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**French-speaking geography of retail and consumption:
themes, issues and approaches**

Beyond ethnicity: understanding the interplay between migration, commercial centralities and urban diversity

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Beyond ethnicity: understanding the interplay between migration, commercial centralities and urban diversity

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Introduction

- 1 The relationship between business and international migration has been the subject of extensive research in migration studies from the Chicago School onwards. It encompasses a range of issues, including migrant access to local employment markets, the formation of communities based on shared origin, the social and commercial interactions in a multicultural context, and the influence of migration on urban economies and landscapes (Chinatowns is a prime example).
- 2 Research on ethnic entrepreneurship was introduced in France in the 1980s. It leads to work on how these businesses contribute to urban diversity, from “ethnic enclaves” to “super-diverse streets”. Commercial centralities also constitute a rich field of study, bringing together various intersecting notions: migration trends and business strategies, transnational mobility and urban change, cultural identification as the basis for social interactions, etc. Research on commercial centralities has contributed to theoretical and methodological understandings of the role of those cultural identification in urban (social) practices. Nevertheless, developments in the field have gradually led researchers away from analysing contemporary societies via the concept of “ethnicity”, as an unequivocal all-encompassing frame of reference, to examining instead the mechanisms of urban diversification in focusing on commercial zones shaped by migratory flows.
- 3 Focusing chiefly on French research from 1980 to 2010, this paper will review studies on three complementary aspects of the interplay between commercial business and

migration: “ethnicity” as a conceptual framework; the links between immigrant commercial centralities and urban dynamics; the social interactions associated with commercial transactions in culturally diverse urban contexts. Indeed, during these three decades, the conceptual framework of ethnic entrepreneurship has been both influential in French research, and then criticized and relatively set aside in the light of the complexification of the migration-city nexus and the renewed conceptualization of urban diversity.

- 4 Scientific literature from the MIGRINTER¹ research centre encompasses empirical and theoretical contributions, reflecting changes, not only in the commercial dynamics of businesses run by international migrants and cultural minorities, but also in the theoretical and analytical framework for their studies.

From ethnicity as an analytical framework to understanding urban diversity: changing perspectives on immigrant businesses

Migration research and the question of entrepreneurship

- 5 In looking at research on the comparative history of migration, there is clear evidence of the continued presence of immigrant entrepreneurship (Green, 1998; Rainhorn, 2001). Across the world, immigrant entrepreneurship based on the workforce of fellow nationals constitutes common strategies for accessing employment in local contexts, where migrants face numerous obstacles and discrimination, administrative or social's, but most notably through language. Despite the continuity of these strategies, the role of entrepreneurship in migration was not taken up as a serious subject of study until the 1980s (Berbagui, 2005), which is surprisingly late given that it was an important factor in the analyses of the Chicago School (Park, 1915). Since then, however, it has been the subject of extensive research.
- 6 Dalila Berbagui (2005) highlights the dominance of English-speaking research on the links between urban economies, international migration and small businesses (Ward and Jenkins, 1984; Portes, 1987; Aldrich and Waldinger, 1990). In French academia, North-West African immigration to France was analysed through the prism of business strategies with the work of Gildas Simon (1978) and his doctoral students (Boubakri, 1985; Ait Aouaziz, 1989), as well as of Michelle Guillon and Isabelle Taboada-Leonetti (1986) on the “Choisy triangle” in Paris’s 13tharrondissement. The latter focuses on the social and economic changes linked to immigration from Southeast Asia, and helped to cement entrepreneurship as a prism for migratory studies in France. Studies from English-speaking academia were also circulated and discussed from a theoretical and conceptual point of view, with a critical approach to the notion of “ethnicity”, widely used after the pioneering work of Ivan Light (1972). It sparked a critical debate in French academia, with scientific and social essence, on the concept of ethnicity.
- 7 The term ethnic sprung up in the marketing industry, in market strategies and consumption analyses, and thus in market studies. In everyday language, “ethnic” is an extremely vague term, used synonymously with words such as “exotic”, “foreign”, “minority” or “culturally distinct.” In France, studies on migration rarely use concepts related to ethnicity to analyse trends in business and entrepreneurship. Publications

focused instead on business dynamics with little recourse to the ethnic-related vocabulary (Tarrus and Peraldi, 1995; Souchaud & *al.*, 2012). This demonstrates a hesitancy within French social science to tackle cultural categorisations. It also no doubt speaks to the limits of French statistical data when it comes to collecting information on self-identification and hetero-identification based on cultural or phenotypical criteria within commercial transactions (Poutignat and Streiff-Fenart, 1995). Logistical difficulties accessing information combined with intellectual caution have consequently pushed researchers to find different ways of looking at the relationship between business and migration. In the proceedings of the conference held to mark the twenty-year anniversary of MIGRINTER, the introduction to the chapter on conceptualising ethnic entrepreneurship talks of the necessity of “... *questioning the relevance of the label ‘ethnic’ in economic and commercial structures linked to migration and mobility*”, since it may lead to “...*essentialisation, unrepresentative of the complex and remarkably fluid identities of stakeholders: business owners, employees and customers*” (Audebert and Ma Mung, 2007, p. 12).

Challenging the ethnic approach to immigrant entrepreneurship and minority businesses

- 8 This stance is part of an ongoing debate that first arose in the early 1990s, when English-speaking researchers began to challenge the notions linked to ethnicity in understanding the commercial dynamics of migratory contexts (Waldinger, 1993). In 2012, Antoine Pécoud distinguished several key approaches to immigrant entrepreneurship, focusing either on the local context (barriers to employment, immigrant residential concentration), or on the “ethnic resources” (solidarity, trust, information sharing), enabling migrants to partially mitigate the discrimination and class disadvantages they face. These approaches are underpinned by different theoretical frameworks, highlighting either structural factors (class relations) or individuals’ capacities and networks. Even the term “ethnic business” covers a range of vastly different definitions, involving diverse, often implicit, criteria, such as a perceived shared culture or migratory experience among the business owners and workers or a similar identification with customers and the influence of these specific cultural identities on the strategies, operations and success of the business. Lastly, “... *these definitions vacillate between descriptions and analyses*” (Pécoud, 2012, p. 7), a clear argument for limiting the use of the term ethnic, since it is insufficient to describe the vast variety of businesses involving migrant owners, workers and customers.

Entrepreneurship and “urban diversity”

- 9 Immigrant entrepreneurship has also been studied from an urbanist perspective, looking into both the dynamics of urban consumption, and the interplay between changes in the business offer and changes in the social makeup of users and locals. The concepts of “diversity” and more recently “superdiversity” (Vertovec, 2007), have been the subject of extensive cross-disciplinary research in the English-speaking world in urban and migratory studies. Based on ethnographic surveys and observations of commercial streets, often using international comparisons, this research highlights the entrepreneurs’ diversity of origins and migratory experiences. It considers the

complexity of cultural references used in these commercial centralities, and their contribution to shaping the city via the concept of *migrant urbanism* (Hall, 2015).

- 10 Neighbourhoods in the process of gentrification are particularly useful for understanding the mixed impacts of minority businesses. On the one hand, they promote the continued presence of immigrant city dwellers and their social markers in neighbourhoods where they have become minority residents (Chabrol, 2011). On the other, they create culturally diverse urban landscapes, increasing the residential attractiveness of their neighbourhoods, particularly since they can be “commodified” (Zukin, 1995), and lend themselves to the “ethnic packaging” sought by the new clientele (Hackworth and Rekers, 2005). The extensive English-language research on this topic has helped to “desingularise” these businesses, by placing them within a wider range of commercial businesses responding to demand for “different”, socially distinctive consumer products (Berroir & al., 2015).
- 11 Recent research on Paris has helped shift emphasis from an analysis of entrepreneurial strategies to the contribution of minority businesses in shaping urban spaces via the cultural markers they display and commercialise. Several commercial centrality comparisons in Paris demonstrates that minority-operated food shops and restaurants, characterised by the culturally distinct nature of their products, are much more than simple market niches serving either to exoticise a commercial zone, or to attract a captive clientele. These businesses are remarkably diverse, covering a broad range of products, and differing widely in prestige, clientele and owner origin, and in the way they are perceived by the city’s inhabitants and political stakeholders. The rise of numerous businesses that escape classification (halal, kosher or Japanese restaurants, for instance) illustrates the plasticity of cultural markers for consumption. The complexity and diversity of their geographical distribution show that these minority businesses are closely linked to several different urban trends, such as gentrification and the transformation of residential neighbourhoods into places of leisure and consumption (Aytar and Rath, 2011).

Immigrant commercial centralities and urban dynamics: place-oriented vs. circulation-oriented approaches

Immigrant/minority centralities: a local approach to immigrant commercial zones

- 12 Immigrant commercial centralities in European cities have been the subject of numerous monographic studies and some comparative studies. In 2003, sociologist Alain Battegay (2003) pointed out that immigrants’ commercial centralities in European cities, particularly in France’s (Goutte d’Or in Paris; Place du Pont in Lyon; Belsunce in Marseille, etc.) have “histories, urban layouts and modes of development particular to each city, and are the result of unique migratory patterns and stories” (p. 10). Research reveals certain commonalities between them: their shared characteristics are chiefly linked to factors facilitating the implantation of businesses, or shaping their operation and evolution within the urban setting (extension, diversification and competition).

- 13 In keeping with models developed by the Chicago School, researchers have therefore examined the real estate opportunities (availability of premises), which enabled the first immigrant businesses to appear. The aim is to discover the entry point for what Burgess called “invasions”, and the urban opportunities to facilitate the “establishment of commercial territories” in a given time and place (Dihn, 2006). With this approach, Michelle Guillon and Isabelle Taboada-Leonetti (1986) demonstrated how the renovation of the Italian neighbourhood in Paris’ 13th arrondissement profoundly transformed its commercial activities, while the Olympiades urban project did not attract the businesses and residents expected by developers. In specific terms, the availability of commercial premises explains the initial establishment of businesses by Southeast Asian refugees towards the end of the 1970s. In parallel, the availability of local housing in the private real-estate sector enabled these populations to take up residence in the neighbourhood. After their initial establishment, these businesses rapidly diversified. The first wave of businesses was soon joined by others (from exclusive food products to clothing, beauty products and services, culture and telecommunications), leading Emmanuel Ma Mung (1996) to talk of a commercial “system”, highlighting the dynamic nature of the networks which link individuals through “*an exchange of goods and services on the basis of ethnic belonging*”.
- 14 New business owners seek to enter this system and glean the benefits of the neighbourhood’s visitor flows and attractiveness. Competition for real estate can then arise in which “*latecomers are often the most disadvantaged, particularly those without broad financial resources or access to a dense group identity network*”, as shown by Leyla Sall (2007, p. 17) in the case of African business owners in the Château-Rouge neighbourhood in Paris. However, competition for space does not preclude successions, alliances or interdependence. Alain Tarrus (1992), for example, showed how in Marseille in the 1990s, Jewish business owners forged alliances with Algerian and Moroccan business owners, sharing expertise and information networks. Recent arrivals to an area depend on groups who arrived before them (in particular to lease premises), but the former also need employees of different ethnic or national origins in order to diversify their customer base.
- 15 The concentration of businesses offering products and services specific to migrant populations shows that their appeal extends beyond their local neighbourhood, attracting visitors from the outside. While peripherals in relation to the city centre, these places nevertheless act as centres for the populations they service. Jean-Claude Toubon and Khelifa Messamah (1990) first use the term “*immigrant centrality*” in relation to the Goutte d’Or, a neighbourhood in Paris 18th, while Sophie Bouly de Lesdain (1999) referred to Château-Rouge as an “*African centrality*”. Their dense and specific commercial fabric (customer base, window displays, signage, etc.) and high influx of people from specific groups (Africans, Asians, etc.) make these neighbourhoods instantly identifiable to other city dwellers. Anne Raulin (2000) describes them as “*minority centralities*”, meaning areas characterised by minority groups, designated by locals with labels such as *Chinatown*, *Little India*, or *Little Bamako*.
- 16 The specific, easily identifiable character of immigrant commercial centralities also contributes to the growing specialisation and segregation of city centres which, according to Alain Metton (1998) “*are moving towards a break-up of commercial activity into specialized subcentres*”, segregating customers into different spaces, whose commercial characteristics are defined by the needs of a different category of consumers.

Nevertheless, they remain subject to recomposition due to the arrival of new stakeholders, to the dispersal of a particular group, to the sustained intergenerational patronage, to the arrival of other groups or consumers (including the majority group through a process of exoticisation), as well to the impact of urban renewal policies. A case in point: the îlot Chalon neighbourhood in the 12th arrondissement, Paris's lost first African centrality, which was pulled down in the 1980s (Sall, 2007).

Marketplaces: transnational approaches and the mobility turn

- 17 Contrary to the Chicago School approach, some researchers have bypassed monographic methods, to focus directly on the movement of people, goods and capital within the networks to which these commercial territories belong. The economic activity of these “marketplaces” or “crossroads”, legal or not, demonstrates their integral role in certain dynamics of “globalization from below” (Tarrius, 2002). New commercial centralities emerge from specific and sometimes unexpected geographical conditions, creating new opportunities for professional business owners and for some migrants with no previous links to commerce.
- 18 The use of the term “marketplace” to describe these commercial centralities emerged in studies chiefly focused on economic exchanges across the Mediterranean in the 1990s (Peraldi, 1999; Schmoll, 2004). It designates both a function, that of capturing and channelling economic flows, and a place, where commercial negotiation and transactions take place. According to Michel Peraldi (2007), these types of marketplaces play an important role in the globalised capitalist economy, and migrants play a crucial role in these economic transactions; to a certain extent, they occupy the same place as travelling merchants did historically. Their role and place within these socio-spatial systems have been the subject of numerous studies. Marie-Antoinette Hily and Christian Rinaudo (2002) studied the market of Ventimiglia, situated on the border between France and Italy; it plays host to both “locals” and “migrants” whose identities and social relations are constantly evolving in relation to each other, along with the formation of internal local ties, and external support networks resulting from international mobility. The popularity of this market means temporary migrants can find quick access to networks, employment and for some, prosperity. It also contributes to the commercial dynamism of the city and surrounding region. On a different scale, the mobility of circulating migrants involved in the market, make Ventimiglia a hub of “*globalisation from below*”, as described by Alejandro Portes (1999) and Alain Tarrius (2002). These marketplaces can therefore be taken as “hubs” or “crossroads” within transnational networks when studied through the prism of the mobilities of goods and entrepreneurs.
- 19 In some cases, marketplaces arise from the reactivation of former commercial hubs via new cross-border dynamics. This is the case for Agadez in the north of Niger, which became a sub-Saharan migratory hub in the early 1990s, thus echoing its past as a rest stop on a former trans-Saharan trade route (Bensaâd, 2003). With its economic revival through changes in contemporary migration patterns, and goods trafficking (contraband of cigarettes), the city is now embedded in ever-widening networks, strengthening its position as a regional hub. The various economic activities developing there (hotels, restaurants, shops and petrol stations) provide employment for migrants

who find themselves stranded on the edge of the desert and obliged to adapt their migratory plans.

- 20 Other kinds of hubs have been conceptualised as “resource zones” along “global routes”. The research of Olivier Pliez (2007) into the itinerary of jeans made in China and sold in Cairo, revealed “the emergence of a ‘set’ system, made up of stations between which flows circulate”. Transporting the jeans from the city of Yiwu, south of Shanghai, to the Cairo market, via Dubai, Tripoli and Sallum (on the border between Egypt and Libya), involves a wide range of different stakeholders and mobilities. It also creates new economic niches for migrants to occupy. When located on ports acting as North-South interfaces, these marketplaces constitute what Alain Tarrus calls “trading posts”: places of settlement and redistribution where “the emergence of a kind of nomad capitalism” is evident. In Europe, two Mediterranean cities interfacing North-South, Marseille and Naples, have been studied as examples of “trading posts”. Marseille, while far from the forefront of the national economy, has seen the development of bustling commercial activity from the 1980s onwards, related to its colonial history, port and border position. Run by small-scale entrepreneurs of foreign origin and aimed at immigrant and/or foreign populations, this “bazaar economy” leaves little trace in the official data, yet is part of a network of North-South exchanges that connects Marseille to Alger, Istanbul, Tunis and Dakar. While fed by international mobility, the economy of trading posts is underpinned by strong local networks. In the case of Naples, for example, Camille Schmoll (2004) demonstrated that alongside the international mobility of entrepreneurs to and from this marketplace, there was far more circulation within the greater municipality.

Looking at different scales: from local to transnational

- 21 Today, more and more researchers are combining both local and transnational approaches. A shift to the mobility paradigm allows us to move beyond a strictly monographic approach to commercial centralities and resituate them within wider urban dynamics. This includes studies looking at both the mobilities of business owners and customers, and the evolution of the commercial structure. For example, works analysing the transport of goods from storage and wholesale locations (often in peripheral suburbs) to retail premises (in the city centre), while considering the wider trends influencing urban transformation (metropolitanization, gentrification, etc.).
- 22 User flows, which emerged in the literature on immigrant commercial centralities in the 1980s, are now the subject of systematic study. In addition to information on catchment areas and visitor rates, surveys are now helping us understand the continuity and evolution of businesses, as well as their relationship to spaces both near and far. Inspired by urban studies on public spaces, the survey of users frequenting businesses in the African neighbourhood of Château-Rouge in Paris, carried out by Marie Chabrol (2011), demonstrated that these businesses continue to operate—while evolving—due to high numbers of customers from across Paris and its nearby suburbs, but also from other parts of France and neighbouring countries. These customers also patronise other kinds of businesses, including immigrant commercial centralities in other areas of Paris, the Paris suburbs, across France and also in other countries. Other similar studies, such as that carried out by Zhipeng Li (2017), highlight the complementarity of immigrant commercial centralities in the city centre (Belleville),

with those in the suburbs (Aubervilliers) and the country of origin (Qingtian County in the region of Wenzhou).

- 23 On another scale, a detailed description of the mobility of goods and business owners (both sellers and buyers) helps us understand the local dynamics at work in a marketplace. This was the approach taken by Martin Rosenfeld in his study of the Heyvaert District in Brussels, specialized in second-hand car dealerships (Rosenfeld, 2013; Rosenfeld and Van Criekingen, 2015). Looking at the entire value chain from Brussels to Cotonou, he was able to understand how the Brussels marketplace operated locally (by identifying industry stakeholders both up and downstream and their relationships), and the role of these activities in the dynamics of urban change in Brussels. This is the latest approach to studying these commercial activities: analysing their role in the changing face of cities. For example, how they slow or accelerate gentrification in Paris and Berlin, and the ways in which they mitigate financial and real estate crises (Chabrol, Fleury and Van Criekingen, 2014). In 2014, Iris Polyzos used this approach to examine the integration of migrants from recent Chinese migrants in Athens and demonstrated their role in redynamising declining urban areas and commercial real estate in the face of the ongoing economic crisis (Polyzos, 2014).

Commercial transactions and identity negotiation: different scopes and perspectives

- 24 The question of identity and how it is negotiated and reformulated within commercial spaces has been examined in numerous studies on businesses and migration. In *Négociations identitaires marchandes* (commercial identity negotiations), Emmanuel Ma Mung (2006) pointed out that “[...] *the objective phenomenon of ethnic entrepreneurship encourages us to consider certain types of transactions and the spaces in which they take place (i.e. “ethnic” commercial neighbourhoods, cosmopolitan marketplaces, etc.), through the prism of identity, since this is the ostensible operational framework of those involved (who consistently employ language heavily influenced by stereotypes)*” (2006, p. 84).
- 25 There are two broad approaches to this subject: ethnographic studies of commercial transactions “on site” (within commercial premises), and street-level research, looking at how identity is negotiated via commercial scenography. These two approaches are not mutually exclusive.

In food business and food habits

- 26 Studies focusing more specifically on the links between migration, business and food habits, have examined the porosity of these boundaries, “*that is, the relations that are entered after a population, institution, business, industry or merchandise has been identified as ‘other’*” (Hassoun, 2009). By observing everyday interactions in businesses run by North-West African entrepreneurs in gentrified neighbourhoods in Turin, Giovanni Semi (2005) analysed the “intercultural communication” involved in business transactions. He showed how objects were “culturalised”, which means how they are acquiring cultural values and exotic characteristics in a process of “cultural commodification”. This research deals with the perspective of the individuals involved in negotiating identity in business transactions, and how this process contributes to maintaining, constructing and reconstructing ethnic boundaries. In his research on restaurants,

Jean-Pierre Hassoun (2010) challenges the “so-called otherness” implied in the term “ethnic” as applied to the food industry, since the “otherness” of “ethnic” products is often adapted to respond to a demand for cultural difference, while remaining palatable to the tastes and standards (hygiene, health and environmental) of local food consumers. As promoted in restaurants, culinary otherness is not a phenomenon that comes integrally through migration. Rather it is a constant process of reciprocal negotiations within business transactions, from which emerges culinary hybridisation and identity labelling; neither does not exclude the employment of stereotypes, both on the part of entrepreneurs who display their cultural otherness as a marketing strategy, and on the part of consumers in search of the exotic (Garnier, 2010).

- 27 This research investigates the processes of culinary othering in urban eating habits and how otherness becomes desirable and marketable, looking at the influence of the remoteness of the country of origin, and social class. A comparison of restaurants considered as “other” in gentrified neighbourhoods and those in peripheral suburbs demonstrate that, in the words of Jean-Pierre Hassoun (2009), “*what is exotic to some is not so to others*”.

At the street level

- 28 Cultural otherness is generally visible prior to entry into an establishment, since it is displayed on the facades of the businesses which shape the urban landscape. Anne Raulin (1996; 2000) and Emmanuel Ma Mung (1999) worked on the North-West African and Asian businesses “scenographies” in Paris’s 13th arrondissement. They then looked at the “commercial staging” of Asian businesses across several “commercial territories” in Paris: Belleville, the Triangle de Choisy, the neighbourhood of Arts et Métiers and the street, Rue du Temple. Their research analysed the identity strategies at work within several different forms of “negotiation” between the minority group and broader society: “*the meaning conveyed by the facade, which is key to any business, determines that of the commercial interaction. It indicates the type of commercial tactics employed by the business owner and defines the terms of cultural communication they seek to promote*” (Raulin, 2000, p. 56). Here, the business owners are seen as playing a role, both in society, and in the dramaturgical sense, as per Erving Goffman’s notion of urban theatre. The range of commercial scenography in multicultural cities demonstrates the diversity of both commercial and identification strategies. As emphasised by Emmanuel Ma Mung (1999), commercial staging produces “*symbolic forms, signifiers through which the host society sees and understands the group, and through which the group choses to appear, i.e., present itself. Looking at signage, we can observe a wide variety of different self-presentations on the part of business owners and the group they represent, indicating strategies combining both commerce and identity, the two being inseparable in this case*” (p. 154). Ma Mung differentiates “signals for internal use”, aimed at the members of the group, and “signals for external use”, used to communicate with broader society.
- 29 Conceptualised as a constant process of negotiating identity with the surrounding society, commercial street scenography can provide insight into both identity negotiations and the formation of places and neighbourhoods across different urban contexts. In her studies of kosher businesses in Paris’s northeast, Lucine Endelstein (2008; 2009) analysed commercial scenographies and helped refine the notions of visibility and invisibility. Often employed in the field of migration research, visibility

refers to signals and practices that are evident, instantly identifiable and “readable” to all, while readability relates to the knowledge necessary to decode these signals. This approach helps us understand urban landscapes in a way that unites objective scientific observation with the subjective perceptions of locals. It draws on “urban-dweller expertise” (Joseph, 1991), in particular through “commented walks” (Grosjean and Thibaud, 2001), in order to observe and describe the diverse representations generated by “foreign” businesses in a given neighbourhood. These representations are also influenced by their spacial context and the repetitive or cumulative nature of the signage, as Hadrien Dubucs (2009) demonstrated in his work on Japanese businesses in the neighbourhood of Opéra in Paris. The visibility and social marking of spaces also depend on the “*density of establishments and the reproduction of collective practices*”. The presence of “foreign” businesses shapes the activity and mobilities in neighbourhoods and commercial strips, lending a temporal dimension to the visibility and invisibility of cultural references, and generating a particular local atmosphere (Endelstein, 2008; Dubucs, 2009; Chabrol, 2011). In her research on the appearance of foreign business in Florentine, a gentrified neighbourhood of Tel Aviv, Caroline Rozenholc (2010) considers commercial spaces as public spaces of local collective identity and analyses, “*how businesses condition the atmosphere of a neighbourhood and local modes of consumption and self-representation*” (2010, p. 268).

- 30 Lastly, observing foreign businesses in cities leads to an examination of the streetscapes that have been shaped by these businesses and their promotional displays, practices and temporalities. For this reason, research into migration and urban change has moved towards an analysis of streets as spaces for the development of cosmopolitanism and multicultural practices, to complement national (Charmes, 2009; Brody, 2005) and international (Radice, 2009; Zukin, 2010; Hall, 2015) studies. Street-level analysis has been used to understand how specific spaces emerge within the context of globalisation, to observe expressions and even affirmations of local identity (Rozenholc, 2010), to describe experiences of co-presence (Berthomiere and Hily, 2006), and to analyse the impact of globalised trends in religion (Endelstein, 2009). Streets, with their concentration of diverse representations, provide a window into the process of globalisation and incite innovation in research methodologies.

Conclusion

- 31 The range of terms used to describe these commercial territories, from ethnic enclaves to immigrant zones to marketplaces, reflects changing approaches in research. Transnational research is often seen as a move beyond local, monographic approaches in the tradition of the Chicago School and Community Studies. Research across different metropolitan scales has also been seen as an empirical means reconciling the dichotomy between these two approaches. Yet the impact of transnational mobility is now so clearly evident in contemporary cities that it is arguably high time to abandon the very notion that these two approaches are in opposition. Micro-local, transnational and multi-scale approaches could today be seen as different facets of the same phenomena.
- 32 The complex dynamics and rapid evolution of commercial centralities, along with current trends in research, create numerous opportunities for innovation in the field. For example, approaches focusing on collective, multi-site surveys across different

urban environments and national contexts can bring to light the range of existing modes of consumption and enable us to compare and de-silos the dynamics and operation of these zones. Street surveys using a range of methods (visual observation, questionnaires for users, clients and business owners, etc.) can reveal the range of different business strategies, consumers and modes of consumption within commercial centralities or in a single business. Thus, commercial streets can be studied as “contact zones”, where people encounter different social and cultural identities.

- 33 Lastly, commercial centralities are complex objects of study and places of diversity, with all that implies in terms of encounters, interrelations and discrimination. All of these aspects must be studied together, by comparing different spaces and by observing the range of practices and encounters within one commercial zone, strip or business. Juxtaposing different scopes and methods appears to be the most promising way to understand how these different groups coexist and mix, a crucial question in light of the current resurgence of identity-based tensions.

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NOTES

1. Founded in Poitiers in 1985, MIGRINTER is one of France's major research centre on international migration. The laboratory hosts the *Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales (REMI)*, a prominent multidisciplinary journal dedicated to the migration studies, and publishing papers both in French and in English. Its work has contributed to developments across the entire field of migration study, including pioneering

empirical research on business and migration, as well as nourishing theoretical debates surrounding cities, migration and ethnicity.

ABSTRACTS

The paper contributes to the discussion on how human geography and the social sciences more broadly have approached the nexus between international migration, trade and urban retail. The aim is to better understand the results and limitations of promoting dialogue between very different and complementary approaches - in terms of spatial scale, methodology or conceptual framework - to a complex and multidimensional issue. More specifically, the article focuses on how French-speaking research has participated in a major conceptual shift that took place between the 1980s and 2010s. It draws on a multidisciplinary literature review to show how ethnicity-based analyses of migrant entrepreneurship have been incorporated, debated and enriched by new conceptual frameworks such as urban diversity, transnational circulation or identity negotiation.

Cet article contribue au débat sur la manière dont la géographie humaine et les sciences sociales en général ont abordé le lien entre les migrations internationales, le commerce et la distribution urbaine. L'objectif est de mieux comprendre les résultats et les limites du dialogue entre des approches très différentes et complémentaires - en termes d'échelle spatiale, de méthodologie ou de cadre conceptuel - d'une question complexe et multidimensionnelle. Plus spécifiquement, l'article se concentre sur la manière dont la recherche francophone a participé à un changement conceptuel majeur qui a eu lieu entre les années 1980 et 2010. Il s'appuie sur une revue de littérature multidisciplinaire pour montrer comment les analyses de l'entrepreneuriat migrant basées sur l'ethnicité ont été incorporées, débattues et enrichies par de nouveaux cadres conceptuels tels que la diversité urbaine, la circulation transnationale ou la négociation identitaire.

INDEX

Mots-clés: migrations internationales, études migratoires, commerce, petit commerce urbain, ethnicité, diversité urbaine, circulations

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AUTHORS

MARIE CHABROL

Université de Picardie Jules Verne, UR 4287 Habiter le Monde

ORCID 0000-0002-8956-0682

marie.chabrol@u-picardie.fr

HADRIEN DUBUCS

Sorbonne University, Department of Geography and Planning, Research Unit Médiations

ORCID 0000-0003-2661-8653

hadrien.dubucs@sorbonne-universite.fr

LUCINE ENDELSTEIN

CNRS (The National Centre for Scientific Research), Research Unit LISST

ORCID 0000-0002-5370-9510

lucine.endelstein@cnrs.fr