

On the consequences of scarcity mindset: How 'having too little' means so much for ethnic venture failure

Abstract

Drawing on the psychological concept of scarcity mindset as a lens, we explore UK-based ethnic entrepreneurs' accounts of their behaviors and choices to theorize ethnic business venture failure. Our findings suggest the constraints of 'having too little' entrepreneurial resources can induce three organizing tensions in organizing, community embeddedness, spatial and segment spawning, and dispositional optimism—which may operate in combination or serially to precipitate ethnic venture failure. Our findings contribute to research on conflicting demands in entrepreneurship by showing how resource constraints, sometimes played out in the form of enduring inequalities within markets and society-at-large stymies the conversion of contradictory yet mutually constituting demands in organizing into potentially productive outcomes.

Introduction

Although it is widely acknowledged that ethnic entrepreneurs are exceptionally resilient on average with some appearing on “rich lists,” their high rates of business discontinuance, shutdown, or liquidation still evoke vivid images of contemporary entrepreneurial bankruptcy, failure, and despair (Amankwah-Amoah and Wang, 2019; Singh et al., 2007). Representing approximately 7% of small businesses in the UK, for example, ethnic minority-owned businesses generally trade less than 3 years compared to well over 4 years for other businesses (Jones et al., 2014). Such high levels of failure have unsettled assumptions about ethnic entrepreneurs, often stigmatizing those associated with business failure and undervaluing the contribution of ethnic businesses to wealth creation in many advanced societies (Lam et al., 2019; Storey, 2016). In this regard, several studies have highlighted ethnic venture failure—defined as the ‘cessation of an [ethnic] entrepreneur’s involvement in a venture as it has not met a minimum threshold for economic viability’ (Corner et al., 2017, p.692)—as a distinctive challenge in many industrialized countries (Mendy and Hack-Polay, 2018; Szkudlarek and Wu, 2018). Thus, although each venture failure has its own unique triggers, previous studies have overwhelmingly highlighted resource constraint (both tangible and intangible), in the form of funds, profitable social connections, and time as a fundamental endogenous antecedent to ethnic businesses failure (see, for example, Brenner et al., 2006; Wang and Altinay, 2012; Robinson, 2014).

Cumulatively, these studies have extended our understanding of the ‘why’ of ethnic business failure, but what appears to have been overlooked or missing in the existing literature is the ‘how’—how those propounded resource constraints that precipitate failure come to be intractably played out in organizing. Such knowledge, we surmise, will not only illuminate, and contextualize how some-taken-for-granted settled dispositions, could trigger ethnic business failure. It has the potential to help depoliticize public discourse on ethnic venture failure and entrepreneurial venture outcomes in general (Ogbor, 2000; Ojo, 2012). In this regard, we draw on the psychological concept of ‘scarcity mindset’ (Mullainathan and Shafir, 2013a) as a lens to explore how having limited resources might mean so much for the failure of ethnic business ventures. By scarcity mindset, we refer to entrepreneurs having fewer entrepreneurial resources than they feel they need to run a ‘successful’ venture. Thus, our objective is to extend our understanding on how the contexts of scarcity shape ethnic entrepreneurs’ choices and their behaviors in organizing, to precipitate failure.

Our paper and the empirical study it discusses make two contributions. First, we go beyond the lack of entrepreneurial resources as a precursor to ethnic businesses failure to provide insight into ‘how’ entrepreneurial resources, including ancillary support, in organizing, plays out to precipitate failure. Second, we contribute to the ethnic entrepreneurship literature by developing a scarcity mindset perspective of ethnic venture failure to apprehend how our ethnic entrepreneurs’ accounts of their discursive struggles played out in everyday organizing may operate in combination or serially and thereby instigate the demise of ethnic ventures. Related to this, we explore how a scarcity mindset brings to the fore the challenge of reconciling competing and often contradictory organizing demands on ethnic entrepreneurs. In doing so, we extend understanding of the vicissitudes and contextual challenges faced by ethnic entrepreneurs in their efforts to seize, explore, and exploit opportunities and limits otherwise overlooked by their competitors (Baker and Welter, 2018).

Our paper is structured as follows. In the next section, we review studies on ethnic venture failures, discuss their key differences and highlight the contradictory

yet interrelated triggers of ethnic business failure. Following this, we delineate our scarcity mindset approach to ethnic venture failure, after which we explain our research methodology. Next, we present the findings from our empirical inquiry. We conclude our paper with a discussion of these and their implications for the theory and practice of ethnic entrepreneurship, together with suggestions for further research.

Ethnic business venture failure

Ethnic business venture failure can either be sudden, triggered by unpredictable events, or protracted, punctuated by events and false starts which ultimately lead to failure (Amankwah-Amoah, 2016; Ucbasaran et al., 2013). Addressing why ethnic business ventures in industrialized societies fail has long been recognized as a key question that requires a complex answer. Earlier commitment to exploring the phenomenon in the UK adopted an ideological framing of ethnic enterprises as failure bound as nearly half of black-owned businesses, for example, have been trading for less than 3 years (Blackburn and Kovalainen, 2009). As the study of ethnic ventures has become more mainstream, accounts regarding their failure have tended to fall under one of two broad headings. First are those studies that assume a material resource contingent perspective to argue that ethnic ventures are constrained by their often-limited entrepreneurial resources which make it difficult for them to develop the competences and capabilities they require to compete successfully (Achidi et al., 2011; Yang et al., 2012). Contingent entrepreneurial resources often cited by such studies include access to finance and credit (Lee and Black, 2017), market orientation (Jones et al., 2000), and management expertise and skills (Hutchinson, 2018). The second trend focuses on opportunity structure to explain failure (Ram et al., 2016; Ley, 2006). The assumption here is that ethnic entrepreneurs, often disadvantaged in labor markets, struggle to mobilize the requisite boilerplate networks and quality relational and social capital to start and support their business ventures (Cope et al., 2007; Soetanto, 2019). Their lack of these fundamental resources also implies that their businesses tend to concentrate toward the lower end of opportunity structures and

rely on an impoverished customer base (Barrett et al., 2002). Nevertheless, the derived theoretical implication of studies focusing on either resource constraints or opportunity structure points to acute contradictions that defy easy explanation of failure. For example, although having ‘too little resources’ is a catholicon reason for ethnic venture failure, we also know that having ‘too little resources’ is what makes ethnic ventures creative, innovative, and resilient (Dana, 2007; Emmanuel-Jones, 2018). In engaging with this duality with contrasting assumptions, some studies have also highlighted ‘hybrid entrepreneurship’ (Raffiee and Feng, 2014), over-confidence (Koellinger et al., 2007), and entrepreneurial hubris (Urban, 2006) as potential precursors to ethnic venture failure.

Recent advances within the ethnic business literature have redirected attention to mixed embeddedness (Kloosterman and Rath, 2001)—the relevance of both social and economic contexts in shaping outcomes in theorizing ethnic business failure. Serving as a point of convergence for many conceptual and empirical studies on small business enterprises, the notion of mixed embeddedness posits that business activities are embedded in social relations, and that it is the interaction of resources with the wider socio-economic context that shapes outcomes (Jones et al., 2014; Bagwell, 2018; Szkudlarek and Wu, 2018). Thus, in emphasizing the socio-cultural contexts within which ethnic businesses operate, this lens gives primacy to the wider economic context, for example, sector, regulatory regime, geographic and/or spatial distribution within which the firm competes (Jones et al., 2014; Phizacklea and Ram, 1996). Although this approach has contributed significantly to extending our understanding about ethnic venture failure, recent calls have emphasized the need to re-orient the socio-economic determinants of embeddedness to embrace pervasive issues such as gender, identity, and agency which are frequently conflated with ‘cultural’ related factors that tend to precipitate failure (Cope, 2011; Cerderberg and Villares-Varela, 2019). To traverse the complications of attributing ethnic venture failure simply to embeddedness, extant research is opening new interpretive horizons to understand the influence and impact of information processing and strategic decision-making on

ethnic entrepreneurs' failure. Taking the view that venture failure is a psycho-social 're-production' in practice (Goss, 2008; Shepherd et al., 2009), such studies prioritizing the mechanisms through which psycho-social factors including social positionality (Martinez, 2020), feelings, beliefs, cognitions (Byrne and Shepherd, 2015), and emotions (Farashah, 2015), as potential antecedents to performance, may precipitate ethnic venture failure.

Contributing to the psycho-social perspective in theorizing venture failure (Frese, 2009; Shepherd et al, 2009), we draw on the notion of 'scarcity mind-set' as a meta-theoretical lens to explore how the behaviors and choices of ethnic entrepreneurs and the contexts within which they operate could combine to precipitate venture failure. The UK is a more lax context in terms of regulations for small business ownership creates lower selectivity for entrepreneurs (compared to continental Europe, for example) (Aldrich and Waldinger, 1990). This lower selectivity in entry will directly affect failure; hence, we should expect higher entry but also higher failure. In this regard, our scarcity mindset approach offers a unified framework to empirically examine how having 'too little resources' might provoke ethnic venture failure. Drawing on the scarcity mindset literature affords two main advantages for the purposes of our inquiry. First, providing insight into the entrepreneurs' accounts of their behaviors and choices within the contingencies of organizing highlights the salient entrepreneurial organizing demands ethnic entrepreneurs face in their everyday organizing: a potentially blinkered view of organizing strategies that may appear to make them successful can serve as a source of their venture demise. Second, its emphasis on cognitive resources to managing limits and capture opportunities in organizing can serve as a response to the broader debate on the potential contribution of other 'ways of knowing' to understand venture failure (Ucbasaran et al., 2010). In the following section, we present our scarcity mindset approach to ethnic venture failure.

Scarcity mindset approach to ethnic venture failure

The limits on resources mean that scarcity is ubiquitous in everyday social life. Conceptualizing scarcity not merely as an economic issue but also as an individual psychological problem, existing studies suggest that scarcity in all forms shapes individuals' choices and behaviors by directing their minds towards unfulfilled needs (Leana and Meuris, 2015; Shah et al., 2015). In their seminal work on how scarcity defines everyday lives, Mullainathan and Shafir (2013a, p.4) refer to scarcity as 'having less than you feel you need' resulting in a laser focus on what is lacking at the expense of other equally important issue that requires cognitive effort. These authors argue that although physical scarcity is pervasive in everyday life, the feeling of scarcity is aberrant due to individuals' subjective perception of what matters. From this perspective, scarcity is both a physical constraint and a mindset that can make people behave in less capable ways (Mani et al., 2013). Thus, when scarcity in any form captures one's attention, it changes modes of thinking, seeing, noticing, as well as choices and behavior. Just as food arrests the attention of starving people, Mullainathan and Shafir (2013a) argue that visceral forms of scarcity capture the mind's focus, thereby decreasing cognitive bandwidth and changing how decisions are made (Mani, et al., 2013; Shah et al., 2015; Schilback et al., 2016). 'Bandwidth' as used here refers to how preoccupied one's mind is, so that in such situations, individuals begin to make decisions in less sure-footed fashion (Sleek, 2015; Shah et al., 2012). This might lead to what they refer to as a 'scarcity trap', where one is overwhelmed by doing more and more, with correspondingly less time to think carefully about the next important step. At once distracted and less capable, the individual's capacity for self-management diminishes and his or her capacity to coordinate, control and make decisions is accordingly affected. The concept of scarcity mindset has been applied to study the cognitive challenges faced by poor people (Mullainathan and Shafir, 2013a) and consumers (Roux et al., 2015). Elsewhere, Spears (2011), after several experiments supported by a large dataset, concluded that people operating under impoverished conditions tend to make suboptimal or poor decisions. Shedding light on the cognitive consequences of poverty, how scarcity forces people

to make trade-offs and reduces executive control (Gennetian and Shafir, 2015), these studies taken together, suggest that tunneling in on resource concerns impedes long-term success.

Our re-reading of how 'having too little' resources' could potentially shape one's cognitive functioning in the shadow of business failure prompts us to ponder anew ethnic venture failure through the prism of the scarcity mindset. Our argument is that when entrepreneurs' in general 'feel that [their] resources are low relative to needs, a scarcity mindset emerges' (Shah et al., 2015: 402), which sets in motion certain psycho-social processes which subsequently influence their decision making in ways that could precipitate the demise of their businesses. Thus, ethnic businesses and their owners by virtue of having 'too little', in terms of both social class and material resources (Cederberg and Villares-Varela, 2018; Bruder et al., 2011), signify that many ethnic business ventures face existential threat as their owners struggle to allocate their attention to managing them well. The owners' cognitive load, induced by their resource concerns, not only changes how they normatively look at problems and make decisions. It also means they face very serious opportunity costs in their everyday organizing (Shah et al., 2012; Mani et al., 2013). For example, we posit that when it comes to managing the future, they are likely to adopt an instrumental approach to balancing their immediate short-term requirements at the expense of the overriding strategic goal of growing their business. Having to operate with very limited resources also means that ethnic entrepreneurs are not only forced to manage competitive pressures (Watson, 2013), they must also make many trade-offs, choices and sacrifices within the contingencies of creating and capturing sustainable value (Shepherd and Patzelt, 2011). In doing so, their minds become focused on present scarcities, for example, short-term financial hurdles such as accounts receivable and loans and meeting the demands of today's customers, which stretch their limited information-processing abilities to the extent that they lose sight of making relevant longer-term investments and choices that could benefit their ventures in the future. In this regard, we argue that limited resources stifle the potential of ethnic entrepreneurs and their

businesses to identify, seize, and re-configure potentialities and limits into future resources and productive outcomes (Ocasio, 1997; Sarpong and Maclean, 2016).

Prioritizing ethnic entrepreneurs' accounts of their own behaviors and choices within pervasive contingencies of organizing, our scarcity mindset approach to ethnic business venture failure places emphasis on the socio-economic embeddedness serving to condition ethnic entrepreneurs' actions and behavior in their daily situated organizing. Driven by these theoretical choices, we conceptualize scarcity in this study as *having to make do with limited quality material, social capital and cognitive resources*. We foreground our arguments on the discursive reproduction of agential dispositions, practical coping, and other salient factors including shared values and organizing relationships, around which scarcity may be understood within enterprise failure discourse. As a corollary, we transcend the individual subject to focus on discernible patterns of discursive practices by 'giving primacy not just to consciousness, but also to internalized habits, skills, dispositions as well as reflexive awareness' (Sarpong and Maclean 2014, p.18) in theorizing the 'how' of 'having too little' resources might play out in precipitating the demise of ethnic business ventures.

Research methodology

The study reported in this paper advances insight into how resource constraints may precipitate the demise of ethnic business ventures. We develop our contribution by drawing on ethnic entrepreneurs of West-African origin domiciled in an advanced industrialized society, namely the UK, where 7% of all small businesses are owned by ethnic minorities (HM Treasury, 2008). An estimated 15.4% of immigrants to the UK launch their own business, as against just 5.3% of the indigenous population (Burn-Callander, 2016). We chose to study this subgroup of entrepreneurs and their businesses because they not only represent one of the growing and distinct minority subgroups operating businesses in urban areas of the developed world (Mendy and Hack-Polay, 2018; Nwanko, 2005), they also comprise one of the few significant ethnic groups in industrialized societies whose entrepreneurs and their businesses have seldom been the focus of traditional small business research

(Fadahunsi et al., 2000; Ojo, 2012). We conducted our study in the Greater London area, whose cosmopolitan outlook offers a particularly rich context to identify and study ethnic entrepreneurs and their business ventures. Our choice of Greater London was also based on the premise that it is home to Britain's most concentrated Black African population and, hence, their small businesses (Economist, 2016).

Owing to the particularity of the subgroup of entrepreneurs we studied and the paucity of research drawing on our chosen theoretical lens to examine ethnic venture failure, we adopted an exploratory qualitative research approach for our study. In addition, we had no access to any database on failed ethnic entrepreneurs of West African origin and their businesses. Hence, we relied on a preliminary list of three potential participants obtained from a London-based business advisor of African origin. Referrals from two of our initial participants led us to five more former business owners. Subsequent referrals also referred us to more former business owners. This referral and snowballing process (Geddes et al., 2018; Pratt, 2009), aimed at reaching these hidden population entrepreneurs continued until we reached data saturation or no new themes were emerging (Aldiabat et al., 2018; Guest et al, 2006). To be included in the study, participants needed to satisfy the following purposeful sampling criteria (Gentles et al., 2015; Suri, 2011). First, participants needed to be first-generation entrepreneurs of West African origin. Second, they needed to have ceased their involvement in a business venture that did not meet a minimum threshold for economic viability in the past 10 years. Third, details of their business venture should be verifiable on the UK company house publicly available database of closed businesses. In all, 25 entrepreneurs, mainly male (n=22), and their diverse businesses ranging from cleaning services to recruitment agencies met our sampling criteria. Aged between 31 and 59 years, the average age of our participants was 46.9 years. Except for two businesses that had broad competitive focus, most businesses we studied were very narrowly focused on ethnic customers or operated in ethnic enclaves. Apart from two businesses (one going into compulsory liquidation and the other forced to close), voluntary liquidation characterized the failure events of the

remaining 23 businesses. We did not have access to any meaningful documentary evidence of accounts or financial circumstances of the failed ventures we studied. We therefore followed Corner et al. (2016) to estimate our respondents' investments and the potential financial loss deriving from the failure of their individual ventures from our interview data. Reporting losses between £1,000 and £230,000, the average financial losses our entrepreneurs claimed to have incurred at the time of their respective business closure is estimated at £22,300. We provide a biographical sketch of our research participants and their business ventures in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

Data for the inquiry were chiefly collected through semi-structured interviews extending over a 6-month period. Following Antaki's (1994, p.187) assertion that 'it is only in the participants' own ways of organizing themselves... that we shall find solid ground for our analytical claim', we approached our interview data collection through the reflective gaze of *Verbal autopsy* (VA), a World Health Organization approved method used by health authorities to garner cause-of-death information from relatives and carers in places where many deaths occur outside of health facilities and where death certification is weak or absent (Gouda et al., 2017; Thomas et al., 2018). In VAs, a non-medic external to a health facility interviews a carer or a relative of a deceased person to gather relevant information on the signs and symptoms shown by the deceased person prior to death. The information gleaned is reviewed by an expert to determine the potential cause-of-death to inform public health policy. Applied to our study, our entrepreneurs represent the 'parents' of a 'deceased offspring'—a business they founded and nurtured, our interviews focusing on the putative parents' narrating the signs and symptoms displayed by the 'offspring' prior to decease. Our methodological approach encouraged us to show compassion to our entrepreneurs (Kibler et al., 2017), which in turn encouraged them to narrate their stories to us in

unexpurgated fashion (Hollinshead and Maclean, 2007). This approach, we observed, also afforded reflection, facilitated conversation, and offered us the opportunity to gently challenge the thoughts of our entrepreneurs in ways that helped us to arrive at meanings determining their actions and ultimate failure (Hu et al., 2017; Mantere et al., 2013).

We began each interview with assurances of confidentiality and the collection of participants' socio-demographic data. We then invited interviewees to recount the story of their business and what led to its collapse. Based on this story, we probed for explanations as to how they came to conceive the opportunity of starting the business; their motives and desires in pursuing it; how the business took off; and what actions they took when they realized their business was failing. We made conscious efforts to zoom in and out with respect to concrete instances of their decision-making processes, using discursive devices such as footing and forward-pointing to encourage our respondents to speak the 'language of interest' (Whittle and Mueller, 2011) in relation to their venture strategy, resources, capabilities and the idealized visions they had cultivated for their ventures; cognizant that success or failure are socially constructed, which may promote the use of impression management in participant accounts (Maclean et al., 2012). Each interview was digitally recorded and lasted between 55 and 90 minutes. The recorded interviews were then transcribed, and interviewees accorded pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality.

Our data analysis, which involved a three-stage process, followed grounded theory guidelines as we had not elaborated a priori hypotheses to guide our empirical inquiry (Corbin et al., 2014; Locke, 2000). First, we engaged in open coding by reading and re-reading the textual data to make sure they matched correctly with what we heard from our entrepreneurs and their descriptions of the events and circumstances that precipitated the demise of their business. This process allowed us to engage in reflexive debates as we shared our intuitive beliefs about what might have triggered the demise of the businesses. Akin to 'sweeping the sky for new comets', we probed the raw data to develop a 'checklist' of words (e.g., resources, rivalry, location, plans,

threats, bias and learning) relating to how the entrepreneurs thought and acted in managing their ventures. Probing further the meanings our entrepreneurs ascribed to these words and their actions, we developed our descriptive categories to capture their 'doings' and 'sayings' in practice (Saldaña, 2015).

The second stage focused on developing our theoretical categories. This involved an inductive analysis of the data against the backdrop of key responses, the existing literature, and our chosen theoretical lens (Gioia et al., 2013). We did this by iteratively probing and interpreting the resulting data until the emerging common themes from the data became saturated (Bernard et al., 2016; Suddaby, 2006). We further iterated between the raw data, emerging themes, and the existing literature until we could develop meaningful groupings of the themes and their conceptual linkages between the groups and the descriptive categories. Table 2 summarizes our analysis.

Insert Table 2 about here

In the third stage, we coded the emerging categories, their descriptions and relevance to our theoretical lens (Edmondson and McManus, 2007) to converge on overarching aggregate theoretical categories from which we inferred our three distinct mutually constituting entrepreneurial organizing tensions and demands. Next, we applied the themes to the entire dataset. We did this by annotating the data with numerical codes. Each code was backed-up with a short descriptor that particularized and elaborated the various headings. Following this, we built up our understanding of how the tensions generated by having few resources may have taxed the entrepreneurs' cognition and attention, and in turn, their behavior, and choices, to explore viable conceptual linkages and theoretical explanations as to how they might precipitate failure.

Data analysis: disentangling ethnic business venture failure

Analysis of our data revealed insightful findings regarding how the pervasive resource constraints experienced by ethnic business ventures could precipitate their failure. In unpacking how this might play out in practice, we identify three salient entrepreneurial organizing tensions whose demands, dynamic interplay, and articulation together appear not only as contradictory in form but also challenging to reconcile into productive outcomes.

Insert Table 3 about here

We concede that although, in practice, these organizing demands may have some atavistic resemblance to obvious and general triggers of venture failure in competitive environments, their catalytic contribution to the potential demise of ethnic ventures is thrown into stark relief by highlighting the mechanisms through which resource constraint may play out in the form of scarcity mindset in organizing. In the next section, we delineate these entrepreneurial organizing demands to show how they may constitutively lead to the precipitation of ethnic venture failure around three specific lines of attention: (i) community embeddedness; (ii) spatial and segment spawning; and (iii) dispositional optimism. These emphasize failed cognition, decisions based on biased thinking, and the focus on the present and the neglect of long-term opportunities (Shantz et al., 2018; Mullainathan and Shafir, 2013a). The relationship between these themes, we also argue, bring into sharp relief, how resource scarcity leads to “more trade-offs more trade-offs to make, leaving less energy for avoiding mistakes or making good long-term decisions” (Mullainathan and Shafir, 2013b, p. 231). In what follows, we present the fine details of our findings.

Empirical findings

Community embeddedness

Community embeddedness as used in organizing our findings refers to the seemingly high degree to which our entrepreneurs identified, and relied on ethnic suppliers, employees, and even customers to support their businesses (Wang and Warn, 2017; Shantz et al., 2018). The dialectical tensions characterizing this community, we observed, played out in the form of either building a broader, heterogenous customer base or simply relying extensively on local co-ethnic clienteles, suppliers and/or locate their businesses in ethnic enclaves and neighborhood markets. As argued by Patrice:

I would have loved to diversify, but I narrowed my target to the African Caribbean customers, because my bank manager advised me to focus first on my community—after which I can then proceed to other communities. (Patrice)

Nevertheless, by contrivance, our data analysis suggests that the choice to exploit opportunities inherent in embeddedness results in entrepreneurs becoming tied to a network of customers whose relational actions, contextual demands, and expectations tend to dissipate the entrepreneurs' ability to capture sustainable value from their economic transactions. Karly and Ramel lamented the behavior of some of their ethnic customers in this respect:

Brothers and sisters used to come into my shop just to do things they will never do in a white man's shop—they ask for discounts. They see the price tags but still try to haggle. (Karly)

You need to facilitate credit—to make more sales, but this can be dangerous with Africans, once they accumulate debt, they will move to a different dealer, just to avoid paying up their debts. (Ramel)

Emphasizing the potentiality of migrants to import their particularistic values as part of their cultural practices into the marketplaces of pluralistic industrialized societies (Azmat, 2010; Omar et al., 2003), such accounts revealed much about how 'seen, but unnoticed' (Garfinkel, 1964, p.226) practices could act as a brake on the ability of 'embedded' ethnic entrepreneurs to create and capture value: bestowing discounts and credit to attract customers and, in the process, foregoing income. The

upshot of such contradictory demands on entrepreneurs with limited options, we surmise, is a precarious balancing act on accounts receivable in which the entrepreneur is expected to sacrifice the needs of his or her business to help others. To tackle such problems, Barry, who previously ran a boutique, told us if he had the chance to restart his business, he would not show his face much in his shop. Rather, he would spend his time in the backroom watching the CCTV although his sales assistants met customers because 'they will start haggling immediately they see my face'. Evidence from our analysis further suggests that although the networks generated from 'embeddedness' provide opportunities to recruit ethnic employees at lower cost, their work commitment sometimes becomes refracted by the social relations and context within which they secured their job, to the extent that they can become a drag on the business. As Danny explained:

My employees and customers were mostly Africans. They always feel 'he's my man' so I can play up. They are not always punctual; they just take life easy with the job. (Danny)

In a related development, two interviewees (Azam and Uchenna) who had formerly run off-licences both explained to us that they struggled to compete with Chinese and Indian shop owners in their respective boroughs because these particular ethnic groups were able to pool resources to buy some of their goods in bulk from industrial retailers.

The Chinese and Indians were getting cheaper supplies which enabled them to sell far cheaper than we were doing, and so, they kind of put us out of business. (Uchenna)

Our interpretation of our retailers' stories is that, whereas not directly engaged in conflict with Indian shop owners, they were nevertheless impacted by what can be described as an inert 'intercultural disharmony' (Chua, 2013) between minority groups, that made it impossible for them to access analogous networks so they too

could reap the economies of scale exploited by their competitors from different ethnic groups. The exclusion from Asian buying network suggests that race as a may even have excluded, or disabled, some of our respondents. It may be that this effect is two pronged. The scarcity mindset, we describe, may discourage, but there may be compounding physical exclusion.

Community embeddedness, we observed, also manifests itself in the form of service nepotism—the practice whereby service providers cue customers of shared characteristics such as ethnicity on whom to bestow gifts and discounts (Sarpong and Maclean, 2015; 2017), frequently enacted by those entrepreneurs that operated within ethnic enclaves. The existing literature suggests that beneficiaries of service nepotism express loyalty and commitment and hence are likely to spread positive word-of-mouth endorsements concerning the entrepreneur and his or her business (Rosenbaum and Walsh, 2012). However, this assumed quid pro quo does not always hold in practice. Rather, we found that service nepotism can be antithetical to repeat value capture, especially when beneficiary customers fail to deliver their side of the bargain through repeat purchase or the provision of relevant reviews or feedback much needed to support everyday reflective learning among our entrepreneurs. The challenge here lies in the competing tensions between entrepreneurs' efforts to cultivate customer loyalty on the one hand and benefit from adaptive learning on the other. As Azam put it:

You are nice to them because you feel they are Africans. You give them discounts on their purchases, yet they don't return to your shop. (Azam)

Consistent with Roux et al. (2015), scarcity activates competitive behavior in Azam which appears as selfish welfare because, although he appears generous, his generosity allows for personal gains. Although Azam gave his ethnic customers unsolicited discounts to enhance their customer experience and loyalty, it may be that they failed to return to his shop because they felt embarrassed. Related to this, Felix

complained about customers not returning to pay for goods because they claimed the products, they had bought on credit were defective:

For instance, I used to give women credit on a hair product called the Brazilian hair, because they need a lot of the packs to do certain hairstyles. I usually allow them to pay for two-thirds and the rest later. Some never come back, and it was hard to get the money back. One or two of them later said the product was poor, that's why they are not paying. (Felix)

Although such gift and counter-gift logics may provide other resources to entrepreneurs beyond the financial dividend, here, we surmise that customers did not return to lodge complaints or place an urgent request for a refund for the supposedly defective products because they had benefited from unsolicited credit. The problem faced by the entrepreneur goes beyond capturing value from repeated exchanges to embrace engaging with potential consumer complaints and feedback on their products and services (Wei et al., 2020; Liu and Mattila, 2015). Thus, they miss out on second-order learning that could potentially help them to improve on their products and services (Lapr e and Tsikriktsis, 2006).

Spatial and segment spawning

We used the label 'spatial and segment spawning' to describe our entrepreneurs' (in)ability, as inferred from their narratives, to access, prise open and capture opportunities and value from customers within and beyond their ethnic enclaves. The challenge our entrepreneurs faced, we found, pertained to choosing an optimal location for their businesses and trying to compete against larger business entities. As most participants operated in low-order sectors where customers are more likely to value, say, proximity over brands (Barrett et al., 2002), they tended to locate their businesses in ethnic enclaves. In such contexts, the locational choices our entrepreneurs made were frequently tied to their business models and plans. Nevertheless, the strategic advantage of being near customers appeared to be regularly eroded by fierce rivalry and competition.

There was too much competition—I think the restaurants and clubs owned by Africans in London are not really profitable. We were all selling the same products and targeting the same customers, all heading for a car crash. (Tyrone)

Tyrone recounts how he attempted to avoid becoming one of the ethnic neighborhoods ‘sardines’ by relocating his business away from the prime location he previously occupied. The upshot of this decision, he observed, was that he missed out on proximity-effect customer traffic, in his case high-street customer traffic, and the localized ties he had cultivated with his value network over the years. Our data evidence also suggests that some of our entrepreneurs who, in contrast, attempted to break out of their narrow ethnic enclave (Andersson et al., 2021), to locate elsewhere or made efforts to target ‘mainstream’ customers, often found themselves in market spaces where they were in direct competition with businesses with deep pockets, such as supermarkets, through pricing and opening hours *inter alia*.

I ended up in a dog fight with well-established businesses. They outbargained me for contracts since they had money to bankroll their operations far better than me. (Ellis)

Ellis may have found himself in a venture context he is familiar with. Poorly endowed like many of the entrepreneurs we studied, Ellis considers he failed in his efforts to pursue and realize the opportunities located beyond his immediate locale, because he was out-competed by exceptionally resourced individuals and better-endowed companies who occupied those sectoral spaces. The story of Gabby is more instructive. Breaking out of an ethnic enclave confinement, he started his night club in the ‘less cosmopolitan’ borough of Greenwich. Reflecting on the demise of his business, he pointed to the specific regulatory constraints that stymied it as arising from broader issues of urban regeneration in London:

If the club were to be located in another borough such as Southwark, Hackney, Lambert or central London, we wouldn’t have had the problem. But we were

located in Greenwich, a borough that was lobbying to be made a Royal Borough. As far as they were concerned, there was the need to clean up the borough—in order to achieve the royal title. (Gabby)

Drawing on an evocative narrative about subtle and overt form of micro-aggressions against ethnic businesses, Gabby argued that residents who objected to the number of black people coming into the area at weekends began to complain to the police about noise created by clubbers. Eventually, the local authority became involved, and he was summoned to court. The court acknowledged that Gabby did his utmost to handle neighbors' concerns and that he had acted within the law. This notwithstanding, the indicative hostile posture of the community eventually forced him to shut down. In short, the organizing trade-off faced by our entrepreneurs in terms of spatial and segment spawning can be summarized as follows: locate too close to rivals and potentially ferocious competition may hit profits; move too far away and too large a share of the market may be foregone.

Dispositional optimism in organizing

Our entrepreneurs' narratives expressed a great sense of optimism regarding the potential sustainability of their individual business ventures. Although over-optimism would seem to be rather typical of failing entrepreneurs (Ruthig, 2016; Ucbasaran et al., 2010), the high levels of optimism conveyed by our entrepreneurs compensated for deficits in financial and other forms of capital that they required to develop successful businesses. Analyzed under the rubric of dispositional optimism (Crane and Crane, 2007; Hmieleski and Baron, 2009), we found that although this 'hard wired' optimism was important, and often propelled our respondents creatively to identify opportunities to start and build their businesses, it also had the ability to blind them to the chase—impeding their 'success during the different steps of the entrepreneurial process' (Kappes and Sharot, 2015, p.4). Such 'implausible optimism' became manifest in the narratives of our entrepreneurs when we invited them to

reflect on their business models and explain what assistance they had received from the outside world.

You mean professional advice? Are you kidding me? I have never thought it's useful for a small company like mine to waste their resources on professional advice—something they can actually do by themselves. (Ramel)

Although the existing literature suggests that the take-up of professional advisory services and business growth training schemes among ethnic entrepreneurs is very low, even when offered freely by the state (Marlow, 1992; Wang and Altinay, 2012), Ramel concedes that beyond the potential cost involved, he did not seek professional advice because he was confident in his own abilities to reinvigorate his business. Rather, he insists that events occurring beyond the theoretical boundaries of his firm (which, we conclude, contradicted his preconceptions), were to blame for its failure. In a related development, Mina narrated how she devised the idea of starting her business.

I'm very spontaneous, I think—if I see something, if I want to do something, that's all I think about. I like to say, okay, this is a thought—put the idea into practice and conquer. That is how my business was born. (Mina)

Mina's reified representation of her start-up process reinforced her initial optimism to 'conquer' and capture opportunities otherwise neglected by others. Such optimism, we argue, may keep an entrepreneur going in the short-term until the overbearing competing demands of reality make themselves felt, turning them into what might be described as self-martyring entrepreneurial optimists (Hmieleski and Baron, 2009). This arguably misplaced optimism frequently played out in the form of cognitive biases—our entrepreneurs' own perception and confidence in their own competences and business models (Gudmundson and Lechner, 2013; Navis and Ozbek, 2016) restricting their ability to sense fleeting opportunities, avoid strategic blunders, and anticipate changes in the business environment. As Barry mused:

I still think this business is worth pursuing. I love fashion, I think this is going to be my retirement business. I still believe I want to have a fashion business in my life. (Barry)

Barry's future expectations of 'making it' in the fashion business after losing his life savings doing the same type of business is not atypical. Although Fraser and Greene (2006) argue that optimistic bias in talent beliefs diminish with experience, our ethnic entrepreneurs, particularly those operating in ethnic enclaves, tended to show such biases even after failing; their dominant logic being simply to create and capture opportunities within their enclaves and ethnic economies. Over-focusing on such ethnic enclaves, we found, led to such ostensible advantages dissipating quickly due to non-linear disruptive technologies, social trends, and ignored warning signals, which frequently contradicted their own preconceptions (Andersson et al., 2021). As observed by Percy:

I could see customers going online to shop, but I didn't have the money to follow the trend and follow them online, do on-line promotion, and buy Google ads. (Percy)

In short, many of our ethnic entrepreneurs, driven by their biases, became overly focused on nurturing narrow business models and market segments and ended up forgoing their 'peripheral vision'. As George Orwell put it, 'to see what is in front of one's nose needs a constant struggle', this in turn may precipitate the demise of their business ventures.

Discussion and conclusion

Ethnic-minority-owned businesses have been thriving for decades. However, changes in industry structures and competitive dynamics mean their cessation due to failing to meet a minimum threshold for economic viability is now a distinct challenge for many industrialized countries (Ojo, 2021; Achidi and Priem, 2011). In this paper, we drew on the psychological concept of scarcity mind-set as a lens to explore how

the often-limited resources available to ethnic entrepreneurs may contribute to their failure in practice (Slade et al., 2018; Morris, 2020). Building on existing work on ethnic business failure and transcending this at certain crucial points, our study highlights important oversights and oversimplifications in understanding how resource constraints may play out in precipitating ethnic business failure (Morris, 2020). At its core, our research suggests that ‘having too little’ (Mullainathan and Shafir, 2013a) means that many ethnic business ventures struggle to reconcile a set of contradictory, albeit interdependent organizing demands imposed on them and thereby shape these into unproductive outcomes (Morris et al., 2020). Our findings suggest that rather than lack of experience or lack of capabilities, our ethnic entrepreneurs experience of resource scarcity, from money to durable networks, forced them to make too many trade-offs, leaving them little room to avoiding mistakes in creating and capturing sustainable value in organizing (Morris and Tucker, 2021; Mullainathan and Shafir, 2013b). Emphasizing how resource constraints might precipitate ethnic venture failure in practice, we identify three contradictory entrepreneurial organizing demands: ethnic embeddedness, spatial and segment spawning, and dispositional optimism, which may operate in combination or serially to precipitate ethnic venture failure. Table 4.0 summarizes how the contradictory, yet mutually constituting demands in organizing could potentially be managed to lead to productive outcomes to reduce ethnic business failure.

Insert Table 4 about here

By providing a discursive interpretation of our entrepreneurs’ own accounts of their behaviors and choices (Barton, 1997; Zilber, 2007) in managing these organizing demands, the everyday ‘struggles’ of ethnic entrepreneurs in making do with their often very limited resources to create and capture sustainable value become far more apparent. Clearly, whereas our entrepreneurs’ experiences and the circumstances of their defunct businesses may vary, their narratives were very much connected in

terms of their struggles and efforts required to keep their now-defunct businesses afloat. Significantly, their perceptions of the triggers of their venture's demise were generative, sparking insights about ethnic venture failure (Mantere et al., 2013). Subverting the stereotypical image of ethnic entrepreneurs as dream chasers endowed with a 'Midas' touch, the stories recounted by our entrepreneurs provide important pointers while bringing a finer level of granularity to our understanding as to how 'having too little resources' might serve as a precursor for failure.

Our study has implications for the theory of ethnic business venture failure and could also have potential to initiate a wider discussion on entrepreneurial failure within the broader entrepreneurship area. First, emphasizing how antithetical entrepreneurial demands faced by entrepreneurs in everyday organizing might be reconciled and leveraged into productive outcomes, our study contributes to recent research on conflicting demands in entrepreneurship (Nielsen et al., 2017; Ramoglou and Tsang, 2016; Volery et al., 2015) by illuminating how contradictory demands and everyday tensions within the contingencies of organizing could precipitate the demise of ethnic businesses. These conflicting organizing demands raise interesting questions about the building and management of ethnic ventures and challenge the assumptions and boundary conditions that characterize entrepreneurial concepts such as mixed embeddedness, social capital, and opportunity recognition (Griffin-EL and Olabisi, 2018). Ethnic entrepreneurs starting new ventures may face identical, similar, or novel entrepreneurial organizing demands that vary significantly across locations, industries, or ethnic embeddedness. How individuals adapt to these variations, accommodating and challenging their own taken-for-granted local practices, raises questions for entrepreneurial theory. Second, by focusing attention on psycho-social processes which conventional explanations of failure frequently ignore, using the scarcity mindset as a theoretical lens elucidates contextual entrepreneurial organizing demands that must be reconciled to create or capture value (Gaim, 2018; Knight and Paroutis, 2017). Discussion of the difficulties associated with reconciling organizing tensions and their demands as a recipe for failure is currently lacking in ethnic

business failure research. Engaging in such a discussion creates the possibility of analyzing stories of failure as narrated by ethnic entrepreneurs in ways that acknowledge, and in this way potentially begin to address, broader inequalities and dysfunctions within markets and wider society. Beyond these theoretical contributions, our three entrepreneurial organizing demands of embeddedness, proximity, and optimism forge exciting connections with the burgeoning literatures on business failure and ethnic entrepreneurship and may engender further insightful links with other broader subjects.

Our study has implications for the practice of ethnic entrepreneurship. First, in the absence of business plans and balance sheets, the stories recounted by our ethnic entrepreneurs only provide insight into how everyday factual fragments of characters, plots and themes as contained in their renditions may come together in ways that enable the probing and uncovering of unfulfilled values, unrealized potential, and ethnic entrepreneurial dreams of the future. Constitutively, the organizing demands we identified simultaneously enable and constrain the potential of ethnic entrepreneurs to explore and exploit sustainable value for their businesses. In this regard, they provide context for the identification of potentialities and limits within the contingences of making and revising their judgments and strategies (Elfenbein et al., 2017). Consequently, we encourage ethnic entrepreneurs to embrace the tensions they experience as salient harbingers for the strategic transformation and renewal of their businesses. Embracing these tensions, we surmise, may enable entrepreneurs to recognize the limits of logic and representation to circumnavigate the tensions and contradictions they present in everyday organizing. Second, although many entrepreneurs had not imagined the organizing tensions we identified could contribute to failure, our findings provide opportunities for ethnic entrepreneurs to engage in what Maslach et al. (2018) describe as vicarious learning from failure that can inform changes in day-to-day organizing and hence lead to fewer failures in practice.

Despite these insights, our study also has limitations which in turn provide opportunities for further research. First, we note that although the age, gender, level of education and enculturation, and nationalities of our research participants were quite diverse, we did not capitalize on these variations in developing our contribution. Future research might investigate whether these dimensions could influence 'scarcity mindset' in precipitating ethnic business failure. Second, the organizing tensions developed in this paper require further research to extend our understanding of how their intriguing, contradictory yet interrelated elements co-exist and persist to challenge the survival of ethnic businesses over their life course. As we only studied failed businesses, we could not rule out the possibility that some, if not all our findings, on how ethnic businesses managed the organizing tensions we found could also not be observed in 'successful' ethnic businesses. In this regard, we invite future research to explore how these organizing tensions we found may come to be identified, labeled, and play out in 'successful' ethnic businesses. Third, although our reliance on verbal autopsy as methodological frame enabled polyphonic voices of ethnic entrepreneurs, often subjugated in entrepreneurial discourse to tell their own stories on failure, we would not presume to rule out the potential impact of egocentric biases, memory loss or embellishment in the retrospective accounts of our respondents (Chandler and Lyon, 2001; Golden, 1997). In this regard, a longitudinal study tracking the performance of ethnic businesses over time would be better suited to document their variances and capture how ethnic business venture failure precipitated by 'scarcity mindset' unfolds in practice.

In conclusion, we surmise that 'scarcity mindset' as an a priori theory extends our understanding of how the struggles of managing organizing tensions play out in practice, and how they may subsequently lead to the demise of many ethnic ventures which somehow always appear identical, similar, or expected; yet it can also be surprising, seen, but unnoticed.

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Table 1: Biographical sketch of the entrepreneurs' and their case ventures

	Name, Age (Gender)	Venture type	Nature of business (SIC)*	Venture size	Venture Duration	Failure event	Financial Investment / Loss in GBP
1	Azam 53 (M)	Off-License retail shop	Retail sale in nonspecialized stores with food, beverages or tobacco predominating (47110)	Employees: 0 Partners: 0	Started: 1997 Failed: 2002	Voluntary liquidation	Invested: £55,000 Loss: £32,000
2	Barry 45(M)	Fashion Wear	Retail sale of clothing in specialized stores (47710)	Employees: 6 Partners: 3	Started: 2006 Failed: 2014	Voluntary liquidation	Invested: £35,000 Loss: £15,000
3	Danny 50(M)	Security and Cleaning services	Security and commodity contracts dealing activities (66120)	Employees: 10 Partners: 0	Started: 2008 Failed: 2012	Voluntary liquidation	Invested: £5,000 Loss: £5,000
4	Ellis 51(M)	Cleaning services	General cleaning of buildings (81210)	Employees: 10 Partners: 0	Started: 2006 Failed: 2008	Voluntary liquidation	Invested: £7,000 Loss: £7,000
5	Felix 55(M)	Hair Beauty Salon	Hairdressing and other beauty treatment (96029)	Employees: 6 Partners: 0	Started: 2012 Failed: 2015	Voluntary liquidation	Invested: £9,000 Loss: £9,000
6	Gabby 55(M)	Afro-Night Club	Other entertainment activities (9234)	Employees: 20 Partners: 3	Started: 2006 Failed: 2014	Closed down business	Invested: £230,000 Loss: £230,000
7	Henry 51(M)	Used car and spare parts	Retail trade of motor vehicle parts and accessories (45320)	Employees: 3 Partners: 0	Started: 2008 Failed: 2012	Voluntary liquidation	Invested: £6,000 Loss: £6,000
8	Jacob 59(M)	Private Security Services	Investigation and security (7460)	Employees: 25 Partners: 2	Started: 2007 Failed: 2015	Voluntary liquidation	Invested: £25,000 Loss: £5,000
9	Karly 58(F)	Hair Beauty Salon	Hairdressing and other beauty treatment (96029)	Employees: 5 Partners: 0	Started: 2010 Failed: 2015	Voluntary liquidation	Invested: £17,000 Loss: £16,200
10	Laura 51(F)	Event catering Services	Event catering activities (56210)	Employees: 7 Partners: 0	Started: 2011 Failed: 2017	Voluntary liquidation	Invested: £10,000 Loss: £10,000

11	Mina 44 (F)	Recruitment Agency	Temporary employment agency activities (78200)	Employees: 3 Partners: 0	Started: 2009 Failed: 2011	Voluntary liquidation	Invested: £25,000 Loss: £24,000
12	Nasim 40(M)	Sale of Fine Arts	Artistic creation (90030)	Employees: 0 Partners: 0	Started: 2009 Failed: 2017	Voluntary liquidation	Invested: £30,000 Loss: £8,000
13	Otis 41(M)	Renewable Energy	Other specialized construction activities not classified elsewhere (43999)	Employees: 0 Partners: 1	Started: 2013 Failed: 2016	Involuntary liquidation	Invested: £5,000 Loss: £4,000
14	Patrice 51(M)	Estate Agency	Real estate agencies (68310)	Employees: 6 Partners: 1	Started: 1997 Failed: 2002	Voluntary liquidation	Invested: £100,000 Loss: £65,000
15	Percy 53(M)	Afro-cosmetic shop	Retail sale of cosmetic and toilet articles in specialized stores (47750)	Employees: 2 Partners: 0	Started: 2010 Failed: 2013	Voluntary liquidation	Invested: £16,000 Loss: £10,000
16	Quincy 47(M)	Business center and internet cafe	Other business support service activities not classified elsewhere (82990)	Employees: 4 Partners: 0	Started: 2003 Failed: 2007	Voluntary liquidation	Invested: £40,000 Loss: £24,000
17	Ramel 47(M)	Food processing	Manufacture of other food products not classified elsewhere (10890)	Employees: 3 Partners: 0	Started: 2008 Failed: 2011	Voluntary liquidation	Invested: £40,000 Loss: £29,000
18	Sandy 46(M)	Recruitment Agency	Temporary employment agency activities (78200)	Employees: 2 Partners: 0	Started: 2016 Failed: 2018	Voluntary liquidation	Invested: £3,000 Loss: £3,000
19	Sowah 32(M)	Afro-Caribbean bar & Restaurant	Other business support service activities not classified elsewhere (82990)	Employees: 3 Partners: 0	Started: 2016 Failed: 2018	Voluntary liquidation	Invested: £18,000 Loss: £17,000
20	Trevor 47(M)	Takeaway Restaurant	Take-away food shops and mobile food stands (56103)	Employees: 3 Partners: 1	Started: 2015 Failed: 2017	Voluntary liquidation	Invested: £5,000 Loss: £1,000
21	Tyrone 43 (M)	Private Security Services	Private security activities (80100)	Employees: 4 Partners: 0	Started: 2012 Failed: 2014	Voluntary liquidation	Invested: £4,500 Loss: £4,500

22	Uchenna 48 (M)	Off-License retail shop	Retail sale via stalls and markets of food, beverages, and tobacco products (47810)	Employees: 1 Partners: 3	Started: 2014 Failed: 2017	Voluntary liquidation	Invested: £15,000 Loss: £10,000
23	Victor 48 (M)	Private Security Services	Private security activities (80100)	Employees: 12 Partners: 1	Started: 2012 Failed: 2014	Voluntary liquidation	Invested: £12,000 Loss: £8,000
24	Willy 38(M)	Private Security Services	Private security activities (80100)	Employees: 3 Partners: 0	Started: 2011 Failed: 2014	Voluntary liquidation	Invested: £14,000 Loss: £13,000
25	Yorkie 31(M)	Hearing services	Aid Other human health activities (86900)	Employees: 0 Partners: 0	Started: 2017 Failed: 2018	Voluntary liquidation	Invested: £5,000 Loss: £5,000

*SIC code is a Standard Industrial Classification code. These are used by the UK's Companies House to classify the type of economic activity in which a company or other type of business is engaged.

Table 2: Overview of data analysis

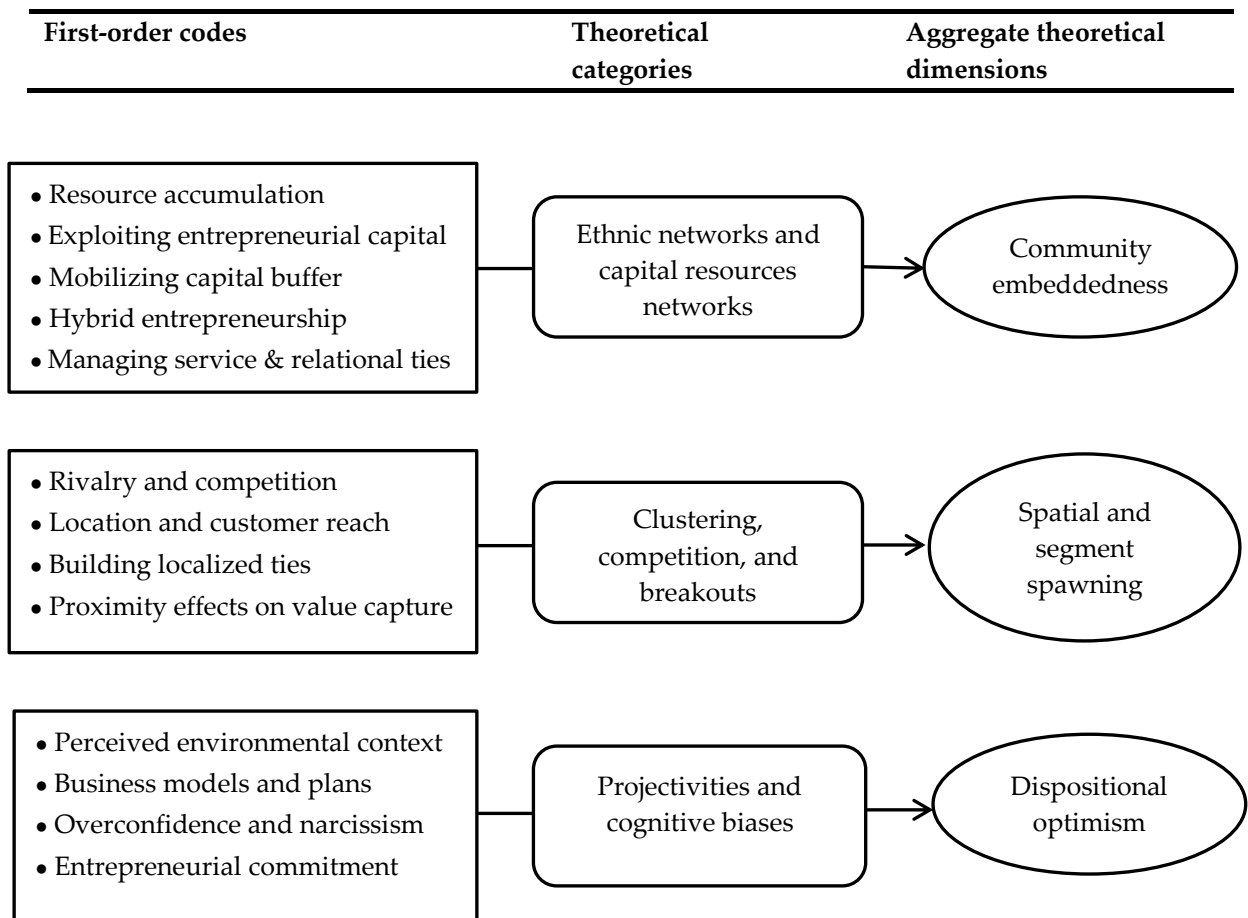


Table 3: Entrepreneurial demands and their organizing tensions




Entrepreneurial demands	Organizing tensions	Representative quotes
Community embeddedness	Ethnic customers	‘Dealing with customers of African origin is entirely a different kettle of fish. They expect you to run like a charity. They will not commit to payment plans, you persist, and they go elsewhere’. (Henry)
		
Spatial and segment spawning	External networks	‘I had customers who will come in wanting to do business with us – only to disappear afterwards. I later realized that they have colluded with some of my staff to enter into a cheaper deal’. (Patrice)
	Clustering in ethnic enclaves	
		‘My shop was in Camberwell, the central base of most Africans and Caribbean. Close to Brixton, close to Peckham, where the concentration of black people is high’. (Barry)
	Breaking out of ethnic enclaves	
Dispositional optimism	Focusing on competence building	‘One thing I do really regret is failing to diversify, as opposed to broadening my customer base and employing staff from other ethnic groups; I relied mainly on my local community’. (Patrice)
		
	Peripheral vision	

Table 4: Organizing tensions and how they could be managed in practice

Organizing tensions	How tensions play out	Potential ways of dealing with tensions in practice
Community embeddedness	Exploration and exploitation of ethnic networks, relational ties, and other forms of capital resources embedded in them	Agents (re)constructing their own social relations and ultimately themselves based on rational analysis
Spatial and segment spawning	Balancing the need to 'focusing' and diversification	Cultivating the 'peripheral vision' to break out of ethnic enclaves and the nurturing of narrow business models, and targeting market segments
Dispositional optimism	Making sense of agential projectivities and cognitive biases	Engaging in reflexive praxis that attempts to "fix" meanings to contradictions that constitute opportunity and limits in organizing