



# Future Research Opportunities: A Systematic Literature Review and Recommendations for Further Research into Minority Entrepreneurship

Tim Mazzarol

## Introduction

What makes a minority? It is a smallness in quantity, not smallness in quality. There is nothing permanent about a minority. There is nothing permanent in anything that can grow. (Taylor 1945, p. 84)

The field of minority entrepreneurship has evolved steadily since the publication of Pierce's (1947) work on 'Negro Business and Education' and has enjoyed significant growth within recent decades. Despite this, the field remains ill-defined and fragmented across a range of academic disciplines such as sociology, cultural anthropology, geography, economics, political theory, strategy, small business and entrepreneurship. Both the concepts of 'minority' and 'entrepreneurship' remain vaguely defined, with different units of analysis found, depending on the field of academic research and the national context in which the research is being undertaken (Basu 2009). Further, the multidisciplinary nature of minority entrepreneurship has led to fragmentation and a wide range of differing methodological approaches and units of analysis. In addition, this situation is compounded by a paucity of reliable databases upon which to undertake robust analysis within this field.

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T. Mazzarol (✉)

University of Western Australia, Crawley, WA, Australia

e-mail: [tim.mazzarol@uwa.edu.au](mailto:tim.mazzarol@uwa.edu.au)

This chapter examines the future directions that academic study in the field of minority entrepreneurship might take. In doing so, it takes a holistic view of the field and includes an examination of the evolution of the study of minority entrepreneurship, how it is structured, definitions of key concepts, key units of analysis and common findings.

The chapter is structured as follows. First, an examination is made of the concept of 'minority entrepreneurship', with a specific focus on how it is defined and what are its main units of analysis. Second, an analysis of the evolution of the field of minority entrepreneurship is outlined, with an examination of what have been the most influential journals and papers within specific fields. Third, the chapter examines the major research themes that have been explored. Finally, the chapter concludes with observations and recommendations for future directions that might be pursued. The chapter is not without its limitations. Given the range of research studies to be reviewed over a period of five decades, not all works could be included. In addition, the multidisciplinary nature of the field of minority entrepreneurship means that only some of the most important conceptual areas and sub-domains could be examined in depth.

## What Is Minority Entrepreneurship?

A problem for researching minority entrepreneurship is the lack of clarity over what constitutes a 'minority'. This has impacted both research and government policy, where public funds have been allocated to such firms to provide special assistance to economically and socially disadvantaged communities. This issue emerged in the USA during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s as federal, state and local government programmes were rolled out to assist minorities such as Black, Hispanic, Native and Asian-Pacific Americans (Sonfield 2001). However, problems in defining what groups represented 'minorities' and who should be eligible for special help emerged and there were problems in assessing the real value of such public investment (Bates 2011).

## Defining and Applying the Concept of Minority

In the USA, a common benchmark for categorising an enterprise as a 'minority business' was the use of a 51 per cent rule, whereby the business had to have a minimum of 51 per cent of its ownership rights held by people from eligible minority communities. Unfortunately, this generated problems, with many firms experiencing limitations on raising capital from non-minority

investors, which also served to impede business growth (Sonfield 2001). This problem has also emerged in Australia in relation to government support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) indigenous enterprises, where a 51 per cent rule in terms of ownership has also been applied. As in the USA, this has imposed restrictions on the ability of Australian indigenous enterprises to access equity financing from non-Indigenous owners, while also leading to a significant under-reporting of indigenous business ownership and entrepreneurial activity within the wider economy (Foley 2013).

As noted above, the concept of 'minority entrepreneurship' is ill-defined, which is not a reflection on the lack of attempts to define the concept, but more a recognition that the concept is broad ranging in its focus (Basu 2009; Bates 2011). For example, the OECD (2017) focuses its attention on such 'minorities' as women, youth, seniors, unemployed people and immigrants. By comparison, Wood et al. (2012), in their international review of minority entrepreneurship, also focused on women, youth, seniors and immigrants, but included ethnic minorities, the disabled, indigenous communities and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual (LGBTQIA) people. This broad range of sub-groups is determined by whether such communities are considered 'minorities' within the wider community (as is the case for immigrants, the disabled, indigenous and LGBTQIA people), or just outside the mainstream 'entrepreneur' profile (as is the case for women, youth, seniors and the unemployed). The case of women entrepreneurs is an interesting one. Within most countries, women comprise around 50 per cent of the population, which does not make them a minority within the general population. However, their inclusion in the minority entrepreneurship field is predicated on the relative lack of female participation in start-up business activity (Wood et al. 2012). This is the same logic used to include youth, seniors and the unemployed, with suggestions that other groups, such as military veterans and discharged prisoners might also be included (Rieple et al. 1996; Wood et al. 2012).

Historically, the interest in minority entrepreneurship that was pioneered by the likes of Pierce (1947), Harvard (1964), Dixon (1970), Goodell (1971) and Garvin (1971) has generated research that has helped to enhance the economic and social mobility of minorities who are viewed as disadvantaged within the national economy. This reflected government policy interest in such research. Mavoothu (2009) noted that the U.S. Department of Commerce defined 'Minority Entrepreneur' as: "*A business ownership by any individual who is not of the majority population*". This includes such ethnic groups as Black, Hispanic, Latinos, Asians, Pacific Islanders and American Indians. However, this is a relatively narrow definition that excludes

many of the groups currently being encompassed by the OECD (2017) and the contemporary academic research community. The focus of minority entrepreneurship research can also include any group of entrepreneurs that lie outside mainstream society (Cooney 2009a).

This expansion of the range of communities considered eligible for inclusion within the field of minority entrepreneurship certainly provides new frontiers for academics to explore. However, one might ask whether an ethnic minority group suffering from economic and social disadvantage is the equivalent of female entrepreneurs launching high-growth start-ups, regardless of their socio-economic background? Or, for that matter, even such groups as youth, seniors and members of the LGBTIQ community? A further question is whether this widening of the range of groups who might be included in minority entrepreneurship research is becoming too broad, thereby exacerbating problems within the research community of definition, compatibility of findings and usefulness of results?

## Defining and Applying the Concept of Entrepreneurship

Assuming that a definition of the concept of *minority* can be found, there remains the issue of how to define the concepts of 'entrepreneurship' and 'entrepreneur'. As with the concept of minority, the definition of entrepreneurship is difficult to clearly define and subject to the context in which it is being considered (Landstrom et al. 2012). It is often viewed as a process through which an individual identifies, captures and exploits opportunities, usually for commercial or 'marketable' outcomes (Kuratko and Hodgetts 2004). Important attributes of the entrepreneurial process recognised within the academic literature are: opportunity recognition (Kirzner 1997); calculated risk taking (Knight 1933); resource shifting and recombination to achieve growth (Drucker 1985); innovation (Baumol 1968) and creative disruption (Schumpeter 1934). Despite this, the complexity of the entrepreneurship concept makes trying to find a single definition difficult (Gartner et al. 1988). The term has been applied to any action that involves discovery and exploitation of opportunities to produce new goods and services, or organisational and market designs (Shane and Venkataraman 2000). It has also been suggested that the concept of entrepreneurship should also include self-employment and the foundation of new business ventures, whether this is for the purpose of profit generation or not-for-profit activity (Shane 2003; White 2018).

In its study of minority entrepreneurship ('The Missing Entrepreneurs'), the OECD (2017) differentiates entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs from

‘ordinary’ business activity. These ‘ordinary’ businesses, are the small businesses that typically comprise around 99 per cent of all firms in most economies, while employing the majority of the workforce and contributing around 60 per cent of the value added (OECD 2010; Wymenga et al. 2011; ASBFEO 2017). As such, they can hardly be considered ‘ordinary’. For the OECD (2017), the concept of the ‘entrepreneur’ is that of someone who is seeking to generate value by creating their enterprise, usually through the development and commercialisation of new products, processes or markets. This implies that research into minority entrepreneurship should focus primarily on the creation of new, innovative and growth-oriented business ventures rather than the process of self-employment, and the creation of ‘ordinary’ small firms, or the acquisition of an established business venture by migrants, racial minorities, women, youth, seniors, disabled, indigenous or LGBTQIA people.

This emphasis by the OECD (2017) in growth focused entrepreneurial firms reflects the typical interest that governments place upon entrepreneurship, including the role played by minorities. Government interest in this area is on the creation of jobs and the stimulation of economic growth. As a result, the OECD’s Entrepreneurship Indicators Programme (EIP) framework, which is used in their research into minority entrepreneurship, focuses on the creation of new businesses, new jobs, plus the growth, innovativeness and export activity of such ventures (OECD 2017). Academic research has followed a similar trajectory within the field of entrepreneurship. However, recent analysis suggests that this focus on high-growth entrepreneurship may be unduly myopic, when firms such as Gazelles<sup>1</sup> and Unicorns<sup>2</sup> represent fewer than 1 in 50,000 small firms (Aldrich and Reuff 2018). Given how rare such firms are, the emphasis on this type of venture has been likened to a process of trying to ‘pick winners’, and is potentially counterproductive, because such firms typically destroy as many jobs as they create (Shane 2009; Bown and Mason 2017; Kenney and Zysman 2019). The process of growth in such firms is also more akin to a game of ‘snakes and ladders’ than a steady rise (Davila et al. 2015). Further, given the atypical nature of these firms and the difficulties of applying reliable methodologies, the true impact of these atypical firms is hard to fully assess (Nightingale and Coad 2014). Rather than pursuing this tiny group of outlier firms, there are now calls for academics and policymakers to focus more on ‘ordinary’ or ‘everyday’

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<sup>1</sup>Gazelles are high-growth companies, particularly those that have increased their revenues by 20 per cent or more annually over a period of four or more years (Aldrich and Reuf 2018).

<sup>2</sup>Unicorns are start-up businesses with a stock market value (or estimated value) of at least \$1 billion (Aldrich and Reuf 2018).

entrepreneurs who own and operate the majority of the small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) that comprise the majority of all firms in the economy (Welter et al. 2017).

This internal tension within the entrepreneurship domain over what should be the focus of academic research has implications for the field of minority entrepreneurship. For example, much of the extant literature within the field of sociology has focused on self-employment and economic self-determination by ethnic minorities via business activity (e.g. Portes and Jensen 1989; Portes 1992; Portes et al. 2002). However, much of the minority entrepreneurship research within the entrepreneurship domain, has focused on the role of minorities within the new venture creation and growth-oriented entrepreneurial enterprise (e.g. Cooper et al. 1989; Cooper and Artz 1995; Chen et al. 1998; Saxenian 2002; Edelman et al. 2010). These two academic perspectives, while not entirely alien to each other, continue to represent separate research themes with different motivations, conceptual and methodological foundations, and separate goals and objectives. One approach to addressing this ‘entrepreneurship’ issue is the adoption of the term Minority Business Enterprise (MBE), which avoids the direct reference to entrepreneurship (see: Bates and Bradford 2008; Bates 2011; Bates et al. 2018). However, this approach has not been widely adopted.

## The Evolution of the Minority Entrepreneurship Field

To examine the evolution of the field of minority entrepreneurship, a systematic examination of the literature was undertaken (Transfield et al. 2003), with a specific focus on content analysis within the academic publications (Gaur and Kumar 2018). This was deemed necessary in order to provide a holistic overview of the literature, which is widely dispersed across a range of academic disciplines. A preliminary examination of the literature, in particular key sources that have sought to provide an overview of the field, was undertaken to provide an initial snapshot of the major thematic areas and concepts (e.g. Strom 2007; Basu 2009; Brush 2009; Godley 2009; Wood et al. 2012; Ma et al. 2012; Wang 2013; Legros et al. 2013; Cruz and de Queiroz Falcão 2017; Chreim et al. 2018). The Scopus online bibliometric database was used to conduct the search, which employed the key words: “minority entrepreneurship”, “minority entrepreneur”, “minority business enterprise”, “minority enterprises”, “minority entrepreneurs”, “ethnic minority firms” and “minority businesses”. A total of 1072 sources were generated, which included 803 journal articles, 125 books and book chapters, 58 conferences papers, 70 reviews, 3 research notes and 3 short surveys.

These publications ranged from 1970 to 2019. Publications were selected for their relevance, citations and field of research. These works were then examined using SPSS, NVivo and Leximancer analysis tools to provide a more in-depth review of: (1) areas of research focus; (2) methodologies used; (3) findings and (4) future research opportunities highlighted. The remainder of this section outlines the findings from this review.

As shown in Fig. 1, the field of minority entrepreneurship grew slowly over the years from the publication of Pierce's (1947) paper until the end of the last century. The introduction by the U.S. federal government of funding to support minority enterprise in 1969 appears to have served as a trigger to stimulating academic papers in the 1970s and 1980s (Sonfield 2001). By the mid-1990s the total volume of papers in this field grew steadily and this trajectory increased in the early 2000s, largely with the development of a strong interest within the entrepreneurship and small business management disciplines in the field of minority entrepreneurship.

The multidisciplinary nature of the minority entrepreneurship field was clearly revealed in the literature examined over this 49-year period. At least 15 separate academic domains were recognised in the analysis: sociology; entrepreneurship; small business management; economics; management; marketing; accounting and finance; politics and public policy; geography; anthropology; cultural studies; migration studies; tourism; history; education and training. Other areas included medicine, engineering and computer science. In the interests of simplification and reflecting the academic domains that have made the most contribution to the field of minority entrepreneurship, these numerous research areas were combined into three broad categories that encompassed: (1) business and economics (including

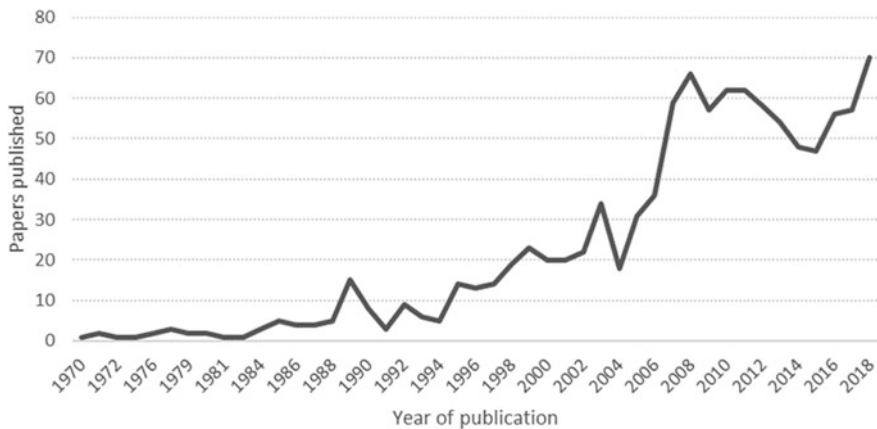


Fig. 1 Papers published in Minority Entrepreneurship from 1970 to 2019

entrepreneurship and small business management); (2) sociology, cultural anthropology and migration studies and (3) other (e.g. history, politics, geography, education). This grouping was influenced by both the broader academic domains into which these disciplines fit, but also the overall volume of work published in the minority entrepreneurship field within these areas. So, while *business and economics* and *sociology, culture anthropology and migration studies* have seen a large amount of research work published within this field, the academic disciplines that fall into the *other* category are grouped together less as a reflection of their importance and more as a recognition that fewer research papers have been published in those areas within the minority entrepreneurship field. Figure 2 shows the evolution of the minority entrepreneurship field as categorised into these three areas. It can be seen that while sociology and the other domains grew steadily over the decades, the business and economics area expanded rapidly from the start of the current century, with significant growth in the last decade. This has been predominately focused within the sub-disciplines of entrepreneurship and small business management. However, it is worth noting that many of these journals are interdisciplinary in nature and do not fall easily into specific academic domains.

Table 1 lists the most prominent journals over the five decades within the field of minority entrepreneurship. The journals included in this table were selected for several reasons. First, they had to have published a number

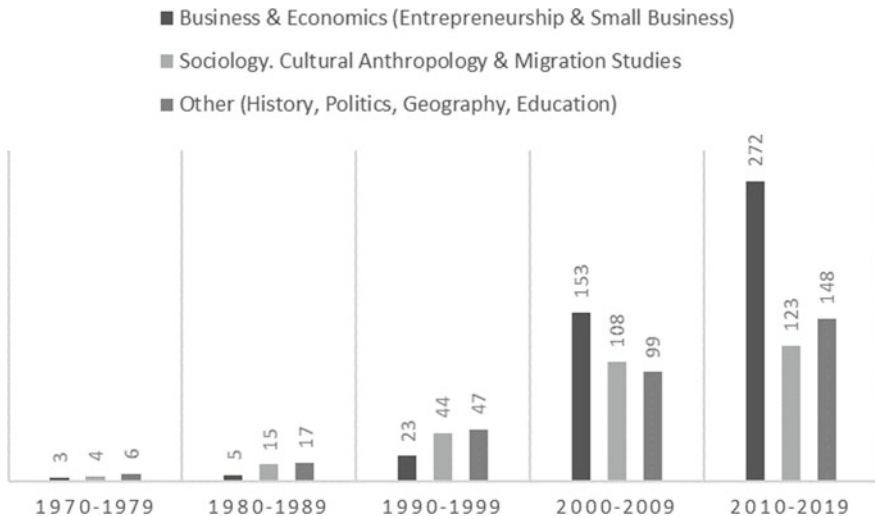


Fig. 2 Works published in minority entrepreneurship from 1970 to 2019 by field of research



**Table 1** Most influential publications in minority entrepreneurship, 1970–2019

Publications	Date range	Papers	Citations
<i>Review of Black Political Economy</i>	1970–2015	15	98
<i>International Migration Review</i>	1985–2015	10	819
<i>Annals of the American Academy of Political &amp; Social Science</i>	1986–2007	9	167
<i>International Small Business Journal</i>	1988–2016	17	759
<i>Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies</i>	1988–2019	28	752
<i>Urban Geography</i>	1989–1998	6	176
<i>Ethnic and Racial Studies</i>	1992–2018	22	473
<i>Economic Development Quarterly</i>	1995–2018	14	304
<i>Small Business Economics</i>	1995–2019	19	493
<i>Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development</i>	1998–2018	16	306
<i>Urban Studies</i>	1999–2015	8	166
<i>Environment and Planning C: Government Policy</i>	2000–2015	12	353
<i>Journal of Small Business Management</i>	2000–2015	7	223
<i>Entrepreneurship and Regional Development</i>	2001–2014	20	907
<i>International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour &amp; Research</i>	2004–2019	18	464
<i>Service Industries Journal</i>	2005–2019	5	109
<i>International Journal of Business and Globalisation</i>	2007–2010	9	36
<i>Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship</i>	2008–2018	13	162
<i>International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business</i>	2008–2018	19	96
<i>Journal of Enterprising Communities</i>	2008–2018	11	52
<i>International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship</i>	2009–2017	8	56

of papers over the time period that were specifically focused on minority entrepreneurship. Second, they had to have at least one paper that had more than 20 citations in this period. As shown, the journals are listed in terms of the date range in order to present a perspective of the evolution of the field. The *Review of Black Political Economy* was something of a pioneer in the field of minority entrepreneurship, with the publication of Dixon's (1970) paper on minority entrepreneurship programmes. As can be seen in Table 1 the journal continued to publish articles in minority entrepreneurship throughout the review period. At the time of writing, the most highly cited paper from that journal was the paper by Bates (1994) comparing non-minority and black-owned urban-based firms' employment of minority employees. By the 1980s the minority entrepreneurship field had widened

to focus on ethnic minority-owned businesses within immigrant communities. Journals such as *International Migration Review* and *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* emerged. The first two papers published in the mid-1980s focused on Korean immigrant entrepreneurs in Chicago (Kwang and Won 1985) and comparisons of ethnic black, Italian and Jewish enclaves in New York (Model 1985), both of which were produced in the same issue of *International Migration Review*. The 1980s also saw the emergence of growing interest in minority entrepreneurship within the fields of small business and social geography. For example, in the late 1980s the *International Small Business Journal* published a paper on black-owned businesses in South Africa (Phillips and Brice 1988). Around the same time *Urban Geography* published a paper on inter-ethnic minority conflict in urban America, with a focus on hostility from black communities towards immigrant entrepreneurs of Asian and Hispanic origin within Los Angeles and Miami (Johnson and Oliver 1989).

This pattern of research within the sociology, cultural anthropology and migration studies on the one hand, and the business and economics and urban geography on the other continued during the 1990s. The journal *Ethnic and Racial Studies* published a paper by Portes (1992) on economic mobility amongst immigrant and domestic minorities. This continued the work already undertaken by that author in the 1980s (e.g. Portes 1987; Portes and Jensen 1989). This period also saw the emergence of a growing interest in minority entrepreneurship within the journals specialising in entrepreneurship and small business, with papers emerging in *Small Business Economics* (Ageev et al. 1995) and *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development* (Smallbone et al. 1998; Crick and Chaudhry 1998; Ram et al. 1999). At the same time, the *Economic Development Quarterly* (Bates 1995; Wallace 1999) and *Urban Studies* (Oc and Tiesdell 1999) also started to publish papers in the minority entrepreneurship field. Since the end of the last century, the number of journals publishing research into minority entrepreneurship has widened, with the aforementioned journals being joined by the likes of *Environment and Planning C: Government Policy*, which is now renamed *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*. This published a paper by Van Delft et al. (2000) which addressed the issue of using ethnic entrepreneurship as a policy tool for managing rising inflows of migrants across Europe. This paper remains one of the most highly cited works. In addition, the business journals also began to increase their interest in minority entrepreneurship. For example, the *Journal of Small Business Management* opened its card with a paper by Dyer and Ross (2000) which examined relationships between

ethnic-minority businesses and their co-ethnic customers using a qualitative study with a small sample of black business owners. This was followed by *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development* with a paper on employer-employee relations within South Asian ethnic minority restaurants in the UK (Ram et al. 2001). The *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour & Research* followed with a paper by Basu (2004) which explored the entrepreneurial aspirations of minority ethnic family business owners in the UK. At the time of writing, this paper was amongst the most highly cited works within the minority entrepreneurship field that have been published in that journal.

By the mid-2000s a range of other journals within the business disciplines had also started to publish work from the minority entrepreneurship field. This included the *Service Industries Journal*, which published a paper by Altinay and Altinay (2005) that focused on ethnic minority entrepreneurship within the catering sector. This was followed by the *International Journal of Business and Globalisation*, with the publication of a series of articles within its first year of operations on aspects of minority entrepreneurship (e.g. Perreault et al. 2007; Beng and Chew 2007; Lowrey 2007; Inal 2007; Pio 2007). The following year, the *Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship* published a special issue focusing on empirical research into ethnicity and entrepreneurship in the USA (see: Danes et al. 2008; Shelton et al. 2008; Rogoff and Heck 2008; Fairchild 2008; Cardon et al. 2008; Haynes et al. 2008; Swinney 2008). Of these papers, that by Danes et al. (2008) which examined the effects of ethnicity, families and culture on minority entrepreneurship within the context of family business theory, has been the most highly cited. In the same year, the *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business* published a special issue on gender and entrepreneurship (e.g. Pio 2007), with a focus on rural minority communities in a subsequent edition (e.g. Bhrádaigh 2008).

Additional journals emerged during late 2000s, such as the *Journal of Enterprising Communities* and *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*. The first of these commenced publishing in 2007 and offered a strong focus on minority entrepreneurship. The latter journal emerged in 2009 and included a paper by Cooney (2009b) that focused on female entrepreneurship programmes for the minority traveller community in Ireland. It is arguable that the minority entrepreneurship field has become relatively well established within the academic literature, with specialist journals providing outlets for research in this field, while a number of books have also been published within the field (e.g. Dana 2007b; Apitzsch and Kontos 2008; Griffiths 2011; Wood et al. 2012; Ramadani et al. 2019).

## Leximancer Analysis of the Minority Entrepreneurship Literature

An examination of the minority entrepreneurship literature was undertaken using the Leximancer text analytic software (Leximancer 2018). Leximancer is a well-established method for undertaking content analysis within large datasets such as in the case of bibliographic analysis of the kind being examined in this case (e.g. Cummings and Daellenbach 2009; Liesch et al. 2011; Shafique 2013; Volery and Mazzarol 2015). The Leximancer software uses algorithms to identify, in a grounded manner, not only the most important concepts within the corpus, but how they are interrelated. The software uses co-occurrence counts and word frequency as its basic data (Smith and Humphreys 2006) and is a reliable data analysis tool involving minimal intervention by the researcher in comparison with NVivo (Sotiriadou et al. 2014), which makes it an effective tool for content analysis (Biroscak et al. 2017).

All the abstracts for the 1072 sources collected for this analysis were examined within the Leximancer software, generating themes and concepts. A concept within Leximancer is a collection of words that are found together within the text as being associated with each other. Leximancer identifies the frequency and association of these words, and also tags them as representing a distinct concept. The identification of concepts occurs only when there is sufficient evidence above a given threshold. Once all the concepts have been identified, Leximancer generates a concept map that illustrates the concepts within a cluster or theme. Each theme is shown by a series of coloured bubbles that represent the association of each theme and cluster group, as well as their size and importance, which is displayed using colours. The more important themes are shown with 'hotter' colours. The themes and concepts are listed in Table 2 and the concept map is illustrated in Fig. 3.

The analysis identified 74 concepts of which 37 were the most important and these are listed in Table 2 as grouped into one of ten themes. It can be seen that the most important themes were: minority, entrepreneurs, ethnic, development and firms. These were followed by: women, political, government, programme and issues. These themes and concepts are discussed in more detail below. Their relationship with each other is illustrated in Fig. 3, where the most important themes of minority, entrepreneurs and ethnic, lie at the centre of the map as might be expected. However, the relationships between these themes and concepts, and the body of literature as it has evolved over the time period from 1970 to 2019, is also illustrated. The four outliers shown in Fig. 3 represent the time periods over which these publications were released (e.g. 1970–1989, 1990–1999,

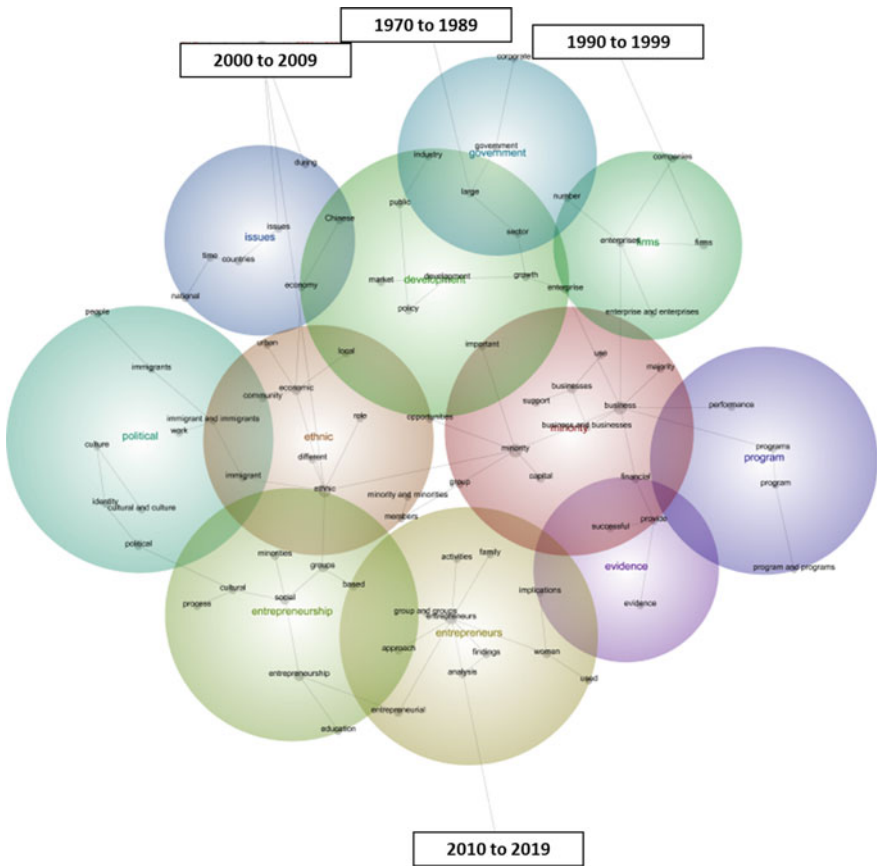
**Table 2** Most important themes and concepts in minority entrepreneurship, 1970–2019

Themes	Hits	Concepts
Minority	2352	<i>minority, business and businesses, capital, group, support, financial</i>
Entrepreneurs	2073	<i>entrepreneurs, entrepreneurship, social, groups, entrepreneurial, minorities, cultural</i>
Ethnic	1765	<i>ethnic, economic, community, role, different, immigrant, based</i>
Development	1188	<i>development, market, policy, important, growth, economy</i>
Firms	900	<i>firms, enterprises, enterprise, sector</i>
Women	396	<i>women, family</i>
Political	376	<i>political, work</i>
Government	178	<i>Government</i>
Programme	153	<i>Programme</i>
Issues	149	<i>Issues</i>

2000–2009 and 2010–2019) and represent the grouping of the research into four periods. It can be seen that the first three eras from 1970 to 2009 are closely associated with the themes and concepts relating to: ethnic, minority, firms, development, government and issues. By contrast, the 2010–2019 era has a much stronger association with entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship, reflecting the growing attention within the more recent literature to studies produced within the business and economics disciplines in which the focus is on entrepreneurial activities and enterprises, including high-growth and transnational ventures rather than the smaller MBEs and self-employed. It also reflects the inclusion of more minorities such as women.

The most important theme was that of ‘minority’, which reflects the focus within the literature in relation to minority-owned businesses, their need for financial capital and support. It is linked to the theme of ‘ethnic’, which is again a reflection of the use of “ethnic minority” as a common description and point of focus. This theme is also representative of the focus within the literature, particularly the literature on the development of minority-owned firms, plus the role of government and the programmes that are developed to help such firms. This reflects work such as Griffiths (2011) on minority business ownership in the USA, which examined the size, structure, characteristics and economic importance of these firms, as well as challenges facing them. These typically included racial discrimination, and a lack of access to financial capital (U.S. Department of Commerce 2011).

The theme of ‘entrepreneurs’ was the second most important area of focus and one that has received significant attention during the past decade.



**Fig. 3** Leximancer concept map of works published in minority entrepreneurship 1970–2019

This theme encompasses the entrepreneurial activities of minorities and how their social and cultural characteristics (and group behaviours) shape their approach to entrepreneurship (a closely related theme). It is exemplified by Basu and Altinay's (2002) work on how entrepreneurship is shaped by culture, which focused on immigrant business communities from Asia, Africa, Turkey and the Indian subcontinent within London.

In third place was the 'ethnic' theme, encompassing the research undertaken into ethnic minority communities, either locally born (e.g. Black, Hispanic, Indigenous) or immigrants, and their differences in finding a role in the economy. An example is the work of Valenzuela (2006) which examined the influx of immigrants from Mexico and Central America into the USA, with respect to their ability to obtain employment, and the opportunities for self-employment and economic development via entrepreneurship.

Similar research also emerged from other countries, such as New Zealand, with the work of de Vries (2012) on Indian immigrants, which highlighted their adaptability, strong work ethic and predisposition for employment, while also facing discrimination and job dissatisfaction.

The 'development' theme lies between the minority and ethnic themes, and is linked to the government theme via the concepts 'policy' and 'growth', reflecting the interest of governments in minority entrepreneurship research as a way to better understand how entrepreneurship can be fostered within ethnic minority groups to facilitate economic self-development and self-sufficiency. As a theme, it encompasses concepts relating to economic development, market development, policy development, and the development of business growth and the economy, which are identified as important. This interest in the economic development of minorities can be found in countries such as Singapore (Lim 2015). Examples of similar work can be found in the UK (e.g. Ram and Smallbone 2003).

The final major theme of 'firms' focused on the concepts relating to firms and enterprises, as well as industry sectors, with attention to how minority-owned firms operate, as well as their characteristics and performance. This is usually within the context of their role in the economy and how well they are supported by government policies. This is illustrated by an examination of U.S. government support programmes for minority business enterprises undertaken by Bates (1995), which found such programmes suffered from many flaws, such as lending to financially unsustainable firms resulting in high default rates. He recommended against targeting impoverished communities with poorly administered programmes that only served to undermine existing minority-owned businesses that were viable. Also worthy of note is the work of Theodore (1995) in relation to the effectiveness of support programmes for minority-owned firms in Chicago that recommended "*debundling*" local government tenders to enable such firms to bid for contracts.

The remaining minor themes of 'women', 'political', 'government', 'programme' and 'issues' are all related to the previous five themes discussed above. As illustrated in Fig. 3, the 'women' theme is closely associated with the literature published in the 2010–2019 period and is linked to the theme entrepreneurs. This reflects the focus within the minority entrepreneurship field of women since the end of the 1990s. Immigrant women have been the subject of such research studies (Raijman 2001). These have focused on the challenges facing women entrepreneurs who also have competing roles within their family and community, such as motherhood, femininity, family and the

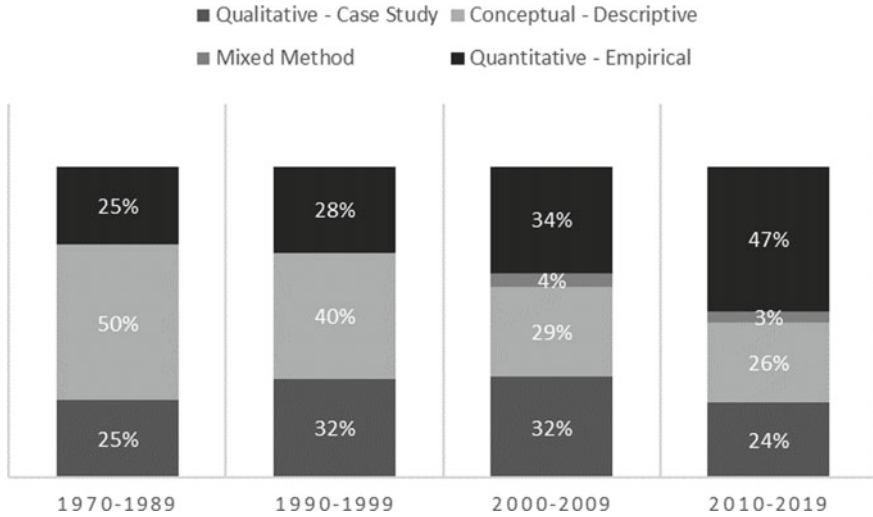
need to balance these roles with their business within the context of societal, institutional and personal pressures (Forson 2013).

The 'political' theme is an extension of the themes 'ethnic' and 'entrepreneurs' and encompasses the political nature of culture and identity in shaping minority entrepreneurship within many countries, with specific focus in some contexts on immigrants. However, it can also reflect situations in countries such as Malaysia where ethnicity can define major political, social and economic divisions with the society, such as occurs between Chinese and Malays in that country (Nonini 2005). As shown in Fig. 3, the 'government' theme was closely associated with the 'development' theme and linked via the concepts of 'industry', 'public' and 'policy' (e.g. Chang 1987). The 'programme' theme relates to the research into the design, development and effectiveness of programmes, usually funded by government, targeted at providing support to minority-owned businesses (e.g. Karuna-Karan and Smith 1972). Finally, the 'issues' theme relates to specific research or policy related issues emerging within the literature that had relevance to minority entrepreneurship (e.g. McCormick 2001).

## Areas of Research Focus, Methodology and Findings

To provide a review of the focus, methodology and findings within the literature throughout the 1970–2019 time period, an examination of a sample of 232 papers from the 1702 sources was undertaken. Only papers with 20 or more citations were included in order to examine research that has had some impact on the field (Soutar et al. 2015). In terms of methodology, the papers were either qualitative (mostly case studies), quantitative (survey-based data analysis or econometric), mixed method (e.g. qualitative and quantitative) or conceptual and descriptive in nature. Figure 4 illustrates the composition of the methodologies found in these papers. It can be seen that 50 per cent of the papers published in the period 1970–1989 were conceptual or descriptive in nature, with an even balance between qualitative and quantitative methods. In the following period (1990–1999) the proportion of conceptual and descriptive papers had fallen to 40 per cent, with quantitative (28 per cent) and qualitative (32 per cent) methods being broadly equal, although case studies were a more common methodology. During the third period (2000–2009), conceptual or descriptive works (29 per cent) had declined in relative terms, against quantitative (34 per cent) and qualitative (32 per cent),





**Fig. 4** Methodologies of highly cited works published in minority entrepreneurship 1970–2019 (*n* = 232)

and mixed method (4 per cent) studies had begun to emerge. In the final period (2010–2019), quantitative (47 per cent) had become more dominant.

This pattern of changes to methodology over the five decades suggests that as the minority entrepreneurship field has evolved, there has been a shift from conceptual, descriptive works, and mostly case study based qualitative studies, towards more empirical quantitative research. This reflects the evolution that commonly takes place within an academic discipline as the field is initially conceptualised, explored with case-based qualitative investigations, and then subject to theoretical validation and measurement using quantitative approaches (e.g. Ramos-Rodríguez and Ruíz-Navarro 2004; Volery and Mazzarol 2015). An examination of the major works over the 1970–2019 time period identified several consistent areas of focus that evolved into conceptual or theoretical themes that have formed the foundation of the minority entrepreneurship field. These include: research studies into ethnic migrant entrepreneurship as a sub-domain; the theoretical concepts of ethnic community enclaves, mixed embeddedness and transnational entrepreneurship; female entrepreneurship; and studies relating to the examination of the relative performance of ethnic minority businesses and entrepreneurs, plus the effectiveness of government policy and support programmes designed to assist such groups. These are discussed further in the following subsections.

## Ethnic Migrant Entrepreneurship

As noted above, during the first era of the evolution of the minority entrepreneurship field, much of the focus was ethnicity and economic and social integration of ethnic minorities within the USA. These were mainly researchers within the sociology, cultural anthropology and migration studies disciplines, with some economic historians and social geographers also contributing. For example, Higgs (1976) provided an historical perspective on the evolution of Black and Immigrant American entrepreneurs in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This used a mixed method analysis of census data to examine the factors influencing entrepreneurial activity amongst blacks and immigrants finding that urbanisation was a key trigger in fostering entrepreneurship, in particular within the southern states. Immigrants were the most likely to become business owners, followed by locally born whites and then blacks. The research also focused on the arrival of immigrants and the concentration of different ethnic minorities within urban centres, and the potential for both positive and negative outcomes. For example, Johnson and Oliver (1989) highlighted inter-ethnic conflict between Black Hispanic and Asian communities in American cities in which Blacks boycotted the shops of Asian and Hispanic migrant business owners. Bates (1989) examined the situation facing Black-owned businesses in American cities, noting that lack education for the owners, and lack of access to financial capital and wider market opportunities for their businesses, served to constrain such firms into ghettos.

What had started with a focus on socio-economic disadvantage amongst local ethnic minorities (e.g. Blacks in the USA), quickly expanded into a wider examination of immigrant ethnic minorities. For example, during the 1990s many studies examined the economic mobility that minority entrepreneurship offered to immigrant communities (Pyong and Bozorgmehr 2000). This highlighted the challenges facing Korean immigrant business owners who were vulnerable to exploitation by landlords and suppliers, and the detrimental effects of operating in an 'ethnic sub-economy' (Pyong 1990). However, on a more positive level, this research also demonstrated the ability of Korean immigrants to use their initial success in running retail stores in predominately Black minority communities and then leveraging these to scale-up to more capital-intensive businesses such as garment manufacturing (Yoon 1995). This research included historical studies of ethnic minority entrepreneurship, including Jewish immigrants in Canada (Hiebert 1993), ethnic and religious minorities in the Soviet Union and Russia (Ageev et al.

1995) and the impact of colonial policy on post-colonial economies in Africa (Njoh 1998).

The role of government policy in assisting immigrant minority enterprises was also examined by Myers and Chan (1996), who studied state government procurement policies in New Jersey, finding that such policies did not address discrimination, nor did they provide benefits to the minority businesses. This focus on ethnic migrant entrepreneurship has continued within the minority entrepreneurship field with more recent research relating to ethnic migrant entrepreneurship in countries such as France (Al Ariss 2010), Greece (Piperopoulos 2010), Macedonia (Ramadani et al. 2014), Finland (Katila and Wahlbeck 2012) and Germany (Bruder et al. 2011), in addition to the UK (Clark and Drinkwater 2010a; Jones et al. 2012). This appears to reflect both the rise of immigrant ethnic minorities within many countries since the 1970s and the expansion of the minority entrepreneurship field from a largely Anglo-American centric research community to a more international one.

## Ethnic Community Enclaves

The concept of ethnic community enclaves, is a key research theme emerging from the study of minority entrepreneurs from ethnic immigrant backgrounds. This first appeared in studies undertaken by sociologists into the formation of ethnic community enclaves within the USA. This included Cuban migrant enclaves in Miami (Portes 1987; Forment 1989; Portes and Jensen 1989), as well as Blacks, Italians and Jews in New York (Model 1985) and Korean immigrants in Chicago (Kwang and Won 1985). This research challenged the assumption that ethnic enclaves should be viewed as “mere residential agglomerations” and that ethnic enterprises were “vehicles for exploitation” (Portes and Jensen 1989). Of importance is the concentration, not of dwellings within such communities, but of ethnic-minority owned businesses. Also of interest were the characteristics of the enterprise founders (Portes 1987) and (in the case of the Cuban enclave in Miami) their political connections (Forment 1989). However, the research also identified the importance of social connectivity and the role of family and community support for entrepreneurs within these communities (Model 1985; Kwang and Won 1985).

The most highly cited papers from the period 1990–1999 continued to focus on ethnic community enclaves (Lin 1995), but the research widened to include more immigrant communities such as Chinese (Wang 1991; Zhou 1998a; Wang 1999). Of particular interest to researchers were the

economic and social benefits that ethnic minority entrepreneurship offers to minorities, such as immigrant communities. This is exemplified by Portes and Zhou (1992), who examined Dominican, Cuban and Chinese immigrants to the USA, and their use of entrepreneurship to achieve economic mobility. This study found that entrepreneurs who remained within their ethnic enclave were more likely to succeed than those who moved outside of it. The importance of social capital, plus the leveraging of human capital and community cohesion, was important to success. This ability for ethnic minority-owned business to leverage their own communities as both a source of labour and customers was highlighted in a study by Zhou (1998b) of ethnic Chinese owned firms in Los Angeles. This use of local co-ethnic labour within ethnic minority-owned firms was a focus for other researchers in this period (Kim 1999). However, in non-urban or more dispersed communities, ethnic minority communities were more likely to seek self-employment due to a lack of alternatives (Razin and Langlois 1996).

Further research into ethnic enclaves encompassed family businesses and compared minority and mainstream (white) enterprises across different sectors, finding that a key factor for success was a shared business culture, guided by “a set of values, beliefs and strategies” (Mulholland 1997, p. 685). While these studies were focused on the USA, research emerged from other countries. For example, there were studies of African-Caribbean small business operators in the UK (Ram and Deakins 1996), ethnic minority businesses in Lyon (France) and Birmingham (UK) (Phizacklea and Ram 1996), and Turkish ethnic minority entrepreneurs in Brussels (Belgium) (Kesteloot and Mistiaen 1997). These studies found such communities, despite an often-hostile environment, were positive about their future, and willing to move outside their ethnic enclave to achieve social and economic upward mobility and assimilation into the mainstream society.

## Mixed Embeddedness

During the 1990s the research into ethnic migrant entrepreneurship and ethnic enclaves produced the concept of mixed embeddedness (Barberis and Solano 2018). This concept was pioneered by the work of Kloosterman, van der Leun and Rath (1999), who introduced this as an approach to understanding the behaviour of migrant minority entrepreneurs in advanced economies (Kloosterman and Rath 2001). This explains how the migrant entrepreneur is embedded in a mixed range of structures and networks, which include the host country’s legal, regulatory, market and cultural structures, as well as their own ethnic cultural and social networks and structures. This

can also include the geographical context (e.g. urban, rural, regional, international) in which they operate, as well as the formal 'written' and informal 'unwritten' rules that they must adhere to in order to successfully operate their businesses. Some of the initial work in this area was undertaken by Fischer and Massey (2000), who examined multi-level U.S. census data to see if residential segregation and the creation of market niches (e.g. ethnic community enclaves) was beneficial to entrepreneurship. However, they found that enclaves were detrimental if they become more than 'moderate' in nature and risked lowering entrepreneurship activity and concentrating poverty geographically. In the same year, Fadahunsi et al. (2000) published research into the role of formal and informal networks in assisting entrepreneurship amongst minority businesses in London. This found support for the theory of mixed embeddedness, but a desultory impact of government support programmes.

Over the period 2000–2009, more work relating to the mixed embeddedness concept was published. This research highlighted the value of localised networking within ethnic enclaves, but also noted the adverse impact of large firms, such as national chain stores, that moved into these areas, and the ineffectiveness and even adverse impact of government policies associated with enterprise support, market deregulation and immigration (Barrett et al. 2001). It also emphasised the need to approach ethnic minority entrepreneurship in a more holistic manner focusing on culture, economics and the sectoral context in which these forces operate (Ram et al. 2000). In addition, the importance of education and fluency in the local language for migrant entrepreneurs was highlighted (Altinay and Altinay 2008), together with the role of social capital building (Bagwell 2008) and the ability to maintain co-ethnic and non-co-ethnic networks across both the local (country of residence) and international (country of origin) (Pécoud 2004; Altinay and Altinay 2005; Jamal 2005; Miera 2008; Kitching et al. 2009).

These studies focused on the positive and negative aspects of ethnic community enclaves and challenged the incumbent theory that viewed these concentrations as beneficial to ethnic minority enterprise and economic self-development (Clark and Drinkwater 2002). Rather than social geography and ethnic concentration, successful business operations were found to rely more on financial resources, management skills and access to market information (Ram et al. 2002, 2003). By the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, there was a recognition that economic and social mobility for ethnic minorities would require government policy and academic research to focus less on ethnic culture and more on the social, economic and institutional

context, or mixed embeddedness, in which such communities exist (Jones and Ram 2007; Danes et al. 2008; Ram and Jones 2008).

Attention to mixed embeddedness within the minority entrepreneurship literature continued over the period 2010 to 2019, but expanded the field to include the concept of superdiversity, which relates to the concentration of large immigrant populations in major cities such as London and how this superdiversity within these populations impacts conventional theories of ethnic minority business (Vertovec 2007; Sepulveda et al. 2011; Nathan and Lee 2013). Also, of interest were the positive and negative impacts of such diversity, as well as how these are measured (Lee 2011). This superdiversity concept was also explored outside the major cities into regional centres, finding that regardless of the level of diversity within these communities, the influences of racism and structural constraints continued to have negative impacts on ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurship (Jones et al. 2014). Other research examined the interrelationship between entrepreneurial orientation and the impact that co-ethnic social networks have on this across different ethnic communities (Wang and Altinay 2012) and how this impacts employer-employee relationships (Jones and Ram 2010).

## Transnational Entrepreneurship

Concurrently with mixed embeddedness, the field of minority entrepreneurship also saw the emergence of the concept of transnational entrepreneurship (Moghaddam et al. 2018). This relates to the ability of an immigrant entrepreneur to establish international business relationships (e.g. importing or exporting) by leveraging their knowledge and networks within both their country of residence (COR) and their country of origin (COO) (Lundberg and Rehnfors 2018). The concept appeared in the literature in the late 1990s (e.g. Itzigsohn et al. 1999; Kyle 1999; Landolt et al. 1999) and it was observed by Saxenian (2002) in relation to the role played by immigrant entrepreneurs in the evolution of Silicon Valley's technology businesses. However, Portes et al. (2002) brought the concept into the sociological literature, providing one of the first clear definitions of transnational entrepreneurs as business owners who travel overseas at least twice a year and who view foreign engagement as essential for their business success. They also provided some of the key theoretical and practical foundations to the concept within the academic literature. Further work in this area emerged as the concept moved into the minority entrepreneurship domain. Zhou (2004), in a review of the ethnic entrepreneurship field to that time, noted that the research had moved from a largely local or national context (e.g. ethnic minority enclaves

in one city or country) to a more transnational and global one. This appeared to be motivated by the rising level of globalisation within the world, the ease of international travel and cross-border commercial engagement. However, it was also found that more research was needed (Zhou 2004).

By the end of the decade 2000–2009, a range of work was published that focused specifically on transnational entrepreneurship. This addressed the role played by family networks to assist in facilitating a migrant entrepreneur's business engagement between their COR and COO (Bagwell 2008), as well as comparisons between different migrant entrepreneur groups, such as the Turkish and Polish communities in Germany, and their ability to leverage transnational social networks to source skilled labour and exploit open transnational market environments (Miera 2008). The importance of transnational networking as a key to business performance for transnational ethnic entrepreneurs was also highlighted, along with evidence that not all ethnic minority immigrant communities were as likely to engage in transnational business activity (Kariv et al. 2009).

The research literature relating to transnational entrepreneurship continued to evolve in the period 2010–2019. Its focus was on the concept of superdiversity, but within the context of transnationalism. This examined how the reality of the challenges facing new migrant entrepreneurs compared to the aspirational 'neoliberal' images of globalisation (Jones et al. 2010). A literature review was undertaken by Ilhan-Nas et al. (2011) into 'international ethnic entrepreneurship' encompassing the period from 1936 to 2009. This offered a conceptual framework that identified the interrelationship between push-pull factors (antecedents), the characteristics of the entrepreneurial activity (e.g. scale, scope) and the environmental context (e.g. geographic, social, cultural and economic factors) influencing these. These interactions resulted in individual, organisational and national level outcomes (e.g. self-employment, enterprise creation, job-generation and ethnic enclave formation). The study highlighted the nexus between transnational entrepreneurship and mixed embeddedness, as well as the need for future research to approach the area using a variety of theoretical perspectives. Also, research by Bagwell (2016) suggested that transnational entrepreneurship is likely to be multipolar rather than bipolar, and more complex than the relatively simple models identified in earlier research. Nevertheless, despite the focus on this area over many years, by the end of the decade transnational entrepreneurship was still being viewed as a research field that was still in its infancy (Moghaddam et al. 2018).

## Female Entrepreneurship

Interest in female entrepreneurship within ethnic minority communities did not emerge in any substantial way within the minority entrepreneurship literature until the 1990s. Some of these early studies examined such issues as the dual role of business and domestic responsibilities that women faced and the many cultural factors influencing their ability to undertake business roles (Dhaliwal 1998). In addition, there was a recognition that many of the common assumptions underlying the extant literature relating to ethnic minority entrepreneurship was not entirely applicable to women as it had been developed largely with data collected from men (Hillmann 1999). The decade 2000–2009 saw a rise in the number of papers published in the field of female entrepreneurship as a sub-domain of minority entrepreneurship. This work continued the trend that had first emerged in the 1990s and reflected the wider social changes that transformed the more traditional roles of men and women in society over the previous decades. Despite a lack of attention within the entrepreneurship literature to that time, research was identifying opportunities for exploring gender roles within business in a post-traditional society (Baines and Wheelock 2000). Further, there was a recognition that the academic literature had largely overlooked the role of female entrepreneurs from ethnic and migrant backgrounds who were a key part of many family-owned businesses in such communities (Dhaliwal 2000). Research has also focused on the challenges facing women and minorities in securing opportunities in many corporate environments and the potential to pursue entrepreneurial activities instead (Heilman and Chen 2003). Some research started to examine differences regarding how women from different ethnic backgrounds engage in entrepreneurship, producing findings showing that while ethnic minority women held high aspirations for business ownership, a lack of resources (e.g. financial and human capital) was a major impediment for them (Smith-Hunter and Boyd 2004). This inability to secure both financial and business support, and to be taken seriously, was particularly identified as a dilemma for ethnic female entrepreneurs in launching ventures in the information and communications technologies (ICT) sector (Martin and Wright 2005). As the decade ended, research was examining the nature of female ethnic minority entrepreneurship, seeking to “*deconstruct the entrepreneurial archetype of the white male hero*” (Essers and Benschop 2007, p. 49). The impact on ethnic minority female entrepreneurs of social stratification (e.g. social structure, institutions and culture) was also explored (Robinson et al. 2007). Other studies pointed to the struggle amongst ethnic minority women to secure employment and to overcome low



self-esteem and discrimination when establishing their own businesses (Pio 2007), as well as being more likely as employers to employ ethnic minority women, thereby helping to alleviate existing income disparities between men and women (Light 2007). Female entrepreneurs were also found to seek external advice more than their male counterparts (Scott and Irwin 2009) and to get good financial benefits from self-employment (Lofstrom and Bates 2009). However, not all women are the same and differences exist between women from differing ethnic minority communities (Kwong et al. 2009).

The literature into female ethnic entrepreneurship during the past decade has continued to grow, with studies considering the wider issues associated with ethnic minorities and women business owners and their challenges in securing finance, accessing markets, developing business skills and overcoming discrimination (Collins and Low 2010; Carter et al. 2015; Bewaji et al. 2015). An interesting contribution to this aspect of the minority entrepreneurship field was a study by Verduijn and Essers (2013) which challenged the mainstream male-dominated and largely optimistic paradigm of entrepreneurship initiated in the previous decade.

## **Performance, Government Policy and Support Programmes**

Additional research in the minority entrepreneurship field has focused on areas relating to the performance of such businesses and their contribution to enhancing the socio-economic well-being of minority communities, as well as the role and impact of government policy and support programmes designed to assist such firms. Some of this research has focused on comparisons of minority and non-minority owned enterprises. For example, Rafiq (1992) examined Muslim and non-Muslim owned businesses in the UK, finding that minority-owned firms were more likely to focus on servicing their local co-ethnic community and that such firms remain smaller than average and less profitable. Their owners' motivations to take up business ownership was usually due to necessity rather than opportunity. Bates (1994) highlighted the propensity of minority-owned businesses (e.g. Black-owned firms in the USA) to employ minority workers regardless of their location, when compared to non-minority owned firms. An examination of Chinese and African-American-owned restaurants in the USA, found many similarities and differences between the two groups, but could not identify any significant explanatory patterns and called for more empirical research (Lee et al. 1997). There was also interest in studies that examined the relative performance of ethnic minority-owned business, in particular the factors influencing their

success (Deakins et al. 1997; Ramachandran and Shah 1999), business expansion (Kaplan 1997), internationalisation (Chin et al. 1996) and their involvement in supply chains (Carter et al. 1999). These studies highlighted the importance of social capital and the leveraging of family and community networks. They also supported the earlier findings relating to ethnic enclave formation and development. For immigrant communities, this included the leveraging of international connections back into their countries of origin, to establish import-export business opportunities. Most of these studies were undertaken within the sociology, cultural anthropology and migration fields.

Attention was also given to assessing the support programmes developed for minority entrepreneurs (Kotlowski 1998; Oc and Tiesdell 1999). These studies identified that such support programmes were generally welcomed by the minority business owners (Marlow 1992). However, it also suggested that most support programmes, specifically in the USA in relation to micro-loans, had been unsuccessful and even harmful (Bates 1995). Nevertheless, some positive outcomes had been found in programmes designed to enhance minority-owned enterprises ability to secure contracts within government procurement systems (Bates and Williams 1995). In the UK, this research raised concerns about the lack of reliable data on the composition of ethnic minority-owned firms to enable reliable targeting of such programmes, and what the focus and desired outcomes of these programmes should be. Funding allocation structures for these programmes were prone to promoting unhealthy competition and the effectiveness of the programme was less likely to consider the benefits to the business owner, than to the ability of the contract to be efficiently managed by the programme delivery agency (Ram 1998). Work on the need for business education, training and support programmes for ethnic minority business owners has also continued (e.g. van Delft et al. 2000; Ram et al. 2000; Ram and Smallbone 2003; Deakins et al. 2003; Beckinsale and Ram 2006; Ram et al. 2006). Additional research has examined the challenges facing ethnic minority entrepreneurs in securing access to finance (Bates 2000; Hussain and Matlay 2007) and markets (Bates 2001), plus securing fair access to supply chain procurement contracts (Shah and Ram 2006; Marion 2009). Studies focused on the challenges facing minority entrepreneurs in accessing finance and credit for their ventures also continued to be of interest (Irwin and Scott 2010; Bruder et al. 2011; Bates and Robb 2013).

There have also been numerous studies published that focused on the sociological, economic and political policy issues associated with ethnic minority entrepreneurship (Ram et al. 2000). These include works focusing on the interaction of ethnicity, culture and entrepreneurship in shaping

business activity (e.g. Basu and Altinay 2002; Levie 2007), as well as the merits of small business ownership and entrepreneurship as a vehicle for overcoming social exclusion and fostering the development of social capital (e.g. Blackburn and Ram 2006; Deakins et al. 2007). These studies include work on the factors influencing new venture creation within minority communities (Edelman et al. 2010), and the influence of education levels and entrepreneurship on minorities (Thompson et al. 2010).

## The Sub-domain of Minority Indigenous Entrepreneurship

One of the least examined areas of minority entrepreneurship is that of minority indigenous entrepreneurship. This relates to the Aboriginal communities within the country of study. The distinction is important, because in much of the literature the term 'indigenous' is used to refer to people born in the country (non-minority), as compared to immigrants or minority groups such as Aboriginal communities. However, in countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the USA and throughout South and Central America, the term is used to describe the original inhabitants. These people are the Aboriginal communities who were present in the country prior to settlement by mainstream ethnic communities such as Europeans. This review of the minority entrepreneurship literature found relatively few papers on the topic. A search using the Scopus database and the search terms 'indigenous entrepreneurship' and 'indigenous entrepreneur' identified 404 sources ranging from 1973 to 2019, of which 291 were journal articles, 56 were books or book chapters and the remainder were conference papers, editorials or reviews. Of these 64 were specifically focused on what might best be described as minority indigenous entrepreneurship.

An examination of the sub-set of papers relating to minority indigenous entrepreneurship grouped them into four broad categories: developmental, comparative, case studies and policy-related. The developmental category comprised papers that were focused on the development of the field of minority indigenous entrepreneurship (e.g. Peredo et al. 2004; Peredo and Anderson 2006; Hindle and Lansdowne 2005; Dana and Anderson 2007; Hindle and Moroz 2010). The comparative category contained works that made comparisons between minority indigenous entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship and the mainstream theory and practice of entrepreneurship (e.g. Anderson et al. 2005; Frederick and Foley 2008; Tapsell and Woods 2010). These papers have examined how minority indigenous

entrepreneurs screen opportunities (Lindsay et al. 2006), use social capital and networks (Foley and O'Connor 2013), maintain positive entrepreneurial self-efficacy (Lindsay et al. 2007) and employ mindfulness when developing entrepreneurial activities (Capel 2014). They have also examined the importance of traditional culture (Klyver and Foley 2012) and intergenerational exchanges (Dana 2007b; Frederick et al. 2008; Kawharu et al. 2017) in shaping entrepreneurship in minority indigenous communities. The case studies category, as its name implies, contained research studies that examined specific cases of indigenous entrepreneurship (e.g. Ratten and Dana 2015; Frederick et al. 2008; Lemelin et al. 2015; Turner et al. 2012; Fonneland 2013; Pearson and Helms 2010, 2013). Finally, the policy category comprised a range of papers that were designed specifically to help shape government and regulatory policy relating to minority indigenous entrepreneurship (e.g. Peredo 2003; Anderson et al. 2005; Anderson et al. 2006; Russell-Mundine 2007; Peredo and McLean 2013). However, given the need for brevity, the focus will only be on the developmental studies.

The group of papers categorised as developmental were sourced primarily from researchers who originated from Australia, Canada and New Zealand. In Australia, minority indigenous entrepreneurship research is focused on the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander (ATSI) communities, who are referred to as Indigenous with the emphasis on the application of a capital "I" within the term (Hindle and Lansdowne 2007). In Canada the focus is on Inuit communities, also referred to as 'First Nations' (Beaudoin et al. 2009), while in New Zealand the Maori populations are the point of focus (Frederick et al. 2008) and in Finland attention is centred on the Sámi people (Frederick and Udén 2008). It should be noted that there are minority indigenous communities found throughout the world (Berkes and Adhiraki 2006) and those mentioned are those that featured most frequently in the entrepreneurship-related literature. One of most highly cited papers is that of Peredo et al. (2004) who published what they proposed would provide the foundations of a 'theory of indigenous entrepreneurship' that distinguished this field from ethnic entrepreneurship and offered definitions, an overview of the challenges facing communities, and some possible theoretical foundations and research questions upon which to base future research. This research was followed-up with a further paper building on these contributions and acknowledging the challenges of getting clarity around the concept indigenous entrepreneurship and its boundaries, economic and social objectives, relationship with culture, and the interaction between indigenous and non-Indigenous communities (Peredo and Anderson 2006).

Much of the foundation work in the development of research into minority indigenous entrepreneurship in Australia was pioneered by Foley (2003), an Australian Aboriginal scholar, who has argued that research into ATSI entrepreneurship has become a trendy study area, with non-Indigenous researchers ignoring the Indigenous community and its historical context leading to the research becoming 'exotic' rather than 'inclusive' in nature (Foley 2008). Another major contributor is Hindle (2007) who focused beyond the Australian ATSI community and sought to develop a global, conceptual perspective on what minority indigenous entrepreneurship is, offering suggestions over definition, research frameworks and building blocks for developing research in this area, emphasising the importance of including the contextual issues (e.g. culture, traditions, history) (e.g. Hindle and Lansdowne 2005, 2007; Hindle and Moroz 2010; Hindle 2010). In Canada, Wuttunee (2004) provided a benchmark work in the field of minority indigenous entrepreneurship with his study of the Aboriginal communities throughout that country. His book challenged the existing definitions and measures of 'success' used by mainstream western economic paradigms. His study highlighted the chronic unemployment and poverty within many communities, and he emphasised the lack of education and technical skills amongst the Inuit, as well as the significant health and social dysfunction problems they faced. However, he also pointed to the need for minority indigenous entrepreneurship to be examined via a different set of performance metrics that was more congruent with the spiritual, cultural and historical context of indigenous communities, and not just a mirror image of mainstream business models.

Other developmental work emerged in the form of Dana and Anderson's (2007) 'International Handbook of Research on Indigenous Entrepreneurship' which provided a range of papers from various authors who contributed chapters, including suggestions over definitions for the concept of indigenous entrepreneurship (Dana 2007b). A special issue of the *Journal of Enterprising Communities* was also devoted to indigenous entrepreneurship (Frederick and Frederick 2008), which encompassed a range of papers addressing studies from Australia, New Zealand, Hawaii, Sweden, Samoa and Ghana. These books and special issues provide some of the foundations in the developmental work that has been published in the minority indigenous entrepreneurship field. Collectively this work highlights the opportunities, but also the many barriers to indigenous entrepreneurs, such as a chronic lack of economic and human capital, cultural and social constraints, historical mistrust and conflict with the dominant culture and society, as well as government policy and racial prejudice (Nikolakis 2010). Despite this

body of literature, the minority indigenous entrepreneurship area remains underdeveloped and outside the periphery of mainstream entrepreneurship research, including the field of minority entrepreneurship studies (Dana 2015). It requires a multidisciplinary approach and one that can view the world through the culture and *Weltanschauung* (worldview) of the indigenous communities rather than the mainstream paradigms (Hindle 2010).

## Future Directions for Research

As outlined in this chapter, the field of minority entrepreneurship has evolved steadily over the past 50 years with a transition from relatively narrow examinations of economically and socially disadvantaged local Black and Hispanic communities in the USA, to a global examination of a wide range of communities deemed to have minority status. In the following section, the lessons emerging from this review and the directions for future research in this field are discussed, with attention given to what Sinek (2019) refers to as the ‘Golden Circle’ of understanding, which focuses on addressing the issues of ‘WHY’, ‘HOW’ and ‘WHAT’ is important to the things that people do. This is a convenient framework to help guide organisational strategic thinking and is therefore useful to help guide the future strategic directions of the minority entrepreneurship field. A failing of most strategy is that it focuses too much on the ‘WHAT’ and the ‘HOW’ rather than the ‘WHY’, and the minority entrepreneurship field is no different. Therefore, these concepts will be considered in the reverse order, with specific reference to: problems of definition; problems of methodology and priority areas for focusing research.

### The ‘WHAT’ Factors—Problems of Definition

According to Sinek (2019), the majority of organisations and the people who operate them seem to be very confident that they know WHAT they do. For the academic community engaged in the study of the field of minority entrepreneurship this question might also engender confidence about what they are researching. However, this confidence may not be justified, because despite the passage of time the issue of definition within the minority entrepreneurship field remains a problem. As noted earlier in this chapter, defining concepts such as entrepreneur and entrepreneurship remains problematic, with questions over whether an individual who is self-employed out of necessity, and operates a small business as a sole trader, should be labelled an ‘entrepreneur’. Even the concept minority remains ill-defined, with the

term now encompassing not just ethnic minorities (e.g. Blacks, Hispanics in the USA) or immigrants, but women, younger or older people, LGBTQIA communities, plus the disabled, returned service personnel and released prisoners (Wood et al. 2012; Cooney 2014). This lack of clarity around definition and specific units of analysis risks undermining the integrity of the research undertaken in the minority entrepreneurship field. As noted by Caws (1959), definition matters and it should be viewed as a critical foundation in guiding WHAT the academic community is investigating.

The case of female minority entrepreneurs is illustrative of this problem. The growth in academic research into what has become a sub-domain of women entrepreneurship has been significant since the 1980s, although it remains underdeveloped, and “*lacks legitimacy, institutional support and funding*” (Brush 2009, p. 615). However, in most countries, women comprise around 50 per cent of the population and are actively involved in small businesses, either formally or informally. This is particularly the case in family-owned and operated businesses. Throughout the OECD group of developed economies, the number of women who own and operate their own businesses has increased since the 1990s and while it remains substantially below that of men, the gap is closing in almost every country (OECD 2016). Most female business owners are sole operators, employing only themselves (ABS 2015). There is evidence that women are less motivated by making money than their male counterparts when business foundation is examined and that the pursuit of personal interests or hobbies is often a stronger motivator (OECD 2018). However, these preferences of female entrepreneurs have been identified as a weakness that risks marginalising women and making them less interesting from a research perspective (Brush 2009).

Nevertheless, while the gender gap within business ownership remains substantial, and women are significantly underrepresented in the high-growth entrepreneurial start-up sectors, this pattern is changing (OECD 2018). Overall the trend in female business ownership, self-employment and women as employers has been one of positive growth, with questions raised as to whether, in time, it will even be necessary to treat women as a separate or ‘minority’ category (Marlow et al. 2012; ABS 2015). Care should therefore be taken in defining women as a minority given their relative equality in terms of the size of their share of the overall population and the emerging evidence that they may have more similarities than differences to men in terms of entrepreneurial motivation and business management practices (Brush 2009). What often differentiates women in the entrepreneurship field are the same

things that differentiate ethnic, immigrant and Indigenous minority communities, which is culture and context (e.g. history, worldview, religion, societal prejudice and institutional or regulatory structures).

Within the field of minority entrepreneurship, the focus has, quite rightly, been on ethnic minority women, in particular female immigrant communities (Chreim et al. 2018). However, even this more narrowly focused area of research has been adversely impacted by a paucity of definition regarding the key units of analysis. A similar problem can be found within the sub-domain of minority indigenous entrepreneurship. As discussed earlier, the use of a term such as indigenous can be misleading, as it might refer to groups that are local to the country but who are the majority rather than the minority within that population. Yet the term Indigenous is also a common descriptor for minority indigenous communities who are the Aboriginal people of the country with antecedents that pre-date the formation of the nation states in which they are citizens. The meaning of the terms minority entrepreneurship and minority entrepreneur continue to lack clarity as do many other key concepts. In her review of the state of research into ethnic immigrant entrepreneurship, ethnic community enclaves and transnational entrepreneurship, Zhou (2004) noted that the concepts enclave economy and transnationalism were valuable conceptual tools for understanding both the economic and social contributions of immigrant groups. However, she expressed concern about disagreements over perspectives that were caused by poor or inadequate definition and methodology.

Similar observations emerged from Basu (2009) in her review of ethnic minority entrepreneurship, where she noted that the term remained ill-defined along with the concepts of ethnic and entrepreneurship. Bates (2011) raised further concerns over vague definitions of concepts such as social capital and social resources within minority entrepreneurship research. He suggested that such vagueness risked compromising “*the usefulness of social-resource explanations of entrepreneurial dynamics*”, particularly when applying the mixed embeddedness concept (Bates 2011, p. 173). Several years later this concern was still being raised with suggestions that the “*minority entrepreneurship literature lacks a unifying focus*” (Bates et al. 2018, p. 421). From this one can draw the conclusion that the field of minority entrepreneurship suffers from a vagueness of definition that risks undermining the scientific integrity of the research being undertaken in this area. Further, the rapid expansion of the field, its multidisciplinary nature and the significant widening of what the term minority means, all create problems that require attention. A key function of definition within science is to clarify what is meant by concepts being examined, discussed and eventually refined into constructs that in turn need



precise terms to describe them (Caws 1959). Going forward there is a need within the field of minority entrepreneurship to agree upon what specifically is being investigated and to develop well considered and tested constructs with agreed descriptive terminology that offers a clear definitional framework to guide future research.

## The 'HOW' Factors—Problems of Methodology

For Sinek (2019), the 'HOW' factor relates to the processes that organisations undertake to produce their products and services. If one relates this concept to the field of minority entrepreneurship research, the 'HOW' factors are the research methodologies that are used to undertake the research. As discussed in this chapter, academic research into minority entrepreneurship has evolved from a wide range of disciplines, which have been loosely grouped into the categories of: business and economics (entrepreneurship & small business); sociology, cultural anthropology and migration studies and other fields (e.g. history, politics, geography and education) (see Fig. 2). Each of these academic disciplines have approached the subject with different conceptual and methodological tools and perspectives. Bates (2011) suggested that while the approaches of different research groups (e.g. sociologists and economists) can be highly complementary, problems of methodology and reliable data continue to create problems, such as a lack of a single unifying focus and too much diversity in the issues examined, as well as the range of methodological approaches used.

The problems described by Bates (2011) also reflect the lack of clearly identified and validated constructs and well-defined terminology used to define the main units of analysis. Furthermore, a scarcity of robust databases has resulted in a good deal of research being based on case studies, small (potentially non-representative) samples and a lack of longitudinal analysis. As discussed earlier, the evolution of the methodology used in the minority entrepreneurship field (see Fig. 4), has seen an increase in quantitative studies in the past decade. However, many of these studies rely on small samples within single countries, and with varying approaches to the definition of key units of analysis. Many sociologists continue to rely on qualitative, case study or ethnographic research methodologies, while economists and business researchers often make use of census data, commercial databases (e.g. Dunn & Bradstreet) and cross-sectional surveys (Bates et al. 2018).

As discussed in the previous sections, the field of minority entrepreneurship has focused on a few conceptual areas such as ethnic enclaves, mixed embeddedness, transnationalism and more recently superdiversity (Vertovec

2007; Sepulveda et al. 2011). Of these, the last three have been identified as offering the most promise for future research (Barberis and Solano 2018). Additional conceptual tools that have been identified as useful for ethnic minority entrepreneurship research are social capital (Kwon et al. 2013; Cruz and de Queiroz Falcão 2017), and entrepreneurial orientation (Wang and Altinay 2012). There is also a suggestion that socio-spatial relationships be examined in relation to mixed embeddedness, with a focus on territorial embeddedness rather than local embeddedness, which can also accommodate the wider geographical focus of transnationalism (Barberis and Solano 2018). In this area is the concept of superdiversity pioneered by Vertovec (2007), who highlighted the multi-ethnic melting pot that large cities such as London, Leicester, Manchester and Birmingham (UK) had become. This concept, combined with mixed embeddedness offers researchers some potential frontiers for future research methodologies (Barberis and Solano 2018).

The combination of mixed embeddedness and transnationalism has also been identified as another useful frontier for researchers (Barberis and Solano 2018), with the concept of 'bifocality' amongst transnational immigrant entrepreneurs as another potentially valuable tool (Vertovec 2004). An examination of recently published reviews offers the following general summary of future research opportunities. Godley (2009) suggested that the evidence to support the value of the ethnic enclave as a mechanism for enhancing the upward social and economic mobility of immigrant ethnic minorities was inconclusive. He called for more comparative research studies that included a better understanding of the role and importance of minority human capital endowments (e.g. education, family support, skills and professional connections). This appears to have differentiated the successful and unsuccessful cases of immigrants within countries such as the USA and UK. In their review of transnational migrant entrepreneurship, Ilhan-Nas et al. (2011) identified a lack of quantitative studies focused on the frequency and scale of transnational business activities by different ethnic groups. They suggested that significant differences are likely to exist between migrant transnational entrepreneurs depending on their country of origin and the environmental context within their COR and their COO. In addition, they called for more longitudinal research studies to track the number of immigrants who return to their COO and those that remain in their COR. Their review also recommended more multidisciplinary and multi-theoretical approaches to the research, with attention given to culture, language, religion, social status and national origin. This is consistent with the findings of Moghaddam et al. (2018, p. 58), who suggested that future research into transnational

entrepreneurship should focus on addressing the questions: “*Do TEs from different countries behave differently? An if they do, how?*”

Within the field of mixed embeddedness and migrant entrepreneurship, Barberis and Solano (2018) highlighted future research opportunities in six areas. First, they suggested examining the intersectional dimension of migrant entrepreneurship and the ‘disentangling’ of such dimensions as gender, social class and legal status. Second, is a focus on former migrants who leave their host country and return to their country of origin to found businesses, offering opportunities for exploring the concepts of mixed embeddedness and transnationalism. Third, is the study of migrants in developing economies starting new businesses and the relative importance of mixed embeddedness. Fourth, is the opportunity to undertake comparative studies with comparisons of migrant and non-migrant activity in self-employment and new venture creation. Fifth, is an examination of the role of agency in determining how migrant entrepreneurs acquire and manage the resources required to develop their ventures. Finally, there is the potential to undertake research into the intersection of mixed embeddedness and business growth and innovation. Legros et al. (2013) recommended more research that tests and validates the hypotheses and conclusions found in one context (e.g. region or country) across different contexts in order to replicate these findings and assess the robustness of the findings “*within different communities in the same country or on the same community in another country*” (p. 1212). They also called for a more ‘holistic’ review that considers the impact that ethnic entrepreneurs have on their host countries economic and social conditions, including social integration. Such research, they suggest, will put researchers into a position to provide more useful advice to governments and to help shape policy that relates to immigration and integration policies.

Within the field of women minority entrepreneurship, Chreim et al. (2018) suggested that future research opportunities can be found in examining the influence of co-ethnic and host country environmental factors that might enhance or impede entrepreneurial activities. This can include regulatory frameworks and government support, as well as cultural norms (unwritten rules). As with most topics within the minority entrepreneurship field, there is also a need for comparative studies, as well as the need for additional mixed method studies to provide a more comprehensive perspective than is the case with either qualitative or quantitative methodologies alone. Finally, there are gaps in the literature on women entrepreneurship in relation to female entrepreneurs moving from developed to developing economies and the way that female entrepreneurs approach strategy. A similar pattern can be found in the area of minority indigenous entrepreneurship

with a need for more mixed method research designs, more comparative studies (particularly across indigenous communities in multiple countries), plus the need to consider culture and context (e.g. community, history, economic and social disadvantage). Hindle and Moroz (2010) have provided a useful summary of many of the key issues facing this sub-domain within the minority entrepreneurship field. First, they ask whether entrepreneurship should be a major or minor issue for the economic and social development of indigenous communities. They also note the need to avoid confusing Indigenous entrepreneurship with ethnic or migrant entrepreneurship, or social entrepreneurship. In relation to methodological issues, they point to the tendency for Indigenous communities to be frequently studied, but to have little or no control or influence of such research. What is needed is a more collaborative approach that builds a genuine partnership between these communities and the researchers to deliver benefits to both. This is consistent with the views expressed by Foley (2008) that too much research has ignored the culture, context and aspirations of the Indigenous communities and is thereby non-inclusive in nature. Hindle and Moroz (2010) and Foley (2008) agree that future research into minority indigenous entrepreneurship should avoid the often-one-sided approach of the mainstream (e.g. western hegemonic) cultural worldview and build a genuine relationship of equality between the two communities. This should view the world and the concept of entrepreneurship through the eyes of the Indigenous people. It is a view echoed by Wang (2012) who suggested the need to focus on social-spatial, not just economic processes.

It can be concluded from this overview of methodology that more multi-disciplinary and mixed method studies are needed. These should be undertaken with consideration of the culture, context and worldview perspective of the minority communities that are being examined. Larger and more reliable datasets, longitudinal analysis and comparisons across geographic and national jurisdictions are also needed. This can also include approaches such as co-citation analysis (Ma et al. 2012). Care should also be taken to avoid the tendency to apply theories and measurement tools that have been developed within mainstream communities to minority communities. The researcher should seek to form a collaborative partnership with the communities they are investigating and perceive the world from that perspective, rather than applying and comparing the minority community with the characteristics and performance expectations of the mainstream entrepreneurship paradigm.

## The 'WHY' Factors—Problems of Motivation and Focus

The final and most important element within Sinek's (2019) Golden Circle model is that of the 'WHY' factors, which address the overall *raison d'état* that should determine the 'HOW' and 'WHAT' factors. In the case of minority entrepreneurship research, this is undoubtedly the most important element. As has been discussed in this chapter, the original motivation for such research was the need to examine the factors influencing the upward economic and social mobility of minority communities, specifically Blacks and Hispanics in the USA (e.g. Pierce 1947; Dixon 1970; Goodell 1971; Garvin 1971; Higgs 1976). This was subsequently widened to include immigrants from Asia, Europe, South America and the subcontinent, and focused on the formation of ethnic enclaves that exerted social, economic and political influence on American society (Bates 2011). The evolution of the field of minority entrepreneurship in the early years reflected the response to government policies. This sought to find ways to better understand the factors likely to enhance or impede such communities economic and social development. Responding to this were academic researchers within the disciplines of sociology, economics, geography and politics.

Whatever the specific academic discipline of the researchers, the fundamental question that needs to be addressed is why should studies of minority entrepreneurship be undertaken? Large scale immigration into the UK and Europe from the 1980s widened the geographic catchment encompassing minority entrepreneurship and saw the field spread from what had been a largely U.S. centric focus to an international one. However, the factors motivating and focusing these researchers have differed from country-to-country and across academic disciplines. As the literature shows, the rise of business and economics related research since the start of the present century has been significant and it has shifted the motivation and focus of minority entrepreneurship. In general, this has focused on the application of mainstream entrepreneurship and business management principles and concepts to minority ethnic communities, migrant communities, women and minority Indigenous communities. This has seen studies focus on the entrepreneurial orientation of minority entrepreneurs (e.g. Wang and Altinay 2012), entrepreneurial growth (e.g. Altinay and Altinay 2005, 2008) and the general performance and competitiveness of minority business enterprises (e.g. Perreault et al. 2007; Kariv et al. 2009; Legros et al. 2013). Such studies often tend to assume that the primary motivation of minority entrepreneurs is to engage in business activities for the same reasons as their mainstream counterparts. Differences are highlighted, but the overall purpose of the research

is to identify ways for the minority entrepreneur to become 'mainstream'. While this might indeed be the motivation of many minority entrepreneurs, this may also not be the case.

Clark and Drinkwater (2010b), in their examination of minority ethnic entrepreneurship in the UK, highlighted the importance of self-employment for minority ethnic communities as a means of achieving economic self-sufficiency. Here the primary motivation for research is to ascertain the relationship between entrepreneurial activity (i.e. self-employment), job creation and economic growth. Such research is focused on helping to shape government policy and guide public investment in support programmes for ethnic minority communities. In this regard, the 'WHY' factor for such research is to inform government policy and help to shape practice. By comparison, Farmaki and Altinay (2015) examined ethnic minority entrepreneurship within the tourism and hospitality sector. Their motivation and focus was on employing theories of ethnic entrepreneurship and concepts relevant to such firms, and to explain the strategic factors that might assist such businesses to remain competitive. Here, the 'WHY' factor was how to enhance the success of these small, minority businesses.

In his review of the opportunities that entrepreneurship offers to minority communities such as ex-prisoners, the disabled, Roma, older people and LGBTIQ people, Cooney (2014) examined each group and the relative social and economic challenges that they face. Apart from highlighting some of the benefits self-employment and business ownership might offer to these groups, the focus was on influencing government policy (Cooney 2014). This assumes that a primary purpose of minority entrepreneurship research should be to use entrepreneurial concepts and theories, supported by government policy and funding support, to generate self-employment and business ownership within minority communities. This is in turn motivated by the assumption that such entrepreneurial activity will result in improved social and economic outcomes for these otherwise marginalised communities. While these motivations are admirable and well-meaning, there remains the issue of whether entrepreneurship is for everyone and whether it can (or should) be applied within minority communities using the same paradigms that apply to the mainstream communities.

As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, mainstream 'entrepreneurship' is associated with high-growth entrepreneurial ventures. This type of high-growth start-up activity has been supported by government policy on the understanding that such firms can generate jobs and economic growth (OECD 2010). This view of entrepreneurship has become the main focus of research within recent decades (Shane 2012). However, as has been explained,

there is now a recognition that only a few high-growth ventures will be generated and that with high-growth there is also high risk (Shane 2009). Further, the ordinary or everyday entrepreneurship of the small business community, the majority of which are sole-proprietor 'nano' businesses of the self-employed, is a field that has been largely ignored within academic research (Welter et al. 2017). This should be a cue for scholars working within the field of minority entrepreneurship to focus on a different paradigm of what entrepreneurship is and why such research might be of benefit to the communities that are found within the minority arena.

According to Bates et al. (2007), the popularity of minority entrepreneurship as a field of research has waned since the 1990s. They outlined the challenges that still face ethnic minorities in the USA and discussed the pros and cons of different academic disciplines (e.g. sociologists, economists) in the type of methodologies used in their research. Their conclusion over future research directions highlighted three general areas. The first was the need to address the lack of unifying focus within the field and the need for a convergence of the various academic disciplines into a more multi-disciplinary field. However, they also noted that there is a fundamental difference between minority entrepreneurship and immigrant entrepreneurship that are best approached as distinct areas of study. This suggests specific challenges facing the two groups requiring different research questions, motivations for the study and units of analysis. A second area for research was the adoption and use of digital technologies by minority entrepreneurs and their businesses, specifically whether such firms face similar or different challenges to mainstream businesses and entrepreneurs. Finally, they suggested that research should focus on the racial discrimination facing ethnic minority entrepreneurs and how this results in barriers.

This review of five decades of literature in the field of minority entrepreneurship challenges the somewhat pessimistic view of Bates et al. (2007) that interest in the minority entrepreneur has waned. In fact, as the evidence outlined here suggests, there has been a significant growth in research published in the field since the 1990s. However, the minority entrepreneurship field does lack a unifying focus and needs better and more systematic definitions of key concepts that should be based on well-developed underlying constructs that can provide the foundations for the future development of the field. In addition, there needs to be a convergence of what is still a largely disparate collection of academic disciplines exploring this field. The emergence of new, multidisciplinary journals (e.g. *Journal of Enterprising Communities*) provides appropriate outlets for this research, but as shown in the earlier discussion, there are a wide range of journals where such research

can be published. Nevertheless, what is needed is greater communication and collaboration between researchers from a wide range of disciplines, perhaps via conferences or joint research forums and projects, to exchange ideas, share methodologies and work collectively on shaping the next 50 years of research in this important field.

Finally, the 'WHY' factor remains the most important issue for where the future directions might lead. Researchers usually respond to government policy or social and economic changes that create research problems and opportunities. For academics, the research they undertake should not only be of interest to them, but an activity that allows them to make a difference! The field of minority entrepreneurship is one area where research can make a difference. However, it must be guided by the overarching question of why is this research being undertaken and what outcomes will it generate that might prove beneficial to the minorities who are being studied? As has already been noted, a critical aspect of such research should be the inclusion of the minority communities in this research. Rather than being just a subject of interest and respondent or 'laboratory rat', the minority communities should be viewed as partners in the research. It is their worldview, aspirations and final outcomes that are important. Not all of these communities will wish to emulate the 'mainstream' model of entrepreneurship. The research community, particularly those from the business and economics disciplines, needs to avoid imposing their own worldview on that of the minority communities they are investigating. Through a process of collaboration and co-creation, a much more useful and potentially exciting future can be developed for the field of minority entrepreneurship.

## Conclusion

As outlined in this chapter, the field of minority entrepreneurship has evolved steadily since the initial work of Pierce (1947). It has expanded into a multi-disciplinary research domain, able to support its own specialist journals and a series of sub-domains. However, this growth has come at a cost in the form of a high degree of fragmentation across the various foundation disciplines upon which the field has been built. This is manifested in the paucity of clear definition in relation to the nature of what constitutes a 'minority', as well as the nature of 'entrepreneurship' within the context of the field. As has been discussed above, the concept of what a 'minority' is has become so wide that it is almost meaningless and this has some significant consequences for future research. In addition, there is a similarly vague definition



of entrepreneurship, with attention given in some circles to mainstream, high-growth, profit focused start-up ventures, as well as ordinary small businesses owned and operated by people from a minority background. Even these approaches to entrepreneurship have been challenged by researchers working in the sub-domain of indigenous minority entrepreneurship who suggest that conventional business enterprise paradigms are not a suitable fit for such communities.

This fragmentation and paucity of clear definition has also been accompanied by a lack of well-established theory underlying the field. As examined in the review of the field's evolution, the contributions from sociology and cultural anthropology have been significant, while those from business and economics remain primarily an application of existing concepts from mainstream entrepreneurship theories to the minority community. More work is therefore needed in uniting the various academic disciplines through multidisciplinary research, and a detailed readjustment of the methodological approach to research design. This should focus more upon the co-creation of research outcomes through the involvement of the communities under investigation. It is something already highlighted by those working within the indigenous minority entrepreneurship area as a gap within the current research methodologies. Here is a potential point of collaboration between the researchers working in business and economics and their counterparts from the sociology and cultural anthropology.

Future research should be guided by Sinek's (2019) Golden Circle of WHY, HOW and WHAT it is seeking to achieve. This is not a criticism of the academics who have published in this field. In fact, their work is of quality and offers valuable findings and a sound platform upon which to build. Any weaknesses are not caused by individual researchers, but by the fragmentation that has occurred as the field has evolved. To address this problem, it is recommended that those who research this field focus on ascertaining WHY they are investigating minority entrepreneurs, HOW they should design their research methodology to best investigate the phenomena they are examining and WHAT specific units of analysis they should be examining. Rather than a criticism of the minority entrepreneurship field, the reader should embrace this analysis as an opportunity to continue the work of the past 50 years and pursue the goal of building a strong, multidisciplinary research domain that offers significant potential to make a difference by producing research findings that contribute to enhancing the economic and social well-being of people throughout the world.

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