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Super-diverse Britain and new migrant enterprises

Trevor Jones, Monder Ram, Yaojun Li, Paul Edwards and Maria Villares

IRiS Working Paper Series, No. 8/2015

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Abstract

Diversity has been framed either as positive for economic dynamism and prosperity in British urban spaces, contributing to greater competitiveness, attractiveness of cosmopolitan lifestyle as well as the growth of a variety of migrant enterprises, or as having a negative impact on average wages, job availability and welfare provision. Our findings on entrepreneurs from both 'new' and 'old' migrant groups help bring nuances to the positive and negative aspects of this diversity dividend. This Working Paper argues that the diversification of origins of new migrant firms does not translate into a better position in Britain. New migrant groups in business share many similarities with their predecessors, including: skewed sectoral distribution, entrepreneurial motivations, limited access to mainstream finance, and a lack of recognition of their role in the economy. We indicate that new migrant entrepreneurs do make a substantial contribution in both social and economic realms, despite operating in a hostile and competitive environment and lacking adequate financial, cultural and social capitals. They manage to subsist, creating employment and services to the local community.

Keywords

Entrepreneurship; immigrant; super-diversity; exclusion; UK

Citation

Jones, T., Ram, M., Li, Y., Edwards, P. and Villares, M. (2015) 'Super-diverse Britain and new migrant enterprises', *IRiS Working Paper Series*, No. 8/2015. Birmingham: Institute for Research into Superdiversity

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Introduction

During the 1980s the UK switched from a long-term trend of net emigration to one in which immigration has consistently been in the ascendancy (Cooley, Kornblatt and Sriskandarajah 2007). At the time of writing, the British media is divided over whether the national economy is a net gainer from the growing immigrant presence or whether the message to immigrants should be (to quote Will Self's sardonic satire), 'Take a worthy low paid job, preferably mopping up after our incontinent elderly ... and then take yourself home after you've made a "net contribution"' (Self 2014: 2). While certain sections of public opinion would undoubtedly endorse the latter approach (Harris 2013), the great majority of scholarly research supports the contrary view that diversity is economically beneficial (Legrain 2009; Dustmann and Fratini 2013). Though we ourselves are very much 'pro diversity', we shall in this paper take issue with some aspects of the standard features of the liberal stance, notably what we see as its absence of historical perspective, and its tendency to reduce migration to an exchange between nations while ignoring key divides between the various stake-holder groups within both the destination society itself and its immigrants. Quite simply, diversity ought to be about class as well as geographical origin, gender, religion and ethnicity, a proposal magnificently illustrated by Will Hutton's provocative query, 'What's wrong with selling visas to rich immigrants at £2.5m a pop?' (Hutton 2014). Critics of the (super) diversity narrative highlight the need to make processes of exclusion and social inequalities more central in attempts to understand the new migration and minorities landscape in Britain (Faist 2008; Anthias 2013).

This paper explores how the 'super diverse' UK has resulted from the different origins and circumstances of new inhabitants, but is not necessarily accompanied by the formation and success of diverse migrant enterprises, revealing underlying processes of social exclusion. Using our findings on entrepreneurs from both 'new' (migrants from the A8 countries; asylum-seekers and refugees), and 'old' migrant groups (South Asian and Afro-Caribbean migrants), this paper argues that the diversification of origins for new migrant firms does not necessarily translate into a better position for entrepreneurs in British society. This can be seen in the lack of recognition of their contribution, sectoral composition, entrepreneurial motivations, access to finance, in addition to the performance and experiences of hostility in the labour market and beyond.

In this paper, we use data from both the Labour Force Survey (2004-2013) and our 165 interviews with participants representing 22 national origins in the East and the West Midland regions in the UK. Semi-structured interviews were conducted between 2010 and 2011 with 49 business owners and 60 workers. Interviews with owners elicited profile data on the firm, such as activities, employment size, age, location and sectors. Information on the owner included age, gender, ethnicity, migrant status, management qualifications or training and experience, as well as motives for starting and running a business. Worker interviews focused on motivations for coming to the UK and the Midlands, their experiences of work, the material and non-material rewards they received from working in new migrant businesses, and their plans for the future. Interrogating these issues allowed us to explore the extent to which social ties were mobilised in a response to societal inequalities, whether the workplace acted as a refuge against labour market discrimination, and workers' plans to either move out of the new migrant firm or stay put. The interviews lasted between 45 and 90 minutes.

We show that immigrant entrepreneurs do make a significant contribution to British society in both social and economic realms. They operate in a very harsh environment, with a dearth of socio-

economic-cultural capitals and a fierce competition and yet, through determination, tenacity and ingenuity, they manage to survive and prosper, providing jobs and services to the local community including the native population. In the process, their entrepreneurism not only promotes economic development but also fosters ethnic cohesion. Just like the pioneers before them, the new immigrant entrepreneurs are defying all the odds against them and making a notable contribution to British society.

The emergence of 'super-diversity'

Since the late 1980s global patterns of migration have changed, reflected in the acceleration and growing complexity of migration flows, migrants travelling longer distances, more countries participating in multiple migration corridors and the multiplication of the categories of entry (Castles et al. 2014). As well as the emergence of a globalised market for high skills (Castles 2000), the present century has also seen rises in asylum applications and in the inflow of overseas students, together with continued high levels of family reunion (IPPR 2007). These changes have 'radically transformed the social landscape of migrant-receiving countries' (Vertovec 2010: 83). The British case, it has been argued, is representative of some of the key features of super-diversity, such as the increase in countries of origin beyond the post-colonial links, multilingualism, multiplicity of religions of affiliation, and diversification of migration channels and statuses (ibid.). Beyond this, the most abrupt impact has been made by EU enlargement in 2004, granting open access to the British labour market to migrants from post-Soviet Eastern Europe (Sumption and Somerville 2010). Labour migrants from eight such countries – the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia – are collectively known as Accession Eight (A8) migrants (Green et al. 2007). Previously virtually absent from post-war UK immigration statistics, these migrants have added an extra diversity to the British population, not only by adding new countries of origin but also in relation to the profile of migrants. A8 migrants are well educated, often occupying jobs for which they are over-qualified, and have legal status following the EU regulations (Anderson 2013). When the May 2004 to September 2009 inflow of 1.5 million A8 migrants (Sumption and Somerville 2010), whose magnitude came as something of a shock to the then Government, is seen in conjunction with an increased volume of incomers from almost unprecedented sources in Africa and Asia, there appears much merit in the notion of super-diversity (Vertovec 2007), a multi-ethnic British population derived from a wide range of origins many of which did not previously make a notable contribution to immigration. Moreover, since January 2014, the lifting of labour market restrictions on Bulgarians and Romanians has added a further dimension to this picture of multi-nationality – and indeed to grassroots xenophobia (Taylor 2014).

Table 1 Distribution of migrants who arrived in the UK 2004-2013

	%	N
India/Pakistan/Bangladesh	16.0	3,929
China/Hong Kong	3.2	779
Africa	13.7	3,337
A8/A12	29.9	7,317
Western Europe/Old Commonwealth	17.2	4,209
Other	20.0	4,881
All	100.0	24,452

Notes: Pooled data from the first wave of each quarter in each year.
Source: The Labour Force Survey (2004-2013).

Lending some historical balance to this picture, Judt (2010) points out that, far from unprecedented novelty, the present era resembles a return to the great global mobility of the nineteenth century. According to this notably dispassionate source, the imperial years before World War I were characterised by ‘globalisation avant le mot‘ (Judt 2010: 192), a 'more open form of society' than found in Continental Europe (Olson 1982: 86), peaking in the Edwardian Age and free of any legal restrictions on cross-border human movement. As early as 1848, Marx and Engels could celebrate the tearing down of international barriers as one of the great achievements of capitalism. Another scholar who rejects the notion that the present era is somehow unprecedented is Van der Bly (2005), who reminds us of the reality that the process of worldwide distance reduction has been going on since Columbus.

Just before World War I, however, the erection of the first legal barriers to movement put an end to this freedom. In the case of Britain, Panayi (2010) makes clear that immigration restrictions had been brewing from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, a response to popular hostility towards refugees from Irish famines and anti-Jewish pogroms. For Judt (2010), the historical era of open borders ‘came to a shuddering halt’, to be replaced by what he clearly regards as a state of abnormal un-freedom. Yet the swinging pendulum of History fails to provide the essential contextual grounding for migration studies: ‘... today it is as if the twentieth century had never happened. We have been swept up into a new master narrative of “integrated global capitalism"’ (Judt 2010: 192-193). Tempting though it might be to see today's cross-border mobility as unprecedented, in reality it is more closely captured by the phrase ‘normal service resumed’.

Equally zealous in his commitment to historical balance is Hobsbawm (1994), another scholar struck by the essential abnormality of twentieth-century migration prohibition, notably after World War II. Surprisingly for this author, ‘in a world dedicated to free movement in the economy, governments resisted free immigration’ (Hobsbawm 1994: 276). He notes for this period the placing of restrictions on formerly open access, as with New Commonwealth migration to the UK, and the hedging of European ‘guest-worker’ migration with so many restrictions as to create a new form of ‘un-free labour’ (Miles 1987). Yet despite widespread restrictions on entry, after decades of exporting population to the New World, post-war Europe switched emphatically to being a continent of immigration. As part of this the UK had received almost three million immigrants by 1970

(Hobsbawm 1994). From the 1980s further profound changes in direction have occurred. Pinpointed by Coleman and Salt (1992) is a shift from an established inflow to Britain dominated by New Commonwealth and Irish migrants, to what these authors call a 'tripartite system' of settlement, refugees and labour power. The first of these refers to arrivals for family reunion, mainly from South Asia, the second denotes successful asylum applicants and the third is continuing economic migration but now consisting mainly of professional and highly skilled entrants admitted by work permit. To be strictly accurate on this last point, post-industrial labour migration is polarised, with the highly skilled and highly paid needing to be serviced by an army of low-paid cleaners, caterers and other service providers (Sassen 1996), a process parallel to the bifurcation of the labour market (or "hour-glass" class structure) that is assuming greater importance in developed countries such as the US and the UK (Portes et al. 2009).

Who benefits? Situating immigrant entrepreneurs in the broader immigration diversity discourse

Over the half-century since Enoch Powell's alarmist rhetoric on immigration, 'pros' and 'antis' have vied for authorship of the British immigration narrative. While the latter express fears of overcrowding, of unfair pressures on scarce social resources, and antipathy towards what Miles (1989) calls 'The Other', the former celebrate the advantages to be gained from welcoming new talent and fresh labour power. At its most straightforward immigration is a matter of benefitting from the powerful work motivations of people escaping from the often dire economic conditions of their homelands (Waldinger and Lichter 2003); or simply of topping up exhausted resources, as suggested by a UN calculation that ageing Western Europe needs a 13.5 million net annual inflow merely to replace its working-age population (UN Population Division 2000). Beyond this, we note the 'diversity dividend' (Syrett and Sepulveda 2011), the great range of economic contributions bestowed by a broader variety of human cultures and backgrounds (IPPR 2007; Nathan and Lee 2013). Any final judgement on this issue should not ignore Hayter's (2003: 15) reminder that cross-border migration is no trivial means by which people in poor countries resolve their own personal problems at the expense of those in more affluent areas: 'people migrate only if they have some money, they are exceptionally enterprising and/or are in exceptional fear for their lives'.

Following Seglow's (2005: 319) claim that 'there is a near academic consensus that migration tends to improve the [receiving] states' economies' (see also Putnam 2007), we might assume that the pro/anti split corresponds to a debate between informed science and street-level myth, with 'visceral' fears of invasion trumping the 'technocratic' evidence in favour of new blood (Ganesh 2014). An exception to this consensus is Meilander (2001), who worries acutely over threats posed by immigrants to the political culture of the destination societies. Yet, any condescending dismissal of popular feeling would tend to miss many of the nuances of the 'real world' of scarce social resources, austerity and precarity (Standing 2011). Running through from Phizacklea and Miles (1984) to Armstrong (2012) is a theme of complex and shifting interplay between racism, class and British state policy, in which popular feeling is no simple matter of anti-immigrant sentiment.

In some respects this 'pro' versus 'anti' jousting is a false opposition, with Sanderson (2013: 27) putting his finger on the tendency to gloss over the essentially uneven social impact of immigration: 'Although immigration is beneficial in the aggregate, it is possible that it does not benefit all host

country residents equally'. On the question of working class racism, it has long been noted that those living in the poorest urban areas are the very people subject to the spatial incursions attendant on immigration, where the white working class feel they have been ignored by policy makers (Beider 2011). As Alibhai-Brown (2000), herself a former Ugandan Asian refugee, observes, 'Those who had least to give were expected to play the part of reluctant hosts'. Any reference to 'irony' here would be redundant. Some of the double standards evident in this debate are skewered by Zizek (2008: 267), who reminds us that 'the influx of immigrant workers from post-communist countries is not the consequence of multi-cultural tolerance – it is indeed part of the strategy of capital to hold in check workers' demands'.

These debates about who makes a positive or negative contribution can be explained through wider processes of social exclusion affecting both migrants and non-migrants, both foreigners and citizens. Rethinking difference, equality and other identity boundaries has been at the core of some of the criticisms put forward about the conceptualisation of (super) diversity thus far. Bringing social exclusion, race, class and gender to the (super) diversity debates helps moderate optimism underpinned by the concept of diversity in and of itself. Indeed, Vertovec (2014) recently revisited super-diversity, examining how the concept is increasingly perceived as evolving beyond ethnicity, towards a transformed set of conditions and social configuration to understand change and its outcomes. Vertovec (2012) summarises some of the main criticisms of the use of 'diversity' as instrumental in reinforcing normativity, the questionable universality of the diversity paradigm, and its prescriptive and divisive politics for group-based movements especially. The various debates on heterogeneity and homogeneity in the Western world have been explicated by Faist (2008). Faist reveals the necessity and challenges of incorporating social inequality in our understandings of diversity in multicultural societies. Focusing on civil society and governmental programmes, Faist (2008) maintains that the diversity agenda might reinforce, reify or legitimise categories such as ethnicity, thereby perpetuating difference and running the risk of celebrating social incorporation not as inclusion but as diversity. This ability to conceal the difference and consequently inequality is also exposed by Anthias (2013), who warns that the diversity narrative in the integration discourse serves to depoliticise and individuate difference, through the culturalisation of social identities. Anthias (2013) unpacks how the diversity discourse has properties of boundary making between the maintenance of the 'good difference' and the criminalisation of the 'bad difference', as well as the intensity of this difference (e.g. how much diversity is sustainable) to guarantee social cohesion.

The novelty of such a diverse array of origins in a 'super-diverse' Britain seems to be balanced by marked persistence in how citizens and non-citizens participate in processes of social inclusion/exclusion. One historical continuity is that migrants have been constructed and reified throughout the last century as either (or both) greedy foreigners taking jobs from local workers or welfare tourists who benefit from hard-working national taxpayers (Anderson 2013). Bridget Anderson's (2013) historically informed research disentangles the relationship between vagrancy, settlement and mobility through the analysis of key developments in English law since the fourteenth century. Her concept of 'community of value' (Anderson 2013: 2) serves as a lens to see the divergent patterns of acceptance of migrants in British society in relation to wider processes of social exclusion. These accounts help to deconstruct the sometimes overlapping categories of the 'Good Citizen' – e.g. the hardworking taxpayer; the 'Failed Citizen' – e.g. the benefit scrounger, the single mother relying on the 'nanny' state, the bogus asylum seeker, the criminal; and the 'Tolerated Citizen' – e.g. the

migrant making a net contribution, differentiating him/herself from the failed citizens and not demanding welfare provision (ibid.).

Immigrant entrepreneurs appear to lack a fixed category; they traverse a continuum with categories of social recognition and exclusion at opposite ends. Migrant entrepreneurs are reified either as dedicated hard workers reaching success (rags to riches path for Asian businesses in the UK) or as exploiters who use the illegal labour force of co-ethnics and family members to reap large profits (see a detailed account of the facts and fiction of immigrant entrepreneurship in Jones et al. 2012). In fact, not only is their material return often paltry but they also receive little recognition, be it official or popular. Instead of being valued for beneficial contributions they are more likely to be vilified as members of an unwanted mass of parasitic interlopers. According to a December 2013 YouGov poll, two-thirds of respondents agreed that there are too many immigrants in Britain, with only 26 per cent believing that they make a positive contribution to the country. In the specific case of immigrant entrepreneurs, 31 per cent thought their entry numbers should be reduced, in itself a clear indication that many native Britons give little thought to the benefits conferred by such active economic agents.

Patterns of entering entrepreneurship for 'new' migrants

In the midst of these discussions about who gets what from international migration, it is somewhat surprising that the interests of the immigrants and the socio-economic functions of the immigrant entrepreneurs are so rarely considered. Throughout our studies of immigrant-origin entrepreneurship in Britain, we have witnessed the widespread refusal by social commentators to acknowledge the penalties, the sometimes bitter toll, imposed upon a majority of immigrant business owners. Equally noticeable is the lack of appreciation of their contributions to economic development and socio-ethnic cohesion in the local and wider communities. This has also been argued by Zhou (2004, 2007), who highlights how the literature on ethnic minority enterprise has focused on its economic achievements and overlooked its social contribution.

In the case of the first wave of South Asian entrepreneurs – or 'old' migrants – it has been claimed that following the neo-liberal enterprise culture which emerged in the 1980s, they have escaped the depredations of racism and have achieved wealth and social status (Gidoomal 1996; Srinavasan 1995; Ward 1991), not to mention an enviable degree of independence (Metcalf et al. 1996). By contrast, critics have pointed out that, apart from a miniscule minority, Asian entrepreneurs have mostly been forced into undesirable under-remunerated markets like corner shop retailing, progressively abandoned by native white competitors (Ram and Jones 2008). In these 'vacancy chain' markets (Kloosterman 2010), commercial survival is possible only through working murderously long hours and often also through illegal cost-cutting practices such as dodging the National Minimum Wage (NMW) (Jones et al. 2006). Not only do these businesses threaten their owners' leisure and desire for a law-abiding existence, but sometimes they menace life itself, as confirmed by Ishaq and Hussein (2007) in their study of racist violence suffered by Asian retailers on Clydeside. For several decades now, these marginal entrepreneurial communities have existed under a cloud of double-think, blithely hailed for their industriousness, whilst enduring the kind of unremitting work regime unthinkable for native white workers (Jones and Ram 2012).

Turning to new migrant businesses, we find that both A8 migrants and refugees are well represented among the self-employed, often in the case of the latter because self-employment offers virtually

their only chance to earn any kind of income at all (Sepulveda et al. 2006) – truly an example of the notion of 'entrepreneurs of necessity'. By contrast, A8 migrants have entered the UK freely as EU citizens able to take advantage of cheap air fares to maintain short-term 'circulatory' migration patterns (Favell 2008), shuttling back and forth between Britain and Eastern Europe like 'long distance commuters' (Legrain 2009). We would imagine that virtually by definition self-employed entrepreneurship requires long-term commitment and consequently could hardly be a more inappropriate career option.

According to Cook et al. (2011), however, this is a highly reductive image of A8 migrants. In the first instance they cannot be dismissed as a uniform bloc of humanity, internally differentiated as they are by often very significant ethnic and national traits. For these authors, a key distinction is that between the Roma and other East Europeans, the former's migration to Britain being an escape from persecution and hence a one-way move. They also point out that the 'long distance commuter' model of A8 economic migrants is in itself an over-simplification, glossing over a wide range of migration strategies, including permanent residence in many cases. Characteristically motivations change over time and 'short term transitory migration often becomes more permanent, with family members moving to join a loved one who had initially moved alone' (Cook et al. 2011: 59). Like their predecessors, new migrants may cling to the 'myth of return', common amongst the first wave of South Asian migrants (Anwar 1979). We would note this as one of the many constants of post-war immigration to Britain, a process in which the pace of technological and attendant change creates changes in style but rarely in substance (Jones et al. 2012).

Increasing diversity is surprisingly not leading to a great deal of different outcomes in the labour market. Despite the growing interest in the novelty of peoples, cultures, languages, religions, skills and backgrounds, the opportunity structure underlying the socio-labour incorporation of these new migrants seems to explain these outcomes. Owing to the very recent emergence of new migrant entrepreneurship, there has thus far been insufficient time to allow for them to inform any kind of coherent narrative, academic, political or popular, mythical or evidence-based. However, we can discern, at the very outset, a considerable degree of historical continuity, perhaps surprising given the great novelty of the geographical, demographic and social origins of the new wave (Vertovec 2007). Crisis in the industrial sector, the increasing relevance of the service sector and a new division of labour explain the marginal position of migrants in Western societies, showing a polarised urban landscape where technologically sophisticated companies share the cities with survival entrepreneurs settling in low income areas (Sassen 1996; Ålund 2003). As Kloosterman et al. (1999) and Rath (2000) set out more than a decade ago, migrant entrepreneurship is still placed in the lowest areas of the market structure and embedded in processes of succession where minorities replace nationals or other ethnic groups. This replacement process is due to perennial demand for the products offered by these small businesses, as well as the abandonment of activities of low productivity and intensive hours of work by the children of migrants who are progressively better positioned in the labour market.

All the evidence suggests that the new migrant entrepreneurs are taking up the mantle of their predecessors, operating mainly in the same constricted band of markets at the bottom of the economy (for a detailed account on the historical continuities of new migrant enterprise see Jones et al. 2012), apparently the only permitted opportunities for operators effectively excluded from the economic mainstream. The sectoral pattern of immigrant firms is laid out in Table 2.

Table 2 Sectoral distribution among the self-employed (rounded row %)

	Manufacture	Construction	Retail	Finance	Other	N
White	6	22	21	25	26	46,972
Established immigrants						
Black Caribbean	6	21	24	31	18	156
Black African	3	6	38	25	29	268
Indian	5	11	46	16	21	918
Pakistani/Bangladeshi	2	2	74	11	10	1,022
Chinese	1	2	68	13	16	283
Other	5	10	43	24	18	1,058
New immigrants						
Polish	4	47	18	17	15	291
Other A8/A12	5	45	14	21	15	316
Western European +Old Commonwealth	7	10	21	37	25	257
Somalian/Congo/Zimbabwean	8	15	25	27	26	17
Afghan/Iraqi/Iranian/Syrian	9	0	65	0	26	13
Indian	10	8	42	23	18	96
Pakistani/Bangladeshi	3	1	58	15	23	99
Chinese	0	4	46	29	21	23
Other African	2	5	24	40	28	127
Other	3	11	31	28	26	2,972
All	6	21	23	24	26	54,888

Notes:

1. Manufacture: manufacture, electricity, gas and water; retail: including hotel, restaurant and transport; finance: including administration, education, health, community service; other includes agriculture, fishery and other industrial sectors.
2. Established immigrants: immigrants who arrived in the UK prior to 2004; new immigrants: immigrants who arrived in the UK between 2004 and 2013.

Source: the Labour Force Survey (2004-2013).

In Table 2, we show the sectoral distributions of the new immigrant entrepreneurs. To facilitate the discussion, we also show the pattern for whites and for the old immigrants. We define the old (established) immigrants as those who came to the UK before 2004 in contrast to the more recent arrivals. As noted earlier, the new immigrants came from a greater variety of origin countries and it would not be appropriate to code the same categories. Following standard practice, we classify, for the established immigrants, Black Caribbean, Black African, Indian, Pakistani/Bangladeshi, Chinese and Others. Among the new immigrants, we code Polish, people from other A8/A12 countries, Western European/Old Commonwealth, Somalian/Congo/Zimbabwean, Afghan/Iraqi/Iranian/Syrian, Indian, Pakistani/Bangladeshi, Chinese, Other African, and Other. Five sectors are differentiated: manufacturing, construction, retail, finance and other (see notes under Table 2 for more detail; Appendix 1 shows the sectoral distributions among all respondents).

White entrepreneurs are fairly evenly distributed except for manufacturing, with around 20 to 26 per cent in each of the construction, retail, finance and other sectors (6 per cent in manufacturing as compared with 12 per cent overall as shown in Appendix 1). Among entrepreneurs from the

established minority communities, Black Caribbeans who were the earliest arrivals show the least difference from the whites. Their counterparts from other groups are much less likely to find themselves in manufacturing and construction than whites. Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Chinese entrepreneurs are over three times as likely to be found in retailing, restaurants and transport (the Chinese take-away and Pakistani taxi-driver are notable examples), and are much less likely to gain a foothold in finance, administration, education, health and related sectors than the whites. Even Indians who are generally shown in research as faring quite well in Britain are over twice as likely as whites to engage in retailing (the Indian restaurants and corner shops).

The New Immigrant entrepreneurs show a greater variation in employment sectors than do the established groups or the whites. When they arrived in the country, they had to compete not only with whites but also with those who came earlier, squeezing a foothold for themselves where they could. Thus Poles and people from other A8/A12 countries are mostly likely to be found in construction industries, while entrepreneurs from other Western European countries or from the Old Commonwealth are much more likely to engage in 'white-collar' sectors such as finance, education, health, administration and community services. Construction self-employment, predominant for A8/12 workers, might also be related to sub-contract relations with larger companies, concealing a different employment status from other types of self-employed.

Ethnic 'social capital' seems to be playing a role for some groups. For instance, a well-established co-ethnic community would provide information on business avenues and operational expertise. Thus the sectoral distributions of the newly arrived Indians are fairly similar to those of their predecessors. Yet when a niche sector such as catering reaches saturation point, the new immigrant entrepreneurs would have to operate their business in other sectors, as in the case of the Chinese where the established community tends to work in take-aways and restaurants whilst the new entrepreneurs turn to finance, education or health. A similar situation is found among the Pakistani/Bangladeshi entrepreneurial communities where the earlier arrivals tend to work in retail, catering and transport such as taxi-driving but the newly arrived tend to find work in various other industrial or commercial outlets. These differences might also relate to the different waves of migration from the same nationalities, levels of education and occupational trajectories.

Another perspective for viewing the new immigrant entrepreneurism is to compare human capital (as indicated by years of schooling) and its relation to conditions of work (as indicated by hours of work per week). We can again compare the groupings among the new immigrants with those in the established communities and with whites. It would be ideal to analyse the returns to earnings but, unfortunately, the self-employed are not asked for information about earnings in the LFS. (There is some slippage between self-employment and employee statuses as some self-employed workers may have sub-contract relations with larger organisations and may thus also view themselves as employees in that sense. However, the earnings information is on the whole unreliable for the self-employed.) We thus present education, hours of work and hourly pay for employees.

Table 3 Years of schooling, hours of work and hourly pay

	Self-employed		Employee		
	Years of schooling	Hours of work p/w	Years of schooling	Hours of work p/w	Hourly pay
White	13	40	14	35	12
Established immigrants					
Black Caribbean	13	42	13	35	11
Black African	18	41	18	36	11
Indian	15	46	16	36	13
Pakistani/Bangladeshi	15	44	17	34	10
Chinese	15	41	18	34	13
Other	17	41	17	36	11
New immigrants					
Polish	16	45	17	39	8
Other A8/A12	16	40	17	38	8
W European +Old C.	15	42	18	37	14
Somali/Congo/Zimbabwean	17	46	21	35	10
Afghan/Iraqi/Iranian/Syrian	14	60	23	31	10
Indian	15	45	20	36	12
Pakistani/Bangladeshi	14	47	22	35	9
Chinese	17	31	23	36	10
Other African	16	36	18	36	11
Other	16	43	18	36	10
All	13	40	18	35	12

Overall, all immigrants, whether self-employed or employee, have more years of schooling than whites. Among the established ethnic communities, there are no marked differences in education or hours of work, although the black Caribbean population has the lowest and black Africans have the highest education as previous research has shown (Daley 1996; Li 2010). Among the new immigrant entrepreneurs, whilst education is similar to that of the established communities, there is a greater variation to the hours of work with most groups working longer hours than whites, peaking at 60 hours for Afghans, Iraqis, Iranians and Syrians, which is 20 hours more than whites work per week and which forms an interesting contrast to the situation for employees in the group, at 31 hours indicating more part-time work. It is also of interest to note that among employees, most groupings from the established or the new communities are paid less than whites, with the exception of Indians and Chinese amongst the old established and West Europeans and others from Old Commonwealth countries amongst the new.

In sum, the quantitative analysis reveals that the new immigrant entrepreneurs tend to be lower educated than employees, but still have on average higher education than white British, work in variegated sectors and, for some groups, work very long hours.

Barriers in access to financial resources and outcomes of the new migrant enterprise

Our qualitative research shows that operating in sectors of market exclusion, new migrant businesses receive meagre returns which fail to reflect their essential contributions: in addition to the provision of retail outlets in under-serviced urban neighbourhoods largely deserted by native shopkeepers, new migrant firms also act as buffers against unemployment and social exclusion in disadvantaged communities, and as vehicles for the social integration of disparate migrant populations both with one another and into the British mainstream. As employment providers, they offer fellow migrants a haven from an often hostile job market, while social integration is fostered by the interaction of migrant shopkeepers and their workers with their customers (Jones et al. 2014).

Drawing on our own interview surveys of new migrant business owners in the East and West Midlands (Jones et al. 2014), we are struck by their resilience in the face of punishing odds. In the case of many of those who arrived as penniless asylum-seekers, we should note the determination and creativity required to conjure productive businesses from virtual destitution – we use the word 'conjure' advisedly to capture the existential unlikelihood of a capitalist business created in the very absence of capital.

As well as operating in the virtual absence of funding from mainstream banking sources, new migrant firms face great difficulty in obtaining informal capital. Of the 76 African business owners interviewed in our East Midlands survey, the only respondents to have arrived in Britain with any assets were 16 Somalis who had previously gained EU refugee status in the Netherlands. For the rest, their firms rest on financial foundations so fragile as to defy the laws of economics. As might be expected, the resource base of the freely moving A8 economic migrants is rather less circumscribed. Yet it is far from bountiful since in most cases start-up capital has had to be laboriously amassed from personal savings derived from low wage employment. Menial work for which they are vastly overqualified is the lot of most East European migrants and according to Cook et al. (2011: 62), 'The sense of being at the "bottom of the pile" was strongly articulated by Polish workers'.

In the majority of cases, A8 migrant capital would be regarded as painfully inadequate by authorities such as Bates and Robb (2013), who maintain that, as well as equipping itself adequately, any firm needs sufficient finance to cushion against downturn and to take opportunities for expansion. Critics of entrepreneurial mythology such as Shane (2008) identify a quite widespread tendency for under-capitalisation among small entrepreneurs, but even he would probably be startled by the severity of this lack among UK migrant business owners. This is showcased by the fact that many of our East Midlands sample were resorting to such extortionate funding sources as credit cards and back street moneylenders.

Lightening this rather gloomy picture of capital starvation is a small number of comparative high fliers, grounded in abundant finance and delivering unquestionable economic benefits to their local economy. The most outstanding examples of this are to be found in the West Midlands, where Birmingham houses several former asylum seekers who were successful business operators in their homelands. In defiance of persecution and threats, these entrepreneurs found ways of moving accumulated assets, bringing a quite unexpected gain to the West Midlands economy in the form of the international relocation of established and successful business activity. One Afghan business owner who fled the Taliban has gifted a supermarket with a turnover in excess of £1 million per annum to a deprived area of Birmingham. As well as employing 20 people, it offers a 24 hour a day service to a multi-ethnic consumer base of the type described by Morosanu (2013) as a new form of

social network based on shared non-native status. Among several fast food restaurants owned by Middle-Eastern refugees is a truly expansive Iranian-owned organisation, with 22 pizza and burger outlets spread across Birmingham and its vicinity, supporting a total of 100 employees. Growth has been strong for several years now, apparently unaffected by the economic downturn. Like the Afghan supermarket, its contribution extends beyond generating substantial wealth and employment for the local economy to providing cheaply priced products to low-income populations, including native residents as well as fellow migrants.

Perhaps the most challenging case from an ethical as well as economic viewpoint is a Kurdish food shop, another vigorous contributor to its host society with 10 employees and steady growth. As well as retailing, the firm also manufactures ethnic sweets to sell to other Kurdish shops in the vicinity. Yet its owner holds a PhD in Chemical Engineering and holds a University post as Visiting Lecturer. Is this business to be seen as a valuable economic contributor or a regrettable waste of human potential? Bearing in mind the large proportion of highly educated people in our sample, such glaring mismatches between qualifications and occupation are very widespread in both the East and West Midlands, with the corner shop run by a post-graduate a fairly common occurrence. For refugees this most often stems from non-recognition of academic qualifications gained outside the UK, a repeat of the early South Asian experience (Aldrich et al. 1981). According to Cook et al. (2011: 66), much the same applies to A8 migrants; 'a large proportion of the migrants in our study were over-qualified for the work they were doing'.

Ultimately, however, we must recognise that these sizeable business ventures financed by repatriated capital are unrepresentative of a new migrant entrepreneurial population more accurately described as struggling. Elsewhere in our West Midlands sample of 50 firms, there are 12 whose stated annual revenue is less than £10,000, a paltry turnover which is replicated by an even larger number of respondents in the East Midlands. It is no exaggeration to describe this as close to penury. Notionally, this revenue is not only required to supply a living but it should also cover working capital and all running expenses.

Reflecting the largely unchanging structural disadvantages experienced by all migrant entrepreneurs (Kloosterman 2010), these penurious returns are essentially a re-run of those suffered by the first wave of South Asians. They stem directly from the persisting entrepreneurial segregation which, at different periods, has squeezed immigrant firms into a ghettoised market space of 'small scale low value-added production with low skill labour the main input' (Kloosterman 2010: 31; see also Table 2 on p.3). Among our own respondents, a striking example is provided by a seriously overworked Birmingham-based Somali food retailer. He works over 60 hours per week (with a two hour prayer break on Fridays) in order to keep up with 'strong competition for customers from supermarkets and other migrants in business in Small Heath'. Inevitably this means 'I have little time for my family and am cut off from community social events'. For all this self-sacrifice he is (under) rewarded with an annual turnover of less than £50,000. Mitigating any sense of grievance is his relief at having escaped a civil war, which destroyed his former business and brought death to family members. Nevertheless, even in such extreme circumstances we should stop short of hailing adequate subsistence as a heart-warming advance on abject misery.

To varying degrees these struggles are experienced by all of our respondents who are trapped in these poor markets. As Kloosterman (2010) confirms, these are low entry threshold activities

requiring relatively little expertise or capital but whose ease of entry inevitably attracts a surplus of suppliers, leading to ferocious competition. Aggregate customer purchasing power is simply insufficient to allow an adequate living to all would-be suppliers (Jones et al. 2006). Of our 50 West Midlands respondents, only 13 have broken out of this retail/catering/personal services ghetto and of these, only three could be said to be thriving as opposed to merely surviving. In a genuinely inspiring way, these three operators demonstrate that a truly creative strategy can overcome the most stringent structural limits, notably by targeting a novel market area requiring relatively modest financial inputs. Exemplifying this here is a Polish tattoo artist cashing in on the expanding twenty-first century fashion for body art, and a Zambian driving instructor addressing rising car-ownership among immigrant communities.

Unexcitingly, however, the major commercial success for West Midlands new migrants has accrued not to these imaginative innovators but to those high-flying ventures (noted earlier), where the normally tight limits of retailing and restaurant ownership have been overcome by the sheer volume of capital invested. When the entrepreneur enjoys abundant funding, no innovative market repositioning is required. With soul-destroying predictability, immigrant entrepreneurship turns out to be, not the liberating exercise in social mobility canvassed by the neo-liberal model, but a rather less dramatic tale of riches-to-riches. For the case of the vast majority of our respondents, this must be amended to 'rags-to-rags'.

Discussion and conclusion

This paper has exposed how super-diverse Britain is mirrored in the origins of the new migrant entrepreneurs who are superseding and complementing the small business landscape of the country. The analysis comparing established and new migrant entrepreneurs shows that despite the variation of origins of people entering self-employment, paths to entrepreneurship and its outcomes do not seem to be that positive. This is the case particularly in relation to the incentives to entry into this form of subsistence entrepreneurship, skewed sectoral distribution, under-capitalisation and negligible profits, as well as continuing lack of appreciation of the contribution that these businesses bring to Britain. These results contribute to the understanding of how migrants enter, settle and live in super-diverse Britain, in a context of social exclusion and inequality.

Somewhat paradoxically in the light of the entrepreneurial vicissitudes described in this paper, we might argue that the ultimate loser from blocked entrepreneurial potential is the British economy itself. Thwarted by the political-economic structure they may be, but as agents our respondents display a quite remarkable entrepreneurial ethos, creating a wealth of valuable (though largely unsung) business activity from the most slender resources. Even their resort to unorthodox high-risk means of self-financing might be thought to embody the true spirit of entrepreneurialism, the willingness to take risks to achieve a goal. As Shane (2008) points out, this pioneering spirit is definitive in the popular image of the entrepreneur. Whether or not we accept this, it is certainly evidence of the most powerful motivations, with owners prepared to take extreme measures on behalf of their firms. More evidence of this will to succeed is provided by the finding that, despite the economic downturn coupled with all the obstacles faced so far, a large proportion of our East Midlands sample are contemplating future expansion. This is as true of the refugees as of the A8 owners, with one in three Africans making concrete growth plans to achieve defined future goals.

Though it might be imagined that policymakers would be keenly interested in harnessing this kind of energy to the national good, the reality is that, even before 2010, new migrants were marginalised in relation to the UK enterprise support system. According to Kinselinchev et al. (2010), new migrant entrepreneurs in the East Midlands – often with poor English language skills – were acutely in need of support in navigating an unfamiliar business and legal environment. Yet, since the arrival of the Coalition government a bad situation has deteriorated with the drastic culling of the existing support system.

Appendix 1 Sectoral distribution for both employees and self-employed (rounded row %)

	Manuf	Constr	Retail	Finance	Other	N
White	12	8	25	35	20	380,251
Established immigrants						
Black Caribbean	9	6	21	42	22	3,229
Black African	6	2	24	39	29	5,570
Indian	14	4	32	30	20	8,784
Pakistani/Bangladeshi	10	3	49	23	14	7,912
Chinese	7	2	44	30	17	2,162
Other	9	4	32	34	23	11,278
New immigrants						
Polish	27	9	38	14	12	3,320
Other A8/A12	19	12	33	18	18	1,925
W European +Old C.	10	4	22	39	26	3,597
Somali/Congo/Zimb.	9	2	18	36	36	359
Afghan/Iraqi/Iranian/Syrian	4	2	46	24	23	159
Indian	12	3	34	26	25	1,799
Pakistani/Bangladeshi	9	1	53	15	21	960
Chinese	6	1	41	33	19	373
Other African	8	4	24	37	28	2,156
Other	10	4	32	28	26	2,972
All	12	8	26	34	20	436,808

Notes:

1. Manuf.: manufacture, electricity, gas and water; retail: including hotel, restaurant and transport; finance: including administration, education, health, community service; other includes agriculture, fishery and other industrial sectors.
2. Established immigrants: immigrants who arrived in the UK prior to 2004; new immigrants: immigrants who arrived in the UK between 2004 and 2013.

Source: the LFS (2004-2013).

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