Cosmopolitanism and Business: Entrepreneurship and Identity among German-Turks in Berlin[1]

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Introduction

Ethnic entrepreneurship has become an essential dimension of ethnic minorities' presence in Western countries. Self-employed immigrants started to appear in North America in the 1960s and in Western Europe in the 1970s. Many of them had initially been recruited for their labour but soon opened their own businesses. This used to be perceived as an unexpected and marginal consequence of immigration but the process became a major trend and is still important among migrants' descendants of the second and third generation. In the United States of America and in the United Kingdom, immigrants and their descendants are proportionally over-represented among self-employed workers and all advanced urban economies are witnessing a growth of ethnic minority business activities (Barrett et al., 1996). Well-known examples of ethnic entrepreneurs include Chinese, Japanese or Korean businessmen in the USA, Indians and Pakistanis in Britain and North Africans in France.

In Germany, entrepreneurship is also common among members of ethnic minorities. Although the proportion of independent workers is still higher among Germans than among foreigners, the number of independent foreigners is growing while the number of German independent workers is declining, so that there will soon be a higher percentage among foreigners than among Germans (Buch et al., 1994). Turks constitute the biggest group among self-employed immigrants, with Greeks and Italians also being well represented. Turks first came to Germany as labour migrants in the early sixties, and now constitute one of the most important ethnic minority groups in a Western European country. There are over two millions German-Turks in the country at large, and around 150,000 in Berlin alone. Their independent economic activities started in the early nineteen seventies and expanded very quickly. Turkish businesses are now part of the urban landscapes of all German cities. There are around 51,000 self-employed German-Turks in Germany, employing 185,000 persons (Zentrum für Türkeistudien, 1999). It is estimated that there are between five and six thousands Turkish businesses employing 20,000 people in Berlin (Hillmann, 1998).

The importance of ethnic entrepreneurship has led to a substantial literature that has tried to explain its spectacular growth[2]. I shall present later the main arguments that can be found in this literature, but what I would like to emphasis is that ethnic

entrepreneurship has almost exclusively been approached from a socio-economic perspective. It is certainly true that ethnic entrepreneurship is a topic well suited to socio-economic approaches, but the implications of ethnic economies in terms of identity and culture have nevertheless been neglected. In this paper, I therefore try to explore the connection between ethnic entrepreneurship and migrants' identity and culture in the case of German-Turkish businessmen in Berlin.

The cultural dimension of ethnic economies is particularly worth investigating because much research is currently being done on new patterns of minority groups' identity, with the emergence of concepts such as cultural hybridity, creolisation or cosmopolitanism[3]. I will develop these concepts later but the basic assumption of my work is that researching German-Turkish entrepreneurs' business practices can contribute to our understanding of the specificity of migrants' identity. There is thus a revealing interaction between business and identity that needs to be investigated.

The paper is composed of three parts. The first part presents the different arguments that have been developed to explain ethnic entrepreneurship. It is argued that recent developments in this field challenge these arguments, and that new models are needed to take these changes into account, in particular as far as the cultural dimension of ethnic economies is concerned. The second part presents two empirical cases that illustrate the culturally hybrid nature of ethnic businesses and the implications in terms of identity of German-Turkish businessmen's job. The third part explores the relevance of the concepts of cultural hybridity and cosmopolitanism in the understanding of the cultural dimension of ethnic entrepreneurship. It is argued that such concepts can be useful if one emphasises their practical dimension and if one does not overestimate the importance of culture and ethnicity.

The concept of ethnic entrepreneurship

The concept of 'ethnic entrepreneurship' refers to the economic activities of self-employed members of ethnic minority groups[4]. An important literature has tried to explain its rapid growth. It is indeed quite puzzling to see that immigrants, whose position in host societies is often characterised by discrimination, disadvantage or even exclusion, are actually over-represented among self-employed businessmen.

Two sets of factors, often called the 'structure' and the 'resources' arguments, have been used to explain the emergence and development of ethnic economies (Aldrich and Waldinger, 1990, Jenkins and Ward, 1984). The structure side refers to factors external to the minority group. The existence of a potential market is obviously a crucial factor. Immigrant entrepreneurs have often relied on their fellow immigrants' particular needs, thus creating a 'protected market', or have invested in sectors of the economy that were abandoned by native businessmen because of their demanding working conditions (grocery stores and newsagents are classic examples). Government policies may or may not facilitate the creation of businesses by immigrants. High unemployment and the possible discrimination a group endures on the labour market are also factors that push immigrants into self-employment. The resources side is composed of factors internal to the minority group. Its capacity to organise itself and to mobilise ethnic solidarity, and its cultural predisposition for business or a trade experience are some of the properties of a group that favour independent business activities. Ethnic entrepreneurship is then the product of a successful interaction between these two sets of factors. In other words, immigrants must not only find themselves in an appropriate context, they must also be able to seize the existing opportunities (Aldrich, Waldinger and Ward, 1990).

Recent developments

It should be stressed that such explanatory models are not as relevant today as they once were. Ethnic entrepreneurship started in Western Europe in the early seventies, but despite its short history it has evolved enormously. The situation today is quite different to the one that was prevalent twenty or thirty years ago. Most of the theoretical models that have been elaborated to explain ethnic entrepreneurship refer to the situation that was prevalent in the nineteen eighties, and need therefore to be partly reconsidered in the light of recent changes. If factors like German-Turks' unemployment problems and the socio-economic and symbolic discrimination they must face are still very much relevant today, this is not the case with the other factors mentioned above.

The protected market hypothesis needs to be reconsidered for example. The fact that Turkish migrants had special needs that forced them to go to ethnic shops used to be at the core of the development of the Turkish economy, but today's situation

is different for two reasons. First many German shops have adapted their products to customers from important ethnic groups who therefore do not need to go to particular 'ethnic' shops any more. Second, second and third-generation migrants have also adapted their needs, and now tend to use non-ethnic products. This double movement has reduced the importance of the protected market, to the extent that very few businesses can survive by relying exclusively on ethnic customers (Sen and Goldberg, 1997). Businesses that rely exclusively on customers coming from the same ethnic group have consequently become a small minority in the German-Turkish economy. A clear majority of them have German customers[5].

The declining role of the protected market also questions the relevance of the ethnic 'niche' or 'enclave' model. According to this theory, which was first developed by Portes and Wilson in their study of the Cuban economy in Miami (Portes and Wilson, 1980), the success of migrant businessmen lies in their very isolation from the main market. This isolation protects them from the competition of native businesses, and provides good opportunities to new migrants who would not be able to integrate into the mainstream labour market because of their lack of skills. Apart from the fact that the very existence of ethnic enclaves has been recently discussed (Waldinger, 1993), it should be stressed that opening a business always demands a knowledge of how things work in the host society. Becoming self-employed requires skills such as the ability to speak well the language and the understanding of all administrative questions. It is indeed true that many ethnic businessmen collaborate intensively with other members of the same ethnic group, but this does not mean that they are completely cut from the host society.

In contemporary Turkish entrepreneurship in Germany, the niche model is quite inadequate. A large majority (72.9%) of German-Turkish entrepreneurs has contacts with German businessmen for at least part of their supplies. Moreover, German-Turkish businessmen are increasingly employing German staff[6], which constitute a further indication of how the Turkish economy is becoming integrated in the mainstream economy (Duymaz, 1989). Finally, few Turkish entrepreneurs employ recently arrived compatriots, precisely because of their poor knowledge of German and their lack of experience of the German society (Sen and Goldberg, 1996). The Turkish economy is thus not so neatly separated from the German mainstream economy. In some cases, this blurring of boundaries has gone so far that a category of 'Turkish' businessmen has

emerged that has lost its 'Turkishness' and does not really differ any more from German businessmen[7].

Several other changes have been taking place since the 1980s. Government policies have always played a key role in the evolution of ethnic economies by determining their legal framework, but have recently started to participate more actively by encouraging members of ethnic minorities to become self-employed[8]. The idea behind such initiatives is that migrants' independent economic activities may be a solution to their unemployment while constituting an economic support to their integration. In the mean time, ethnic entrepreneurs have also started to get organised through the creation of business associations. In Berlin for instance, several organisations exist, representing the interests of Turkish, Italian, Greek and Vietnamese entrepreneurs. Even if such organisations may arguably only represent the interests of a minority of entrepreneurs, they have contributed to ethnic entrepreneurs' visibility and changed the way German businessmen and policy-makers view this phenomenon.

The creation of such associations is connected with the emergence of what could be called a Turkish business elite, whose activities have nothing to do any more with the small family businesses that used to be associated with immigrant entrepreneurship. Such businessmen's activities have taken an international dimension, taking place not only between Germany and Turkey, but also in other European countries[9]. They have also initiated a huge sectoral diversification, and German-Turkish businessmen are now present in almost all sectors of the German economy, including highly successful and competitive sectors like software and new technologies. Finally, a very small number of immigrant entrepreneurs have become very successful and such success-stories are often presented as examples of how economically dynamic immigrants can be[10].

Such recent changes concern only a very small minority among Turkish businessmen in Germany, and do not therefore apply to the whole Turkish economy in Germany. A very high number of Turkish entrepreneurs are still active in the 'classic' sectors, such as grocery stores, restaurants, snack bars, and so on, with the result that Turkish businessmen now constitute a very heterogeneous group. Such changes are nevertheless important because they have helped transform the general context in which ethnic economic activities take place: as we have seen, many policy-makers and some German businessmen now view immigrants' economic activities differently. Moreover,

such success stories also function as models that inspire many other German-Turks. Even the most successful German-Turkish businessman started very modestly, and many of course dream of following the same trajectory.

These changes obviously challenge the literature on ethnic entrepreneurship. In fact, they challenge the usefulness of such a concept, since one may indeed wonder if the differences between Turkish entrepreneurs will not eventually become more important then their common Turkish origin. In such a case, speaking of a 'Turkish economy' would be senseless. I cannot deal with such issues in this paper, but I would like to concentrate on the cultural dimension of ethnic entrepreneuship, that, I shall argue, also needs to be rethought.

The cultural dimension

As far as ethnic minority groups' culture and identity are concerned, the models mentioned above take these factors into account, but in a very debatable way. It is indeed often argued, in a Weberian fashion, that some migrants have a 'cultural predisposition for business' or a mentality that favours commercial success. According to such arguments, some migrant groups tend to work harder, to save their money and to dedicate their lives to their enterprise. This would explain why so many immigrants go into business and why they quite often manage to be successful in their commercial activities. Moreover, it is also often argued that some groups bring with them a trade culture that favours entrepreneurship. These arguments can be criticised from a theoretical and an empirical point of view.

First, on a theoretical level, many scholars working on ethnic entrepreneurship have convincingly argued that such a 'business culture' was to be understood as a reaction to structural factors such as high unemployment among immigrants and the discrimination they have to face (Jones and McEvoy, 1992). Immigrants are then seen as forced to develop such a culture if they want to survive economically. From this point of view there is no such thing as a cultural predisposition to business. Moreover, this argument tends to consider culture in a holistic way, something that migrants carry with them regardless of where they live and what they do. But it seems obvious that minority groups' cultures are at least partly influenced by the new contexts in which they live, and that such modifications have to be taken into account.

Second, from an empirical point of view, the idea according to which some migrants have brought with them a 'business culture' cannot be as convincing today as it once might have been. This is because an increasing number of ethnic entrepreneurs now belong to the second or even third generation and have therefore no experience they could possibly have brought from their country of origin. In the case of German-Turks for example, it has been showed that many first generation Turkish shop-owners were of rural origin (Blaschke and Ersöz, 1987). In their previous agricultural activities, they were self-sufficient, and relied only on their own work and on the help of their family. They knew how to manage a small enterprise. This experience and this culture of independence have pushed them to become self-employed in Germany. This argument might be very convincing, but can obviously not be applied to these migrants' descendants, who now represent an important proportion among German Turkish entrepreneurs[11]. Even if it could be argued that second and third generation migrants inherit a business tradition, this argument would not explain the contemporary expansion of the Turkish economy in Germany.

We therefore have to rethink the cultural and identity dimension of ethnic entrepreneurship. The recent research on new patterns of migrants' culture can be very useful here. Instead of using a bounded conception of culture, I would thus like to suggest thinking in terms of cultural hybridity and of cosmopolitan identities. Such concepts are also much more suited to the study of second- and third- generation migrants' culture and identity. I will precise later how I exactly use these concepts, but my argument will be that there is a connection between the emergence of cosmopolitan identities and the contemporary development of an ethnic economy. Before elaborating further my argument, I would like to continue with two empirical examples.

Two empirical cases

I shall briefly describe two Turkish businesses, a bakery/café and a restaurant/bar, both located in Kreuzberg, the Berlin neighbourhood with the largest Turkish and foreign population. The common point to these two sites is that they constitute open places in which people can meet, interact and develop social relations.

The owner of the bakery/café arrived in Germany thirty years ago at the age of fourteen. After working for many years in a factory, he found a job in a snack bar run by a fellow German-Turk, but became unemployed when this business closed. After having looked for a job for more than a year, he decided to become self-employed. He borrowed money from friends and relatives, worked during a few weeks in a friend's bakery to get the needed skills and opened his own shop. Despite the tough competition and the sixteen hours he has to work daily, he says he is happy not to fear unemployment any more, and to be able to work with his family. His wife is almost always helping him in the shop.

He sells almost only 'German' bread to German customers, but his café welcomes both German and German-Turkish customers. His relations to his fellow German-Turks are often ambiguous. Some of them are just people from the neighbourhood who come whenever they need bread. But other German-Turks come to his place to talk and drink 'Turkish' tea. Some of them are friends or have become acquaintances. Their exact role is not quite clear however, since they are also customers on which this businessman needs to rely. There is thus a permanent negotiation when it comes to paying for all the tea glasses that have been served: the friends/customers hand over their money, and the shop-owner sometimes refuses, sometimes accepts it with the ambiguous expression of someone not doing what he should do. The shop-owner's attitude towards these German-Turkish friends/customers is also quite ambiguous. He joins in their conversation but often leaves them to welcome other customers. He often has mixed feelings towards these fellow German-Turks, and he occasionally criticises some of them for their inability to speak German and for their inactivity in life. Several of them are indeed unemployed and thus quite inactive, in sharp contrast to the shop-owner's extremely hard working conditions. Joking relationships expressing this tension can sometimes be observed. The shop-owner laughingly complains that 'Turks cannot speak German and never work!' while his 'friends' reply by treating him of 'a German who is not in a position to give his opinion on a topic regarding Turkey'.

This ambiguity is largely due to the presence of non-Turkish customers. The shop-owner says that he has to be careful because he knows that Germans are often reluctant to enter a shop full of German-Turks and where Turkish is the only spoken language. Since he needs German customers, he has to make sure that they feel at ease

in his shop. He has established quite good relationships with many of them and often manages to connect them with the German-Turks present in the bakery despite the linguistic problems. Again, there are those who are simply occasional bread-buyers and those who come regularly and have therefore become acquaintances.

This businessman is thus very conscious of this complex situation and of the skills it requires. He knows for example that the coexistence of Germans and German-Turks is no straightforward process. When asked about what is important when one runs such a place, he carefully explains that what makes his shop successful is his ability to deal correctly with German customers. He says he is good at establishing relationships with them, with the result that they enjoy coming regularly to his bakery. He learnt this 'social skill' when he was working in this Turkish snack bar, being the whole day long in contact with Germans. He adds that he cannot leave the shop to his wife because her knowledge of German language and her experience of German customers are limited. She would therefore not be able to deal successfully with the social part of the job. The key point here is that this businessman sees himself in an intermediary position between his German-Turkish and German friends/customers. He knows that the coexistence of Germans and German Turks is a complex process that needs some skills to be handled and believes that not everybody owns these skills.

The other business is a restaurant/bar situated a few blocks away on one of the streets where Kreuzberg's nightlife is busiest. Its owner was born in Berlin, but his parents sent him to his grandparents' village in Eastern Turkey where he spent his childhood. He came back to Berlin when he was ten and has not left the city since then. His business is a typical Berlin place, mostly frequented by German and German-Turkish young people. It is the third premise he has opened. His two previous attempts to become self-employed failed. Before that, he had worked as a waiter in several Turkish restaurants, which gave him some experience, but he also stresses that running a restaurant does not require many skills and that it is therefore an easy activity that everybody can learn. He works with his brother. Both of them had been experiencing unemployment, which pushed them to open this business. Other members of the family sometimes collaborate. He explains that it is important for him to have family around him at work because he feels more comfortable working in Turkish with people he can really trust. Teamwork is made more efficient that way. Moreover, it allows them to be

quite flexible in their trips to Turkey, making it easier to maintain contacts with the friends they still have there.

However, he also stresses that he is a 'world-open' (*weltoffen*[12]) person. He says that he does not want to work only with family members because he would not like having a 'typical Turkish family business'. Moreover, he feels it is necessary to work with people from the outside who bring their experience to his business. That is why he employs a professional German cook, without whom they would not be able to prepare the food Germans expect, and several German waiters. He says that his employees' origin is not important as long as they are also world-open. Both languages, German and Turkish, are spoken among the staff, often in a complete mixture. It is very important for him to have a job that gives him the possibility to meet other people and to work with friends. He definitely wanted to be in Kreuzberg because he thinks it is the best neighbourhood to meet people who are open to both cultural diversity and to persons of different origins: 'Germans who live in Kreuzberg must be open-minded, otherwise they would not live here'. He enjoys the ethnic diversity of Berlin that makes it a world-city, and would never live anywhere else in Germany. He is thinking of opening a bar in Istanbul, another world-city he enjoys and where he could see himself living.

Business, culture and identity

Whether or not everything will go well for these two businesses is uncertain. Success among immigrant businessmen is often precarious and many of them unfortunately go bankrupt. Moreover, these stories are not really unique and similar cases can be found in many empirical studies on ethnic entrepreneurship. But regardless of their success or originality, these two places and the way they work reveal what could be called the hybrid nature of ethnic entrepreneurship (Raulin, 1987).

On the one hand, these two businessmen and their families rely on ethnic networks, as it is often the case among ethnic entrepreneurs. Money comes from friends and relatives; skills have been acquired through the help of fellow ethnic businessmen; the people who work in the shop are members of the family; some customers are German-Turks, which transform the shop into a meeting place.

Moreover, in the case of the restaurant, being self-employed allows the owners to run a partly transnational life through frequent trips to Turkey. On the other hand, one invests in a business only if one plans to stay somewhere for a long time. This is the case of these two shop-owners who have all their family in Germany and who have no intention of returning permanently to Turkey. Moreover, running such businesses demands a good knowledge of the language and of the administrative procedures. Finally, it supposes a will to open oneself to Germans and to German tastes through contact with customers and, in the case of the restaurant, through collaboration with German employees. In other words, these businessmen belong to a minority group and rely on it while simultaneously establishing connections to people outside the group.

It is in this sense that one could speak of 'hybrid business'. However, the concept of cultural hybridity usually refers to cultures that are the product of two previously distinct cultures. But this syncretism-inspired approach may not be relevant when one tries to understand these two businessmen's identities. They are indeed characterised by the fact that they are able to adapt their behaviour to different cultural contexts. They know how to deal with both Germans and German-Turks and do not have any problems handling situations in which people of different origins coexist. This requires great adaptation faculties and an ability to deal with a wide range of people. The concept of cosmopolitanism is more adapted to speak of such identities that enable multiple cultural competencies (Vertovec and Rogers, 1998). This is a crucial point that requires a more detailed analysis.

Cultural hybridity versus cosmopolitan identities
Cultural hybridity, syncretism and creolisation are concepts that have been widely used recently to challenge once-dominant bounded conceptions of culture and identity. Research on migrants' identity and culture had long rested on the idea that migrants lived, often in an uncomfortable way, 'between two cultures'. This conception fitted well into the classical anthropological definition of culture, according to which cultures constitute distinct entities, clearly separated from one another and with a high degree of internal coherence and interdependence. Migrants then suffer from the contradictions between their culture of origin and the culture of the host society.

Bounded conceptions of culture have then been criticised for not allowing us to consider that a growing number of people now belong to two or more cultures and for

essentialising differences (Caglar, 1990, 1997, Wicker, 1997). The emphasis has been put on processes of cultural syncretism and it has been argued that instead of being between two cultures migrants shape a new creolised form of identity which is then seen as the combination of two distinct cultures. The question is then often to know if this hybrid culture is a step towards assimilation or if it constitutes a durable new identity pattern. The growing importance of transnational patterns of migration (Basch et al., 1994) has also encouraged the development of unbounded concepts that suppose the mixing of cultures or nations. Other researches on a more general level (see for instance Appadurai, 1997) have reinforced such trends by emphasising, among other things, the declining relevance of borders between cultures. These borders are indeed seen as challenged by all kinds of flows taking place on a global level and the world is then increasingly 'interconnected' (Hannerz, 1996). Finally, such creolisation processes are often celebrated as a form of resistance 'from below' to hegemonic constructions of identity coming from above, such as national identity frameworks.

The problems with such approaches of identity and culture is that they do not allow us to make a clear difference between an apparently 'pure' culture and an explicitly hybrid one (Werbner, 1997). Claiming that any culture is in one way or another hybrid does not contribute to the understanding of situations where two different cultures coexist. What is important in the case of German-Turks is to investigate how they concretely deal with their double belonging. It may be true that a hybrid German-Turkish culture exists among German Turks, but what is crucial in the cases presented above is that we are faced with people consciously moving from a milieu to another. These businessmen know that they are relying simultaneously on different types of cultural knowledge. They know that they are dealing with all kinds of people and they are aware that managing such socially and culturally complex situations is not always an easy process and that not everybody is able to handle them. We thus need to consider the fact that in the eyes of the German Turks I mentioned different cultural contexts and milieus do exist, and that these people see their lives as spanned between them.

The concept of cosmopolitan identities is more adapted to such culture-crossing situations. It indeed conveys the idea that people with such identities can successfully move from one cultural milieu to another without feeling disoriented. This ability to be 'world-open' has however long been monopolised by people with high cultural, social

and economic capitals[13]. Hannerz (1990) thus opposes 'cosmopolitans' to 'locals', i.e. to people who are unable to deal positively with the cultural diversity of today's world. And Friedman (1997) makes a clear distinction between diasporic intellectuals who adopt such multiple cultural identifications and their working class compatriots who, he argues, are not concerned by such discourses, being confined in their 'local ghetto identity' (1997: 84). There is however no reason, as Werbner (1999) argues, why even lower-class refugees or labour migrants cannot develop such milieu-moving abilities. But if we assume that everybody can be cosmopolitan in one way or another, then we need to investigate the different forms cosmopolitanism can take and the relationship between such milieu-moving abilities and class, gender or ethnicity (Werbner, 1999).

A crucial point here is *how* one is to be cosmopolitan. Cosmopolitanism is indeed often viewed as a 'perspective' or a 'state of mind' (Hannerz, 1990: 238). But in the case of German-Turkish businessmen cosmopolitanism should rather be viewed as a *practice* embedded in concrete daily interactions. It is not only a mental attitude but also a business strategy that is elaborated in a context of tough economic competition and struggle for economic survival. Milieu-crossing abilities are necessary skills for German-Turkish entrepreneurs. This does not mean that the businessmen mentioned above are not also 'mentally' sensitive to cultural diversity and do not enjoy intercultural relationships. On the contrary, the second case mentioned above shows for example how business practices and mental 'world-openness' can go together. And shop-owners often stress that one of the reasons why they like their job is because it gives them the opportunity to meet all kinds of people, including Germans. But it is however crucial to consider that they do need this ability to deal with different milieus and that acquiring this ability is no straightforward process. The case of this businessman who considers his wife unable to deal successfully with non-Turkish customers highlights the fact that not everybody can be cosmopolitan. Not because of personal incompetence of course, but because of their position within a social order determined by gender, class and ethnicity.

Emphasising ethnic entrepreneurs' strategies does not imply neglecting the precariousness and difficulties that many businessmen experience, nor does it mean saying that migrants are in a position of fully shaping their own situation. The 'disadvantage theory', according to which self-employed migrants react to difficulties or discrimination on the labour market, is often accurate. Unemployment pervades the

two cases presented above, and job uncertainty is frequently mentioned as a motivation in almost any study of Turkish entrepreneurship in Germany. Self-employment is thus not an ideal solution bringing both commercial success and cultural freedom to German-Turks. In many cases ethnic entrepreneurship is clearly a reaction to economic difficulties. Moreover, it is also very demanding in terms of job and life conditions. This concern with discrimination is however not incompatible with strategies: on the contrary, migrants cope with discrimination by relying on their social and cultural flexibility. Cosmopolitanism is then a strategy elaborated in a context of socio-economic difficulties.

Business and cosmopolitanism

Without implying a causal relation between them, one can thus observe that ethnic entrepreneurship and immigrants' cosmopolitanism go together well and reinforce each other. This connection is no coincidence. It is indeed important to consider that German-Turkish businessmen's cosmopolitanism not only enables them to navigate between people of different culture but also, more generally, between all kinds of people. There are of course Germans and German-Turks, but there are also friends they know well, friends of friends and strangers, regular and one-time customers, and so on. All kinds of people happen to come to these places and all of them are in a way or another necessary to the business. The shop-owner's job is to answer these different people's needs, adapting his behaviour to each of them. This is especially the case in an economically difficult situation: a businessman struggling to survive obviously cannot afford to lose customers. He therefore needs to know how to make everybody happy.

Being a merchant fundamentally implies knowing how to deal with different people in different contexts and answering positively their needs. A long history of trade diasporas illustrates the deep link between cosmopolitan identities and business activities. In its most apparent manifestation, cosmopolitanism is about how immigrants navigate between, say, a 'Turkish' and a 'German' milieu. But it should not be reduced to such 'simple' movements. German-Turkish businessmen not only deal with both Germans and German-Turks. They also deal, as all businessmen do, with different people with different needs. Even among their German-Turkish customers, they are confronted to a variety of situations, of persons, of demands that all require cosmopolitan abilities. And the more difficult their commercial situation, the more open

and flexible they need to be. Again then, cosmopolitan abilities and identities should be seen as strategies.

This larger conception of cosmopolitanism also shows the limits of 'culture'. It is certainly true that German-Turks are able to deal with their 'double belonging'. But they are also confronted to more complex situations that involve more than simply two worlds. The German versus Turkish divide is probably the most visible aspect of the complexity of their lives but it is not the only one. Differences in terms of socio-economic achievements, religious zeal, political convictions, and so on, should not be under-estimated. Both 'Germans' and 'German-Turks' constitute extremely heterogeneous groups. In other words, we need to redefine the exact place of culture or ethnicity in our conception of cosmopolitan identities: being German or German-Turkish is of course very important but other criteria do exist. In its worse form, this over-emphasis on the cultural specificity of German-Turkish businessmen can even lead to a subtle form of racism.

Conclusion

The cultural dimension of ethnic entrepreneurship needs to be better understood. The growing importance of self-employment among immigrants has consequences in terms of culture and identity that must be investigated. Socio-economic studies abound but there is a lack of specifically cultural approaches to ethnic economies.

In studying the cultural dimension of ethnic entrepreneurship, it is crucial to avoid bounded conceptions of culture or identity. On this point, an important literature already exists and several concepts – such as cultural hybridity, creolisation or cosmopolitanism – have been developed to understand the specificity and complexity of immigrants' identity today. As I have tried to show, the concept of cosmopolitan identity can be useful to understand German-Turkish businessmen's culture. It highlights their ability to deal with all kind of people and to move from a milieu to another.

But business is a concrete activity that requires a practical approach: the emphasis should therefore be put on the strategies that German-Turkish businessmen elaborate in a socio-economic context characterised by discrimination and economic

difficulties. This also means that cosmopolitan identities are not only mental dispositions but also imply concrete skills and competencies.

Finally, it is important not to over-emphasise the difference between 'Turkish' and 'German' cultural contexts. Thinking in terms of milieu-moving abilities and cosmopolitan identities should not lead to a reification of these milieus. German-Turkish entrepreneurs not only navigate between Germans and German-Turks but also, as everybody does, between all kinds of people. Moreover, as all businessmen, they need this flexibility to adapt to their different customers' demands. Their 'Turkishness' thus plays a role in the shaping of their identities, but should not be overestimated. German-Turkish businessmen's identities are not only determined by their ethnicity but also by the nature of their job and by the complexity and heterogeneity of the contexts they are confronted with. It remains an essential task of future research to define more precisely the importance of culture and ethnicity in the definition of the identities of members of minority groups.

Notes

[1] An earlier version of this paper was presented at the conference 'Identity and/in Movement', Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Hull University (UK), March 23-25, 2000. I would like to thank Steven Vertovec, Ayse Caglar and the participants at this conference for their very helpful comments.

[2] For a recent review of the literature on ethnic entrepreneurship, see Barrett et al. (1996).

[3] For a good introduction to this literature, see Werbner (1997).

[4] Giving a precise definition of 'ethnic entrepreneurship' is difficult for several reasons. First, an approach in terms of sectors is of little help because immigrant entrepreneurs' activities keep developing in different directions. Second, trying to define the 'ethnic' dimension of 'ethnic entrepreneurship' is a complex task: in some cases, ethnic businesses are clearly embedded in an 'ethnic community' but this is far from being always the case. Some ethnic entrepreneurs do not differ from non-ethnic businessmen any more. In other words, 'ethnic entrepreneurship' can be defined as the economic activities of members of ethnic minority groups who have created their own business. It is also important to underline the fact that only *legal* activities are considered as ethnic entrepreneurship. Business done by immigrants is indeed often associated with crime, black economy or illegal practices. For obvious reasons, little is known about such activities. In any case, they have few common points with ethnic entrepreneurship and cannot therefore be considered together.

[5] 86.7% of Turkish businessmen in Germany have contact with German customers. All the statistical data I use in this paper come from the 1998 survey done by the Zentrum für Türkeistudien (1999).

[6] Only 69.8% of the workers employed by a Turkish businessman are German-Turks. The remaining workers are either German (19.6%) or of another nationality (10.6%).

[7] For a case of 'ethnic' entrepreneurship in which ethnicity does not seem to play an important role, see Hillmann (1999), who has observed how self-employed Turkish women do not see themselves as part of a 'Turkish' or 'ethnic' economy, but as 'normal' businesswomen. They indeed tend to rely less than men do on Turkish staff or customers.

[8] This is being done mainly through financial help and through the creation of centres providing help and advice to migrants who wish to become self-employed. How to gather a capital, to choose a sector, to deal with administrative and fiscal problems are some of the fields in which advice is proposed. Such initiatives are very often organised or sponsored by state agencies. See Betz and Haberfellner (1999) for examples of such initiatives in Austria, Germany, Scotland and Portugal. In Germany, the *Zentrum für Türkeistudien* at the University of Essen has been very active in promoting this new way of considering ethnic entrepreneurship, especially in North Rhine-Westphalia, a highly industrialised region with a very important Turkish and foreign population.

[9] It should be reminded however that the international dimension of Turkish entrepreneurship was already present at the very beginning, when Turkish businessmen in Germany used to import products from Turkey to answer the German-Turkish population's needs. Since many of these products are now produced in Germany, such practices have become less common. Today, such 'German' products are exported to Turkey or to other countries with an important Turkish population. Another kind of international business activities is represented by German-Turkish firms that install their factories in Turkey because of the lower production costs and that thereafter sell their products in Germany.

[10] In a significant way such highly successful immigrant entrepreneurs have started to appear in big business newspapers. See notably 'Secret of Success for Many Turks in Germany Lies in Start-Ups' (by K. Richter, *The Wall Street Journal*, July 13, 1999) and 'Unsung heroes. Europe's immigrant entrepreneurs are creating thriving businesses-and thousands of jobs' (*Business Week*, European edition, February 28, 2000, pp. 20-24).

[11] 62.9% of Turkish entrepreneurs in Germany are younger than forty years old. Only 14.8% are older than fifty.

[12] One of the consequences of the growing importance of multiculturalism in Berlin and Germany has been the emergence of many 'new' concepts that find new ways of describing immigrants and relationships between Germans and non-Germans. *Weltoffenheit* is an example that literally means 'world-openess' and can be translated by 'liberal mindedness' or 'cosmopolitanism'. For a review of many of these concepts and an analysis of the implications of multiculturalism in Berlin, see Vertovec (1996).

[13] I use the concepts of economic, social and cultural capitals in Bourdieu's sense (Bourdieu, 1972).

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