of Mediterranean origin: Southern Europeans (Italians, Spanish, Portuguese) strongly represented among artisans (among the Italians, for instance, there is but 1 businessman for 4 artisans), Maghrebians (Algerians, Moroccans, Tunisians), who comprise the majority of businessmen (among Algerians, 3 businessmen for 1 non-businessman).

Other groups have only recently come on strong in the-self-employed sector: the refugees from Southeast Asia (of Chinese origin in their majority), and lately Turks whose business networks are being elaborated with great rapidity in eastern France and the Paris area.

3) Present-day dynamic factors in the creation of concerns

The present-day development of foreign entrepreneurship in France is derived from three types of dynamics which work together, more often than they play apart :

a) The community dynamic of Maghrebian tradesmen

It is at the root of the recent development of small immigrant businesses in France, among Maghrebians as well as Asians. The case of the former is particularly telling. Within this group, the overwhelming majority of businessmen (or tradespeople) presently installed in France comes from the Berber communities whose regions border the Sahara Desert: Jerbiens and Jebalias from southern Tunisia, The Mozabits of the Algerian Sahara, the Soussi from southern Morocco (area of Agadir and the Anti-Atlas). 90% of the Moroccan businessmen in the urban district originate from Souss. (fig.3)

These three communities have a long-standing migra-

tory and trading tradition throughout Maghreb where they have monopolized retail and generally wholesale commerce as well; this activity has in turn impelled and propped up a trade bourgeoisie with strongholds in major metropoli and national capitals. Political (conflict between Morocco and Algeria) or economic (state takeover of businesses in Algeria and Tunisia,) reasons brought about their transfer to France in the early 1970s; they bought up the businesses of French households which were having trouble competing with the newly installed large-scale shopping centers. The trades and commerces they opened up are of three basic types:

- Routine neighborhood trade. This is the case with 'local" grocery stores whose products are essentially meant for French customers in the wealthy areas of Paris (7th, 8th arondissements) and western suburbs (Neuilly, Versailles). Their sales advantages reside in daily availability - shops remain open 12 to 15 hours a day, even during weekends and summer vacation.

- 'Community"-type trade whose products and services are essentially meant for immigrant customers in the area where the tradesman has set up, for example "popular" restaurants with North African cooking in old industrial suburbs of Paris (St. Denis, Gennevilliers), Oriental clothes stores in the "Goutte d'Or?

- "Exotic"-type trade which offers specific products meant for customers in the home country looking for a change of scene. This is the case with ordinary or luxury restaurants mixing Maghrebian with European cooking. Spatially speaking, this kind of trade can spread out in areas with weak foreign

implantation and also, conversely, in neighborhoods highly frequented by tourists (for ex. the Latin Quarter in Paris).

Taken as a whole these trades owe their economic success to the resources of the community system of business groups. The start-up capital for the purchase of the establishment is essentially raised within the group of origin. Among Moroccans, no less than 77% of the tradesmen interviewed in Paris constituted this capital thanks to loans from their close relatives or compatriots hailing from southern Morocco. The would-be entrepreneur seldom has recourse to the bank system; it is true that French banks are often reluctant to grant loans to foreigners whose solvency appears far from obvious.

The functioning of these Maghrebian trades is issued in nearly all areas from the community dynamic: customers (except as regards "exotic" trades), family-based manpower - recruiting of wage-earners originating from the same group -, managing of one or several establishments by two or three operators coming from the extended family, buying back of establishments within the selfsame ethnic circuit (with Moroccans, 26% of the time). To be sure, failures occur (choice of a poor location, intra-community conflicts, competition from supermarkets), but generally speaking, economic success is frequent in this type of system, as is proven by reinvesting of profits in France and - more and more commonly - in the countries of origin. So it is that the Soussi people installed in France have set up large-scale businesses in their regions of origin (financing of hotels in Agadir, first seaside resort in Morocco), and likewise in Casablanca, incontestably the leading economic metropolis of this country.

b) The individual dynamic of Portuguese artisans in the construction industry

Along with a community system based on solidarity and bonds of belonging, a differing logic of entrepreneurship has developed; it is founded on enterprising spirit, the sense of individual success, and the hope for social promotion.

The example we have chosen - of the Portuguese in the construction industry - is not meant to imply that the present-day soaring of foreign artisanship is due uniquely to this type of dynamic. The ethnic system is also quite efficacious in these sorts of activities, as is illustrated by the garment industry circuits within the Chinese communities of the 13th arrondissement (home workshops) and, a fortiori, the highly complex case of the "Sentier", in Paris (cf. MOROK VASIC (1987, 1988)

In comparison with the interwar period, the role of construction in foreign artisanship has sharply gone up . . . to 40% (of employed foreign artisans). Southern Europeans represent a clear majority, and the proportion of Portuguese is steadily growing, while that of the Italians and Spaniards is going down (the settings-up of establishments fails to make up for the closings-down due to retirement).

Direct questions in surveys (of members of this group) led to the conclusion that the development of Portuguese artisanship in this branch of activity is attributable more to individual or family considerations, strictly speaking, than to community-type processes, even if the Portuguese immigrant community in France is well-known for its capacities in the

organization of networks and the invigorating of dynamic associative activities. A study presently in course in the Toulouse region illustrates a highly marked scattering in the places of origin of Portuguese (90% in the construction industry): for 330 artisans, we may note no less than 160 different places of origin (concelhos) in Portugal. (POINARD 1990)

The individual will to succeed is strongly pronounced but does not suffice. Recent studies (AUVOLAT and BENNATIG 1988) have insisted on the open-mindedness of these artisans (who are often younger than their French colleagues); emphasis has also been placed on their highly binding ties with the industry sector: quite often, theirs is a subcontracting role. The latter may well result from the satisfactory valorization of the relational network that the ex-immigrant worker has conserved from when he was employed in large-scale construction concerns (BENNATIG 1988), but it can also serve to mask abusive dismissal procedures and the reduction of the wage-earner to toiler and drudge. (POINARD 1990).

Be that as it may, present-day prospects for these artisans are rather favorable inasmuch as after 10 years of crises and slumps, the construction industry has, since 1987-1988, experienced a phase of recovery and rehiring of personnel. In this respect, Portuguese artisans who set up their own businesses will have little difficulty recruiting Portuguese employees through either seasonal contracts or the intermediary of the networks of clandestine workers which have not stopped functioning, at no time since the official halt (1974) of immigration in France.

c) The social dynamic of the second generation

A third type of dynamic is emerging in the milieu of foreign entrepreneurship in France. It is issued from the will of the second generation to become integrated into the social system through economic success. This movement concerns young people of Maghrebian and Portuguese origin.

In comparison with the traditional activities of the parents or group of origin, the determination to modernize is real, and illustrated by the quest for formulas suiting the new needs of customers: Tunisians, for instance, are passing from the restaurant-pastry shop to the fast food outlet, and from small business to export-import with the sending country.

But more frequently there ensues a rupture with the classical schemas of the family or group of origin; the educational level of the youth has risen, and they don't wish to reproduce the situation - they henceforth can't bear its attendant constraints - of their tradesman or artisan parents. They have been behind numerous forms of creation in the fields of transportation, services rendered to firms (supermarket security), computer science, advertising, and mass media. In contrast to their elders, young people don't hesitate to have recourse to banks and especially to the different forms of public and private assistance (the foundation "Entreprendre en France") earmarked for the setting-up of enterprises. Failure is far from rare, and yet a dynamic has been launched; prospects of social integration shall help ensure its permanence.

III - PERMANENCE AND TRANSFORMATION OF BUSINESS SPACES

The spatial behavior of foreign entrepreneurs is

relatively distinct from that of the overall foreign population in France. Resulting plans of action permanently evolve on account not only of ongoing active dynamics, but also owing to external factors linked to the progress of regional economies or to the role of local communities. The question shall be examined at different scales, using the well-known case of businessmen as a foothold.

1) The permanent polarization of the Parisian urban district

The over-concentration of foreign entrepreneurs in the Parisian urban district remains the major fact of this spatial layout (**fig. 4**). Almost one out of 2 (42% in 1982) foreign businessmen resides in Paris or its suburbs, and this proportion is over three times superior to that (12.8% in 1982) of French businessmen. In the field of restaurant ownership, this concentration is even higher (47% as opposed to 17% for French restaurants). Finally, this commercial concentration is itself largely superior to that of the totality of the foreign population (in 1982, 33% of the foreigners resided in "Ile de France") in France.

This extraordinary appeal of the French capital for foreign entrepreneurs is in fact all but new: as early as 1926, Paris welcomed over half of the **foreign** tradesmen and artisans.

The inertia of these phenomena which are as persistently and profoundly anchored in the functioning of the Parisian economy as immigration might explain the present-day polarization, but deep recent changes in the national composition of foreign populations could also have modified the role played by Paris for foreign entrepreneurs. In reality -

and this is especially the case for businessmen -, the newcomers (be they Asian or Maghrebian) are as strongly drawn to Paris as were their predecessors. A telltale example is the regrouping in the capital of refugees from Southeast Asia who had previously been dispersed throughout France by the authorities.

The regrouping of communities in the Parisian urban district is here - as is the case in all host countries - a factor favoring the installation of entrepreneurs of the same group. The fact is well-known and well-expressed within the very heart of the Parisian urban district. Maps (fig.5)

show that the localization of Moroccan, Algerian, and Tunisian tradesmen is closely correlated to that of the corresponding national populations.

In the provinces, Map ^(fig.4) classically opposes, in 1982, the eastern half of France where foreign tradesmen are relatively well-represented to the western half where they are by no means numerous. The spatial contrast once again illustrates the division of immigrant France into two parts. One may note the strong concentrations of the coal-bearing basin of the "Nord" and "Pas de Calais" departments; these are linked to old waves of immigration in the coal mines and the iron and steel sector. One may also note the attractive pull of the Lyons urban district and its "satellites" (St. Etienne, Grenoble), and that of Marseilles (port of entry for Maghrebians) and the Riviera (Alpes-Maritimes). In western France, on the other hand, the only notable regroupings correspond to regional capitals (Bordeaux, Toulouse) or to harbor cities and towns (Bayonne, Bordeaux, Nantes, le Havre) in which relations with the ex-colonies have likely played a vital part in the choice of location for "exotic" restaurants.

We lack information on the spatial evolution since 1982 of this nationwide configuration. We await the results of the general population census effectuated in March, 1990. Nonetheless, several observations allow us to suppose the decline of small foreign businesses in regions affected by the crisis and industrial restructuring (coal-bearing basin of the "Nerd"-Valenciennois area - Sochaux-Montbéliard region). In all these sectors and entities, the foreign population has exited in numbers either to the sending countries or to the most dynamic regions in today's France. The loss of customers has in turn redounded upon the working condition of local trade.

The second foreseeable movement or phenomenon is the spreading-out of foreign entrepreneurs throughout the French urban network, in medium-sized towns and their close surroundings, most notably in the western half of France. Direct observations in a vast variety of settings point to the installation of foreign businessmen and artisans. The case of Poitiers, middle-sized town (140000 inhabitants) situated in southwestern France, capital of a Department with little immigration (2% of the total population, this low figure including a fair number of foreign students), throws, in our opinion, a spotlight on this recent evolution.

In 1975, the Department counted fewer than 30 foreign self-employed. In 1990 it includes over 110, of whom 2/3 are to be found in the Poitiers urban district. "Exotic" restaurants and shops are largely predominant; such specialization is logical in a city where there exists no strong community regrouping. The search for available business slots has favored

the implantations brought about by former students, by wage-earners and young people from foreign families installed in the Poitiers area, but also by tradesmen who didn't succeed in the Paris region. Initially concentrated in the town center, foreign businesses are presently moving towards the high-rise buildings of which the commercial under-equipment is patent. This dispersion in the outer peripheries is even more accentuated for Portuguese artisans gravitating towards areas where peri-urbanization provides them with sufficiently large work-yards. (fig. 6)

2) Redistribution of foreign businesses within the major poles of immigration

The three primary French urban districts - Paris, Lyons, Marseilles - are also the principal centers of immigration in France, and their foreign business structures are relatively complex. The systems are articulated with three types of spatial structures: the large-size business poles of city centers and peri-central neighborhoods, the secondary concentrations of the old industrial suburbs, the commercial nodules of the newly created peripheries. These three sectors are actively inter-related, but major evolution from within and especially from without is presently modifying the hierarchical relations existing between the three levels of space for foreign tradesmen in the three cities.

At the summit of the commercial hierarchy are to be found the large-sized business neighborhoods which, on the average, include several hundred foreign establishments, and even more if one takes into account those which are of foreign origin: the "Porte d'Aix" (Marseilles), la "Goutte d'Or", the Barbès-Rochechouart neighborhood, the Choisy "triangle" of the 13th arrondissement (Paris), and to a lesser extent the "Place du Port"

(Lyons). As regards both business activities and customer services, the pluri-ethnic trade web is extremely diversified. So it was that in 1986, the neighborhood of the "Porte d'Aix" counted over 800 establishments which were foreign or of recent foreign origin, 210 hotels owned in the majority by Maghrebians. And as regards Maghrebian trade, 1986 sales in the neighborhood were estimated at 5 to 8 thousand million francs! The large business poles assume, with regard to targeted ethnic groups, a role which carries them well outside the boundaries of the neighborhood . . . and even of the urban district. Customer studies have shown that the "Goutte d'Or" magnetizes business interest in a regional space encompassing the Maghrebian communities of northern France . . . and even Belgium. The Chinese quarter of the 13th arrondissement attracts Asian customers from throughout France. The "Porte d'Aix" exerts the same type of power upon Maghrebians of the Mediterranean "Midi". It adds on or rather, it added on - two additional clienteles: on the one hand migrant workers and their families in transit between Maghreb and Europe, on the other hand a hefty clientele of Maghrebian (80% Algerian) tourists who have come to Marseilles to pick up products which are either exorbitant or cannot be found in Maghreb.

This important commercial function linked as it is to the profitability of three large urban districts but also to a history of immigration (except for the Chinese neighborhood of the 13th arrondissement, which sprang up only in the 1970s...), is presently threatened by a variety of conjoined factors. These have essentially to do with the reconquest of city centers by means of the conjugated effect of: a) the upsurge of the high-grade tertiary sector and the real estate

market and b) urban policies meant to do away with the most visible inner city reminders of the presence of immigrants. This explains the ongoing renovation operations in the "Goutte d'Or"(Paris) and the "Porte d'Aix" (Marseilles). Moreover, this city's Eastern trade has been affected by the 1986 institution of the mandatory visa for entry into French territory. This measure led to **Algerian** tourists' detouring towards more hospitable harbor cities (Naples, Italy; Alicante, Spain).

The mushrooming difficulties for the large-scale poles of immigrant activity in city centers (the situation is similar in the Paris "Sentier") entail in spatial terms a double phenomenon: on the one hand, the spreading-out of certain trades and services on these central spaces taken as a whole (cf. Map fig. 7); on the other hand, the shifting-away of enterprises to ancient and modern outskirts. (fig. 8)

In this context, the role assumed by the secondary schemes of the old industrial suburbs will no doubt be reinforced. Indeed, such bedroom suburbs date from the first Industrial Revolution (Seine-St.-Denis, Gennevilliers and Asnières north and northwest of Paris, Gerland in Lyons, the 14th arrondissement of Marseilles...). They have for quite a long time performed a welcoming function for the foreigners lodging there - often quite uncomfortably - in run-down buildings and generally overpopulated furnished hotels. The neighborhoods in which foreigners are quite markedly concentrated (25 to 30% of the population of communes such as St. Denis and Gennevilliers) feature trades and services essentially addressed to the poor and working populations residing there, for instance "cafes-hotels", "popular" restaurants, grocery stores, personal services. Given the difficulties of the cen-

disadvantaged as they may be, nonetheless possess an ethnic market which is both sizable and distinctly undervalued. So may be explained the high proportion of foreigners in the present-day transactions of establishments located in these sorts of neighborhoods (for example: 25% of the purchases and sales effectuated in Seine-St. Denis are due to foreigners, most of whom are Maghrebian. Source E. MA MUNG 1990).

Last but not least a third form of concentration is rapidly developing, in the Parisian region to begin with. This consists in the new cities issued from the policy aimed at reequilibrating Parisian space. Built-up areas situated at over 50 kilometers (32 miles) from the city center have grown into important urban districts (St. Quentin en Yvelines, Marne la Vallee) which are seeking out accommodations more comfortable and less expensive than those in Paris and the "first (peripheral) crown". The trade supply of these new cities still remains quite insufficient in comparison with demand: this provides interesting prospects for the setting-up of foreign tradesmen (as has been the case in Marne-la-Vallee, where highly numerous refugees from Southeast Asia have set up shop).

This spatial restructuring reflects changes having intervened in this sector of foreign activity in France. Other forms of ongoing evolution are Europe-oriented, in view of the Single Market programmed for the end of 1992.

CONCLUSION:

Towards the enlarging of the business space of "ethnic entrepreneurs" in the EEC?

The basically qualitative information at **our disposal** allows us to believe that the opening of borders within the framework of the EEC has already gotten underway for Maghrebian and Asiatic groups.

Commercial networks meant for the importing, distribution and redistribution of "exotic" products which are either imported, or issued from the sending country, already actively operate (at least as regards Maghrebian businesses in France, Belgium and the Netherlands). The group of Rif people, hailing from northern Morocco and newcomers in business activity who are however well-implanted in northern France and the other two countries, assumes a quite active **relaying** role. Capital transfers contributing to installation in the retail trade have been noted in the economic space which extends from the French coal-bearing basin to Amsterdam; parallel movement impels Turkish tradesmen in West Germany to open up businesses in Alsace.

Chinese communities are not exactly relegated to the sidelines. Financial transfers from France to Great Britain have allowed for the opening-up of numerous establishments in London. On a wider scale - and in the framework of far more ambitious vistas -, it would seem that the Chinese community of Paris (and the economic web it has spun out) serves at present as backing-up for the projects of large Southeast Asia **firms** intent upon gaining a foothold, prior to the 1992 target date, within EEC space.

Quite naturally, prospects for the single market bring about many forms of interrogation on the economic behavior and the evolution of these ethnic entrepreneurs face to the new hand in trade and services in Western Europe. Questions bear upon the migratory policy and the administrative systems of regulations which will be applied to these nationals of "third" countries and the capacity of the latter to deal with them; the uncertainty also has to do with the economic dynamic of the branches of activity where these groups play a role, and their capabilities of adapting to the new givens. One may wonder, finally, about what may be the possibilities of associations and articulations between ethnic trade and French trade . . . so as to resist competitive onslaughts from other countries or get across boundaries.

As for ourselves, we wish to formulate the hypothesis thzt disposing of financial potentials and human resources readily mobilizable in the familial and ethnic framework, these ethnic entrepreneurs are hardly destined to be the latecomers of the 1992 adventure. "Community"-minded and transnational, that they already are...

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