

ÁNGELES ARJONA GARRIDO
University of Almería (Spain)

JUAN CARLOS CHECA OLMOS
University of Almería (Spain)

Ethnic Entrepreneurs as Economy Strategy in Almería (Spain)

Abstract: Immigrants going to Almería (Spain) are mainly joining the intensive farming sector such as greenhouses, though nowadays they are present in other areas such as construction and restaurant industries as well as domestic service. Some immigrants in order to escape and overcome market segmentation run their own ethnic businesses in the county. The ruling hypothesis is that, once an immigrant is established as an autonomous worker in the labour market, a whole ethnic economy develops. Besides this is an alternative option for immigrants instead of going through the segregation and discrimination which are constant in other sectors. The same way, the importance of the reception environments in general through the integration process, and more specifically in the autonomous labour market is highlighted as well.

Keywords: Ethnic economy, labor market segmentation, labor alternative, ethnic discrimination.

Introduction

The Province of Almería is currently one of the most dynamic in Spain. Its economy has undergone accelerated growth in recent years and this has propitiated the development and progress of a population which up to the middle of the last century, was deep in poverty and doomed to emigration.

The main incident variables in this process are, in the first place, an agricultural revolution oriented around first-class greenhouse crops, which has developed in the areas of the Campos de Dalías and Níjar. In the second place, the consolidation of a service sector, derived from tourism and extending along the entire coast; Finally, the flourishing marble industry in the area of Macael and the building industry in a large part of the province. The boost given by these markets has caused a massive arrival of population in several waves. First, in the seventies and eighties, from inland Almería and other surrounding provinces. Second, at the beginning of the nineties, the origin of the population diversified, coming mainly from Africa (see Checa 1995), and at the present time people are also coming from Latin America and Eastern Europe. These streams of migration are mainly employed in agriculture,¹ although

¹ The highest number of foreigners registered with the Social Security is in agriculture, which collects around 65%. Furthermore, by geopolitical origin, registrations are distributed in the following manner: 59% correspond to Africans—almost all of them in agriculture—16% to Latin Americans, 15.7% to non-UE Europeans and 7.8% to UE Europeans.

other labor markets also demand an immigrant population. In any case, the common characteristic of these markets is their segmentation; see, among others, Colectivo Ioé 2002; Pedreño 2003; Arjona 2006, where the characteristics and insecure conditions of jobs held by immigrants are described.

Foreign immigrants occupy positions that are less valued and less desired by the native population, because they are highly insecure, variable and low wages, the typical characteristics of a secondary market as defined by Piore (1974). However, some immigrants to Almería, as in other points of the Spanish geography—Madrid, Barcelona, Alicante, Seville, etc.—try to escape from those work conditions by joining the self-employed market. These ethnic entrepreneurs try to avoid the multitude of difficulties—economic, legal, social rejection, etc.—set up their own business oriented toward a clientele which is essentially co-ethnic with the intention of improving both their economic situation and social mobility, which are off limits to them the other way.

Therefore, this study attempts to assess whether immigrant self-employment by setting up their own business is an alternative to the fragmentary job market in Almería. To do this, from theoretical and empirical perspectives, three basic questions are put. First, what are the labor market and the context of immigrant reception like in Almería? Second, to what point can these entrepreneur initiatives be considered the origin of an ethnic economy? And finally, is self-employment an alternative to labor market segmentation?

Conceptual Framework

The basis from which we intend to understand and explain the ways in which immigrant labor is incorporated into the Almería economy is multiple: in the first place, segmentation of the labor market, in the second place, an analysis of the configuration of the host context, and third, the origin of an ethnic economy. The explanation of the segmented labor market comes from the dual market theory of Michael J. Piore. According to this author, there is significant inequality in national labor markets, due to the fact that they are not configured in the same way for all the workers, to the point where there are two levels,² a lower one occupied by foreign labor and another higher level made up of qualified, well paid, stable positions. The lower one is occupied by foreign labor and the higher one by native labor. Both are established by asset/labor dualization. Thus, the primary segment is made up of qualified, well remunerated, stable jobs; the secondary is formed by less qualified and more unstable jobs held mainly by foreign workers (Piore 1974).

In the beginning, the jobs in the secondary segment are generally covered by the groups of weakest workers: young people, women or certain ethnic minorities. So the arrival of immigrants is interpreted as labor that replaces the native marginal

² The analysis of the various labor markets shows that “there are many more than just two segments and the division lines that distinguish them depend on the criteria used as the basis of the classification” (Martínez 1998: 18).

workers and, in turn, deepens the insecurity of the market, strengthening discipline and exacerbating the competition among immigrant groups (Castellanos y Pedreño 2001). Since, as Piore (1979b) argues, the marginal native workers do not accept those jobs since their socio-economic level is covered by the Welfare State and its network of family assistance. Therefore, the jobs held by natives in the process of exclusion are usually chosen for certain places, schedules, temporary jobs, and acts as additional family income. Thus immigrant workers are not the strong competition for the natives, nor are they exchangeable labor. According to Doeringer and Piore (1983: 316) when immigrants arrive, they do not care about job security or promotions, since their first intention is only to stay a short time in the host country, just enough to save up what they expect to get and return to their own country. However, even when they look for more permanency and stability,

they accept those jobs as the price of the change and hope that their children will be more successful. Often those jobs, even though unstable and with no outlet, are still preferable to the situation they were in at home.

So when speaking of complementarity between the jobs held by immigrants and natives, the positions of the immigrants fall into two categories: jobs with low wages for work falling into decline, that complements full-time work by natives, and jobs in services that contribute to sustaining the level of living of the native workers who have better positions, such as domestic help, city sanitation, gardening, etc.

All this would explain, on the one hand, how immigration can coexist with high unemployment in the mainstream population. From the theory of dual labor markets, unemployment is explained as a consequence of voluntary rotation in the work of the secondary segment, where, as we know, jobs are insecure, unstable and offer employees few incentives for keeping them. Unemployment is temporary and voluntary, and the only way to end that is for those jobs to become part of the primary segment (Doeringer and Piore 1975). On the other hand, however, and as Esping-Andersen (1999) points out, the submerged economy is a mechanism for introducing informal flexibility in the dual market. This benefits the businessman and foreign immigrant workers can only adapt to that market³ based on the “opportunities for employment available and their level of acceptance mainstream working conditions” (Villa 1990: 312).

The host context, closely related to segmentation, is another key element in understanding incorporation of immigrants into the workforce. Many of the strategies used by immigrants for their insertion in the workforce depend on contextual and structural factors and at others, on individual factors, and human and social capital.

In the work of Portes and Rumbaut (1990), the idea is emphasized that immigrant human capital is at the expenses of contextual factors which are totally controlled by certain social and economic agents. Among them are the conditions under which

³ After analyzing the 2001 census data, Domingo y Houlé (2004: 10) observe that in the Spanish labor market “insertion of foreigners is more insecure than that of Spaniards in the majority of occupations, and characterized by being temporary and having higher unemployment, both for men and women in all age groups.” The dangers of this market system, in which social polarization is increased, social cohesion is diminished, and which cannot be sustained in the long term in an economic context characterized by rapid technological change.

an immigrant left his home country, the international policy on flows, the context of reception, the path taken by the first to arrive or the types of communities that have already been created in the host country. The main idea of this model is that “a particular context of sending and receiving can develop different social and cultural conditions for the members of different national origins” (Zhou 2004: 7). Thus immigrant entry in the workforce, depending on the context of reception, may be, in the first place, hostile, where access is to the secondary market segment and ethnic entrepreneurs become *minority middlemen*. The term *minority* implies subordination and being fewer—although sometimes, for certain periods, the minority could constitute a numerical majority. On the other hand, the term *middleman* is more complex, since it is placed in a paradoxical situation, in which on one hand, it seems to be mixed with front economic success and on the other, shows its lack of political power (Bonacich 1973).

In the second place, neutral, in which immigrants enter in both market sectors and the natives may create dominant companies in some sectors, and lastly, favorable, in which it has access to businesses and entrepreneurs can form enclave economies. Portes and Böröcz (1989) affirm that it is most common in the majority of contexts for the immigrant to meet with a hostile reception, which extends to manual labor, technical professionals and entrepreneurs.⁴ This is demonstrated when the structures of opportunity (Waldinger 1990) for immigrant insertion in the workforce are defined by social and economic agents in the context and not by the human capital of the workers.

Therefore, in the following section, we analyze the main characteristics of the various labor markets occupied by immigrants in Almería in order to find out the configuration of the context.

Methods and Data

Official statistics on foreign-owned businesses, such as the Tax on Economic Activities, Opening permits in the various City Halls and Registration in the Social Security Special System for Self-employed Workers offered by the Ministry of Labor, have severe deficiencies: in the first place, they do not register informal or illegal businesses; in the second place, they do not show any precise information on the activity carried out; finally, they do not give the nationality of the owner, so European Community Members and non-UE are confused. To correct such statistical skewing, we have done exhaustive fieldwork: combing the main host cities for non-UE immigrants street by street in the province of Almería⁵ to take a count of businesses opened, using various key informers to obtain access to unofficially opened shops or businesses. Once each and every one of these businesses—formal and informal—of non-UE

⁴ In a hostile context, entrepreneurs tend toward the middleman minorities: “When the dominant groups of the host society have a negative opinion of the arrival of activities of these immigrants, they are often forced into a role of marginal merchants” (Portes and Böröcz 1989: 30).

⁵ Adra, El Ejido, Vícar, La Mojonera, Roquetas de Mar, Almería (capital) and Níjar.

entrepreneurs had been counted, with the exception of Chinese entrepreneurs and liberal professions, we handed out a card/questionnaire where socio-demographic, labor, residence and capital asset variables were collected. The final sample contained 182 businesses out of 206 of the establishments counted.

The hypothesis that we are attempting to verify maintains that the participation of immigrants in ethnic businesses has positive economic and social consequences, to the point that it permits the entrepreneurs to escape from labor segmentation in Almería's labor markets. In the process, we assume that these economies are closely linked to their co-ethnic members, more than to natives, configuring an internal market that makes it possible for ethnic entrepreneurs to become successful.

Labor Markets and Ethnic Entrepreneurs in Almería

As underlined above, the labor markets that foreign immigrants have entered in western societies are divided into segments with much diversified characteristics. In this section we first review the various labor markets where the non-UE immigrants are inserted, describing their particularities. Secondly, we focus on ethnic entrepreneurs, to find out their characteristics and how they work, so we can provide information on their configuration as an alternative to the segmented market. And, finally, we analyze the characteristics of the ethnic economy to find out, if it is an alternative to the segmented market, what elements determine it and who is benefited by it.

1. Hostile, Segmented Market?

Immigrants hold many jobs in the province of Almería, but almost all of them are in agriculture, construction, services and, to a lesser degree, the formula of self-employment. Let's take a succinct look at the characteristics of these markets. Immigrants break into the agricultural sector in force around the middle of the nineties in the last century. Their incorporation comes about for several reasons. First, due to the constant increase in hectares devoted to greenhouses. Second, thanks to technical and scientific progress, the production of several harvests in the same season becomes possible. And finally, because of the abandon of agricultural labors by some members of the family group, especially children. Native labor has mainly been entering auxiliary agricultural industries and the service sector, generating a transfer of native labor from some jobs to others, depending on the levels of acceptability, desirability and individual training. Castellanos and Pedreño (2001: 9) report that in industrial agriculture

along with the mobilization of socially vulnerable categories such as women and immigrants, the introduction of certain production technologies has symbolically disqualified the work of field hands, based on which business strategies devaluing such labor have become established.

One of the elements of the agricultural market that makes it undesirable and unacceptable to the natives is its discontinuity and variability. Several situations are

derived from this seasonal labor. In the first place, labor agreements are oral and therefore more symbolic than real, making the present agricultural wage of 35 Euros for an eight-hour workday to be one of the lowest in all Spain. In spite of this, very few, only those who have been working a long time for the same owner, are even paid that.

The demand for labor in this market fluctuates, that is, there are moments when much labor is required—for sowing or harvesting—compared to others that do not require as much—care and irrigation. Therefore, recruiting is subject to various coincidences: variations in requirements and orders from the international market or the growers' occasional need when there is a larger harvest. This leads to a situation in which “guest workers” are present permanently, like an army of reserve labor. So that, depending on the time of the harvest and the type of produce, in any given month an immigrant in Almería could work between 15 and 20 days.

In the second place, and as a consequence of the above, the Almería labor market is sustained by irregular labor with anomalies in wages. The seasonality of the need for labor leads the grower to not want to register and legalize his workers, first because he would have to pay union wages and second, because in a certain manner of speaking, this obligates him to guarantee continuity on the job.⁶ Therefore, if the immigrant has the opportunity, in the best of cases, to work around 20 days a month, he will receive no more than 600 €, under the assumption that he is paid 30 € a day. It may be gathered that this is a rather low wage not desired by the native population.

Another characteristic of this labor market is its poor working conditions and the high risk of contracting diseases. With regard to the first, indoor greenhouse temperatures can be up to 50 degrees and the work is always hard, since it requires constant physical effort. Furthermore, the work is subject to contact with pesticides that are hazardous when handled without proper precautions. This leads to the second point, the appearance of dermatological and infectious diseases. Agricultural labor is also a cause of muscular injuries and herniated disks. For all of these reasons, the work is reviled by the active mainstream population, to the point where employment in greenhouses is perceived as “work for Moroccans and/or Blacks.” It is definitely quite clear that the agricultural labor market in Almería is characterized by its ethnification, variability and temporary contracts, as well as job insecurity.

Construction is the second sector of the Almería economy where foreign labor is employed. General economic development in the province of Almería is generating enormous expansion and growth of construction, which has derived in an important transfer of mainstream labor from other activities, especially agriculture, and also incorporation of foreign labor. Thus the imbalance between offer and demand for labor is offset by immigrants. However, the characteristics and working conditions foreigners have in these jobs are also insecure. The Colectivo Ioé (1998: 156) summarizes the Spanish case, which is also valid for the context in Almería, as: the labor turnover rate is higher than for natives, jobs held require lower qualifications—farm labourers—and there is little or no contract regulation. This reality causes many immigrants to alternate construction with agriculture. Add to these characteristics ethno-discrimination,

⁶ Nevertheless, a type of fixed discontinuous seasonal contract has also recently come into use.

whereby Eastern Europeans and Latin Americans are preferred to North Africans, in spite of the fact that they arrived in Almería first. Insofar as the *service sector* is concerned, immigrants have entered the hotel and restaurant industry, domestic help, prostitution are also self-employed merchants. The first element that characterizes the labor market in the hotel and restaurant industry is again ethno-discrimination. It has been verified that belonging to certain ethnic groups is a handicap, as the Eastern Europeans and Latin Americans hold jobs dealing with the public (Africans only accomplish this in their own businesses). The explanation native businessmen offer for this situation is reduced to better qualities, performance and adaptability to the job of some groups over others. Reality condemns the Africans to zero labor mobility, remaining limited to working in greenhouses, where it is easier for them to become invisible.

The domestic-help subsector is characterized mainly by being female and ethnic. On top of the fact that in Almería legalized employment in domestic help is very low, employers prefer Latin Americans. As mentioned by Herranz (1997), the fact that domestic help requires an employer-employee relationship based on linguistic comprehension, makes Latin Americans preferred labor and more in demand. However, Africans, in addition to the linguistic barrier, are assumed to have culinary and sanitary habits and education very different from ours, which impedes their being hired. It is obvious that behind this discourse, a process of ethnic discrimination is hiding that results in competition among immigrant groups. In addition to the preferences for origin, the domestic-help labor market shows certain working conditions likened to semi-slavery and servility: extremely low wages, long workdays—even more when help is live-in—and above all, highly irregular, with exclusively oral contracts that can lead to arbitrary dismissal. Another activity in the service sector held by immigrants in Almería and, specifically, by women, is prostitution (Arjona, Checa and Acién 2005). Such jobs are characterized by being the most irregular and insecure, although there are also significant differences depending on the particular group. Thus, Nigerians and Moroccans carry out their activities in the farmhouses located among the greenhouses, and their customers are usually compatriots. The hygienic and sanitary conditions are nonexistent and workdays unending. The Europeans, on the other hand, work bars, pubs or advertise by phone, and their customers are usually Spanish.

Finally, self-employed merchants are usually peddlers or have small businesses.⁷ For installation as self-employed workers, Kloosterman et al. (1999) emphasize the importance of the context of reception,⁸ highlighting, on one hand, the regulative and legislative frameworks and on the other, the interests and demands of the consumers. In other words, ethnic entrepreneurs are shown to be dependent on what the groups need and what the contextual and legal framework allows them to offer.

This demonstrates that, in general, the immigrant who intends to set himself up as a self-employed worker faces more difficulties than in seeking employment. The Spanish case demonstrates this, as our current legislation demands a series of rather

⁷ The most outstanding nationalities are the Moroccans, Chinese, Algerians and Senegalese.

⁸ These authors have contributed the Mixed Embedded Theory (social embedding) theoretically and empirically suitable to the European case.

restrictive requirements for granting work permits for self-employment: incidence of the activity to be performed in generating employment, contribution of capital to the national economy, sufficient investment, professional qualifications, contribution of new technologies, etc., apart from compliance with the general standards applicable to the rest of the population. Moreover, when the activity is starting up, the State does not need to have a reason for refusing the residence visa for self-employment.

To the limitations and/or conditions necessary imposed by the Immigration Law, local administrations also place impediments for setting up ethnically-owned businesses, which, in the case of Almería, causes many businesses to be set up illegally, hidden among the greenhouses or in flats, whose location and activity are known only to their co-ethnic customers. Finally, the proliferation of small shops run by immigrants—*hallal* butcher shops, bazaars, public telephone services, teashops, hairdressers, etc., generate distrust among the mainstream population, as they understand it as a formula for settling down permanently and posing competition. The residents of Almería who live near such businesses are demonstrating their unhappiness with this phenomenon: the most flagrant cases are in las Norias de Daza—outskirts of El Ejido—and the neighborhoods of Doscientas Viviendas in Roquetas de Mar, Manolo Escobar and Almería Streets in El Ejido and the neighborhood of El Puche, in the capital of Almería, where the natives are abandoning the place and putting their homes up for sale. Without doubt, all these requirements and impediments have the effect of denial or dissuasion for the immigrant who is thinking about setting up his own business.

A description of how labor markets that immigrants enter in Almería work, definitely shows ethnification and a context of hostile reception, where the process of setting themselves up as self-employed workers is configured around middleman minorities who provide the advance into a consolidated ethnic economy.

2. Why are They Ethnic Businesses?

The consideration of business activities run by foreigners as ethnic economies is closely related to a series of underlying variables: ethnic and spatial concentration (Checa 2007), type of business, number of employees and nationality, clientele, resources used, etc. These variables have sociological and anthropological connotations that must be approached since they lead to concepts of ethnic economy, enclave economy, ethnic ownership economy and ethnic control economy, with different particularities. Ethnic economy includes any immigrant who is an employer, self-employer or who is employed in co-ethnic businesses.

The limits of an ethnic economy are defined by race, ethnicity or national origin, being characterizing by benefiting from the relationships between owners of businesses and between owners and workers from the same group (Logan, Alba and McNulty 1994: 698).

Other researchers in the field of ethnic entrepreneurs have added the function of “entrepreneur school” (Light et al. 1994) since it facilitates training for self-employment. The concept of ethnic enclave, contrary to the ethnic economy, introduces an explicit reference to the spatial dimension (Portes and Wilson 1980), as

space is not only a material container of population, but also of social relations. Thus, enclaves require a preponderant immigrant population to assure extensive clientele among the social relations and ethnic solidarity. The enclave in turn benefits from the co-ethnic labor force available to the entrepreneur, configuring, at the same time, a space for socialization and self-help. Nevertheless, there is a wide diversity of situations in the configuration of enclaves: first, those who live and work within the enclave; second, those who work in this area, but live outside of it; third, those who live within the area of the enclave, but work outside of it; fourth, those members of the ethnic group who neither live nor work in the enclave (Portes and Jensen 1989). The distinction between *ethnically controlled* and *ethnic ownership economies* is similar to the classic *control* and *ownership* of businesses.

Ethnically controlled economies exist when, and to the extent that, co-ethnic employees exert an appreciable and persistent economic power in workplaces due to their numerical preponderance, numerical clustering and organization, but also by outside political or economic mandate (Light y Gold 2000: 23).

The *ethnically controlled economy* definitely requires ethnic control, which makes it possible for the conditions of an ethnic economy to exist: ethnic employees, businesses clustered in places with a preponderance of co-ethnic immigrants and clientele. Therefore, the only distinction from the *ethnic property economy* is defined by the ownership of the businesses.

Taking the above concepts as a reference, we observe that in Almería, ethnic entrepreneurs confirm some of the parameters. In the first place, employees and customers. Of the 139 shops with employee, 117 state that they are relatives of the entrepreneur: spouse, child or sibling. In ethnic businesses set up in Almería, 82.7% of the customers are exclusively immigrants, of whom 64.8% are co-ethnics of the owner or of the employee who “identifies” the business. As a result, it is evident that the relationships among the owners, the employees and consumers transcend strict commercial dependence and mean the acceptance of certain rules of reciprocity. In other words, one of the key elements in the way this type of economy works is ethnic solidarity,⁹ derived from an identity, which intensifies the sensation of community and belonging to the group. Doubtless, the sense of community and of self-identification as such increments solidarity (Waldinger, Aldrich y Ward 1990), a key element for consolidation of the ethnic businessman, since co-ethnics are going to prefer going to these businesses to those run by natives.

This solidarity has to be analyzed in two senses: first, between businessman and employee, where both are benefited: the entrepreneur gains group acceptance, which translates into wider clientele; the employee is able to escape from the secondary market jobs, not to mention training and learning for future business projects. Second, solidarity between customer and businessman is a response to the group itself, increasing ethnic ties and guaranteeing customers out of loyalty. In turn, the entrepreneur responds by supplying his “typically ethnic” products to the community,

⁹ In this regard, Bonacich and Modell (1980) define the ethnic economy under the premise of disadvantages in the mainstream labor market that generates ethnic solidarity.

which would not be able to find them elsewhere. Furthermore, the fact that co-ethnics are employed is also good for attracting customers.

In the second place, the characteristics of the ethnic economy in Almería are still far from the configuration of an ethnic enclave, as occurs in some American or other European cities. In no case, in spite of the concentration of businesses in neighborhoods or streets inhabited by immigrants, does the co-ethnic occupation or the dividends of the economy justify the term enclave. At the present time, in the neighborhoods of El Puche in Almería, Doscientas Viviendas in Roquetas de Mar or Casas Rosas in Las Norias de Daza (El Ejido), there is a high concentration of ethnic businesses in places of heavy density of immigrants, but these are small family businesses only able to give work to a few, and their economic transactions are limited.

Although, if more favorable legal and social requirements combined with the maintenance of the migratory flows, there might be a second phase of migration, in which small economic enclaves are established to facilitate insertion in the workforce for a large part of the members of the enclave, constructing a protected niche for the ethnic minorities.

Finally, when ownership of the businesses where there are immigrants is analyzed, we find that 61.7% are ethnic owners. Food stores, bazaars or bars are the most outstanding. However, 38.3% of the businesses correspond to ethnic control, where the owner—normally a large company—is not the same as the management or supervisor. The role of the immigrant is therefore reduced to control and publicity attracting the immigrants. The businesses that show this particularity most are public telephone call centers and those that send money. For immigrant entrepreneurs it is easier to gain access to a multinational franchises which articulate all the business and manage prices, offers and results, and the immigrant only supplies the shop and subcontracts co-ethnics. The main suppliers are multinational companies devoted to the world of telephony—such as Comytel and British Telecom—sending money—such as Western Union or Money Gram—the business consists in taking out a line with Telefónica and then subcontracting to other multinational companies.

3. Is it a Labor Alternative?

It has been demonstrated that labor markets in Almería are highly segmented and the context of reception is hostile. These difficulties make self-employment a highly valued option among the immigrant groups, since ethnic economies allow immigrants and ethnic minorities to overcome disadvantages and exclusion, negotiating the terms of their participation in the labor market of the host society (Tienda and Rajjman 2000). The variables that are going to help us to distinguish whether we are faced with a labor alternative to the segmented market and who is benefited by that alternative are in the first place, the existence of internal job markets and how they work, in the second place, the transnational nature of the businesses, and, thirdly, the economic and social success of their owners or managers.

From a theoretical perspective, there is still no consensus on whether the typical functioning of the ethnic economy pertains—within the segmented labor market—

to the first segment or to the second or whether, to the contrary, it is a different segment that shares characteristics with the above two, in which case we could allude to the construction of an ethnic niche as an energizing element of the ethnic economy. In this sense, Reitz (1980) defined the ethnic economy as the labor context where co-ethnics use a foreign language, the employees are co-ethnics and the products are for their community. This idea includes the perspective of internal labor markets. The field work has shown that the internal labor relationships of this market also show characteristics of the secondary segment, like it happens in other segmented markets and that they are framed within a context of hostile reception.

Nevertheless, the immigrant group that creates an ethnic economy for itself is going to configure a school of entrepreneurs and recruit labor that enters directly into that economy. This provides an alternative for the group, who when they arrive at the host country do not enter the mainstream secondary market, but start working directly for the ethnic economy.

This condition occurs in Almería, although on not very representative levels. Only some members of the entrepreneur's family and other co-ethnics are directly incorporated in the business, which is a family business with a very low margin of profit. This leads us to also wonder what the labor relations between employer and employee are like and how they differ from those described above for other labor markets.

The particularity of being small businesses involves profit subject to several conditions: in the first place, the diversity of products offered. The majority of businesses offer their customers a variety of services or products in order to maximize resources and obtain the most profit. Thus, for example, in a hairdresser's you might also find food products. In the second place, business without hours. Opening and closing times adapt to the hours of their customers. So most of the sales are to co-ethnics and other immigrants at the end of their work day. In the third place, non-existent salaries when the employee is a family member—child or spouse—or low when the employee is a co-ethnic not a member of the family. And in the fourth place, irregular. The employers, except on rare occasions, register their workers.

Second, the operation of ethnic businesses also has a transnational logic (Guarnizo 1997, 2003; Light et al. 2002). In this sense, the immigrant who opts for setting up a business on his own achieves a labor alternative, since he enters a transnational market system, escaping from the secondary market. Landolt and collaborators (1999: 296) distinguishes five types of ethnic entrepreneurs who have a transnational character: financial agents (banking, finances), product exporters and importers (mainly food), cultural entrepreneurs (music, films, compact disks, etc.), manufacturing companies (shoes, clothes, etc.) and entrepreneurs who return to their country and set up microbusinesses with the money earned in the migratory process. Ethnic businesses in Almería show important elements of transnational operation. In the first place, those who offer food or typically ethnic products and are supplied from their home countries (20%) or wholesalers located in France and Belgium (40%) who respond to transnational supply chains, whereby costs of Customs and duties

are lowered. In a similar manner, there is no lack of entrepreneurs who buy merchandise or products in other Spanish cities—mainly Murcia, Alicante and Madrid. Others are supplied inside the province of Almería by wholesale warehouses or large discount supermarket chains (Lidl, Día, Plus, Carrefour, Eroski, etc.). In the second place, companies devoted to communications and sending money, logically have an innate transnational structure. Similarly, every time ethnic entrepreneurs settled in Almería, in addition to lots and export skills, are creating other little satellite companies in their own countries or in others they supply with the products necessary, which, besides profit, gives him social and cultural prestige. Portes et al (1999) advance further in this matter by distinguishing three sectors of transnationalism (economic, sociocultural and political) and two levels of institutionalization (high and low), so that transnationalism is defined as occupations and activities that require substantial regular contact that surpasses time and national borders to be implemented. Ethnic entrepreneurs in Almería, in their condition of minority middlemen, are economically and socially successful to a certain extent, but as Bonacich (1973) points out, they do not have political success. Third, the business's success. This is defined mainly by the income generated and by its social prestige among co-ethnics. Economic success, as we have seen, depends essentially on ethnic solidarity and the particularities of the internal labor market. Immigrant entrepreneurs in Almería, except for twenty-some cases in which the entrepreneurs have several shops, say their profit margins are very narrow at the cost of great effort. But be that as it may, they earn more than in agriculture and few businesses close. On the contrary, there are more and more new businesses opening, although they may be informal or illegal.

On the other hand, when ethnic entrepreneurs set up a business, it not only covers the needs not met by other mainstream businesses already established, for example, *halal* meat, but their shops also become points of contact and meeting places for their co-ethnics. For the group of immigrants, the co-ethnic who has been able to open or control a business is a reference to be imitated, which derives in ever-greater prestige until they become, as has happened in certain cases, intermediaries with natives: the entrepreneurs are usually the presidents of immigrant associations and more politically visible.

Once the variables that highlight certain characteristics of the ethnic economy as an alternative to the secondary segment of the mainstream labor market have been described, you might wonder for whom it is an alternative. As we have seen above, the internal functioning of the ethnic labor market reproduces mimetically some of the characteristics of the secondary segment (insecurity, family self-exploitation, irregularity, etc.), although it also shares others from the primary segment (job stability, rise in economic and social status, greater skills, less physical labor, etc.), which shows that, in the light of the results that the alternative is chiefly available to owners or immigrants who have control of the business, but to a lesser degree for other ethnic employees, since, in spite of being a possible school for entrepreneurs, the working conditions are insecure, which is why the employees wish to set up their own business.

Conclusion

The process of immigrant entry in the workforce in Almería is framed by segmentation of the labor market. The immigrants, especially those who come from Africa, usually enter the secondary labor market due to the discrimination and rejection to which they are subjected. This limits them, to a great extent, in benefiting from their human capital, just as it reduces their possibilities for ascension and promotion. One of the most alternatives most valued by the immigrants is setting up a business of their own due to the transnational character—commercial and cultural ties are maintained with their home country and with other countries or regions—and the economic and social success this represents. However, the internal labor relations of this market may be seen to have characteristics typical of the secondary segment of other segmented markets and hostile reception. So the real alternative is for the owners or managers, while for co-ethnic employees it serves as training.

The incipient nature of this phenomenon in Spain in general and in Almería in particular, leaves research open to later reviews of what happens in the future. Therefore, as we started the article with some questions, we would now like to close it with others: Will Almería stop being a hostile reception context? Will there be an increase in ethnic businesses that derive in ethnic economic enclaves? And finally, will the ethnic economy become an alternative for employees as well as entrepreneurs?

References

- Ambrosini, M. 1996. "Ethnicité et marché du travail: les immigrés dans le système économique italien." *Sociología del Lavoro*, 66–67: 307–327.
- Arjona, Á. 2006. *Los colores del escaparate*. Barcelona: Icaria.
- Arjona, Á., Checa, J. C. and Acién, E. 2005. "Estrategias económicas de mujeres subsaharianas en el Poniente almeriense," in: F. Checa (ed.), *Mujeres en el camino*. Barcelona: Icaria.
- Bonacich, E. 1973. "A Theory of Middleman Minorities." *American Sociological Review*, vol. 38: 583–594.
- Bonacich, E. and Modell, J. 1980. *The Economic Basis of Ethnic Solidarity in the Japanese American Community*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Castellanos, M. L. and Pedreño, A. 2001. "Desde El Ejido al accidente de Lorca. Las amargas cosechas de los trabajadores inmigrantes en los milagrosos vergeles de la agricultura mediterránea." *Sociología del Trabajo*, 42: 3–31.
- Checa, F. 1995. "Oportunidades socioeconómicas en el proceso migratorio de los inmigrantes africanos en Almería." *Agricultura y Sociedad*, 77: 41–82.
- Checa, J. C. 2007. *Viviendo juntos-aparte*. Barcelona: Icaria.
- Colectivo Ioè 2002. *Inmigración, escuela y mercado de trabajo. Una radiografía actualizada*. Barcelona: Fundación "La Caixa."
- Doeringer, P. B. and Piore, M. J. 1975. *Internal Labor Markets and Manpower Analysis*. Lexington: Mass Lexington Books.
- . 1983. "El paro y el 'mercado dual' de trabajo," in: M. Toharia (comp.), *El mercado de trabajo: teorías y aplicaciones*. Madrid: Alianza Universidad, pp. 307–321.
- Domingo, A. and Houlé, R. 2004. "La actividad de la población de nacionalidad extranjera en España: entre la complementariedad y la exclusión," in IV Congreso de la Inmigración en España, Gerona.
- Espin-Andersen, G. 1999. *Social Foundations of Postindustrial Economies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gallardo, G. 2001. *Tráfico de mujeres desde la República Dominicana con fines de explotación sexual*. Santo Domingo: Organización Internacional para las Migraciones.

- Guarnizo, L. 1997. The Mexican Ethnic Economy in Los Angeles: Capitalist Accumulation, Class Restructuring and Transnationalization of Migration, in: C. A. Davis, *California Communities Program of the University of California*.
- . 2003. "The Economics of Transnational Living." *International Migration Review*, vol. 37, 3: 666–699.
- Herranz, Y. 1997. "Mujeres dominicanas en el servicio doméstico de Pozuelo-Aravaca." *Cuadernos de Relaciones Laborales*, 10.
- Kloosterman, R., Van Der Leun, J. and Rath, J. 1999. "Mixed Embeddedness, (In)formal Economic Activities and Immigrant Businesses in the Netherlands." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 23: 252–266.
- Landolt, P., Autler, L. and Baires, S. 1999. "From hermano lejano to hermano mayor: the dialectics of Salvadoran Transnationalism." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 22: 290–315.
- Light, I., Gold, S. 2000. *Ethnic economies*. San Diego: Academic Press.
- Light, I., Sabagh, G., Bozogmehr, M. and Der-Martirosian, C. 1994. "Beyond the Ethnic enclave economy." *Social Problems*, 1: 65–80.
- Light, I. et al. 2002. "Transnationalism and American Exports in an English-Speaking World." *International Migration Review*, vol. 36: 702–725.
- Logan, J. R., Alba, R. D. and McNulty, T. L. 1994. "Ethnic Economies in Metropolitan Regions, Miami and Beyond." *Social Forces*, 72: 691–724.
- Martínez, U. 1998. "La competición en el mercado de trabajo entre inmigrantes y nativos." *Migraciones*, 3: 9–30.
- Pedreño, A. 2003. "Trabajadores inmigrantes y agricultura intensiva: por qué vinieron a recolectar frutas y cómo fueron convertidos en fuerza de trabajo vulnerable y disponible," in: A. Tornos (ed.), *Los inmigrantes y el mundo del trabajo*. Madrid: UPCO, pp. 123–145.
- Piore, M. 1974. "Notes for a Theory of Labor Market Stratification," in: R. C. Edwards, M. Reich and D. M. Gordon (eds.), *Labor Market Segmentation*. Lexington Mass: Lexington Books, pp. 125–149.
- . 1979. *Birds of Passage*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- . 1979b. "The 'Illegal Aliens' Debate Misses the Boat," in: Piore, M. J. (comp.), *Unemployment and Inflation: Institutional and Structuralist Views*. New York: Sharpe.
- Portes, A., Böröcz, J. 1989. "Contemporary Immigration: Theoretical Perspectives on its Determinants and Modes of Incorporation." *International Migration Review*, vol. 13: 606–630.
- Portes, A. and Jensen, L. 1989. "The enclave and the entrants: patterns of ethnic enterprise in Miami before Mariel." *American Sociological Review*, 54: 929–949.
- Portes, A., Rumbaut, R. G. 1990. *Immigrant America*. California: University of California Press.
- Portes, A., Wilson, K. 1980. "Immigrants Enclaves: An Analysis of the Labor Markets Experiences of Cubans in Miami." *American Journal of Sociology*, 86: 295–319.
- Portes, A., Haller, W, Guarnizo, L. 2002. "Transnational Entrepreneurs: the Emergent and Determinants of an Alternative Form of Immigrant Economic Adaptation." *American Sociological Review*, 67: 278–298.
- Reitz, J. 1980. *The Survival of Ethnic Groups*. Toronto: McGraw-Hill.
- Tezanos, J. F. 2001. *La sociedad dividida. Estructura de clases y desigualdades en las sociedades tecnológicas*. Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva.
- Tienda, M. and Rajman, R. 2000. "Immigrants Income Packaging and Invisible Labor Force Activity." *Social Science Quarterly*, 81: 291–310.
- Waldinger, R. 1990. *Ethnic Entrepreneurs, Immigrants Business in Industrial Societies*. London: Sage Publications.
- Waldinger, R., Aldrich, H., and Ward, R. 1990. "Opportunities, Group Characteristics and Strategies," in: R. Waldinger, *Ethnic Entrepreneurs, Immigrants Business in Industrial Societies*. London: Sage Publications, pp. 13–48.
- Zhou, M. 2004. "Revisiting Ethnic Entrepreneurship: Convergences, Controversies and Conceptual Advancements." *International Migration Review*, 407–445, Internet: http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3668.

Biographical Note: Ángeles Arjona Garrido (Ph.D.) is professor of Social Anthropology, Department of the Social Sciences, University of Almería (Spain). She is author of the books (*La inmigración y el mercado de trabajo: el caso de la economía étnica en Almería*, 2004), (*Los colores del escaparate*, 2006), and (*Jóvenes*

Inmigrados y Educación en España, 2008). She is author to various articles in the following Journals: *Revista Colombiana de Sociología*, *Sociología del Trabajo*, *Redes*, *Portularia*, *Revista Internacional de Sociología*, *Sociologia*, etc.

Address: e-mail: arjona@ual.es

Biographical note: Juan Carlos Checa Olmos (Ph.D.) is professor of Sociology, Department of the Social Sciences, University of Almería (Spain). He is author of the books (*La diferenciación residencial de los inmigrantes*, 2004), (*Viviendo Juntos Aparte*, 2007), (*La diferenciación residencial: conceptos y modelos empíricos para su comprensión*, 2008). Co-editor of the books (*Convivencias entre culturas*, 2001), (*La integración social de los inmigrantes: /modelos y experiencias*, 2003) e */Inmigración y derechos humanos/* (2004), (*Sin trabajo y sin espanto*, 2008). Author of articles in the following journals: *Anthropologica*, *Revue Européenne Migrations Internationales*, *Papers*, *Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociológicas*, *Sociologia*.

Address: e-mail: jcheca@ual.es