

Much ado about very little: The dubious connection between ethnic minority business policy and ethnic minority entrepreneurship

Trevor Jones | Richard Roberts | Monder Ram

Centre for Research in Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship, Aston University, Birmingham, UK

Correspondence

Monder Ram, Centre for Research in Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship, Aston University, Aston street, Birmingham, B4 7ET, UK.

Email: m.ram1@aston.ac.uk

Abstract

This article presents a historical reprise of 40 years of policy interest in ethnic minority businesses in the UK. It contrasts the pronouncements of policymakers with the reality of ethnic minority entrepreneurship. Such an exercise is surprisingly rare given the activism of policymakers in this arena and growing scholarly interest in this field. Our historical overview is informed by a novel research method that plots references to ethnic minority entrepreneurship in the British Houses of Parliament. Though the UK has been the site of some interesting policy experiments on ethnic minority entrepreneurship, their impact has been slight when set against the context of broader political-economic change.

INTRODUCTION

“What is the connection between policies to support ethnic minority businesses¹ (EMBs) and the actuality of ethnic minority entrepreneurship”? This deceptively simple question is rarely remarked upon in either scholarly or practitioner circles. The flurry of policy measures across Europe (Solano et al., 2019) suggests that practitioners, implicitly at least, are confident of the efficacy of such initiatives. The increasingly critical and nuanced scholarly discourse (Jones & Ram, 2007; Kloosterman, 2010; Rath & Schutjens, 2019; Romero & Valdez, 2016) addresses the systemic structural constraints on ethnic minority entrepreneurship, but is surprisingly reticent about prosaic policy pronouncements (for exceptions, see Ram et al., 2015; Rath & Swagerman, 2016). Focussed attention on the extent to which policymakers influence the practices of EMBs is long overdue.

In this article, we argue that the evolution of EMBs in Britain—in itself a narrative of proliferation, growth and diversification (Ram & Jones, 2008)—has to be seen primarily in the context of broader political-economic change.

This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

© 2022 The Authors. International Migration published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd on behalf of International Organization for Migration

While the UK's industrial—de-industrial—post-industrial shift has been a key driving force for self-employment, the emergence and development of EMB has also been affected by party-political swings, as the governing party has twice switched from Labour to Conservative during the period from the 1970s to the present day. Though it would be misleading to downplay the influence of Government policy, we argue that this has made itself felt primarily through general economic policy measures rather than direct entrepreneurial support measures.

There are important theoretical and policy reasons for our examination of the political rhetoric of EMB support in the context of the wider political economy of the UK over a 40-year period. The theoretical rationale is to build on and extend the contextualist turn in EMB research, which was given considerable momentum by the influential Mixed Embeddedness (Kloosterman, 2010; Rath & Schutjens, 2019) perspective. Mixed Embeddedness questions the prevailing tendency—inspired by Light's (1972) emphasis on so-called 'ethnic resources'¹—to account for the prominence of EMBs by privileged insider access to co-ethnic communities. The one-sided nature of this narrative was powerfully corrected by Mixed Embeddedness's emphasis on the interplay between ethnic social capital *and* the external business environment of EMBs. Crucially, this new stress on the world outside the protected social network draws attention to the severity of the structural obstacles facing EMBs; and the failure of enterprise policy to grasp this nettle.

Subsequent research informed by Mixed Embeddedness has fleshed out how the diverse contexts in which EMBs are embedded shape the fortunes of such businesses (Jones & Ram, 2007). But curiously, the role of time and the historical dimension is underplayed (Ram et al., 2017). Our focus on the historical evolution of EMB policy in the UK therefore addresses two surprisingly enduring gaps in extant studies. The first is the tendency to present theoretical models on EMBs in a kind of abstract vacuum. The post-World War Two rise of migrant business in Britain has taken place as an integral part of a concrete historical process (Jones & Ram, 2007), whereby overseas migrants themselves and their changing economic role have been called forth by evolving economic history: 1945–1973 Fordist Industrialism and mass migration of labour power from former colonies; 1974–2000 Post-industrialisation and ethnic minority self-employment; 2000 onwards Globalisation and super-diversity. We trace the connections between EMB policy developments and these political-economic processes.

Second, an historical perspective facilitates examination of how successfully incorporated migrant communities use self-employment as a transitional foothold to high level employment (Jones et al., 2012). Immigrant entrepreneurship is far from a contemporary phenomenon (Baghdiantz et al., 2005)—there is a tendency in EMB research to emphasise novelty rather than continuity. The importance of time and political economic changes are identified in a recent reappraisal of Mixed Embeddedness (Kloosterman & Rath, 2018) by its originators. This welcome recognition takes the perspective closer to its critical realist ontology, which emphasises the importance of temporality in its account of structure and agency (Archer, 2003). Our study then provides a concrete illustration of the importance of foregrounding political economic changes over time in order to develop an appropriately contextualised account of EMB policy.

Analysis of the changing political economy of EMB is necessary to assess whether business support initiatives can live up to the rhetoric that often accompany them. Policymakers and practitioners involved in business support—and innocent of the relevant research—often laud such businesses and view them in a positive light. For example, in the Action Plan for integrating third country nationals and the 2020 Entrepreneurship Action Plan, the European Commission portrays entrepreneurship as decent and sustainable employment for migrants. Some enthusiasts even celebrate the supposed innate entrepreneurial drive of particular ethnic groups (Gidoomal, 1997), oblivious to powerful critiques that emphasise the political economy of migrant enterprise (Jones & Ram, 2007; Rath & Schutjens, 2019; Romero & Valdez, 2016). Drawing attention to the political economy of EMBs over time can alert policy-makers to the limitations of initiatives that are 'agency-centric'. This contributes to a more nuanced view of the potential of business support to facilitate EMB development.

The rest of this article begins with a summary of the research technique used to allow a closer, time specific examination of policy development during the last 40 years using a significant modification to a methodology introduced by Dannreuther and Perren (2013). This approach reveals the specific influences on policy decisions,

which may well differ from the contemporary public presentation of the initiative or political memoirs compiled later. We have used this technique to undertake archival research into the evolution of EMB policy in the UK. The conclusions from this archival research are integrated into the subsequent sections of the article, each one covering a phase post 1945 UK economic history (noting, of course, our analysis post 2000 are still provisional as the coverage of archival material is still limited by the 20 year rule). Finally, in our conclusions we reflect on the broad sweep of the UK's political economy over the last 40 odd years and its impact on the fortunes of EMB policy. We also present conclusions regarding the pitfalls often faced by those researching in this area and how they can be avoided in the future.

UNLOCKING ARCHIVAL MATERIAL TO SUPPORT POLICY RESEARCH

The potential for a mismatch between the underlying influences and motivations behind policy development and its public presentation is an accepted feature of politics. Even for major headline government policy reviews, the detailed discussions surrounding change often take many years to be revealed. Archival research into the public records have often been the only way to understand the policy making process. However, UK researchers have faced significant issues in contributing to such activity, even though access to the records has fallen from a 50 year to a 20-year delay (and shorter in some cases). The reduction in the delay of accessing records has corresponded with a huge growth in the role of the state since 1900. Up to the 1970s, researchers looking at the inter-war years could just about cope with the sheer volume of records but those looking at the post 1960 period have been presented with (literally) miles of shelving full of paper records with no significant use of digital record keeping before the new millennium.

However, Dannreuther and Perren (2013) developed an approach to tag words and phrases reported in Hansard—the official record of UK parliamentary debates—and examined the circumstances surrounding the emergence of small business as an issue in public debate over several centuries. The authors counted the volume of a long list of words and phrases associated with small firms to see how well this mapped against contemporary political, economic and social trends. The authors conclude that 'small business issue' was effectively a political construct in the 1960s and 1970s with little contemporary support, for example, from managerial or industrial economics (which were strongly pro-larger business and in favour of corporate mergers).

This was an important finding based on a novel research technique. However, Dannreuther and Perren (2013) did not look at specific elements of small business or enterprise policy, rather the broader issue of small firms as a whole. However, it is possible to modify and extend this approach of using the digital tagging technique to cover specific areas of public policy—in this case, regarding EMBs—to develop a corresponding timeline of policy evolution. Hansard is more than just a record of the spoken word in either the Commons or the Lords as it includes a verbal record of major Parliamentary committees, written questions and answers, petitions and ministerial statements. As such, it is a barometer of UK political life used by MPs, government and all types of lobby and representative groups to promote an issue or defend a case.

The innovation of building policy specific synonyms to digitally tag and then analyse Hansard records may appear a modest extension of the work of Dannreuther and Perren (2013). However, it is the crucial step needed to unlock our ability to tie in various archival, scholarly and other factual surveys from the late 1970s onwards to identify the underlying drivers of policy evolution. Hansard is essentially a time stamped daily record of British political DNA. Most of the policy issues raised through Hansard will also be reflected in the corresponding archives of public bodies. The ability to find a specific period is very important. UK public records will often cover several years on the basis of a watching brief, especially for less visible areas of discussion; it is not uncommon, for example, to see a general policy file closed in 1990 but be opened in 1945 and contain dozens of individual uncatalogued paper files. A civil servant, for example, in charge of a policy agenda would monitor Hansard day-to-day and even cut and paste extracts into the file, as well as prepare comments or write answers for MP questions.

Even research into high profile issues, which may have better indexing of subject content, can still benefit from being able to tie together a political exchange in Hansard with the corresponding discussions between ministers, officials, technical advisers and external bodies to examine the underlying thinking between policy development and direction.

The development of a policy timeline mapping the emergence (or not) of EMB policy as a strand of enterprise policy is the novel archival contribution used in this article. For purposes of brevity, further details of the EMB specific policy synonyms used are included in the Appendix. More detailed information on updating the earlier work of Dannreuther and Perren (2013) is available elsewhere (Roberts et al., 2019). However, a summary of the findings of this research are reported in Figures 1 and 2, both for the policy timeline generated from a set of EMB specific synonyms, alongside our version of the Dannreuther and Perren (2013) results covering the small firms topic as a whole. In the following sections of historical analysis, key extracts from the narrative record of policy discussion have also been included where appropriate alongside other evidence to support our examination of the underlying drivers and motivation of those involved.

Looked at in summary form in Figures 1 and 2, these data show EMB policy discussion was non-existent in the 1970s when most other strands of UK enterprise policy emerged leading up to the Thatcher government in May 1979 with a commitment to introduce 100 small business support measures in 100 days. Rather, EMB policy debates emerged very suddenly in 1981–1982 (at a time when enterprise policy overall was in decline); this interest in EMBs waned by 1985 but rose again sharply in 1986 followed by several years of decline to a low point in 1990. A further short-term surge in policy interest was reported in 1992–1993.

Hence, even in graphical summary, these results indicate that the origins of EMB policy had little relationship with small business initiatives in general. Small business and enterprise support policies discussion surged in the mid-1970s and remained high until 1982 and thereafter settled at a level somewhat lower for much of the period up to 2000. This apparent mis-match between EMB policy and the pattern of wider UK enterprise policy continued over the following decade and beyond. In the following sections of this article, we examine this hypothesis in closer detail to establish the underlying EMB policy drivers and the resulting consequences for policy impact and the EMB community as a whole. These findings will be integrated into a detailed narrative of the key phases of UK economic and Industrial policy since 1950 from the viewpoint of ethnic minority entrepreneurship support.

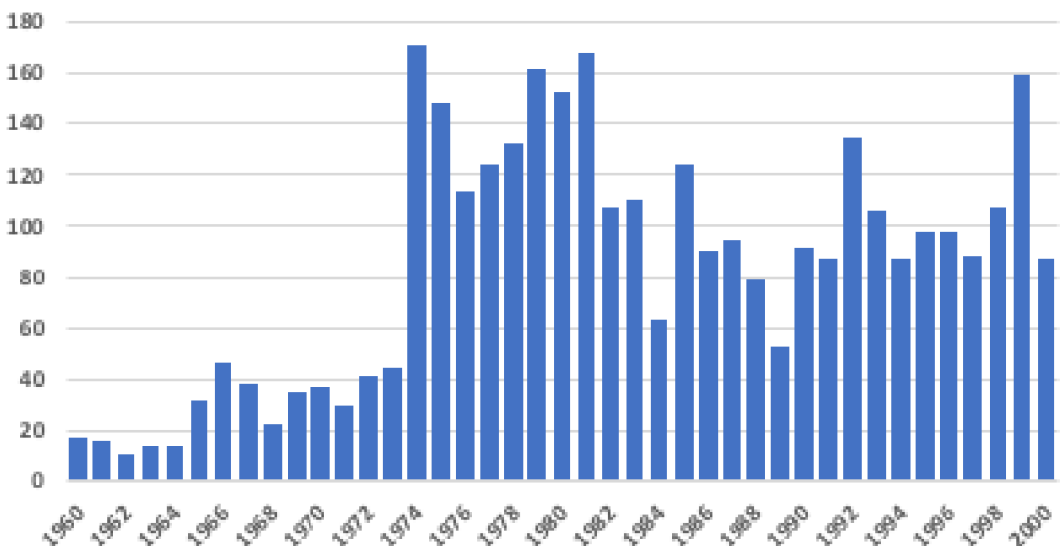


FIGURE 1 Small firms mentions in UK Parliament, 1960–2000 (Per million words spoken)

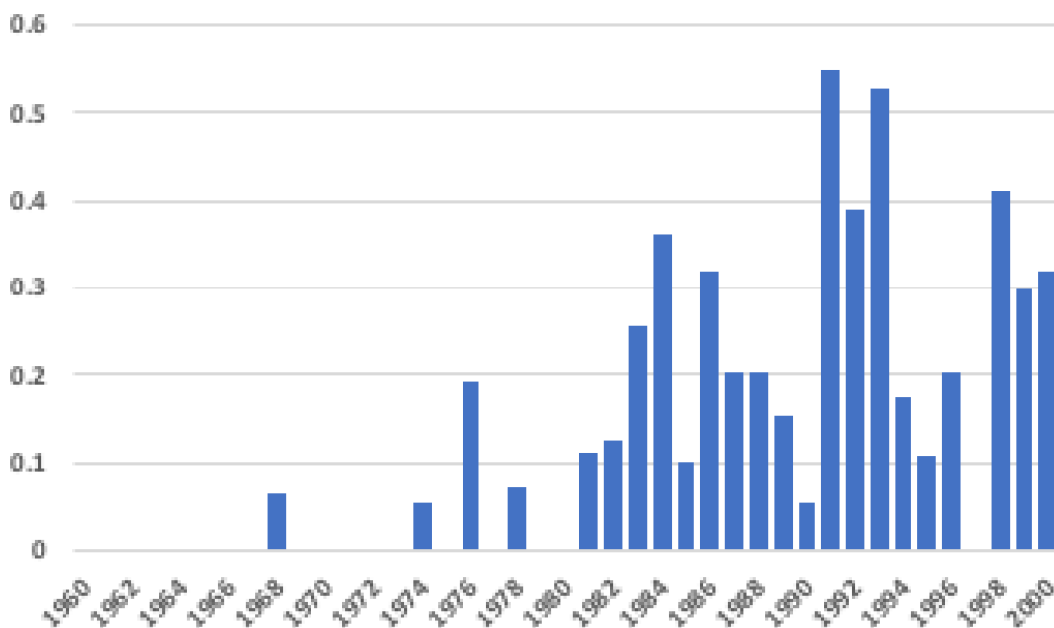


FIGURE 2 EMB mentions in UK parliament, 1960–2000 (Per million words spoken)

THE INDUSTRIAL GROWTH ERA (c1950–1975)

Judging by the content of Parliamentary debates, the immigrant presence in Britain had become a hot topic by the 1960s but there was little mention of their business ownership before the 1980s. Drawn mainly from Britain's former colonies, the ethnic minority population was labelled 'New Commonwealth' immigrants and predominantly comprised African-Caribbeans, and South Asians, with smaller numbers of Hong Kong Chinese and Cypriots. It passed the one million mark in 1968 (Owen, 1996). At this stage, however, there were few ethnic minority-owned firms. The immigrant population largely comprised workers recruited in response to a labour shortage caused by a post-war upsurge of growth in the British economy.

The tenor of Parliamentary debate on the immigration issue was often heated, the most notorious outburst being Conservative MP Enoch Powell's toxic speech forecasting 'Rivers of blood' if immigration were allowed to continue unchecked (Miles & Phizacklea, 1984). Such warnings reflected rifts in civil society, where immigrant entry into the job and housing markets was resisted by sections of the native population worst hit by the scarcity of these resources (Doherty, 1973; Rex & Moore, 1968; Smith, 1977). Attempting to insert themselves at the bottom of the housing market, immigrants felt not only the wrath of the incumbent natives but also the effects of living in the worst areas. As Smith (1989, p. 39) explains, black residents 'cluster where services—from education to crime prevention and victim support—are in greatest need but shortest supply'.

The contrast between growing parliamentary reporting and wider political discourse on the race relations 'problem' in UK and the apparent lack of interest in EMB issues was repeated in our review of secondary research literature over the same period. For example, the Economic and Social Research Council's research funding in this area concentrated on broader employment and social conditions. Indeed, while the General Household Survey started to collect some data in this area in 1970, even by the time of the 1981 National Census ethnic origin was still not included and remained out of official business surveys until the late 1990s. The detailed review of relevant government archives has found virtually no trace of any interest in EMB policy development; the issue was totally ignored by the Committee of Inquiry into Small Firms (1969–1971). Quite simply whenever the issue of small firms

was mentioned in the House of Commons prior to 1981, there was rarely mention of immigrant-owned firms and, even in private, policy makers had no material interest.

DEINDUSTRIALISATION AND THE EMERGENCE OF ETHNIC MINORITY BUSINESS POLICY (1975–2000)

1975 to c 1981

Eventually, looking at the EMB policy timeline based on Hansard, there was a sharp upsurge in interest in this issue from 1982 onwards. It is useful to capture the flavour of urban Britain at the time of these first interventions and the circumstances driving this change in the level of interest. Essentially ethnic minorities found themselves in double crisis, a structural shift in the economy entwined with urban decay and conflict. The initial driving force behind the emergence of EMB was the collapse of the manufacturing industries which had acted as the mainstay of full employment; and a resort to self-employment by many as a survival strategy. UK manufacturing had been in decline since the mid-1960s but with a sharp acceleration in the early 1980s, 'with black and Asian workers disproportionately affected' (Virdee, 2014, p. 148). Partly this was due to their concentration in obsolescent industries like textiles (Yorkshire, Lancashire, East Midlands) and metal foundries (West Midlands). Partly, however, it stemmed from a discriminatory dual labour market system, made up of 'an inner core of secure highly paid professionals, usually white men ... [and] ... an outer core of clerical and blue collar jobs, for which women and blacks are more readily taken on' (Ohri & Faruqi, 1988, p. 69)—and more readily discarded when the industry shrinks. In practical terms, this period was one in which a 'last in, first out' principle seemed to be operating within many large employers. Those who had been brought in to rescue a British economy starved of workers were the very ones to be discarded when workers became surplus to requirements.

In addition to all the forces already creating unemployment, government policy now identified markets and individual enterprise as the principal wealth generators. Consequently, Prime Minister 'Thatcher began a radical dismantling of the mixed economy' (Ha-joon Chang, 2014, p. 90), a trend that, coupled with discrimination in the labour market, created an employment crisis for ethnic minority communities. Ironically, Mrs Thatcher's small business strategy of 100 measures in 100 days to cut red tape, lower taxation and reform industrial relations, accelerated the crisis within many diverse communities. By the early 1980s, the Pakistani male unemployment rate was almost three times that of the white male rate, with African-Caribbean males also acutely affected with unemployment at twice the rate of whites (Ohri & Faruqi, 1988). Bearing closely on contemporary fears of social disorder, 'black youth unemployment has reached astronomical proportions' (Ohri & Faruqi, 1988, p.71), with 35 per cent of African Caribbean males aged 16–24 idle. These fears soon came to pass.

1981–1985

The first hint to policymakers that self-employment ought to replace lost jobs followed a series of inner-city riots; civil servants had been reviewing inner city policy in detail from 1975 onwards but never made the connection before 1981/1982. For decades, it was apparent that the inner residential zones of Britain's largest cities had become spatial concentrations of multiple deprivation and poverty (Smith, 1989). This space had become abandoned by its white residents and occupied by racialised newcomers (Jones, 1983). High on the 1970s political agenda (Smith, 1977), this urban blight, combined with aggressive policing of ethnic minority neighbourhoods, led to street disorders in Southall, West London, St Pauls, Bristol (1980), Chapeltown Leeds, Toxteth Liverpool and Brixton South London (1981). Though multiple deprivation certainly was common to all these areas, Waller (1981, p. 346) reminds us that 'poverty on its own is more likely to extinguish passion

than to arouse it' and observes that the disorder stemmed principally from 'Black animosity against the police'. Tellingly, the 'Black Lives Matter' protest movement of 2020 shows us that police abuse of minority citizens continues four decades later. In practice, both poverty and policing had a part to play in the 1980s uprisings, the former a contextual factor, the latter a precipitating force. As we shall see proposals to boost black self-employment aim to address both poverty and alienation.

The law and order break down was severe enough for the Home Office to set up a Commission of Enquiry under Lord Scarman. Scarman's report expressly highlights the urgent need for EMB support:

The encouragement of black people to secure a real stake in their own community, through business and the professions, is in my view of great importance if future social stability is to be secured.

(Scarman, 1981, p.168)

This is a recognition that the problem goes beyond even the deprivation caused by unemployment and encompasses alienation, the lack of genuine identification with the larger society outside local community and neighbourhood.

Seriousness of governmental intent was demonstrated by the commissioning by a Parliamentary Select Committee of an academic report on West Indians in business (Reeves & Ward, 1981); this was in practical terms the start of academic interest in EMBs with a view to aiding policy development. The report's authors were reluctant to endorse the claim that self-employment in general can be an effective means of addressing socio-economic disadvantage. Any clear-cut conclusion was hard for Reeves and Ward to make given the remit they had on the West Indian community, the low level of self-employment in the African-Caribbean population and the narrow range of sectors in which their firms were engaged. Interestingly, the leading sector was building and construction, a specialisation, which has never subsequently figured as an ethnic minority activity. However, during 1981 encouraging and supporting business starts and self-employment amongst the ethnic minority communities of the UK suddenly appeared on the policy agenda.

While entrepreneurship in general tended to be extolled by 1980s government policy as a source of economic growth and innovation, 'black people's business' was seen more as a means of keeping trouble off British streets. As such, whatever public policy could do to encourage the Black community to get into business was regarded as positive with little thought about the prospects for individual entrepreneurs. This conclusion is endorsed by our archival research. Most of the initial action for EMB initiatives came from the Home Office rather than the economic or industrial departments. Projects worth £3m funding were selected solely in response to local pressures, often at first on Police advice and mainly in locations with a large Black West African population. Indeed, even though the first Minister for Ethnic Minorities in February 1982 (Sir George Young) was an Environment post, the Home Office retained a leading influence in policy development for EMB support for several more years. Indeed, some of the more progressive ideas looked at by the Environment department staff—such as a national EMB Development Agency with financial powers covering all ethnic minority groups—were quietly abandoned. This occurred in 1985 after the UK clearing banks agreed to appoint some Development Officers, again mainly for West Indian customers (each Bank Chairman received a personal request from the Chancellor of the Exchequer after a further set of urban riots).

The policy developments in 1981 and 1982 also accentuated differences already evident in local communities between various ethnic minority groups. The experiences of South Asians from Pakistani and Indian communities was markedly different from the 1970s onwards. A growing number of Asian firms established, notably retail (Aldrich et al., 1981; Werbner, 1980) and clothing manufacturers (Mitter, 1986; Ram, 1994). As the 1980s proceeded, so the multiplication of Asian-owned businesses accelerated. Characteristic of the decade was a stream of studies extolling the rise of Asian enterprise and its basis in the rich business resources of familial and co-ethnic social capital (Ballard & Ballard, 1977; Creed & Ward, 1987; Ward, 1987; Werbner, 1984). Competitive advantage was derived, so it was argued, from privileged insider access to cheap and flexible labour and interest free loans as well as a willingness to grasp the opportunities of Enterprise Britain.

Whatever the quality of these firms, there can be no argument about their quantitative proliferation, with Campbell and Daly (1992) showing both Indian and Pakistani-Bangladeshi self-employment surpassing White British levels by the end of the 1980s (Table 1). As the 1980s progressed, business support bodies—who were tasked primarily with raising the start-up rate—highlighted Asian entrepreneurs as shining exemplars of success with limited dedicated public policy involvement (or cost). Little concern was shown that the bulk of Asian firms were setting up in easy-to-enter market and poorly rewarded sectors (Jones et al., 1989), a pattern of occupying vacated niches, which bulks large in the later theory of Mixed Embeddedness (Kloosterman, 2010; Kloosterman et al., 1999). Hence, the apparent entrepreneurial success story of Asian business start-up trends was in reality evidence of post 1970s labour market restructuring with a rise in immigrant unemployment driving many Asian workers into self-employment as a means of survival (Jones, 1981). The essential lesson to take here is that this entrepreneurial proliferation was propelled by the shift to post-Fordism, with policy inputs non-existent.

1985 to c 1997

The fortunes of EMB policy development changed markedly as the 1980s progressed. While public order policy faded as a driver for targeted policy intervention, it was replaced by a much simpler 'levelling up' agenda. The latter allowed all aspiring entrepreneurs to maximise their entrepreneurial potential and was mainly delivered through 300 or so Enterprise Agencies (EAs) using a mixture of public and charitable sources of funding. This was still without reference to any structural or systemic issues for different client groups, as well as a lack of appreciation of the varying social and economic circumstances and needs of different components of the ethnic minority population.

Once again, it is helpful to highlight the state of race relations in Britain at the time, especially in urban areas and ongoing tensions between the Police and some ethnic communities. The Broadwater Farm riot of October 1985, along with other disturbances at a similar time in Brixton and Peckham suggested that not much had changed since 1981. Based on previous experience it might have been expected that a further period of targeted policy development may have been forthcoming, especially for the West Indian community. However, EMB policy issues declined in political discourse and fell back in volume to a low point in 1990. The Gifford Report into Blackwater, published in 1986 had no business policy impact, unlike the Scarman report in 1981.

Enterprise Agencies embodied the Thatcher-led Conservative government's belief in independent small enterprise as the dynamo of economic growth and innovation. However, they reported mixed results in efforts to support different ethnic minority communities. While African Caribbean uptake of EA support was greater than Asian, their rate of business formation was much lower than other groups (Ward, 1987). Asian business start-ups exceeded African Caribbean or White British, despite receiving little EA input (Ram & Jones, 1998).

In the years between 1985 and 1990, Asian entrepreneurship was regularly highlighted as part of the success story of UK small business policy, especially in terms of start-ups and the impact on social cohesion. With apparently little call on public funds, the Asian small business community expanded rapidly. During the preceding economic trough, the Asian self-employment trend had been essentially counter-cyclical, rising as the wider economy

TABLE 1 Self-employment percentages by ethnic group (after Campbell & Daly, 1992)

	1979–1983	1989–1991
White	8.8	13.0
Indian	13.8	20.2
Pakistani-Bangladeshi	17.4	21.9

declined but after 1985 it began to move in step with the expansion of jobs, income and consumption (Ram & Jones, 1998, 2008). No longer confined to co-ethnic residential enclaves, Asian restaurants and low order retailers began rapidly proliferating in white residential suburbs (Ward, 1985).

Meanwhile, the African Caribbean community at whom the initial policy thrust had been directed were creating businesses at only a fraction of the Asian rate. With so much attention on the success of Asian-led firms, whatever the realities of the economic and social circumstances faced by budding African Caribbean entrepreneurs, they were no longer in scope for targeted help and funding; levelling-up funding, if available, often stretched to little more than subsidised UK language training or funding advice sessions in local community centres. This contrasted sharply with the 1981–1982 period when grant aid, mentoring support and more costly activities were commonplace and targeted to specific locations and ethnic minority groups.

Once again, our archival research strongly supports the apparent evolution of policy events. Immediately after the Blackwater Farm riot, the Home Secretary (Douglas Hurd) held private meetings with Lord Scarman to discuss recent events and make comparisons with 1981. The Home Office did authorise a small top up in dedicated public spending on EMB support through its Ethnic Minority Business Initiative (EMBI). However, this appears to have been done to avoid the embarrassment of some existing schemes being closed in the immediate aftermath to the October 1985 riots and any claim communities were being punished. Still no expansion in activity occurred. Further, the Home Office soon gave up any day-to-day involvement in EMB policy as leadership on matter transferred via various rounds of central government restructuring to the Employment and then the Trade and Industry team.

The move towards integration into the work of ministers and officials responsible for the wider Government enterprise agenda was regarded by many at the time as a success and a recognition of the importance of the EMB agenda. However, this led to a period where specific EMB policy activity declined, as did the number of dedicated programmes and initiatives as the EMBI was allowed to run down after 1987.

The major influence on enterprise policy at the time based on Hansard records, contemporary evidence and archival material, was the so-called 'Lawson boom'. Nigel Lawson, the Treasury minister, presided over a robust reflation of the national economy following several years of high interest rates and unemployment. A succession of free market appointments to role of President of the Board of Trade led to several root and branch reviews of many small business policy issues between 1985 and 1990. The 'light touch' policy environment emphasised the importance of little more than a healthy start-up environment and this thinking underpinned the policy of limiting most small firms support activity to the EAs.

The implications of this rapid move from a public order motivation of funding EMB policy initiatives towards a market-led approach was illustrated after the events at Blackwater Farm with a brief prepared by the No 10 policy Unit for the Prime Minister objecting to any increase in dedicated funding for enterprise and employment schemes. Infamously, the note suggested that spending of this type would be wasted with 'black entrepreneurs setting up in the disco and drug trade'. The highly emotive and insensitive language used clearly shows the expectation that policy advice and discussions will remain in private and not cause embarrassment in future years and illustrates the importance of our archival study to understanding policy development.

Ironically, later in the same document the authors make an equally important observation that for many ethnic minority communities it will need long-term improvements to education levels, wealth and employment as well as targeted support to truly make an impact rather than short-term grants. This was similar to the thinking in 1981/1982 regarding a dedicated Black Business Development Agency. As we have seen, the EMBI was topped up but the broad drift of policy direction had changed. As such, the EMBI-funded EAs which initially had been set-up to serve specific local minority communities, either closed, merged or rebranded themselves as 'open to all' after 1986. Market forces through economic growth and employment would be driver of change. Indeed, when the Church of England Report 'Faith in the Cities' came out in 1986 the full machinery of central government was deployed—Cabinet sub-committees, ministerial working groups and private briefings—to find a way to reject the idea of a national urban business development agency (an urban CoSira). A similar fate occurred to a Business

in the Community (BITC) proposal in 1987 although it was largely focussed on helping certain specified ethnic minority communities.

Little changed for EMB policy under the John Major premiership (1990–1997). The recession of the early 1990s did lead to a reported sharp increase in political debate about the fortunes, but no public order ‘threat’ appears to have challenged the existing policy framework. By this time, 300 EAs were in place and in receipt of £300 million a year of public funding to help promote a level playing field. Indeed, in the run-up to the early 1990s recession, much of the discussion about urban policy had been channelled in the City Challenge programme where local government bid for programme funding. The published guidance for these bids made no reference to any need to target particular communities in looking at business development. It appears that once local politicians had control, the EMB issue slipped lower down in the policy agenda. The subsequent resurgence was in 1991 was short lived and little changed before 1997.

It is important to emphasise that this shift in policy direction—which appeared on the surface at least to suggest Asian entrepreneurship was a success story whilst highlighting the ‘problem’ of African Caribbean start-up activity—was accidental. Policy makers did not have the knowledge and understanding of the EMB sector. Academic research on the topic was in its infancy and links between research and policy making was very weak. At one point the Dean of a Business School wrote to civil servants seeking support (not money!) to continue a dedicated research post on EMB issues. The exchange of internal discussion shows they were aware of the work but little else and the subsequent endorsement provided was largely non-committal (happily though, the post was retained). Both researchers and policy makers also had no data. An ethnic origin question was not on the Census until 1991 and it was not used in business data collection (apart from the Labour Force Survey—at the insistence of the European Commission—so allowing the reporting of self-employment activity).

The change in the driver of EMB policy and its impact on different communities also reminds us that direct business support is only one element in a wide-ranging policy environment, all of whose regulatory restraints and enabling measures can override more specific support measures. Perhaps one of the leading policy enablers of EMB growth from the 1980s to the present has been the ‘light touch’ regulation favoured by the UK’s neo-liberal governments. In practice, few if any barriers are placed in the way of individuals wishing to start a business. As noted by Kloosterman (2000), this contrasts sharply with the more tightly regulated business environment in most mainland European countries and as such helps to explain the faster pace of EMB evolution in Britain.

In most respects the UK approximates to what Kloosterman (2000, p. 100) following Esping Andersen (1990) calls the ‘Neo-American model’, a regime so loosely regulated as to create ‘room for small scale low tech firms in both personal and producer services and in location-bound manufacturers such as sweatshops’. By contrast, most mainland European countries fall into the ‘Rhineland model’, a strictly controlled business environment where ‘the opportunities for immigrants to set up in personal services are therefore slim’ (ibid p. 102). In comparing these differing business contexts, we are once more asked to weigh up the relative virtues of quantity over quality, since the deregulated UK approach certainly promotes a rapid multiplication of EMBs (Sepulveda et al., 2011) but has no means of filtering out start-ups destined to struggle for survival (Barrett et al., 2001). The debate between the quantity and quality of business starts, the impact on wider enterprise activity and social impact continues to this day.

21ST CENTURY—POST-INDUSTRIAL AGE OF GLOBALISATION (1997 ONWARDS)

The new millennium saw a strikingly different context emerge for EMB policy. In common with most other advanced capitalist nations, the UK was now a fully post-industrial economy. Its shrunken manufacturing sector was now dwarfed by a service economy where financial services and retailing were among its fastest growing branches. Parallel to economic change, there were also seismic shifts in the pattern of immigration, as the long

dominant South Asian and Caribbean streams were overtaken by post-Soviet immigration from Eastern Europe and asylum-seeker inflows from conflict zones in Africa, South-West Asia and Afghanistan.

Important though these were, perhaps even more significant for enterprise support was political change, with the New Labour Government of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown comprising the Government up until 2010, when it was replaced by another Conservative administration. Accordingly, we split the 21st century into two sub-sections for analysis. However, in both cases we note these are too recent in time to include evidence from archival research, although we can benefit from the growing academic research in this area as well as some attempt to develop robust data collection post the 1991 National Census.

1997–2010 EMB policy under new labour

Though New Labour's economic approach was essentially a continuation of free market neo-liberalism, its social policy stance was one of social liberalism, promoting equality and inclusiveness. Multi-culturalism was a part of this, to the benefit of EMBs, which was now officially acknowledged as a worthwhile end in itself, a confidence-building exercise in which EMB was seen positively as part of a drive for social cohesion (Deakins et al., 2003).

One sign of this more positive trend was the commissioning of the first major large-scale study on access to finance and EMB by the British Banking Association (Ram et al., 2002). This study was a response to a report by the Bank of England (1999), in which one of the emerging themes was the need for further research into the nature of the relationship between banks and EMBs. Ram et al.'s (2002) findings prompted banks to adopt several initiatives designed to tackle the prevailing perception that ethnic minority firms were unfavourably treated by the financial sector. With regard to specific support services, it was recognised that some of these should be aimed at ethnic minority entrepreneurs, while at the same time there should be proactive engagement with the large numbers of businesses failing to seek support (Deakins et al., 2003). Furthermore, in addition to EAs the Department of Trade and Industry set up a network of Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), part of whose brief was to encourage enterprise development, with a special part envisaged for EMBs. RDAs were given responsibility for the creation of regional business support organisations called 'Business Links'; this reflected the 'English' approach to regionally devolved decision-making, which allowed for the development of different local support strategies within a national policy framework (Mole et al., 2011). Favourable notice is given by Deakins et al. (2003, p. 856) of 'a new commitment to the inclusion of all groups of entrepreneurs, including those from the ethnic minorities'.

Although, the track record of RDAs and Business Links on EMBs is mixed (Ram et al., 2012), many were active in promoting minority enterprise. They pioneered initiatives such as minority business representative groups, community-based support, the collation of diversity data, and targeted policies on access to finance and procurement (aspects described as 'good practice' by Ram & Smallbone, 2003). These features provided the basis for policy interventions at a national, regional and local level. Such activity comprised several key themes, including:

- The importance of adopting a *strategic* approach to encouraging entrepreneurship in disadvantaged communities.
- Viewing minority enterprise as source of *competitiveness*, as well as a vehicle for *economic inclusion*.
- Developing an *evidence-based* approach to interventions, which would require collating and using disaggregated data on minority entrepreneurs.
- Encouraging a balance between '*mainstream*' and '*community-based*' measures.
- The need to build imaginative relationships with *private sector partners*, rather than relying solely on public sector providers.

Notwithstanding significant advances, New Labour era policy still lagged in several respects. Firstly, it continued to place a heavy onus on supply side policies, measures like skills training designed to boost the number of EMBs

irrespective of whether there was a demand for them (Ram & Smallbone, 2003). Structural constraints were rarely acknowledged. This criticism was given extra bite by major theoretical advances in the academic study of migrant business. Leading the way here was *Mixed Embeddedness Theory* (Kloosterman, 2010; Kloosterman et al., 1999), a new perspective which emphasised the way in which firms are grounded not simply in the social capital resources of their own ethnic communities but also in the wider political economy of their adopted country. In effect, ME is a juxtaposition of the microsphere of informal personal relationships with the external world of calculative rationality and official regulations. The expression 'mixed' embeddedness refers to the firm's grounding in these two spheres and the impossibility of it remaining entirely within the protective bubble of the microsphere because the latter acts rather like a womb, offering shelter and protection but preventing any growth beyond the rudimentary.

To expand beyond this level, EMB needs to venture into sectors and markets where the 'range of options is restricted by their being limited in human and other capital ... and the likelihood that they will encounter discrimination' (Kloosterman, 2000, p. 94). Among the hazards facing it, the ethnic minority firm needs to overcome competition from established native incumbents, including corporations (Jones et al., 2014), at the same time battling perceived discrimination from bank lenders (Fraser, 2009; Ram et al., 2002) and customers (Ishaq et al., 2010; Jones et al., 1992). Theoretically, this switch away from the firm itself towards the total context in which it is situated represents a shift away from the neo-liberalism hitherto dominating academic study and also shaping policy under New Labour.

Next, it laid itself open to charges of ethnic labelling from the many EA clients expressing displeasure at measures allegedly tailor-made for 'Asian' or 'black' business-owners when they would prefer recognition simply as 'entrepreneurs'. Ram et al. (2006) warn against essentialist definitions of EMB, arguing that as increasing numbers of firms move away from the corner shop into high value mainstream activities, so the specifics of ethnic identity matter less and less. At the very inception of EMB in Britain, a high degree of interdependence between firm and ethnic community may well have prevailed, but by the turn of the century this applied to a minority of cases. Accordingly, they recognise a 'complex contingent entrepreneurial identity' (Ram et al., 2006, p. 302) and advocate that enterprise support address 'common interest networks' (ibid p. 304) rather than ethnic groups defined in traditional essentialist terms.

Finally, the proliferation of actors providing business support to EMBs lacked coherence and led to increased competition for dwindling sources of funding. The business support infrastructure in many regions became fragmented, changeable, and confusing with a large range of institutions and intermediaries purporting to provide business support (Ram et al., 2012).

The era of 'super-diversity' (Vertovec, 2007) from the 1990s onwards—in which an older pattern of labour migration from a handful of post-colonial sources is replaced by one of migrants from a host of geographical origins driven by a variety of motives—also posed challenges for policy makers. Though the presence and entrepreneurial activities of new migrants was picked up by researchers (Jones et al., 2014; Lyon et al., 2007; Sepulveda et al., 2011), EMB support trailed behind the evidence base. Most public sector agencies lacked knowledge of the dynamics of the new migrant business community in the region, their business support needs, and practical interventions aimed at such groups. Ram et al. (2015) report on a rare example of researchers working alongside a business support agency—referred to as 'SUPPAG', a purely fictional label—to address the challenges of using research to support new migrant businesses. SUPPAG had commissioned the research team to improve the provision of business support for new migrant entrepreneurs in its region. Evidence from the researchers' survey of 165 new migrant businesses—conducted as part of the action research methodology of the project—highlighted the importance of understanding the *context* of owners' business support needs (rather than 'ethnicity-related' factors). The action research process provoked a constant re-assessment of how SUPPAG engaged with new migrant businesses. SUPPAG altered the way it promoted its services; started to develop relationships with a wider range of intermediaries (including those representing new communities); and intensified its efforts in areas where new migrant activity was identified. The project led to a substantial increase in the recorded number interactions with minority businesses.

Since 2010 policy after new labour

With the defeat of New Labour in 2010, the UK was governed for five years by a Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition and thereafter by Conservative administrations. Until derailed by the Covid 19 pandemic of 2020, the economic theme throughout the entire period was one of austerity, with government spending cut to retrieve the sums expended on rescuing the banking system after the 2007 financial crash. Among the many casualties, the EMB support system sustained heavy cuts such that most of the earlier gains were wiped out. The painstakingly assembled EMB support system, including RDAs and Business Links, was effectively eviscerated (Ram et al., 2012).

The remit of the successor institutions established by the Coalition government rarely encompassed the support of EMBs. 'Local Enterprise Partnerships'—based on alliances between businesses and local authorities—had much reduced powers for economic development and business support. Some EAs remained but doubts have been expressed over their capacity, reach in minority communities, and ability to develop relationships with funders from the private sector. A number of 'Growth Hubs' were created, but as the name implies, their focus is the comparatively few firms that attempt significant growth rather than—as in the case of many EMBs—firms that are struggling to survive (Ram et al., 2017). Perhaps unsurprisingly, the disconnection between policy and reality reached a new peak during this phase.

At the same time that entrepreneurial support was almost wholly withdrawn, entrepreneurial achievement reached new heights. According to the recent survey derived from Global Enterprise Monitor data (Roberts et al., 2020), EMBs had generated 250,000 firms by 2018, with a total Gross Value Added of £25 billion. As well as continuing high self-employment amongst Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, African and African-Caribbean self-employment had made great strides in catching up with the Asian level; further diversification was also evident in a belated rise in female ethnic minority self-employment. Perhaps most unexpected are the findings on innovation, with EMBs engaging in product innovation almost one and a half times more numerous than their majority counterparts. Equally noteworthy, growth firms were more numerous whether measured by employment provision or by turnover. Expressing the ambitious mind-set of these EMB owners, the gap between minorities and mainstream is widest of all when it comes to expectations for growth, a finding that comes across as a complete historical role reversal.

It bears repetition that all this has been achieved largely in the absence of support that had become taken for granted prior to 2010. Most striking of all, the gap between support and achievement was widest in the case of refugees, 'often among the most marginalised of immigrant groups ... yet also often displaying significant evidence of enterprise and self-employed activities (Lyon et al., 2007, p. 363)'. Despite considerable barriers, refugee business in Britain actually flourishes in many cases and it is worth highlighting that two of the most outstanding performers in Edwards et al.'s (2016) West Midlands sample were refugees from Afghanistan and Iran, both of whom had succeeded in transferring significant financial assets from the homeland, capital now invested in highly profitable fast growth enterprises in Birmingham. By contrast many asylum-seekers had arrived in a state of desperation but, on achieving refugee status had set up small enterprises most of which are still in business, an expression of almost unbelievable resilience.

CONCLUSION

In this review of four decades of British business support for EMB, we have seen the policy-making wheel turn almost full circle. Support measures first emerged in the early 1980s for reasons that had little to do with entrepreneurship and which in any case were distinctly grudging and reluctant; indeed a cabinet article of the period suggested that any spending on ethnic minorities would be wasteful and likely lead to finance criminal activity, a sentiment betraying the racism prevalent even at the highest official levels. Yet, even this toxic language did not

blind some policy makers to the fact that fundamental change could only occur through the long-term removal of structural barriers. This point was not accepted, perpetuating the impression that business support is being doled out on sufferance, a kind of charitable donation rather than an entitlement. This climate did not completely thaw out until the New Labour period from 1997 to 2010, when EMBs enjoyed an official position within the decision-making machinery and furthermore enjoyed benefits now derived from globalisation and the accompanying economic growth. This last point is prominently highlighted by Kloosterman (2000, p. 97), 'the restructuring of advanced economies in the last quarter of the [20th century] has profoundly altered the demand for immigrant entrepreneurship'. Not that this trend would benefit from any Conservative government support; instead we have seen a reversion to a rudimentary support structure, hardly any more developed than its 1980s predecessor; as in the era of City Challenge in the late 1980s, too much local control of the policy agenda without some central direction often allows EMB policy development to be overlooked, something evident in many LEP and Growth Hub operations again today.

Throughout the entire period a gap has persisted between policy goals and entrepreneurial practice, narrowing somewhat during the New Labour years but widening since post 2010, with the connection between policy and practice extremely tenuous. As suggested earlier, the link has always been weak and overridden by the fact that general economic policy has tended to exert a greater impact than specific entrepreneurial measures, a thrust that has combined with structural economic shifts to comprehensively reshape EMBs. This conclusion has a parallel with the general debate about the role of government in promoting enterprise where commentators argue that small firm measures are of marginal importance when compared to general economic policy, taxation, immigration and education (Storey, 1994).

Now in the 21st century, EMB is not only vastly expanded in size and numbers but also significantly more diverse. Important here is the widening of business participation, with more than 20 ethnicities engaged in business in significant numbers. At the same time, there are trends in the opposite direction and we should not forget that Indians, once in the vanguard of business are now a dwindling presence, as more and more of the highly qualified British born generations use this accreditation to move into professional employment. This has prompted Jones et al. (2012) to wonder whether self-employment is merely a temporary measure allowing a newly arrived group to bed into its host economy, a thought occurring several decades ago to researchers into the multi-ethnic business scene of California (Bonacich & Modell, 1986).

Whatever the truth of this, we can record that EMB has also penetrated branches and sectors of activity formerly barred to it (Roberts et al., 2020). As such, we might regard it as accurately expressing the globalised post-industrial economy in which it is embedded. Such is the nature of a competitive market economy that the fruits of progress are by no means equally shared and we would stress the sharply polarised nature of an EMB economy where a comparative handful of high flying firms are heavily outnumbered by a mass of strugglers on the margins (Jones et al., 2019). Trapped in the traditional low value activities that have always sheltered migrant firms, they remain subject to onerous toil, customer racism and now, in a vicious new twist, the COVID 19 virus that menaces all front-line workers like shopkeepers. Moreover the 'Black Lives Matter' movement of 2020 has reminded us that racism is far from dead, in business as in all other spheres of life.

This study of the shifting political economy of EMB policy in the UK has wider implications. Of central importance is the potency of structural conditions emphasised by Mixed Embeddedness. When infused with a sensitivity to temporal change (and continuity), we can see that the perspective is a powerful reminder of the limited potential of initiatives that focus unduly on addressing the perceived shortcomings of migrant entrepreneurs rather than the economic chains that shackle them. This is not peculiar to the UK. In one of the few wide-ranging investigations of migrant enterprise support, Rath and Swagerman (2016) compared enterprise promotion in 28 European cities and showed that one constant was the way that enterprise support 'opted for measures that supposedly targeted ethnic entrepreneurs' deficiencies' rather than addressing structural disadvantage 'by removing barriers or by offering new economic opportunities' (Rath & Swagerman, 2016, p. 163). It seems that the 'ethnic resources' approach—emphasising the apparent virtues of cultural idiosyncrasies rather than the conformity of

structural barriers—is evident in the profusion of policy measures from Europe (Solano et al., 2019). Such practitioner initiatives, based on an implicit 'deficit model', promotes a lop-sidedness which weakens the potential value of migrant business support measures. Yet, the invocation of migrant enterprise as a panacea for grand societal challenges features prominently in academic and practitioner domains.

Our analysis also has implications for migrant business researchers venturing into the policy domain. Closer engagement is undoubtedly needed, not least because the increasingly sophisticated and nuanced scholarly discourse in migrant business studies appears to be missing in the boosterist policy measures on EMBs across Europe (Rath & Swagerman, 2016). But uncritical endorsement of initiatives by academics—shorn of any consideration of systemic issues—runs the risk the legitimising the neo-liberal agenda that animates the interest of states across Europe (Rath & Schutjens, 2016; Ram et al., 2017). Nonetheless, there is scope for constructive dialogue. Ram (2019) documents how he and his colleagues deployed the approach of 'critical engagement' in their interactions with practitioners. The methodology involves the exploitation of scholarly and practitioner knowledge, a process that is likely to generate more useful insights than either party working in isolation. This approach involves the identification of structural barriers, as well as exploration of opportunities for change.

PEER REVIEW

The peer review history for this article is available at <https://publons.com/publon/10.1111/imig.12959>.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data sharing not applicable – no new data generated.

ENDNOTE

1. For present purposes, we use the definition below, which is typical of the (implicit) approach of many studies: "Ethnic minority entrepreneurs have been understood to be immigrants in the countries concerned or children or grandchildren of immigrants. Immigrants are defined as persons who have been born abroad. Irrespective of their nationality and irrespective of whether they are considered to be ethnic minorities in the countries concerned, immigrants also include the offspring of immigrants [...]" (Smallbone, 2005:2)

REFERENCES

- Aldrich, H.E., Cater, J., Jones, T. & McEvoy, D. (1981) Business Development and Self-Segregation: Asian Enterprise in Three British Cities. In: Peach, C., Robinson, V. & Smith, S. (Eds.) *Ethnic Segregation in Cities*. London: Croom Helm, pp. 170–192.
- Archer, M. (2003) *Structure, agency and the internal conversation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Baghdiantz, I., McCabe, G.H. & Minoglou, I. (2005) *Diaspora entrepreneurial networks: four centuries of history*. Oxford: Berg.
- Ballard, R. & Ballard, C. (1977) The sikhs: the development of south Asian settlement in Britain. In: Watson, J. (Ed.) *Between two cultures*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 21–56.
- Barrett, G.A., Jones, T.P. & McEvoy, D. (2001) Socio-economic and policy dimensions of the mixed embeddedness of ethnic minority business in Britain. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 27(2), 241–258.
- Bonacich, E. & Modell, R. (1986) *The economic basis of ethnic solidarity*. California: University of California Press.
- Campbell, M. & Daly, M. (1992) Self-Employment in the 1990s. *Employment Gazette* June, 269–92.
- Chang, H.J. (2014) *Economics: the user's guide* (Vol. 1). New York: Bloomsbury Publishing USA.
- Creed, R. & Ward, R. (1987) *Black business enterprise in wales*. Cardiff: South Glamorgan CRE.
- Dannreuther, C. & Perrin, L. (2013) *The political economy of the small firm*. London: Routledge.
- Deakins, D., Ram, M. & Smallbone, D. (2003) Addressing the business support needs of ethnic minority firms in the United Kingdom. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 21(6), 843–859.
- Doherty, J. (1973) Race, class and residential segregation in Britain. *Antipode*, 5, 45–51.
- Edwards, P., Ram, M., Jones, T. et al. (2016) New migrant businesses and their workers: developing, but not transforming, the ethnic economy. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 39(9), 1587–1617.
- Fraser, S. (2009) Is there ethnic discrimination in the UK market for small business credit? *International Small Business Journal*, 27, 583–607.
- Gidoomal, R. (1997) *The UK maharajas: inside the south Asian success story*. London: Nicholas Brealey.

- Ishaq, M., Hussain, A. & Whittam, G. (2010) Racism: a barrier to entry? Experiences of small ethnic minority retail businesses. *International Small Business Journal*, 28(4), 362–377.
- Jones, T. (1981) Small business development and the Asian community in Britain. *New Community*, 9(3), 467–477.
- Jones, T. (1983) Residential segregation and ethnic autonomy. *New Community*, 11(1/2), 10–22.
- Jones, T., Cater, J., de Silva, P. & McEvoy, D. (1989) *Ethnic business and community needs*. Report to the Commission for Racial Equality, Liverpool Polytechnic, Liverpool.
- Jones, T., McEvoy, D. & Barrett, G. (1992) *Small business initiative: ethnic minority component*. Swindon: Economic and Social Research Council.
- Jones, T., & Ram, M. (2007) Re-embedding the Ethnic Business Agenda. *Work, Employment and Society*, 21(3), 439–457.
- Jones, T., Ram, M., Edwards, P., & Kiselincev, A. (2014) Mixed embeddedness and new migrant entrepreneurs in the UK. *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, 26(5–6), 500–520.
- Jones, T., Ram, M. & Mascarenhas-Keyes, S. (2012) The entrepreneurial transition. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 38(1), 93–109.
- Jones, T., Ram, M. & Villares-Varela, M. (2019) Diversity, economic development and new migrant entrepreneurs. *Urban Studies*, 56(5), 960–976.
- Kloosterman, R. (2000) Immigrant entrepreneurship and the institutional context: a theoretical explanation. In: Rath, J. (Ed.) *Immigrant businesses: the economic*. London: Political and Social Context, Macmillan, pp. 90–106.
- Kloosterman, R. (2010) Matching opportunities with resources: a framework for analysing (migrant) entrepreneurship from a mixed embeddedness perspective. *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, 22(1), 25–45.
- Kloosterman, R. & Rath, J. (2018) Mixed embeddedness revisited: a conclusion to the symposium. *Sociologica*, 12(2), 103–114.
- Kloosterman, R., Rath, J. & van Leun, J. (1999) Mixed embeddedness: (in)formal activities and immigrant businesses in the Netherlands. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 23(2), 252–266.
- Light, I. (1972) *Ethnic enterprise in America*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Lyon, F., Syrett, S. & Sepulveda, L. (2007) Enterprising refugees: contributions and challenges in deprived areas. *Local Economy*, 22(4), 362–375.
- Miles, R. & Phizacklea, A. (1984) *White Man's Country*. London: Routledge.
- Mitter, S. (1986) Industrial restructuring and manufacturing homework. *Capital and Class*, 27, 37–80.
- Mole, K., Hart, M., Roper, S. & Saal, D. (2011) Broader or deeper? Exploring the most effective intervention profile for public small business support. *Environment and Planning A*, 43(1), 87–105.
- Ohri, S. & Faruqi, S. (1988) Racism, employment and unemployment. In: Bhat, A., Carr-Hill, R. & Ohri, S. (Eds.) *Britain's black population: a new perspective*. Gower: Aldershot, pp. 62–100.
- Owen, D. (1996) Size, structure and growth of the ethnic minority populations. In: Coleman, D. & Salt, J. (Eds.) *Ethnicity in the 1991 census*. London: HMSO, pp. 80–123.
- Ram, M. (1994) *Managing to survive: working lives in small firms*. Blackwell Business.
- Ram, M. (2019) The Centre for Research in Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship: A Vehicle for Critical Engagement. In: Czaika, M., Rossl, L., Altenburg, F. & Pfeffer, T. (Eds.) *Migration & Integration 8: Dialog zwischen Politik*. Wissenschaft und Praxis, Krems: DonauUniversität Krems.
- Ram, M., Edwards, P., Jones, T., Kiselincev, A. & Muchenje, L. (2015) Getting Your Hands Dirty: Critical Research in a State Agency. *Work, Employment and Society*, 29(3), 462–478.
- Ram, M. & Jones, T. (1998) *Ethnic minorities in business in Britain*, 1st edition. Milton Keynes: Small Business Research Unit.
- Ram, M. & Jones, T. (2008) *Ethnic minorities in business in Britain*, 2nd edition. Milton Keynes: Small Business Research Unit.
- Ram, M., Jones, T. & Patton, D. (2006) Ethnic managerialism and its discontents: policy implementation and “ethnic minority businesses”. *Policy Studies*, 27(4), 295–309.
- Ram, M., Jones, T. & Villares-Varela, M. (2017) Migrant entrepreneurship: reflections on research and practice. *International Small Business Journal*, 35(1), 3–18.
- Ram, M. & Smallbone, D. (2003) Policies to support ethnic minority enterprise: the English experience. *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, 15(2), 151–166.
- Ram, M., Smallbone, D. & Deakins, D. (2002) *The finance and business support needs of ethnic minority firms in Britain*. British Bankers Association Research Report.
- Ram, M., Trehan, K., Rouse, J., Woldesenbet, K. & Jones, T. (2012) Ethnic minority business support in the West Midlands: challenges and developments. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 30, 504–519.
- Rath, J. & Schutjens, V. (2016) Migrant Entrepreneurship: Alternative Paradigms of Economic Integration. In: A. Triandafyllidou (Ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Immigration and Refugee Studies*. Abingdon, Oxon and New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 96–103.

- Rath, J. & Schutjens, V. (2019) Advancing the frontiers in ethnic entrepreneurship studies. *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie*, 110, 579–587.
- Rath, J. & Swagerman, A. (2016) Promoting ethnic entrepreneurship in European cities: sometimes ambitious, mostly absent, rarely addressing structural features. *International Migration Review*, 54(1), 152–166.
- Reeves, F. & Ward, R. (1981) *West Indians in Business in Britain*. London: HMSO.
- Rex, J. & Moore, R. (1968) *Race, community and conflict*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Roberts, R., Ram, M. & Jones, T. (2019) *It Took A Riot ... Reflections on UK Government Policymaking for Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship over the last 50 years*, 41st ISBE National Small Firms Conference, Newcastle, UK, November, 14–15.
- Roberts, R., Ram, M., Jones, T., Idris, B., Hart, M., Ri, A. & Prashar, N. (2020) *Unlocking opportunity: the value of ethnic minority firms in uk economic activity and enterprise*. London: The Federation of Small Businesses.
- Romero, M. & Valdez, Z. (2016) Introduction to the special issue: Intersectionality and entrepreneurship. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 39(9), 1553–1565.
- Scarman, L. (1981) *The Scarman report: the Brixton disorders 10–12 April, 1981*. London: Penguin.
- Sepulveda, L., Syrett, S. & Lyon, F. (2011) Population super-diversity and new migrant enterprise: the case of London. *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, 23(7–8), 469–497.
- Smallbone, D. (2005) *Entrepreneurship by ethnic minorities: institutions (Background paper)*. Brussels: OECD.
- Smith, D. (1977) *Racial disadvantage in Britain*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Smith, S. (1989) *The politics of "race" and residence: citizenship, segregation and white supremacy in Britain*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Solano, G., Wolffhardt, A. & Khani, A. (2019) Policies to support migrant entrepreneurship, Report for the EU-funded project 'Migrant Entrepreneurship Growth Agenda, (MEGA).
- Storey, D. (1994) *Understanding the small business sector*. London: Routledge.
- Vertovec, S. (2007) Super-diversity and its implications. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 30(6), 1024–1054.
- Virdee, S. (2014) *Racism, class and the racialized outsider*. London: Macmillan International Higher Education.
- Waller, P. (1981) The riots in toxteth, liverpool: a survey. *New Community*, 9(3), 344–353.
- Ward, R. (1985) Minority settlement and the local economy. In: Roberts, B., Finnegan, B. & Gallie, D. (Eds.) *New approaches to economic life*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 198–212.
- Ward, R. (1987) Ethnic entrepreneurs in Britain and Europe. In: Goffee, R. & Scase, R. (Eds.) *Entrepreneurs in Europe*. Beckenham: Croom Helm, pp. 83–104.
- Werbner, P. (1980) From rags to riches: Manchester Pakistanis in the garment trade. *New Community*, 9, 84–95.
- Werbner, P. (1984) Business on trust: Pakistani entrepreneurship in the Manchester garment trade. In: Ward, R. & Reeves, F. (Eds.) *Ethnic communities in business*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 166–188.

How to cite this article: Jones, T., Roberts, R. & Ram, M. (2022) Much ado about very little: The dubious connection between ethnic minority business policy and ethnic minority entrepreneurship. *International Migration*, 00, 1–18. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.12959>

APPENDIX

METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

The novel approach presented in this paper has been developed as part of a comprehensive long-term review of EMB policy making in the UK (Roberts et al., 2019). The new methodology developed for this review is key to allowing us to identify and follow the origins, turning points and the underlying drivers of policy regarding support for ethnic minority entrepreneurs in the UK.

The methodology used in this paper to identify an EMB policy timeline has extended the research method introduced in Dannreuther and Perren's work in two ways to focus on the detail of policy making. First, looking at the source of the online Hansard information Dannreuther and Perren used an early version of the data source to measure parliamentary activity linked to small firms. The robustness of this information source and in particular the search capabilities have improved significantly in recent years with investment by the AHRC and automated digital tagging of words and phrases (the SAMUELS project, see SAMUELS HOMEPAGE). The results presented in this paper have moved the analysis to the more updated Hansard CORPUS database (see HOMEPAGE) This

work has been reported elsewhere (Roberts et al., 2019), although it is emphasised the objective of this part of our work has been just replicate the previous work of Dannreuther and Perrin. The replicated Dannreuther and Perrin results from this work are reported in Figure 1 of the article.

Second, our research has introduced policy specific synonyms as a way to look in more detail at the policy making process and timeline, an innovation only available following the move to the SAMUELS source database with upgraded search capabilities to specifically include semantic tagging to enhance the capability to analyse the context in which a word or phrase is used. For example, we can distinguish if the phrase 'ethnic business' appears in a discussion concerning business support policy or enterprise more generally, rather than totally out of context. In Table 2, some of the principle words and phrases selected to monitor EMB linked events are summarised; these have then been processed through the Hansard CORPUS database to generate a timeline based on parliamentary activity, as shown in Figure 2 of the main article.

TABLE 2 Key terms-EMB Policy synonyms.

Ethnic owned firms	Caribbean firms	Immigrant owned firms
Asian firms	Indian firms	Black owned firms
Chinese firms	Migrant firms	[singular and plural used]