

SUMMARY

Chinese cuisine has become very familiar to Dutch society in the past few decades. Although there already existed a handful of Chinese restaurants in the Netherlands shortly after the Second World War, it was not until the 1970s that the Chinese restaurant and catering sector began to bloom.

In 1960, the Netherlands still had only about 225 Chinese restaurants. Thirty-five years later, in 1995, this figure grew to around 2,000 – an increase of almost 800%. This rapid rate of growth has thus far been unparalleled in the overall restaurant and catering sector in the Netherlands.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the Chinese restaurant and catering sector greatly encouraged the phenomenon of Dutch people dining out. By 1995, the total number of restaurants in the Netherlands had grown to approximately 10,000. Almost 25% of those restaurants offered Asian cuisine, most of which was Chinese. What factors have enabled Chinese cuisine to reach such an important position in the Netherlands' restaurant and catering sector? The present study aims to answer this question.

Towards that end, the entrepreneurship of Chinese restaurant owners will be examined in the context of the Chinese migration to the Netherlands and their adaptation to Dutch society. The conceptual model is based on a theoretical framework that proceeds from the following set of assumptions: the development of the Chinese restaurant and catering sector has been influenced by a number of social processes that have taken place in Dutch society in the past decades. Furthermore, it is supposed that several socio-cultural characteristics of the Chinese population in the Netherlands have played an important role in the development of the Chinese restaurant and catering sector. In turn, Chinese entrepreneurship has had consequences for the general position of the Chinese migrant population in the Netherlands, as well as for Dutch society itself.

In addition, the present study analyses the extent to which the several socio-cultural characteristics of the Chinese population in the Netherlands can also be observed in a different context. For that purpose, we shall compare the development of the Chinese restaurant and catering sector in the Netherlands to the one in the United States of America.

Chapter 1 addresses the following questions:

- 1) Which social processes have influenced the development of the Chinese restaurant and catering sector in the Netherlands?

- 2) To what extent can one speak of such characteristics as 'orientation towards the homeland', 'achievement motivation', and 'solidarity' within the Chinese migrant population in the Netherlands? Moreover, what role have these characteristics played in the emergence and development of Chinese entrepreneurship in the Chinese restaurant and catering sector?
- 3) To what extent has this entrepreneurship influenced the position of Chinese migrants as a group, and under which circumstances has this resulted in separation or integration?
- 4) Which similarities and/or differences can be found in the history of Chinese migrants, in general, and in the development of the Chinese restaurant and catering sector, in particular, in the Netherlands and in the United States of America?

Chapter 2 focusses on the background of the first Chinese migrants who arrived in the Netherlands. Their history can be interpreted both as an episode in itself, as well as a basis for the later expansion of the Chinese restaurant and catering sector.

Chapter 3 deals with a number of social processes, which have influenced the development of the Chinese restaurant and catering sector in the Netherlands, from its emergence until the mid-1990s. In doing so, this chapter sketches an image of the experiences of Chinese entrepreneurs and their employees in the Chinese restaurant and catering sector, as well as of their efforts to cope successfully with a number of social developments. This chapter aims to give an answer to the first question raised in chapter 1. The main conclusion reached is that three major developments have offered Chinese entrepreneurs opportunities, of which the latter have fully availed themselves: a) the arrival of a few hundred thousand Eurasians (people of mixed Dutch-Indonesian origin) repatriates and ex-military personnel from the former Dutch East Indies; b) the Netherlands' growing economic prosperity; and c) the relative absence of Dutch restaurateurs.

Chapter 4 examines a number of institutional spheres, within which the adaptation of Chinese migrants to Dutch society can be observed – including the juridical status, and the educational levels, of these migrants. In addition, examples are given of certain important cultural orientations of this Chinese community.

Chapter 5 returns to the question of the three previously mentioned socio-cultural characteristics of the Chinese migrant population: 'orientation towards the homeland', 'achievement motivation', and 'solidarity'. In doing so, an answer is given to the second question. By analysing a number of different spheres, we shall attempt to show how those three characteristics are rooted in the value system of Chinese migrants in the Netherlands, and how their values give direction to their general patterns of action, as well as to their ethnic entrepreneurship. For example, the avail-

ability of a number of ethnic resources and the application of several specific strategies also formed the basis for a strong growth of the Chinese restaurant and catering sector in the 1960s and 1970s.

Chapter 6 addresses the third question of how Chinese ethnic entrepreneurship has influenced the general position of the Chinese migrant population in the Netherlands. Based on the evidence available, it is clear that several processes have brought about significant changes to the Chinese restaurant and catering sector over the past few decades. In turn, these processes had consequences for the Chinese migrant population as a whole and for Dutch society as well. On the one hand, some conflicting processes can be discerned: e.g. the increasing penetration of organised crime into the Chinese restaurant and catering sector; and the growing competition from other 'exotic' restaurants. On the other hand, a number of stimulating processes can be observed: e.g. the discovery of new niches and the marketing of innovative products.

Chapter 7 examines the historical background of the Chinese population in the United States of America, and a number of socio-cultural characteristics of the present Chinese community there. In so doing, a context is created, within which the development of the Chinese restaurant and catering sector in the United States of America can be observed.

On this basis, chapter 8 first focusses on the emergence and expansion of the Chinese restaurant and catering sector in the United States of America, and then proceeds to highlight the main similarities and differences in the histories of the Chinese migrant populations, in general, and in the developments of the Chinese restaurant and catering sector, in particular, in the Netherlands and in the United States of America. In doing so, an answer is given to the fourth question raised in chapter 1. In short, the developmental processes of the Chinese restaurant and catering sector in the Netherlands and in the United States of America show remarkable similarities and differences. For example, one can observe the differences in overall social processes that have influenced the emergence and growth of the Chinese restaurant and catering sector in both countries. One can also observe a difference in attitudes of both the American and Dutch government towards the Chinese population. Furthermore a difference can be noted in the manner in which the Chinese population in both societies were organized. At the same time, however, a number of group characteristics such as solidarity and loyalty, as well as the availability of ethnic resources, have also made the expansion of the Chinese restaurant and catering sector in both countries possible.

Based on these findings, the present study concludes that the available theoretical models in relation to the concept of ethnic entrepreneurship, if used in isolation of each other, are not sufficient to explain the phenomenon of Chinese ethnic entrepreneurship. Within a broader theoretical framework of migration and adaptation processes, however, as has been the case in the present study, they can offer a number of new insights: e.g. into how developments on different levels, and processes of change within different spheres, are interrelated; how ethnic entrepreneurship can develop, in the course of time, within that context. Looking at this as a process, it also becomes clear that the entrepreneurship of Chinese restaurant owners can be considered to be the first stage in the process of adaptation of Chinese migrants to Dutch society.