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From City to Territory, and Beyond: Trade Regulation in the Electorate of Mainz (Second Half of the Eighteenth Century)¹

Guillaume GARNER

There are two central questions in current debates on the nature and workings of the economy of the *Ancien Régime*. The first one has to do with the relevance of the notion of market to apprehend that economy. In the wake of Karl Polanyi's work, part of the economic, social, and cultural historiography posited the existence of a radical difference between traditional (non-market) societies and market societies, and located the transition between the two at some point between the very end of the eighteenth century and the first third of the nineteenth century.² Today, scholars seem to agree that an evolution of society and market economy, and not *towards* market economy, occurred during the early modern period.³ But the exact nature of what we call *market* remains to be explored. Because the notion of a self-regulating market (a tenet of standard economic theory) is not applicable, it seems necessary to historicize the market or to distinguish "market regimes" based on the analysis, for instance, of their institutions or networks.⁴

The second question concerns the relations between economic actors on the one hand and public authorities and the state on the other: Did hostility, collusion, conflict, or alliances prevail? Over the last two decades, many studies have highlighted that the view of an opposition between liberty and dirigisme or state intervention is outdated and ill suited, especially when it is superposed

1. Translator's note: All quotations from German-language sources have been back-translated from the French-language version of this article.

2. Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1944).

3. Within the now-substantial literature on the topic, see the analyses of Dominique Margairaz and Philippe Minard, "Le Marché dans son histoire" *Revue de Synthèse* 127 (2006): 241–252; Josef Ehmer and Reinhold Reith, "Märkte im vorindustriellen Europa" *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte* (2004): 9–24.

4. Christof Jeggle, "Gewerbliche Produktion und Arbeitsorganisation: Perspektiven der Forschung," in *Vorindustrielles Gewerbe. Handwerkliche Produktion und Arbeitsbeziehungen im Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, ed. Mark Häberlein and C. Jeggle (Constance: UVK, 2004), 29–33.

upon another dichotomy that pits economic actors seeking freedom against a state that is by nature prone to intervention and therefore dirigisme.⁵ Thus, historians turned their attention to the regulation of economic activities, and many studies have stressed the importance of institutions and legal dispositions in the practical workings of economic exchanges.⁶ In doing so, those scholars sometimes ran the risk of applying a neoinstitutionalist approach that is problematic because of its teleological nature.⁷

Based on a study of trade regulation in a specific territory—the electoral principality of Mainz—I will attempt to demonstrate that a focus on the spatial dimension of economic regulation can help us shed light on elements of answers to both questions. Space is relevant in three ways to economic systems in which circulation plays a key role.⁸ First, because due to the cost of transportation, in particular for heavy commodities, distance entails a significant operational cost. Second, because borders affect exchanges, both because of the points of rupture they create—for instance, with regard to currency or weights and measures—and because of the additional costs of customs duties. Finally, because the perception and analysis of economic facts in the modern era has largely been linked to space. This is the case in France and England, and also in Germany, where the cameral sciences viewed the territory as a political and legal entity, while classic political economy conceived of a “market space” that defined the market primarily as a spatial unit within which individuals transact and commodities circulate.⁹ Based on these considerations, it seems that the relation to space could be crucial to understanding the expectation of economic actors regarding regulations, and the way in which they were negotiated with the authorities.

Mainz is, from this point of view, an interesting case study in two respects. First, Mainz was the capital city of a territorial state whose possessions were extremely divided and scattered along the midcourse of the Rhine and Main rivers and in the Eichsfeld region. Thus, borders and tolls—on land and on

5. Jean-Pierre Hirsch, *Les Deux rêves du Commerce. Entreprise et institution dans la région lilloise (1780–1860)* (Paris: Éditions de l'EHESS, 1991); a German study on a closely related topic, also published in the 1990s, reached similar conclusions: Clemens Wischermann, *Preußischer Staat und westfälische Unternehmer zwischen Spätmerkantilismus und Liberalismus* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1992).

6. For an overview, see “Les institutions de l'économie de marché en Europe XVIII^e–XX^e siècle. Actes de la table ronde organisée par l'URA CNRS 1020 et l'IFRESI (Université de Lille 3, 18 novembre 1993)” *Revue du Nord* 76, no. 307 (October–December 1994).

7. Regarding debates in Germany, see Guillaume Garner, “Histoire économique et Nouvelle Économie Institutionnelle en Allemagne” *Revue de l'Institut Français d'Histoire en Allemagne* 1 (2009): 133–158.

8. Dominique Margairaz, “L'Économie d'Ancien Régime comme économie de la circulation,” in *La Circulation des marchandises dans la France de l'Ancien Régime*, ed. Denis Woronoff (Paris: Comité pour l'Histoire Économique et Financière de la France, 1998), 1–5.

9. Jean-Claude Perrot, “Conclusion,” in Woronoff, *La Circulation*, 181–193; Pierre Dockès, *L'Espace dans la pensée économique du XVI^e au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris: Flammarion, 1969); Guillaume Garner, *État, économie et territoire en Allemagne. L'espace dans le caméralisme et l'économie politique (1740–1820)* (Paris: Éditions de l'EHESS, 2005).

rivers—were ubiquitous, separating the electorate from territories and trade centers that competed with Mainz, in particular Hanau, Offenbach, and Darmstadt in the manufacturing sector.¹⁰ Second, the central authorities of the electorate asserted their power on the city very early on, at the expense of Mainz's local autonomy. Thus, economic actors dealt with either the representatives of the prince, or the government and the chamber of finance it supervised. Actors who were involved in trade banded together in two institutions: the guild of mercers (*Krämerzunft*), whose members worked in the retail trade, and the *Handelsstand*. The latter guild was founded in 1747, one year after the creation of a “trade commission” in charge of fostering the economic growth of the electorate, and one year before the ordinance of 1748 that sought to revive local fairs to rival those of Frankfurt, a major commercial center in the vicinity of Mainz. The *Handelsstand* brought together wholesale traders, that is, merchants who practiced regular trade as well as forwarding and brokering. All of its merchants were also licensed to practice retail trade. To a large extent, the *Handelsstand* was founded to attract foreign merchants by granting them honorary and economic privileges (since they had an exclusive right to practice wholesale trade). The city also experienced significant economic growth in the second half of the eighteenth century as a result of two main factors. On the one hand, thanks to its advantageous location at the confluence of the Rhine and Main Rivers, the city benefited from the growing traffic along the Rhine axis. On the other hand, in the eighteenth century the city benefited from its status as the political and religious capital of a major ecclesiastical principality in the Holy Roman Empire,¹¹ and it boasted a broad customer base that came from both the nobility and the church, with the clergy and nobility representing, respectively, 3% and 1% of an estimated population of twenty-five thousand at the end of the eighteenth century.¹² That particular customer base stimulated the demand for regular, semiluxury, and luxury goods as a result of its demographic weight and its relative affluence.¹³

10. See the map. I would like to thank Jean-Luc Pinol for his help drafting this map.

11. The archbishop-elect of Mainz held indeed the position of archchancellor of the empire.

12. On the demographic and economic influence of the nobility and the clergy, see Christophe Duhamelle, *L'Héritage collectif. La noblesse d'Église rhénane, XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles* (Paris: Éditions de l'EHESS, 1998), 39–40, 49–52, 55–61, 67–71; Walter G. Rödel, *Mainz und seine Bevölkerung im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert. Demographische Entwicklung, Lebensverhältnisse und soziale Strukturen in einer geistlichen Residenzstadt* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1985), 61–69; François-Georges Dreyfus, *Sociétés et mentalités à Mayence dans la seconde moitié du dix-huitième siècle* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1968), 278–295.

13. See the studies on joinery and cabinetmaking by Karola Decker, *Bürger, Kurfürst und Regierung: das Beispiel der Mainzer Schreinerzunft im 18. Jahrhundert* (Mainz: Stadtarchiv, 1990).



Based on Christophe Duhamelle, *La Frontière au village. Une identité catholique allemande au temps des Lumières* (Paris: Éditions de l'EHESS, 2010), 15

COMPETITION AND SUPPLY-AND-DEMAND EQUILIBRIUM ON AN URBAN SCALE

Trade regulation within the urban space applied first and foremost to retail trade. In order to become a retailer, one had to be admitted into the guild of mercers, a process that involved a consultation of the guild, followed by the drafting of two reports—the first one by one of the police superintendents of

the city, the second one by the *Vicedom*, the representative of the archbishop-elect in the city—before the government made a final decision.¹⁴

Thus, Anna Maria Bauer, the widow of a craftsman who had been a member of the guild of shoemakers but had switched to the wine trade, requested in August 1791 the authorization to open a shop to sell English porcelain. The request was immediately forwarded to the *Krämerzunft*, while, at the same time, Anna Maria Bauer's neighbor, one Johannes Müller, a burgher who belonged to the guild of mercers and also had a porcelain business, lodged a complaint with the *Vicedom* to oppose the request. A few days later, the *Krämerzunft* sent to the *Vicedom* a negative report based on the same arguments as those of J. Müller: first, the city already had too many porcelain retailers; second, the said Müller supported ten children and his already-precarious economic situation could be further damaged by the opening of a new shop. The *Vicedom* followed the guild's argument and denied Bauer's request. While the reply of the government could not be found in the archive, the report seems to have had no effect since, most likely at the end of 1792, the *Krämerzunft* sent a second memorandum to the *Vicedom* to complain that "the Bauer widow has taken it upon herself to trade earthenware . . . , and thus diminish the livelihood of other mercers who belong to the guild and sell the same products."¹⁵

We can learn three facts from this mundane example. First, there was an "admission fee" to enter the retailing market, whether it was to sell porcelain or any other retail good. Not everyone could get into that trade: an authorization from the authorities in charge of admissions into the *Krämerzunft* was required, which entailed acceptance on the part of the guild as well, although the city authorities could, on occasion, disregard a negative report from the guild. Thus a specific legal status was required to practice trade; that status had to be requested, and the request could sometimes lead to frictions between diverging interests that were reflected in the position of three categories of actors: the authorities, the merchants in the *Krämerzunft*, and the individual who applied to become a member. Applications could trigger debates that were sometimes heated, because granting this legal status was a key tool to regulate one aspect of the retail market, namely its supply dimension. A similar situation has been observed in other early modern German cities such as Dresden or Leipzig.¹⁶ In Mainz, as in other places, the merchants who belonged to the *Krämerzunft* were in a "privileged" position since, thanks to the recommendation they gave at the request of the authorities, they participated in the regulation of their own sector of activity.

14. The same procedure was used for admission to the *Handelsstand*, the guild of merchants.

15. Stadtarchiv Mainz (hereafter StAM), 21/131, "Anna Maria Bauer" file.

16. Christian Hochmuth, *Globale Güter—lokale Aneignung. Kaffee, Tee, Schokolade und Tabak im frühneuzeitlichen Dresden* (Konstanz: UVK, 2008), 89–103, 106–113; Susanne Schötz, *Handelsfrauen in Leipzig. Zur Geschichte von Arbeit und Geschlecht in der Neuzeit* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2004), 50–72.

Second, in this case, as in many similar examples, the authorities often heard that admitting an additional “supplier” into the market would automatically lead to a decrease in activity and revenue for the other merchants: the *Krämerzunft* often denied those requests for admission, unless it came from an applicant who was taking over an existing business.

Thus, what the guilds called “excess number” (*Übersetzung*), that is the imbalance between the number of merchants and their customers, emerges as a recurring theme in their stated position. In the case of Mainz, this theme was particularly prominent because, although the membership lists of guilds are scarce, their numbers seem to have increased significantly in the second half of the eighteenth century, from 184 members in 1740 to 357 at the beginning of the 1790s.¹⁷ Thanks to the city’s growing commercial activity at the time, however, this growth in membership does not seem to have threatened the economic status of the mercers.

Still, the *Krämerzunft* mobilized the theme of subsistence (*Nahrung*)—a theme that was central to the discourse of German guilds—in order to articulate its claim that an equilibrium had to be maintained between supply and demand, an idea that appealed to and resonated well with the authorities.¹⁸ In the example mentioned above, the idea refers to the particular situation of Johannes Müller, who stressed that he had to support ten children who had “no secure position;” Anna Maria Bauer, however, noted that she was a widow who supported six children,¹⁹ and thus the argumentation shifted to questions relating to the collective subsistence of the mercers who belonged to the guild, and it was that collective interest, more than anything else, that the guild sought to defend.

Third, the parties involved did not refer exclusively or even primarily to the urban spatial scale. The damages that Johannes Müller suffered were all the greater because Anna Maria Bauer was his neighbor, and the competition he was exposed to was greater, according to him, because of this spatial proximity. Many other cases show that the equilibrium between supply and demand was thought of on the scale of the neighborhood—the terms used are “neighborhood” or “region” (*Gegend*)—and of the street.

The significance of these two scales appears in relation to semiluxury retail trade and in the case of the trade of spices (*Spezereien*), that is, a range of products including exotic items, tea, chocolate, coffee, tobacco, and so forth.

17. Friedrich Ludwig Dael and Wendelin Weiler, *Geschichte des Handels und der Gewerbe der Stadt Mainz von den ältesten bis zu den neuesten Zeiten*, mss., StAM, HBIVJ/5, vol. 2, fol. 30, 162v.

18. Christof Jeggler, “Nahrung und Markt in Ökonomien städtischer Gewerbe in der Frühen Neuzeit. Methodische Überlegungen am Beispiel des Leinengewerbes in Münster/Westfalen,” in *Nahrung, Markt oder Gemeinnutz. Werner Sombart und das vorindustrielle Handwerk*, ed. Robert Brandt and Thomas Buchner (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 2004), 95–130; Guillaume Garner, “Nahrung, corporations et marché en Allemagne aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles: débats et renouvellements historiographiques” *Réalités Industrielles* (February 2009): 35–40.

19. StAM, 21/131.

This sector too was very active in the second half of the eighteenth century, as it grew to meet an increasing demand.²⁰ This growth is reflected in the requests presented to obtain the privilege required to create chocolate factories, tobacco factories, and so forth, and in the great number of applications to the *Krämerzunft* related to the sale of those products.

In August 1791, George Friedrich Berlancourt thus requested his admission into the *Krämerzunft* to sell spices. According to the report of the *Vicedom*, his classic trade training, the trips he had completed, and his industrious behavior were all points in his favor; he had also bought the house of a merchant (named Ruck) located in the Schustergasse, the heart of the city. However, the report also pointed out his young age (he was only twenty-two, while the minimum age required to enter the guild was twenty-five) and the opposition of the neighborhood and of the *Krämerzunft*, based on the argument that there were already too many spice merchants in that street and that the threat of excess number would be all the greater because Ruck had not traded in spices.²¹ Despite these objections, this first report was positive and noted that members of the guild of merchants specializing in wholesale trade (the *Handelsstand*), and not mercers from the *Krämerzunft*, were located in that street. Two weeks later, however, the *Vicedom* issued an unfavorable final report that adopted the arguments of the *Krämerzunft*:

As the number of spice shops in the neighborhood grows disproportionately, it naturally follows that the means of subsistence (*Nahrung*) are shared and finally become so small that no one can get what they need to live decently.²²

Berlancourt, however, did not give up because of this negative response and, three months later, presented a new request. He was finally admitted in January 1792, not because the *Krämerzunft* had given in, but because, as Berlancourt noted in his second request, Simon Oreans, a spice merchant who had been admitted into the guild in 1783 and had opened a shop “right here, next to this house [the house Berlancourt had bought],” had closed down because of financial difficulties.²³

What was at stake in the dispute was the demonstration or denial that the “excess number” represented a threat, and spatial references played a major role in that respect, both for the commercial actors who sought to defend their interests and for the authorities and the regulations they issued. The ideal that emerges from the requests and reports was not only that of a quantitative equilibrium between supply and demand on an urban scale, but also of a

20. Regarding this trade in Dresden, see Hochmuth, *Globale Güter*.

21. StAM, 21/131, “Georg Friedrich Berlancourt” file.

22. StAM, 21/131, “Georg Friedrich Berlancourt” file.

23. StAM, 21/131, “Georg Friedrich Berlancourt” file. We do not have the text of the second request, which is presented in the report the *Vicedom* drafted on September 20. Other examples, for which the original requests are found in the archives, reveal that reports presented them accurately and completely: the use of free indirect speech (indicated in German by the use of the subjunctive) shows that the report of August 27 was based on Berlancourt’s request.

distribution of points of sales within the urban space that would allow everyone to find his or her “subsistence” and make it possible to meet the needs of “the public.” From that point view, the scale of the neighborhood, and even more so the scale of the street, are critical in the arguments presented by the three types of parties involved.

Several factors, however, upset this equilibrium between supply and demand at the scale of the city, of the neighborhood, and of the street. The main one was peddling, a practice that the government’s ordinances and the complaints of the members of both the *Handelsstand* and the *Krämerzunft* targeted regularly. Tellingly, one of the main complaints of the merchants of Mainz about peddlers had to do with how they related to space, since it was their mobility that set them apart from sedentary merchants and shopkeepers. When in 1786 the government sought the advice of the *Krämerzunft* regarding measures it ought to take against peddling, the guild stressed how peddlers—most often Jews—who bought their goods from foreign Jews passing through town, “went from door to door to try and sell those goods and thus caused a great harm to regular Jewish merchants and Christian merchants alike.”²⁴ Because peddlers were mobile, they tended to “tempt away” customers and to seek them out. This kind of business practice was considered a form of unfair competition, precisely because peddlers, thanks to their mobility, upset the spatial organization of exchange networks, such as those of merchants who specialized in hoarding (*Aufkauf*), that is, who bought grain from peasants at the city’s gates and then sold it for a higher price on the city’s markets. Furthermore, their mobility made them hard to control, a fact that the mercers of the guild mentioned whenever they denounced the bad quality of their goods.

A report from the *Vicedom*—drafted in the case mentioned above of Georg Friedrich Berlancourt—shows how different those practices were from those of sedentary merchants. The *Vicedom* stressed that one of the criteria to consider when regulating the spatial distribution of points of sales in the city was the relative number of customers in the streets: some streets (like the *Schustergasse*) were particularly advantageous because of the unending flow of inhabitants and customers passing by the shops.²⁵ Thus, established shopkeepers turned their existing business practices into the ethic of the sedentary merchant, who should not lower himself or herself to actively seeking customers, and instead should wait for them—like his or her competitors—in his or her shop.

INSIDE AND OUTSIDE: MERCHANT PRACTICES AND DISCOURSES

While the city constituted a spatial frame of reference for the mercers of the *Krämerzunft*, the expectations of the merchants of the *Handelsstand* regarding economic regulation referred to a number of spatial scales, among which

24. StAM, 23/19, December 13, 1786.

25. StAM, 21/131.

the—territorial—scale of the electorate is more difficult to distinguish from larger (supraterritorial or international) ones. It is important, however, to consider the role of both discourses and practices in this respect.

Merchant discourses have two main features. First, they conceive the spatial dimension of commercial activities within a framework based on a distinction between “inside” (*einheimisch, inländisch*) and “outside” (*fremd, ausländisch, auswärtig*). This distinction is often viewed as a typical feature of the rationale that grounds “mercantilist” discourses and economic policies.²⁶ We should be careful, however, not to conclude without further analysis that it had the same meaning for the merchants and for the authorities. For the merchants, it referred primarily to the notion of turnover (*Absatz*), or sale of stocks, which was key to their discourse, and it was thus defined in connection with the place where the transaction occurred. But—and this seems to be a crucial point—the distinction did not seem to be dependent on the place or the space where the goods were produced. In other words, the “internal turnover” from a transaction could relate both to goods that had been produced within the borders of the electorate (for instance in manufactures and factories) as well as to those that had been imported from “foreign” or “external” territories (for instances “spices” or tobacco).

This internal turnover was relatively predictable and guaranteed thanks to the privileges that the merchants of the *Handelsstand* or of the guild of mercers enjoyed. As the disputes mentioned above regarding the trade of spices show, this turnover depended not on the supply of goods available, but on the demand for such or such commodity, a typical feature of economies driven by demand rather than pushed by supply. Although the internal demand appears to have been clearly on the rise in the second half of the eighteenth century, both the guild of mercers and that of merchants presented it as a fixed value, in order to make the case that the number of sellers (the supply) had to be strictly regulated.

In August 1790, seven iron merchants—three of them members of the *Handelsstand* and another one a master in the *Krämerzunft*—expressed this view in a petition they sent to the government regarding a tobacco and spice merchant (Willems) who intended to use his existing business to sell iron. The petitioners noted that seven merchants already practiced that trade, which was in itself an “excess number,” and even more so because they had to face the competition of foreign merchants who came to the fairs of Mainz. In addition, Willems practiced his business in a shop located on the market square, where four iron merchants already had their shop as well: the competition was all the more harmful due to its being confined within narrow boundaries, which goes to show how different scales—street, city, territory—were embedded into one

26. See, for instance, Alain Béraud and Gilbert Faccarello, eds., *Nouvelle histoire de la pensée économique*, vol. 1, *Des scolastiques aux classiques* (Paris: La Découverte, 1992), 111–116; Jean-Yves Grenier, *Histoire de la pensée économique et politique de la France d’Ancien Régime* (Paris: Hachette, 2007), 116–117.

another. The petitioners asked the authorities to forbid Willems and all other spice merchants to sell iron and noted the “falseness” of the “assumption” that “the public” gains from the increased competition between sellers, at the expense of the sellers’ “*Nahrung*.”²⁷

Whereas merchants described the internal turnover as stable, they stressed in their petitions and requests that the external turnover, linked to a great extent to forwarding and brokering, was marked by a great uncertainty and unpredictability. Both features were usually viewed as having two main causes: competition from companies and trade centers located outside the electorate, and contingent hazards, such as wars. But the domain of external turnover was also that of commercial risk and speculation, in which substantial investments were made and individuals called “capitalists” emerged.²⁸

The second main feature of these discourses is that they often mentioned the interest of the princely state, of the territory of the electorate, referred to in various ways: electoral state (*kurmainzer Staat*), electoral lands (*kurmainzische Landen*), and so forth. The position of the *Handelsstand* in the architecture of that state may explain why merchants referred to the interests of the state of Mainz, understood as a global entity. Since its foundation, indeed, the organization had played a hybrid role, as it was both an institution that represented the interests of the merchant class and a consultative body that advised the government in matters of economic policy. The ordinance of March 22, 1747, that founded the *Handelsstand* noted in its preamble that the elector “was committed to promote trade to foster the commonwealth.” The commitment to “encouraging merchants [*Handelschaft*]” proclaimed in the ordinance of November 2, 1751, that recapitulated the privileges granted to the *Handelsstand* was a façade for the promotion of the economic interests of the territory.²⁹ This guild was thus integrated into the institutional apparatus of the state of Mainz, as a result of both formal decisions and more informal practices. Indeed, the *Handelsstand* acted, in theory, under the authority of the trade commission that had been created the year before (1746), but from the 1760s on, the latter became less and less influential as part of its competence was transferred to the *Handelsstand*.³⁰ While references to the commonwealth, to the general interest of the state, were an obvious strategy to appeal to the government, the guild of merchants did indeed have the institutional legitimacy to cast its interests as identical to those of the state.

27. StAM, 21/154, “Willems” file.

28. Guillaume Garner, “Réguler ou moraliser? ‘Capital’ et ‘capitalistes’ à Mayence dans la seconde moitié du XVIII^e siècle,” in *La Gloire de l’industrie XVII^e–XIX^e siècles. Faire de l’histoire avec Gérard Gayot*, ed. Corine Maitte, Philippe Minard, and Matthieu Deoliveira (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2012), 21–35.

29. StAM, Landesverordnungen: March 22, 1747; November 2, 1751.

30. Albert Kirnberger, *Die Handelsmesse in Mainz in der Zeit der merkantilistischen Wirtschaftspolitik unter der Regierung der drei letzten Kurfürsten von Mainz (1743–1793)* (Mainz: Florian Kupferberg, 1951), 57.

What role did the spatial scale of the electorate play in the concrete business practices of the merchants? Because the trade houses of Mainz have left almost no archive, we do not have many elements with which to answer this question. One notable exception is the ledger that one of the main merchants of the city and of the *Handelsstand*, Ernest Dumont, kept between 1745 and 1767.³¹ Regarding activities most closely linked to trade, the great majority of Dumont's customers were located both outside the electorate and in the city of Mainz itself, since he sold both to customers as a retailer and to the mercers of the city. Regarding forwarding and brokering, the outlook was even more markedly turned toward the outside, in particular because the staple right of Mainz forced the foreign merchants shipping goods via the Rhine river to use the services of Mainz's local merchants. For these merchants this amounted to a private income that they were very protective of, as were merchants in other cities who enjoyed a similar right.³² As for the suppliers of these merchants, documents in the customs archives concerning import-related offences, which contain the names of several merchant members of the *Handelsstand*, seem to indicate that the sale of imported goods might have played a significant role in their business.³³

Regardless of these discourses, the territorial scale does not seem to have mattered that much in the actual practices of those merchants, since their customers were located either below that scale (in the city of Mainz) or beyond it (in the median part of the Holy Roman Empire for Ernest Dumont, for instance). In addition, although the ordinances relating to the *Handelsstand* were not explicit on this point, its competence in matters of economic policy was apparently confined to the city of Mainz alone and did not extend to the whole territory of the electorate. Indeed, as the issue of peddling shows, the *Handelsstand* did not attempt to expand its competence beyond the urban space, since it sought to forbid peddling within the city of Mainz but had no interest in policies on this matter for the rest of the electorate. The same can be said of complaints against the competition of Jewish merchants: their presence in the city, not in the territory as a whole, motivated the petitions against them.³⁴

Some merchants in Mainz, however, had a close interest in the circulation and trade of goods within the territory when it came to the raw materials that were indispensable for a number of factories and manufactures. Far from

31. StAM, 21/135. See the analysis of this ledger in Ricarda Matheus, "Die sogenannten hiesigen Kaufleute . . . sind im Grunde nur Krämer". Mainzer Großhändler in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts," in *Bausteine zur Mainzer Geschichte: Mainzer Kolloquium 2000; mit 28 Tabellen*, ed. Michael Matheus and Walter G. Rödel (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2002), 186–189.

32. On the case of Cologne, for instance, see Hermann Kellenbenz and Klara Van Eyll, *Die Geschichte der unternehmerischen Selbstverwaltung in Köln 1797–1914* (Cologne: Rheinisch-Westfälisches Wirtschaftsarchiv zu Köln, 1972), 38–39.

33. See the series StAM, 21/141 (hearings on tobacco), and 24/201 (fraud).

34. See the report (undated, though probably written at the beginning of the 1790s) intended for Prince-Elector Friedrich Karl Joseph von Erthal: StAM, 21/716.

limiting their business activities exclusively to trade, merchants from Mainz also played a role in production, as they leased or took state manufactures in concession, and sometimes sought to obtain the privileges required to create new manufactures. This lack of specialization is yet another feature of the “capitalistic” practices that consist in diversifying one’s investments, thus one’s sources of profit, thanks to activities that often entail a close relationship with state institutions.³⁵

Thus in 1780, the chamber of finance signed a “contract” with the merchant Joseph Cronauer (a member of the *Krämerzunft* since 1769) that allowed him to create a potash factory that would receive a monopoly over the supply of this material to the electoral mirror factory in Lohr.³⁶ One of the key dispositions of this agreement, which was akin to a form of privilege, created a system to collect ashes from private individuals, which Cronauer would buy at a price set by the chamber of finance. Thus, the contract gave Cronauer a position of monopsony vis-à-vis the citizens of the electorate, who sought to evade the obligation to sell part of their ashes, with some of them trying to smuggle them to neighboring territories. In the following years, one of the chief concerns of Cronauer (who had been accepted into the *Handelsstand* in 1782)³⁷ was to obtain an increased police and border control in order to enforce the disposition and to control the flow of ashes within the territory of the electorate. It should be noted that in instances such as this one, merchants acted in their own name and the *Handelsstand* did not support their requests—and, in fact, the authorities did not even seek its advice on such matters.

Returning to the matter of trade and the circulation of goods within and outside the territory of the electorate, in both cases merchants made a profit from mediating between independent markets when price differences between those markets arose.³⁸ As eighteenth-century economic discourses stressed, “the determination [of profit] is multiple, is situated in exchange, and is connected to the workings of the market,”³⁹ that is, largely predicated on the geographical location of the city and its role as a relay for the localized flows of goods, in particular on the Rhine axis. To use the typology of commercial centers that Johann Georg Büsch, an economist from Hamburg, elaborated at the end of the eighteenth century, Mainz falls into the category of “transit cities” where goods transited from other continental commercial centers and

35. See the analysis of Georg Schmidt, “‘Frühkapitalismus’ und Zunftwesen. Monopolbestrebungen und Selbstverwaltung in der frühneuzeitlichen Wirtschaft,” in *Stadt und wirtschaftliche Selbstverwaltung*, ed. Bernhard Kirchgässner and Eberhard Naujoks (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1987), 110–114.

36. Bayerisches Staatsarchiv Würzburg, Mainzer Regierungsakten (hereafter BStA Wü, MRA), Mainzer Polizeiakten 2138-III.

37. BStA Wü, MRA, Mainzer Polizeiakten 507, “Joseph Cronauer” file.

38. Ellen Meiksins Wood, *L'Origine du capitalisme. Une étude approfondie* (Québec: Lux, 2009), 120–124.

39. Jean-Yves Grenier, *L'Économie d'Ancien Régime. Un monde de l'échange et de l'incertitude* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1996), 59.

their countryside on the one hand, to “market places” that concentrated the main European commercial flows (for instance Hamburg or Amsterdam) on the other. Büsch explicitly cited cities in the Rhine valley as an illustration and criticized the staple right that contributed to a significant part of their commercial activity.⁴⁰

Once again, we have a confirmation that those “specific exchange conditions” were, in the representations and in the practices of commercial actors (as in the prolific literature of cameral sciences), strongly connected to their position within space. The political and territorial division of the German space (or the Rhine region) is a central fact, because borders multiplied institutional boundaries (customs) and, in this respect, played a major role in the geographical segmentation of markets, which was a major requirement for the creation of commercial profits. Distance did play a role: all the commercial and political economy manuals gave a definition of trade very much anchored in space, and, until the first decades of the nineteenth century, conceived the market within a spatial framework. But that space was not homogenous, as political, territorial, and customs borders were both constraints and resources for the merchants since they generated the price differences that provided the basis for their profits. A significant part of the strategy of these merchants in their negotiations with the authorities of Mainz consisted precisely in trying to accumulate, thanks to an ad hoc legal and institutional protection, advantages grounded in the geographical and institutional segmentation (that of customs for instance) of the markets in which they were active. On the one hand, the customs borders generated price differences—a source of profit—and on the other, the territorial border could protect them from the competition of foreign merchants; that is the reason why one of their fundamental expectations was the limitation of the number of actors allowed to satisfy the demand of urban customers. The question of the degree of freedom of trade was brought up not only with regard to the flows and circulation of goods within space, but also with regard to the status and number of the actors authorized to participate in those exchange flows. This explains the importance, in their view, of both the inside/outside dichotomy and of the theme of foreign competition.

THE ISSUE OF FOREIGN COMPETITION: A KEY POINT IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE AUTHORITIES

The limitation of the number of actors allowed to practice commerce was central to the expectations that the merchants of the *Handelsstand* articulated in their memorandums and petitions. This demand appeared clearly when candidates to the *Handelsstand* were “foreigners,” that is, born outside the electorate.

40. Johann Georg Büsch, *Theoretisch-praktische Darstellung der Handlung in deren mannigfaltigen Geschäften* (Hamburg: Hoffmann, 1792), 1:195–199.

As in the case of admissions into the *Krämerzunft* or other craft guilds, the notion of excess number was put forward in order to justify negative recommendations regarding the admission of applicants. But they also expressed other motivations that were more typical of commerce, and in particular the danger of seeing foreign companies seize control of Mainz's commerce, thereby causing a currency flight. Let us stress this point: just as the levels on which the sense of national belonging within the Holy Roman Empire were multiple and not mutually exclusive,⁴¹ so too was the notion of *foreign* flexible, and it encompassed in this context both individuals who were not subjects of the Holy Roman Empire and merchants who came from neighboring trade centers such as Cologne. The focus was less on one's status as a foreigner than on one's extraneity.⁴² Thus the notion can refer to other elements defining merchant identity, such as religion, as revealed in the memorandum that one of the three syndics of the *Handelsstand* sent to the *Vicedom* of Mainz in 1786 to request that all Protestants be barred from practicing commerce, as had been done in Cologne.⁴³ In that particular case and in others, being expelled had further consequences, as applicants who had been admitted into the *Handelsstand* or the *Krämerzunft* also received a right of burghership.

Efforts to see to the full application of the collective privilege received upon admission into the merchant guild also appeared in the form of the denunciation of individuals who practiced commerce without being members of the guild. The complaints sent to the government mobilized the notions of *Pfuscher*, *Störer*, or *Stümpler* to point out that this type of activity was illegal because it occurred outside of the guild's framework. Borrowed from the vocabulary of crafts guilds—and akin to the French term "*chambreelan*"—these notions discredited these individuals both from a legal and moral point of view. They justified the *Handelsstand*'s request that the city authorities impose "a fitting sanction that would serve as an exemplary warning,"⁴⁴ as the three syndics of the guild asked in April 1790, having intercepted a letter proving that two citizens from Mainz had offered to carry out brokering and forwarding for a merchant in Frankfurt. In that instance, the merchants used their privileged status to cast themselves as auxiliaries of the authorities and referred to the threat that these "criminal offenders" posed to the general interest, underscoring the negative impact of such practices on the tax revenues of the electorate.⁴⁵ Within this argument, the opposition between "inside" and "outside" made perfect sense and justified the demand for regulations that confirmed the collective monopoly that the merchants of the *Handelsstand* enjoyed.

41. On this point, see the analysis of Georg Schmidt, *Wandel durch Vernunft. Deutsche Geschichte im 18. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Beck, 2009), 73–81.

42. See Simona Cerutti, *Étrangers. Étude sur une condition d'incertitude dans une société d'Ancien Régime* (Paris: Bayard, 2012), 11ff.

43. For more detail see Garner, "Milieux marchands," 186.

44. StAM, 21/139, "Johann und Georg Höhnlein" file.

45. StAM, 21/139, "Johann und Georg Höhnlein" file.

However, the question of the policy to be pursued regarding the import of manufactured goods shows the relative weakness of this argument's use of the inside/outside distinction in order to articulate the interests that merchants and the government supposedly shared, and reveals the differences, which at times were clear cut, between the interests that the merchants pursued and the objectives of the authorities of the electorate.

A conflict between the authorities and the city's glass merchants about imports of glassware illustrates this point. In 1765, the elector created a manufacture in Emmerichstal, in the Spessart region, to produce windowpanes and glass of average quality in order to put an end to imports, which were deemed excessive. In 1768, the management of the manufacture was leased out for ten years to Anton Zahn. From the point of view of Mainz's authorities, Zahn presented an ideal profile. Born in Bohemia, he settled in Frankfurt, where he managed an "important" glass business, a position that helped him become a member of the *Handelsstand* and receive the right of burghership in Mainz when he applied in 1758.⁴⁶ Confronted by the financial difficulties of the manufacture, Zahn requested that the authorities forbid glass imports, a request the authorities granted in November 1770. Following his death in 1771, the management of the Emmerichstal manufacture was transferred to an officer of the city's guard, who obtained a confirmation of the import ban. Six glass merchants of the city, including Anton Zahn's widow, petitioned the elector several times to protest the ban.⁴⁷ The arguments they put forward first blamed the low sales of Emmerichstal products on their bad quality;⁴⁸ they then noted that part of the glass imported was then reexported to other territorial states within the empire (the Electoral Palatinate and the electoral principalities of Cologne, Trier, and Nassau) and those outlets might be lost in the process, since those neighboring states would surely create competing warehouses. In their petition the six merchants thus highlighted the possibility that the commercial relation with their "exterior friends" would come to an end. This request shows that the interests of the merchants could differ from those of the state, in particular those of the chamber of finance, which was in charge of the supervision of the Emmerichstal manufacture, with the inside/outside opposition not having the same meaning, since the inside—the area that corresponded to the territory of the electorate—encompassed, from the point of view of the authorities, not only an outlet for sales and turnover, but also an area of production that had to be protected. The petitioners sought to work around that very contradiction by stressing the fact that, if they were allowed to import foreign glass to sell it together with that of Emmerichstal, they could get their foreign customers accustomed to the latter, and, by being

46. BStA Wü, MRA, Mainzer Polizei Akten507, "Anton Zahn" file.

47. Regarding the following episode, see BStAWü, MRA, Mainzer Polizei Akten, 2460I and II.

48. This argument triggered a controversy within the controversy, regarding the certification of the quality of the glass and the impartiality of the experts the government called on to make that assessment.

able to maintain their commercial contacts abroad, they would encourage the manufacture to improve the quality of the glass it produced.

The territory thus appears as a discursive resource that merchants could mobilize to legitimize a number of specific claims and interests. The fact that those interests reflected a desire to secure a monopoly or oligopoly over lucrative activities does not explain everything, for it does not account for one key element: the great uncertainty inherent in commercial activities. From this point of view, the legal status attached to one's admission into the *Handelsstand*, or, more generally, the granting of a privilege, was a necessary compensation for the substantial volume of capital that the merchants had also invested, and that compensation could only be guaranteed if the number of beneficiaries remained limited.

THE ECONOMIC POLICY OF THE AUTHORITIES

During the second half of the eighteenth century the authorities of the electorate and of the city of Mainz acted to promote the economic growth of the state, according to the principles formulated in the theoretical discourses of the time, and in particular the cameral sciences, which members of Mainz's administrative apparatus sometimes explicitly referred to.⁴⁹ The legal dispositions promulgated and also the intermediary reports and the minutes of the meetings of the government or of the chamber of finance reveal two main principles.

The first one reflects what we could call a controlled encouragement of competition, the virtues of which were praised in contrast to monopolies and exclusive privileges, which were condemned for their effects on trade as well as manufactures and factories. This approach is especially clear with respect to the establishment of open shops within the urban space. Although Mainz's two police superintendents sometimes decried the attitude of the guild of mercers as too restrictive, when it sought to defend its own particular interests at the expense of the well-being of "the public," the argument that the density of shops within the urban space was too high was not always rejected. Decisions thus resulted from a compromise between a belief in the benefits of competition, a concern for the preservation of the well-being of urban consumers through the control of prices and of the quality of goods, and a will to protect the economic activity of the mercers who were members of the guild, because, among other reasons, their impoverishment would mean a greater expense in aid to the poor, an issue that became of great concern for the authorities at the end of the 1770s.⁵⁰

Beyond considerations of the benefits or the damaging effects of competition, one of the main concerns of the authorities was to retain control of the

49. For instance in a report of the *Vicedom* on peddling: StAM, 4/87 (January 17, 1787).

50. Dreyfus, *Sociétés et mentalités*, 348–353.

supply sphere, that is, the ability to regulate the number of individuals who sold this or that good. This ability was closely linked to the urban space and the resources it offered to those engaged in trade. One of the elements that disrupted efforts to embed the equilibrium between supply and demand within the urban space—a relatively homogenous distribution of shops in the streets of the city based on how busy they were—is found in the legal uncertainty surrounding retail trade. This type of activity was linked to a privilege that was not real but personal: in other words, it was not enough to buy a shop or a house in which the trade of spices (or of any other good) had been previously authorized, for the owner also had to obtain a personal concession. That concession was granted at the time of admission in the *Handelsstand* or the *Krämerzunft* since, as we saw, the admission procedure required that the applicant state the address of his or her future shop. The ordinance of September 26, 1786, emphasized this point when it lamented that

several subjects, who erred foolishly when they decided to buy an old spice shop, thought that they have a legitimate right to pursue the spice trade just because they bought the house; for this reason, we hereby declare that the right to practice the spice trade never rests in the house, but always requires an personal concession from the government.⁵¹

The authorities reissued the ordinance, using similar terms, in March 1792, but it was apparently not respected and conflicts on this point, very often linked to the trade of “spices,” arose. Obviously, those who bought these shops and trade houses sought to get round the *Krämerzunft* admission procedure by adopting a strategy that consisted of presenting the authorities with a *fait accompli* in order to obtain the necessary personal concession. In addition to blurring the boundaries between wholesale and retail trades when merchants of the *Handelsstand* were involved,⁵² the practice was an issue for the authorities, who worried that they could lose, as a result of real-estate transactions, their monopoly over the granting of this coveted type of concession, as well as their control of the spatial regulation of an activity that was becoming increasingly important from an economic point of view. This was a major issue, not only in the electorate of Mainz but also for the authorities in the patrimonial states of the Habsburgs and the city of Salzburg, which conducted, beginning in the 1780s as well, a policy that sought to turn the license to practice commerce in second-hand goods from a real right into a personal one, both for fiscal reasons and to keep control of an area of activity that was increasingly coveted.⁵³

The second principle at work in the measures and decisions the authorities took has to do with the scale of the territory. It was on this scale that the government of the electorate conceived of the notions of “common good” and economic development. This is the reason why the “inside”/“outside”

51. StAM, 23/1.

52. For a concrete example, see Garner, “Milieux marchands,” 188–189.

53. Georg Stöger, *Sekundäre Märkte? Zum Wiener und Salzburger Gebrauchtwarenhandel im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 2011), 79–106.

dichotomy occupies such a central place in the documents of administrative practice. Two points already mentioned above will help illustrate this question and also highlight nuances and debates between various institutions, and in particular the government and the chamber of finance.

The first point has to do with peddling, considered on the scale of the territory rather than that of the city. Peddling was repeatedly forbidden throughout the eighteenth century but, because the measures did not seem to have been implemented, many complaints were sent to the government. At the latter's request, one of Mainz's police superintendents drafted, in November 1786, a report laying out a number of proposed measures. In his opinion, it was necessary to forbid peddling in the city because of how damaging it was to established shopkeepers, and also because it fostered a taste for luxury, and encouraged in particular the consumption of foreign goods that competed with commodities produced in the territory, and thus resulted in a currency flight out of the electorate. The report also noted that peddlers had the right to sell their goods, as the merchants of Mainz did regularly, at the two annual fairs, but that "unlimited and permanently authorized peddling would make this city look like a perpetual fair."⁵⁴ This reference to the perpetual fair is the expression of a rejection of a homogenous market space, in which both the boundary between city and countryside and that between free trade and regulated trade would be abolished. This was a concern, recurrent in the cameralist literature of the time (of which Johann Friedrich Pfeiffer, who taught at the University of Mainz in the 1780s, was one of the most prominent figures): to control flows (of people, of goods, and of currency) in order to make them subservient to the interests of the territory, which was viewed as a coherent entity.⁵⁵

At the request of the government, however, the report sought to ascertain "the extent to which it would be reasonable, in consideration of our neighbors, to completely ban or impose restrictions on peddling." The tangle of borders with many neighboring territorial states (the "neighbors" the quotation refers to) was indeed perceived as one of the main obstacles to the implementations of the measures already taken. This was the reason why the same report proposed to relax the ban against foreign peddlers who sold in the territory items produced in factories located in neighboring territories.⁵⁶ These peddlers could sell these goods to the merchants and mercers of the electorate, which was a way of obtaining them at a lower price while avoiding the presence of peddlers in the city. This solution was not chosen and had already disappeared from

54. StAM, 23/19, November 12, 1786.

55. Johann Friedrich Pfeiffer, *Grundsätze der Universal-Cameral-Wissenschaft oder deren wichtigsten Säulen nämlich der Staats-Regierungs-Kunst, der Policy-Wissenschaft, der allgemeinen Staats-Oekonomie, und der Finanz-Wissenschaft zu akademischen Vorlesungen und zum Unterricht angehender Staatsbedienten*, (Frankfurt am Main: Esslinger, 1783), 1:528–538; Garner, *État, économie*, 78.

56. The report mentioned, among others, the cities of Darmstadt (landgraviate of Hesse-Darmstadt), Wiesbaden (principality of Nassau-Usingen), and Isenburg (principality of Isenburg-Birstein), all of them located within thirty-five kilometers of Mainz.

the final report that the *Vicedom* drafted in January 1787.⁵⁷ But the authorities adopted a more flexible position a few years later: the ordinance of March 15, 1792, stressed how useful peddlers were in the countryside and in small cities (*Landstädte*) where the subjects could not find the goods they needed, in particular because there were no mercers there. Thus, the ordinance created a system of peddling licenses, with a preference for peddlers originating from the Electorate; in rural borderlands, it was impossible to prevent peddlers coming from “exterior neighboring territories” to operate, and the ordinance added that, in that particular case, a reciprocal tolerance was expected from bordering territorial states.⁵⁸

The same desire to encourage what was seen as an optimal exploitation of resources at the scale of the territory was at play in the official policy vis-à-vis factories and manufactures that enjoyed a privilege. In its struggle to prevent fraudulent exports of ashes to neighboring territories and thus make sure his potash factory would receive the supplies it needed, Joseph Cronauer received the support of the government and of the chamber of finance, which repeated on several occasions the ban that made it illegal for the people of the electorate to export their ashes, and regularly reminded local administrative agents of their duty to enforce the measure in their jurisdiction. This is, however, the first point that needs to be qualified: the lack of enthusiasm and/or authority of this local administrative personnel severely undermined the effect of the measures. On several occasions, village authorities forwarded to the government the petitions of their subjects, who requested that the measures be relaxed or suspended, attaching memorandums that supported the point of view of the petitioning village communities.⁵⁹ In the requests they defended not only the opportunity for the villagers to increase their income and to secure their “subsistence” thanks to the profit they made from exporting their ashes, but also argued on the level of the optimal exploitation of the productive resources of the territory, stressing that ash was a fertilizer that was indispensable to the improvement of agricultural yields, and thus appropriating a key theme in the economic and agronomic literature of the Enlightenment. The minutes of the sessions of the government and the chamber of finance suggest that those policies should also be qualified for another reason. The chamber of finance was very much inclined to enforce measures and punish recalcitrant individuals, to a large extent because it had a direct interest in the prosperity of Cronauer’s potash factory, which paid them an annual rent, whereas some within the government began having doubts as early as 1775 about the compatibility between the measures taken and the principle of “property of the subject.”⁶⁰ A similar divergence seems to appear with respect to the ques-

57. StAM, 4/87.

58. StAM, 23/19, Ordinance of March 15, 1792.

59. BStAWü, MRA, Mainzer Polizei Akten, 2460I. [error of the French version]

60. BStAWü, MRA, Mainzer Polizei Akten, 2460I.

tion of glass and windowpanes imports already mentioned, and the necessity to protect the domestic outlet of the Emmerichstal glass manufacture. This difference probably explains why the law hesitated and wavered on this point for a decade, although, overall, glass imports were limited and the petition of the glass merchants was rejected.⁶¹

The inside/outside opposition also played a role in measures concerning foreign trade. At first, these measures were part of a typically “mercantilist” economic agenda that sought to encourage merchants who were not from Mainz to settle in the capital of the electorate and to foster the creation of factories and manufactures, and the measures to promote fairs were meant to capture part of the commercial flows that concentrated on the neighboring and rival center of Frankfurt.⁶² The most famous illustration of this policy was the 1772 “war seizure” at the expense of Frankfurt, when the manager of one of the main tobacco production and trading house, Joseph Bolongaro, settled in the electorate, not in Mainz, but in the new city of Höchst (-Neustadt), which had been created in 1768 to welcome manufactures and companies that specialized in commerce.⁶³ After four years of negotiations, Bolongaro agreed to settle in Höchst in exchange for extended liberties. Among them, he obtained for himself and his heirs the right of burghership, the guarantee of their freedom to emigrate, a dispensation of the duties normally imposed on the burghers of the electorate (military service, residence in the electorate), and personal fiscal exemptions. In addition, Bolongaro obtained very favorable fiscal and customs exemptions for the tobacco factory that he had agreed to create in Höchst-Neustadt. Among other advantages, he had obtained an exemption of the taxes paid on the import of the tobacco leaves processed in the factory, an exemption coveted but rarely obtained in full by other tobacco producers.⁶⁴ In this instance, the authorities’ plan failed, since, while Bolongaro had a prestigious palace built on the bank of the Main River, he never moved his factory to Höchst, and only installed trade offices there. After his death in 1779, his heirs stayed in Höchst before returning to Frankfurt in 1785, after the city granted them the right of burghership the family had been long asking for, but which had been systematically refused to them because they were Catholic.

Beyond this relatively isolated example, in the years following the reforms implemented between 1746 and 1748, this proactive economic policy entailed

61. This is also the conclusion of Rudolf Schäfer, *Die Förderung von Handel und Wandel in Kurmainz im 18. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Otto Pfeifer, 1968), 75. But the influence of the chamber of finance on economic policies was minimal according to Karl Härter, *Policy und Strafjustiz in Kurmainz. Gesetzgebung, Normdurchsetzung und Sozialkontrolle im frühneuzeitlichen Territorialstaat* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Klostermann, 2005), 70.

62. Karl Schwarz, “Der wirtschaftliche Konkurrenzkampf zwischen der Reichsstadt Frankfurt und der kurfürstlichen Stadt Mainz,” (thesis, University of Frankfurt, 1932).

63. For a recent overview, see Silke Wustmann, “Die Einbürgerung der italienischen Kaufmannsfamilie Bolongaro in Frankfurt am Main” *Archiv für Frankfurts Geschichte und Kunst* 68 (2002): 327–374.

64. This is the case, for instance, of the Schmitz & Falkenstein tobacco factory created around the same time in Höchst: Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Wiesbaden, 106/410, 106/1281.

supporting merchants who specialized in commerce and were members of the *Handelsstand*. Thus, the authorities often followed the advice of the guild, whether it was regarding the admission of new merchants or requests relating to trade regulations, such as brokerage rules.⁶⁵

A divergence appeared, however, regarding international competition in commerce. In the second half of the eighteenth century, the authorities in Mainz seemed to be not only hostile to monopolies, but also more and more inclined to foster competition, against the advice of the merchants of the *Handelsstand*. Thus, the guild's request to have Protestant merchants specializing in commerce expelled from Mainz (in 1786) was firmly rejected by the *Vicedom*, which stigmatized the selfishness of the merchants who expected that the "measures and institutions" of the government would guarantee their monopoly. The *Vicedom* and the government, on the contrary, viewed in "reasonable liberty," that is the stimulation of competition, a means to foster the development of commerce.⁶⁶ This was the reason why new members were admitted into the *Handelsstand* against the recommendation of the guild: the privilege was no longer only a means to give commerce a solid foundation, with the authorities of the electorate using it as well, through a policy of increased acceptance rate, as a tool to stimulate competition and encourage those who held the commercial capital to settle in the electorate. In fact, during the second half of the eighteenth century, the membership of the guild doubled, from 51 in 1748 to 120 in 1785, before stabilizing around one hundred in the 1790s.⁶⁷ The same combination of reasons explains why the government remained deaf to the complaints made by the merchants of Mainz regarding the privileges, deemed too broad, that were granted by the government to foreign merchants during the fairs.⁶⁸

How has focusing on the relation of individuals to space shed light on the economy of the *Ancien Régime*? First, the individuals studied here, whether merchants or craftsmen who were members of a guild, pursued specific material interests. They sought to secure their "subsistence" or increase their profits through "the game of exchange," the rules of which were largely dictated by their situation within a given space: the sphere of exchanges was anchored in a spatial configuration that offered resources, and imposed constraints and obstacles on these individuals. This close relation to space seems to be a fundamental feature of the "market regime" that is typical of a circulation economy—contrary to what a clear-cut break between merchant and non-market societies would suppose.

65. Garner, "Milieux marchands," 192.

66. StAM, 21/130, "Ackermann" file.

67. The commercial prosperity of Mainz in the second half of the eighteenth century explains both this increase and a lesser opposition of the *Handelsstand* to new admissions.

68. StAM, 23/15.

Secondly, the relation to space appears to be a fundamental dimension of concrete practices and above all of the expectations of the economic actors regarding economic regulation. As we saw, the merchants and governmental authorities mobilized conceptions of space that intersected only partially. The former thought in terms of commercial outlet areas that must be protected from a growing competition, by acting not on the flows of goods through a customs policy, but on the number of individuals allowed to participate in commercial transactions. These outlet areas spread equally on both sides of the borders of the electorate. As the merchants who requested that the ban on imports be lifted stated in 1772, it was not possible for them, in the current conditions, “to both make a living out of interior consumption and do their duties as burghers,”⁶⁹ and in their minds the inside/outside distinction related to not just the location of sales areas but also and primarily to the origin of the individuals allowed to trade goods. The authorities, in contrast, viewed their measures in relation to the territory of the electorate, conceived as a whole. Their support to factories and manufactures was part of a project that sought to promote an optimal exploitation of territorial resources, while an increased competition—in particular for commerce—that was also a controlled competition—especially for retail trade—needed to serve the general interest. The inside/outside distinction relates on the one hand to the geography of commercial outlets, and on the other hand to the location of productive activities and economic actors. Consequently, the *origin* of great merchants mattered less than their *location*, hence the authorities’ desire to attract “foreign” merchants. In other words, Mainz’s government conceived of the territory as a unit of space within which competition must be encouraged in order to develop exchanges and increase tax income. This is another illustration of the gap between an “economic space” specific to economic actors, in particular those who practice trade, and a territorialized political space that is the space of economic policy.⁷⁰ These specific conceptions of space crystallize a distinction between commercial logic and political logic, which cameralists presented as a theme in order to show that the former should be subjected to the latter,⁷¹ and which seems more relevant for the study of the relations between the state and the economy in the early modern period than the opposition between interventionism and freedom.

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69. BStAWü, MRA, 2460I.

70. We use here the terminology proposed in François Perroux, *L'Économie du XXe siècle*, (Paris: PUF, 1961), 123–136.

71. Joseph Von Sonnenfels, *Grundsätze der Handlung, Polizey und Finanzwissenschaft* (Vienna: Kurzböck, 1777) 2:3–4.

Abstract/Résumé

Guillaume GARNER

From City to Territory, and Beyond: Trade Regulation in the Electorate of Mainz (Second Half of the Eighteenth Century)

This article investigates the spatial relevance of economic regulation in the principality of Mainz in the second half of the eighteenth century. In that city, the guild of mercers and that of merchants advocated the ideal of an equal spatial distribution of shops within the city limits, an ideal that the authorities of the electorate largely shared, although the presence of peddlers and Jewish retailers somewhat blurred its application.

On a smaller scale, the guild of merchants stressed in its petitions an opposition between the “inside” (the territory of the electorate) and the “outside” (other states within the empire and Europe). While that opposition suited the goals of the government’s economic policy, it was not consistent with the merchants’ actual trade practices, in which territorial distinctions played a minor role. From the merchants’ point of view, borders were an institutional and economic asset that served as a basis for their profits and legitimized a privilege that protected them from the competition of foreign merchants. While the government often granted the requests of Mainz’s merchant guilds, disagreements emerged at the end of the eighteenth century when the authorities began utilizing the privilege not as a tool to protect local merchants but to foster competition. The tensions that arose from those disagreements reveal that, ultimately, the merchant community and the authorities held two—largely antagonistic—conceptions of economic space.

KEYWORDS: Germany, 18th Century, economic regulation, merchant guilds, craft guilds, borders, space, territory ■

Guillaume GARNER

De la ville au territoire et au-delà : espace et régulation du commerce dans l'électorat de Mayence (seconde moitié du XVIII^e siècle)

Cet article étudie le cas de la principauté de Mayence dans la seconde moitié du XVIII^e siècle pour éclairer la dimension spatiale de la régulation économique. Dans cette ville, la corporation des merciers et la guilde des marchands défendent un idéal de répartition égale dans l'espace urbain des boutiques, idéal qui est largement partagé par les autorités de l'électorat, mais qui est perturbé par la présence de colporteurs et de commerçants juifs.

À une échelle plus petite, les marchands du Handelsstand défendent leurs revendications en soulignant une opposition nette entre l'intérieur (le territoire électoral) et l'extérieur (les autres États dans l'Empire et en Europe). Si cette opposition répond aux objectifs de la politique économique du gouvernement, elle ne correspond pas aux pratiques commerciales de ces marchands dans lesquelles le territoire occupe une position mineure. La frontière représente pour eux une ressource institutionnelle et économique qui fonde leur profit et légitime un privilège les protégeant contre la concurrence des marchands étrangers. Si les demandes des corporations marchandes de Mayence sont souvent suivies par le gouvernement, des différends apparaissent à la fin du XVIII^e siècle quand les autorités utilisent le privilège comme un outil non de protection des marchands locaux mais de stimulation de la concurrence. Ces tensions révèlent fondamentalement que milieux marchands et autorités défendent ainsi deux conceptions de l'espace économique qui sont largement antagonistes.

MOTS-CLÉS : Allemagne, XVIII^e siècle, régulation économique, corporations, frontières, espace, territoire ■