BLACK ENTERPRISE IN BERLIN

Labor Market Integration of Black Immigrants
Through Entrepreneurship

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INTRODUCTION

Berlin is experiencing a boom in its ethnic business economy. Restaurants, bars, clubs and retail stores emerge on every street specializing in items from around the globe. Many of these businesses are owned by black immigrants. Entrepreneurship by black immigrants in Berlin aligns with a general trend toward self-employment in the region. This paper explores how entrepreneurship has become a key form of labor market integration for black immigrants in Berlin. It provides reasons for the shift toward self-employment by black immigrants and discusses its implications for German economic and immigration policy.

Berlin’s thriving ethnic market is reflective of a transformation in German national identity. Nine percent of the country’s population is comprised of immigrants, and Germany is beginning to accept its status as an immigrant nation (Leung 2004). The rising number of residents with non-German ancestry has sparked debate over what it means to be German. The term is no longer limited to a homogenous group. Berlin is at the heart of this change, both symbolically as the nation’s capital and in the nature of its urban landscape. The social and physical environments are becoming infused with diversity, and German policy is responding to this development.

Recent modifications in German policy have allowed greater leniency for immigrants to start their own businesses. These policy changes combine with several social and economic factors to promote entrepreneurship in Berlin’s black immigrant community. The primary factors are a desire for autonomy, barriers to traditional employment and the need for claiming a safe space for black patrons. The latter reason makes black enterprise unique from other ethnic entrepreneurship in Berlin.
Black business ventures and other ethnic enterprise strengthen the local economy and foster positive social relationships. This research provides German policymakers with information needed to decrease labor disparities and encourage more economic growth through migrant entrepreneurship. The report is divided into five sections. The next section orients the reader with background information on Berlin’s black population and history of migration. It explains German citizenship policy and discusses its impact on immigrant rights and the evolution of migrant entrepreneurship. The third section describes the methods used in this research. The findings section identifies types of black businesses in Berlin and analyzes the primary reasons for entrepreneurship in the black immigrant community. The final section discusses the future direction of migrant entrepreneurship in Berlin and makes policy recommendations for making constructive change.
BACKGROUND

**Berlin’s Black Population**

*Current Demographics*

The black population in Berlin is a small minority. German data does not record demographics by race or ethnicity, thus the exact size of the city’s black population is unclear. The Statistical Office of Berlin (*Statistisches Landesamt Berlin*) reports that 13% of its 3.4 million residents were *Ausländer*, or “foreigners” in 2005. Almost 18,000 *Ausländer* from Africa are registered in Berlin, or 1 out of every 200 residents (see Figure 1). The total black population is estimated to be less than one percent, even when including black German citizens and black *Ausländer* from countries outside of Africa.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Registered <em>Ausländer</em> in Berlin, June 2005</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total <em>Ausländer</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>European Union Countries</td>
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<td>Other Europe</td>
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<td>Vietnam</td>
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<td>Africa</td>
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*Figure 1. Registered Ausländer (Foreigners) in Berlin, June 2006.*
Source: *Statistical Office of Berlin (Statistisches Landesamt Berlin)*

Although black immigrants are a small proportion of the population, they have a growing presence through ethnic enterprise. The March 2006 issue of *Exberliner* magazine highlighted experiences of black residents in Berlin. An article by Gyavira Lasana states, “African enterprise in Berlin is legendary, from the ubiquitous ‘Afro

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1 Total population figures based on March 2004 data.
shops’—replete with hair products, dashikis and yams—to tiny, disheveled ‘pick-up bars’ that double during daylight hours as community centers” (p. 19). The popularity of black business ventures is attributable to many factors, which will be discussed in the findings portion of this paper.

Migration History

Modern migration to Germany has five distinct phases dominated by West Germany (Langlykke 2000). The first phase began after the end of World War Two in 1949 and lasted until the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961. Most migrants in this phase were people fleeing from eastern territories under Polish and Russian control. The post-World War Two period also marked the emergence of a visible black population in Germany². According to research by Maria Höhn in her book GIs and Fräuleins, many African American soldiers remained in Germany after the war to escape intolerance in the United States. “Black GIs experienced in Germany a tolerance and acceptance unknown to them in their own country” (qtd. Lasana 2006, p. 18). Lasana attributes this tolerance to a cultural fascination with black music. “They were seen as authentic progenitors of the pop and soul music sweeping Germany” (2006, p. 18). Although African American soldiers felt they faced more tolerance in Germany, it is important to note that they still faced heavy discrimination. Children born to German mothers and black fathers were frowned upon. The German government attempted to send the “occupation babies” (Besatzungskinder) to the United States, however fewer than 500 out

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² Blacks have been present in Germany since the 18th century, but not at a significant level. There was a period after World War One when approximately 800 children were born to German mothers and black soldiers from the French Army. However, almost all were sterilized or killed by the National Socialists during the 1930s and 1940s (Lasana 2006).
of approximately 5000 were sent away. The children who remained are the first generation of “Afro-Deutsch,” or African-Germans, in Germany.

The second and most influential phase of German migration involves the recruitment of guest workers (Gastarbeiter) from 1955 to 1973. The Federal Republic of Germany recruited temporary workers from other countries to compensate for a labor shortage in their growing manufacturing industry (e.g. Friedrichs and Alpheis 1991, Kemper 1998). The West German government first signed a contract with Italy, followed by Greece, Spain, Turkey, Portugal, Morocco, Tunisia and Yugoslavia. Most laborers were young males under the age of 35 who came without their families. Africans also migrated to Germany during this period, when Africa “was experiencing the brunt of its post-colonial upheaval” (Lasana 2006, p. 18). However the bulk of African migration to Germany did not occur until the 1980s.

Guest workers were meant to be temporary migrants who returned to their home country after the demand for labor decreased. However the government began a program to foster social integration in 1970 after recognizing the potential for permanent immigration. This sparked foreign trade unions and organized labor to resist conservative efforts to enforce the original temporary status of guest workers (Friedrichs and Alpheis 1991). Foreign labor recruitment programs ended in 1973 and existing guest workers were allowed to stay and bring their families to Germany. This led to the third phase of migration to Germany.

The family reunification phase lasted from 1973 to 1988. Many guest workers from European Union (EU) countries returned home in the late 1970s; however most guest workers from non-European Union countries, particularly Turkey, chose to remain.
They did not have the migration privileges of EU citizens and would most likely be unable to re-immigrate to Germany (Langlykke 2000). The remaining guest workers brought their families through Germany’s family reunification policy, and the country experienced a major demographic shift. “The number of foreign residents increased from 170,000 in 1952 to 2,600,000 in 1973, and then to 4,512,700 in 1986. By the end of 1986, 31.8 percent of the newcomers were [Turkish], and the foreign population made up 7.4 percent of the entire population of [West] Germany” (Jurgen & Alpheis 1991, p. 118). Immigration from guest worker family reunification had a lasting impact on German demographics, and the Turkish population continues to be one of the largest non-German ethnic groups in Germany today.

East Germany attracted migrants with their own guest worker program in the 1980s, coinciding with the West German family reunification phase. The German Democratic Republic (GDR) recruited laborers from developing socialist countries such as Vietnam, Angola, Mozambique and Cuba (Kemper 1998). Most guest workers in East Germany returned to their home countries after their contracts expired (Langlykke 2000), thus GDR migration policies did not significantly alter Germany’s racial demographics.

The fourth phase of migration to Germany was heavily influenced by internal conflict and global politics. The period lasted from 1988-1993, which included the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the reunification of Germany in 1990. The presence of black American soldiers dropped in this period following the removal of United States military troops in Berlin. German migration policy shifted to favor ethnic German resettlement.

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3 The most significant migration involving the GDR is its emigration from East to West Germany. “During the period of 1950 to 1994, East Germany lost 4.9 million people to West Germany. The East German population…declined during this time by a total of 2.9 million people” (Langlykke 2000, p. 15).
and people seeking political asylum. Ethnic Germans (Aussiedler) were encouraged to immigrate to Germany from Eastern Europe. Liberal asylum regulations in the West German constitution attracted many refugees from Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe. Many Africans immigrated as political refugees during this period.

The fifth phase of German migration began in 1993. New regulations in the mid-1990s limited the number of political refugees granted asylum in Germany. The German government also allocated special funding to encourage immigrants to return to their native countries. Today the amount of migration to Germany has slowed dramatically compared to the latter half of the twentieth century. The current phase of German migration is at a crossroads, dependent on contemporary debates of immigration policy.

The history of modern migration to Germany is not built upon a notion of permanency. Maggie Leung calls attention to this fact in her book, *Chinese Migration in Germany*. “Rather than talking of immigrants, another rubric was used. Disregarding how long they have lived in Germany, whether they were born there or have ever lived in places outside Germany, these members of German society are ‘foreigners’ (Ausländer)” (2004, p. 11). The construction of German rhetoric and ideology of migrants as “foreigners” has had a significant impact on the rights accorded to non-ethnic Germans, the most important being the right to German citizenship.

**German Citizenship Rights**

Prior to January 2000, German citizenship was declared by genetic inheritance regardless of place of birth (German Embassy 2006). Automatic citizenship was restricted to those born to a German mother or father. Special regulations applied if the
parents were unmarried and only one had German citizenship. The “bloodline” law still holds for people born before January 2000. Therefore, the majority of non-ethnic Germans residing in Germany are not considered German citizens, even if they were born and raised in the country. A recent reform in citizenship law allows those born to non-German parents on or after January 2000 to be declared citizens. At least one parent must possess a permanent residence permit and have lived in Germany for a minimum of eight years. These children must declare if they wish to inherit their parents’ citizenship (depending on the laws of the other country) or keep their German citizenship by their 23rd birthday. People born in Germany after 1990 or permanent residents who have lived in Germany for at least eight years may apply for German naturalization.

The restrictions limiting German citizenship to inheritance have a profound effect on the rights of non-ethnic Germans. Ekpenyong Ani, a member of the Afrodeutsche Frauen (African German Women) organization, expresses, “The bloodline laws have influenced the way people think about who is German and who is not” (Lasana 2006). People born in Germany to non-German parents are considered foreigners and do not have the rights of German citizens. This negatively impacts the social stratification of non-ethnic Germans, as they face more barriers to economic attainment and have less protection under the law. Regulations on self-employment for Ausländer exemplify this situation.

Some exceptions are granted to these regulations. For example, people married to German citizens may apply earlier for naturalization.
Migrant Entrepreneurship

Motivation for Self-Employment

Guest worker family reunification in the 1970s and the influx of political refugees in the 1980s coincided with a decline in the manufacturing industry. This influenced a shift toward self-employment by migrants in Germany. Immigrants no longer came “with the aim of finding dependent employment as previous waves of migrants had done, but of starting a business” (Kontos 2003, p. 127). Since the 1980s, “the total number of self-employed without employees has increased by 78% while that of small enterprises with employees has risen by 38%” (Leung 2003, p. 106). Table 1 shows the amount of growth in self-employment for migrants and non-migrants from 1985 to 2000.

Table 1. Self-employment rates of migrants and non-migrants in Germany

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Nationals All (%)</th>
<th>Migrants All (%)</th>
<th>Male (%)</th>
<th>Female (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>9.53</td>
<td>5.77</td>
<td>7.34</td>
<td>2.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>9.16</td>
<td>6.43</td>
<td>7.20</td>
<td>4.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>9.47</td>
<td>8.05</td>
<td>9.52</td>
<td>5.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>10.19</td>
<td>8.81</td>
<td>10.21</td>
<td>6.39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The number of self-employed migrants in 2000 accounted for 8.8% of the total migrant population. This number more than doubled in Berlin in less than five years; the self-employment rate among Ausländer in Berlin grew to 18.7% in March 2004.

The intense growth in Ausländer self-employment since 2000 is attributable to two major factors. First is a general lack of jobs and high rates of unemployment. Berlin’s unemployment rate is amongst the highest in the nation. The Statistical Office of Berlin (Statistisches Landesamt Berlin) reported an unemployment rate of 20% in March
2004, or one in every five persons. The rate is higher for Ausländer at 25%, or one in every four persons. “Self-employment or unemployment” is a common saying in Berlin, and it is a strategy used to escape such high levels of unemployment in the region. The second factor influencing recent growth in Ausländer self-employment is changes in German policy that grant greater leniency for non-German citizens to start a business.

*Ausländer Self-Employment Policy*

German policy regulating self-employment by Ausländer has shaped the evolution of migrant entrepreneurship. Traditionally, Ausländer from non-European Union Countries were denied the option of self-employment unless they had a right-of-abode permit (*Aufenthaltsberechtigung*), which is usually obtained after eight years of legal residency (Leung 2003). Recently, the German government has relaxed regulations on Ausländer self-employment in recognition of its potential to combat high levels of unemployment and strengthen the local economy (Kontos 2003). This demonstrates a rising dependence on migrant labor for a second time in modern German migration history. Demographic expert Dr. Herwig Birg declares, “The German population is permanently shrinking while the foreign population is permanently growing. Germans will soon become a minority in major German cities in the under 40 age group” (Clermont 2006, p. 2). This demographic forecast is a prevalent issue in German immigration debate and has many implications for future migration policy.

The level of regulation on Ausländer self-employment varies according to the applicant’s nationality, length of residence in Germany and type of business planned. Permission to set up a business is granted if the proposed operation will contribute to the
local economy (Leung 2003). The approval procedure is complex and poses an obstacle for many individuals. The difficulty of establishing a business requires migrants to pool multiple resources together, relying primarily on ethnic-specific resources and social networks.

*Ethnic Resources*

Regulations on migrant self-employment depend heavily on the ability to finance a business. Traditional loans are unavailable to many migrant entrepreneurs and most do not have enough money to start a business on their own. A common method of obtaining funds is venture capital among co-ethnics (Leung 2004). Money is pooled together among family, friends and acquaintances in order to afford a small business.

Ethnic networks are an important support system in migrant entrepreneurship. Maggi Leung (2004) found in her research that social networking among co-ethnics is much more important than state-run programs. Most migrants are unaware of government programs to assist in the self-employment process. Maria Kontos (2003) argues that migrant entrepreneurs are marginalized from government programs. She found in her interviews with policymakers and administrators that “social groups deprived of class resources, such as financial and human capital, were not among the target groups to be supported by official policy” (p. 125). Inferiority and suspicion of informality, crime and exploitations are dominant themes in public discourse of ethnic communities and business ventures. “What is unfamiliar and rarely transparent due to cultural unfamiliarity is viewed as suspect.” A greater understanding of migrant communities would benefit policymakers to provide necessary programs for migrant
entrepreneurs. Migrant entrepreneurs face an unfair burden to depend on ethnic resources that, although beneficial, have a high cost. Problems arise from moral obligations connected with financial support. Furthermore, research shows that self-employment is undergoing a process of individualization that may deplete the resource of ethnic support networks (Kontos 2003).

**Background Conclusions**

Migrant entrepreneurship is influenced by an interconnection of German policy surrounding migration, citizenship and self-employment. Entrepreneurship is sought as a method of escaping unemployment and the German government has acknowledged its positive impact on regional economies. Multiple layers of policy restricting Ausländer rights shape the culture of migrant entrepreneurship. Recent alleviation of government restrictions has influenced a boom in the ethnic business economy. However lack of government support and a complicated approval process have made ethnic entrepreneurs dependent on the support of co-ethnics. All of these factors have a strong impact on the formation and practice of black immigrant entrepreneurship. The remainder of this paper analyzes black immigrant entrepreneurship in Berlin as a form of labor market integration.
METHODOLOGY

The research in this study is based on ethnographic methods. Data collection is based on interviews, observations and document and literature review. Interviews and observations occurred over a three month period in Berlin, Germany from January though March 2006. Informal interviews were conducted with black, Asian and Turkish migrant entrepreneurs; however all interviews are not included in this report. Non-intrusive observation of Berlin’s ethnic business economy and social relations inform the data analysis. Documents and literature were collected for a year long period from June 2005 to June 2006. These provided quantitative and qualitative data on Germany and Berlin. Issues reviewed include demographics, migration history, government policies, social theory and other studies on German ethnic entrepreneurship. A key resource for this study is a March 2006 issue of Exberliner magazine, an English-language monthly periodical in Berlin. The issue highlighted the experience of black residents in Berlin. Many of the interviews referenced in this study are cited from this resource.
FINDINGS: BLACK ENTERPRISE IN BERLIN

Types of Businesses

Black enterprise in Berlin has two major characteristics. First is its ability to fill an entrepreneurial niche that appeals to mainstream demand. This is largely due to the appeal of black popular culture. “We are speaking here of blacks as exotics, something Germans shamelessly pursue, queuing up around the corner for any traveling side show of dark-skin bodies sweating, dancing, drumming, or simply being ‘authentic,’ something in such short supply here in Berlin that even white imitators…can knock down a fat bag of euros” (Lasana 2006, p. 19). A plethora of businesses promote culture from various parts of the African Diaspora, including the United States, Caribbean, Latin America and Africa. The most popular types of businesses are bars and clubs, although restaurants and retail stores also have a significant presence.

The second major characteristic of Berlin’s black enterprise is its function as a safe space for black residents. Black businesses are places where “people can network for jobs, housing, legal matters, or simply discuss events in their homeland” (Lasana 2006, p. 21). They provide a space for socializing and networking as much as they provide a service. Entrepreneurship allows black immigrants to claim a space that nurtures a sense of community and acceptance. This is a unique feature compared to other ethnic entrepreneurship in Berlin. Although ethnic businesses function as a safe space for other migrant groups, the extreme minority status of the black population in Berlin magnifies the importance of claiming such a space.
Reasons for Self-Employment

Autonomy

Autonomy is a primary motivation behind entrepreneurship for black immigrants. Yemi Ogunbumi-Mellig (also known as Lisa), from Nigeria, owns Roots Bar in Charlottenburg. She decided to open her own business in order to be her own boss. “I was dancing in a club called Blondes, the only black woman there, and realized how much I liked the work. Then it occurred to me that I could be working for myself, in my own place. So I decided to do that” (Lasana 2006, p. 21). Lisa arrived in Berlin as a student in 1990, then opened Roots Bar in 1999 after operating her own restaurant, Topas, for two years.

Self-employment is also desirable because the German tax system can reduce one’s paycheck to almost half their earnings. “In Germany, a formally-employed person has to pay, in addition to income tax, a contribution to the reconstruction of eastern Germany, national health insurance, pension insurance and redundancy insurance (contribution to the unemployment benefit scheme)” (Leung 2003, p. 106). Entrepreneurship reduces this loss, especially in cases where the business owner does not hire outside employees.

Although autonomy is also a motivating factor for other ethnic groups seeking self-employment, the high level of discrimination faced by black immigrants places greater importance on autonomy for black entrepreneurs than other ethnic groups. Mario Jorge Do Rosario Neto, owner of Bantu Bar in Mitte, recalls the limitations he faced working for others. “I wanted to practice law, but the firms here would only use me to clean their offices. They never gave me the promotion to legal work they had promised”
Mario immigrated to Germany in 1986 to study politics and law, and opened Bantu Bar after he was unable to become a lawyer. Discrimination is a central theme in reasons for pursuing self-employment, and leads to the second major reason for entrepreneurship among black migrants.

*Barriers to Traditional Employment*

Mario’s story is one shared by many black immigrants in Berlin. He expressed in personal conversation that although he enjoys his business and has experienced success, it is not what he imagined for himself (Personal Interview, March 23 2006). His choices were limited by barriers to the traditional job market. Self-employment is a strategy of upward social mobility for groups that face discriminatory treatment in the job market. “Female, youth and migrant groups are the most vulnerable and over-represented sections in the unemployed population. Facing or expecting to encounter difficulties in finding a paid job with prospects in the formal economy, many migrants consider self-employment to be an alternative” (Leung 2003, p. 105). Entrepreneurship offers more opportunity for economic success than most jobs available to migrant workers, many of whom have backgrounds of poverty and lower levels of education.

Other migrant groups share the experience of facing barriers to traditional employment. Vuong Le, co-owner of a Thai take-out restaurant (*imbiß*) in Mitte, expressed that his decision to open a business was not his first choice for a career. Vuong immigrated to Berlin in 1999 from Vietnam, and worked odd jobs before saving enough money to open his restaurant with friends in 2003. “I would really like to go to America, I don’t want to be in Berlin…there are no jobs here for me” (Personal Interview, January
Vuong worked as an accountant in Vietnam, but his limited German and English prevented him from seeking professional work.

Mario and Vuong’s history is representative of many migrant entrepreneurs who seek self-employment later in life. “The process of developing a commitment towards an entrepreneurial career is based on a process of diminishing commitment towards previous professional roles…old vocational roles are abandoned and a new orientation is developed” (Kontos 2003, p. 126). Migration from a country that is less strong in the global economy compared to the host country creates a “break” in the lives of migrants “due to the lack of transferable social rights” (Kontos 2003, p. 127). The majority of migrants from developing regions face barriers to seeking employment for which they qualified in their native country.

It is important to note that black immigrant entrepreneurs also face barriers within the realm of self-employment. Papus Fofana, a native Guinean who opened the nightclub Tam-Tam in 2001, notes the difficulty he faced as a black business owner. “It was not easy, owing not to day-to-day business problems, but to not being accepted as a black businessman” (Lasana 2006, p. 25). Papus faced constant false complaints from neighbors about drug dealing. “Two years ago, 300 police arrived and searched everyone and everything. It took six hours, from midnight to 6 a.m. They found nothing.” Anthony Baggette, an art therapist from Ohio who came to Berlin in 1981, also faced difficulty as a black entrepreneur and was prevented from opening a business. “When Baggette tried to reopen [the Blues Café] in 1999, the Berlin Polizei made their feelings clear. ‘The exact circumstances are very complex, but put it like this: when we listed the café as a failed venture with the Wirtschaftsamt, we noted the reason as police
The discrimination faced by black entrepreneurs intensifies the importance of claiming a safe space for Berlin’s black community.

Creating a Safe Space

The popularity of black culture in Berlin is not an indication of acceptance by Germans of black residents. The term “schwarze Musik ohne schwarze” (black music without blacks) exists to describe a practice by clubs that advertise “black music” nights but bar entrance to blacks. “The practice is difficult to prove because the clubs rarely have an official policy, but it is a common reality at clubs without black patrons…especially for single black males” (Lasana 2006, p. 27). Another example of discrimination towards blacks in Berlin occurred in April 2005 when the owner of a café in Prenzlauer Berg announced that he would not allow black youth in his business because of drug dealing fears (Lasana 2006). The exclusion of black residents from many public spaces creates a need to claim one’s own space that is accepting of black patrons.

Lisa, owner of Roots Bar, opened her establishment to create a space where black people felt safe and interracial activity was accepted. The club where she used to work as a dancer, Blondes, was restricted. “They did not allow blacks in the club. The owner was a white man who said he had nothing against blacks, but none ever got beyond the Turkish doormen. So I was determined to open a place where interracial activity could happen” (Lasana 2006, p. 21). Papus opened Tam Tam for similar reasons. “[I] wanted to make something for black people, a place where people could enjoy themselves”

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5 “Black music” is a term used in Germany referring to hip hop, R&B and other popular contemporary music that is usually performed by black artists.
(Lasana 2006, p. 25). Papus worked in bars for other people for ten years before opening his own business.

Bantu Bar hosts a special event once a month at to honor a particular African tribe or country. “Africans shy away from official organizations, such as I.S.D., but they readily participate in any party” (Lasana 2006, p. 21). Mario’s observation is indicative of differences in the black community between immigrants and German-born. I.S.D., or Initiative Schwarze Deutsches (Black German Initiative) is a political organization whose membership is comprised mainly of black people born in Germany. Angie Gollum, a member of I.S.D., expresses the different needs of Afro-Germans compared to black immigrants. “[Africans and black Americans] don’t understand what it’s like to be an Afro-German and hunger for roots and identity. They already have it” (Lasana 2006, p. 20). The desire for a sense of community and identity fuels much of the energy at establishments owned by black entrepreneurs.

Andreas Hartwig, owner of an advertising, web and graphics design firm in Prenzlauer Berg called Happy Graphics, has recognized the need for community among black residents in Berlin. He organized the Black Business Club in response to this need. It is meant provide an opportunity for financial networking in addition to being an inclusive social space. He views business as “the strongest glue for the black community” and has a diverse membership that includes all members from all parts of the African Diaspora. “Most activity by blacks is political, and usually one-shot. Now they are beginning to see advantages of approaching these projects as business undertakings” (Lasana 2006, p. 21). Andreas’ organization demonstrates the growing amount of black enterprise in Berlin. It is an important addition to the types of safe spaces claimed by
black residents in Berlin: social, political and economic. Black enterprise is central in creating these spaces.

**Conclusions on Black Enterprise in Berlin**

Black enterprise is sustained by its popularity in Berlin’s mainstream culture; however entrepreneurship by black immigrants is a response to discrimination and exclusion faced by blacks in many public spaces. The autonomy granted by self-employment is a driving factor for entrepreneurship by black immigrants. However self-employment is often not the original career choice of black immigrant entrepreneurs. Instead, it is an alternative to jobs that they could not obtain due to social and economic barriers. Barriers to traditional employment are also an experience shared by other ethnic groups that turn to entrepreneurship. The most unique reason for seeking self-employment in the black community is the desire to claim a safe space where blacks are accepted. The high occurrence of discrimination and lack of critical mass as less than one percent of the population creates a more intense need for safe space compared to other minority ethnic groups in Berlin. Black enterprise is a key factor in the creation of these spaces. It is crucial for fostering a sense of community and celebration of black identity for all black residents in Berlin.
CONCLUSION:
IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Black immigrant entrepreneurship in Berlin is driven by an intersection of historical, social, political and economic factors. High unemployment rates in Berlin create a push towards self-employment. Modifications in German policy have given greater leniency for Ausländer seeking to start a business, and the ethnic business economy as grown intensely as a result. Black immigrants turn to self-employment as a method of upward social mobility after facing barriers to traditional employment, driving a desire for the autonomy provided by self-employment. Black enterprise fulfills a critical need for claiming a space in Berlin for a population that is often excluded from public spaces. Black establishments offer a safe space free from discrimination and foster a sense of community among Berlin’s black residents.

Despite the milestones achieved for black enterprise in Berlin, black immigrant entrepreneurs still face many obstacles in self-employment. German citizenship law and restricted rights for Ausländer limit the upward economic and social mobility of migrants. German policymakers should reform these laws to provide more support for Ausländer self-employment in recognition of their increasing influence on the regional economy and social landscape. Citizenship law should redefine who is “German” to include those born in Germany, regardless of the citizenship of their parents. The same privileges should be given to all people born in Germany because they share the same responsibilities to society. This will foster greater social equality among ethnic Germans and non-ethnic Germans.
The collection of demographic data should include more detailed to disaggregate data by ethnic background. This will allow policymakers to have a more accurate understanding of the population’s social and economic trends. Lastly, anti-discriminatory policies should be enacted to protect people from unfair labor practices and exclusion from public spaces.

Self-employment and entrepreneurship offer tremendous potential for the labor market integration of black immigrants and other migrant groups. Ethnic enterprise has already contributed to the upward social mobility of many *Ausländer*. The above recommendations aim to remove barriers that prevent full labor market integration and decrease social inequality between different ethnic groups and nationalities.

Germany is at a critical point in its immigration history. Growing diversity requires the government to reevaluate migration, citizenship and economic policy. The policies enacted today should consider the current transformation in German national identity to ensure a healthy vision for the future.
References


