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Table of Contents

The Making of Black Urban Entrepreneurs

Rutledge M. Dennis, George Mason University and Kimya Nuru Dennis, Independent Scholar ..1

Preventing Suicide in Today’s Schools

Beverly Doyle, Creighton University15

From Personal to Pedagogical: How Faculty Modeling Influences Pre-Service Teachers’ AI Literacy Development in Teacher Preparation Programs

Abbie McClure, Lauren Campbell, Aubrey Ricketts, University of Tennessee Martin.....18

Professional Development of Inquiry Training Through the Lens of Critical Literacy

Molly Kathleen O’Rourke, Marshall University32

Educator Perceptions of Students with Disabilities in the General Education Setting

Christen Papallo, Central Connecticut State University49

Universal Design for Learning: Transforming Educator Preparation: Enhancing Equity and Access in Educator Preparation Programs Through UDL’s Three Core Principles: Representation, Action & Expression, and Engagement

Beth Stratton and Tammie Patterson, The University of Tennessee at Martin62

Artificial Intelligence’s Impact on College Students’ Cognition and Mental Health

Cosmina Vasilescu and Ilie P. Vasilescu, Union Commonwealth University74

Book Reviews

Leah Litman, Lawless: How the Supreme Court Runs on Conservative Grievance, Fringe Theories, and Bad Vibes.

Samuel B. Hoff, Delaware State University83

Incarcerated While Innocent

Samuel B. Hoff, Delaware State University86

John Grisham and Jim McCloskey, Framed: Astonishing True Stories of Wrongful Convictions.

Samuel B. Hoff, Delaware State University88

The Making of Black Urban Entrepreneurs

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I. Introduction

Black entrepreneurs have played a significant role in the economics, politics, and sociology of Black Americans, and many books and studies have confirmed this unique and crucial role. Among these are the excellent studies by Bulter (1991), Woodward (1998), Boudreaux (2004) and Boston (2014). These authors provide a thorough framework within which we may understand the importance and impact of Black entrepreneurship, the guidelines for establishing entrepreneurial enterprises, and the large and small issues and problems associated with entrepreneurial ventures and activities. The central themes permeating these studies and discussions have been the link and values of entrepreneurship on issues related to racial solidarity, self-help and self-reliance. These books also make the case for a recursive relationship, in that racial solidarity, and concepts of self-help and self-reliance are crucial in establishing Black entrepreneurship. The reverse is also true: the growth and development of Black entrepreneurship may be crucial towards creating the structure to sustain and promote racial solidarity, self-help and self-reliance. Thus, entrepreneurial life in the Black world would serve several purposes, one of which would be the self-employment of the entrepreneur, the other might be giving the individual entrepreneur a degree of financial independence. A third purpose is to provide goods and services to the Black community. A fourth purpose would be that of skill development among the Black population to lessen the impact of discrimination and racial disparities. The premises and logic for such ideas were clearly laid out by Booker T. Washington when he created the National Negro Business League in 1900 and later elaborated by him in his historical and contemporary account of these entrepreneurial activities in his 1907 book, *The Negro in Business*.

Most historical and contemporary studies of Black entrepreneurial enterprises have focused on banking, life insurance companies, savings and loan associations, funeral homes, cosmetic companies, newspapers, labor organizations, and labor unions. The creation of these enterprises has not only been crucial to Black employment, though this has been crucial. These enterprises have been central to the acquisition of skills and professional lifelines to many Black Americans whose mobility had been blocked by the lack of opportunity in a system which has systematically excluded Blacks from the opportunities available to the larger dominant society. Booker T. Washington (1901) provided an organizational and institutional framework for the sociology, politics, and economics of Black entrepreneurship when he created the Negro National Business League in 1900, but even before its creation, there were earlier attempts (Bulter, IBID) and Trotter, IBID) to create entrepreneurial ventures by Black Americans. These

early entrepreneurs, no doubt, possessed the grit, determination, and the will and desire to excel and achieve as the men and women in the present study illustrate.

Of all the studies focusing on Black entrepreneurs, the study that is most interesting, and like the present study, is the Woodward (1998) study. This is so, because the study contains the life histories of selected entrepreneurs. Such histories permit the reader to follow individual entrepreneurs as they move from childhood to maturity, and in the process, assess the issues, individuals, and situations which aided, slowed, or defeated, respondent's quest to fulfill their entrepreneurial objectives. In Woodward's study, one follows the narratives and learns much about the personalities of the entrepreneurs as well as the situations and circumstances, hurdles, obstacles, and victories which collectively characterize the history, sociology, politics, and economics of the entrepreneur, as well as the social, political, cultural, and economic setting in which entrepreneurial activities exist.

II. Theory and Theoretical Framework

There are excellent accounts of entrepreneurs which delve into historical accounts of the role of entrepreneurs. These accounts also, simultaneously, provide insights into theories of entrepreneurial activities. Among these are works of Joseph Schumpeter (2017) and David McClelland (1953, 1961, 1969). There are also, however, earlier books by Max Weber (1930[1904], 1947[1922]) on the historical role of entrepreneurs as well as the theory of entrepreneurship. These books have provided excellent insights into the psychology, sociology, history, and economics of entrepreneurs and the world of entrepreneurship. They, however, did not delve into the unique issues and problems germane to the world of the Black Entrepreneur, although McClelland has written a great deal of motivational research. Their books probe the internal psychological struggles besetting those embarking on the difficult road to entrepreneurship and the social, political, and economic world within which this internal psychological struggle takes place. Collins, Moore, and Unwalla (1964: 4) have provided a useful definition of the entrepreneur which characterizes the individual entrepreneurs in this study. For them, the entrepreneur is one who "...braves uncertainty, strikes out on his own, and through native wit, devotion to duty, and singleness of purpose, somehow creates business and industrial activity where none exists before." This definition highlights the difficulties confronting those embarking on entrepreneurial ventures. We must then assume double difficulties for Black entrepreneurs in a racially divided society.

When assessing the total life experience of Black entrepreneurs, it is important to view those experiences through the lens of "the dual hurdle." One might also describe this "dual hurdle" as a "dual obstacle course." Booker T. Washington touches on this duality in his book, *The Negro in Business* (1907), but he is careful not to have an extended discussion of racial discrimination, this dual hurdle, as he wants to make the case, forthrightly, that the Black entrepreneur, and Blacks in general, must prepare themselves, and succeed "despite" the prevalent, and on-going, and persistent racial discrimination which makes up the dual hurdle. The thesis for such an assumption was sketched by Washington in his book, *Up From Slavery* (1901), where he asserts

that ultimately, and hopefully, the quality of what is produced may/should be a determining factor in who buys your product, rather than whether potential customers like, or dislike, the producer of the product.

There also exists a view expressed by many respondents in this study, one the authors characterize as “standing strong theory,” a “resistance theory” of not giving up or giving in. It is an “I’ll show you theory.” It says, “you think I can’t make it, don’t you? Well, I’ll show you that I can.” In many ways, subtle, and not so subtle, this “resistance theory” runs through much of the narrative of many of the respondents in this study. The resistance theory is a central theme in the narratives because so many of the questions regarding childhood, youth, and young adulthood are connected to a period in the lives of respondents when race, racism, and Jim Crow Laws were central to the political, cultural, economic, and educational customs and values which dominated and controlled their everyday life. This would be the reality for most respondents in this study.

Albert Bandura’s (1971) social learning theory also provides useful insights into the social and psychological world of respondents as entrepreneurs, especially his views on observational learning and self-efficacy. These two perspectives are clearly demarcated in young entrepreneurs as they keenly observe the entrepreneurial activities of parents, family members, and neighbors. The motivation factor connected to entering the entrepreneurial world as young as some did, was not asked. However, the fact that many entered entrepreneurial activities at a young age may indirectly address the self-efficacy issue and the fact that even as the late childhood period, many sought a degree of independence.

III. Methods and Data

Structured interviews, each lasting at least an hour, were conducted with twenty-six respondents. For convenience, four of the interviews were conducted over the telephone. Unlike most studies of Black Entrepreneurs which largely focused on banks, insurance companies, funeral parlors, and other large Black entrepreneurial enterprises, this study focuses on street vendors, small, organized carpentry and brick mason groups, small flea market and thrift store operators, landscape company owners, the one-man home located barbershop, and small housing and church cleaning units. Although the interviews were structured, respondents, while responding to specific structured questions, often extended and elaborated on many of their answers. Their elaborations on the structured questions constitute brief stories in this article. Except for three respondents who were born in the North—New York, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts, the other respondents were born either born in Richmond or came to Richmond with their families when they were quite young. Twenty-three of the respondents were men, three were women, and the ages of respondents ranged from the late 30s to the late 50s. Fourteen of the respondents were married, three were single, nine were divorced, and two were widowers. The study was funded by a Summer Grant provided by George Mason University.

Since the small entrepreneur was the focus of this study, the owner of a small lawn mowing company that had been cutting grass and landscaping in a local Richmond community for many

years was contacted. After explaining the purpose of the study, he agreed to provide the names of the owners of other small entrepreneurial businesses in the city. In addition, similar requests were made in a local barber, an acquaintance at the local flea market, and a local paint crew that had been working in community for many years. These individuals provided the names, sometimes the telephone numbers, of other small entrepreneurs.

IV. The Siblings of Entrepreneurs

Most of the respondents were born in large families, a fact not unusual in the South, rural or urban. Four respondents had four siblings, four had five, five had six, two had seven, two had eight, and one had ten. The most interesting fact in the sibling issue is the birth order thesis. Contrary to studies which highlight and illustrate a relationship between birth order and leadership or success, this study does not necessarily support this thesis, since slightly more of the respondents were the middle child, rather than the oldest child. One of the first studies which raised the importance of birth order was the study by Anne Roe (1952) on the making of a scientist. Like this study, Roe's study did not indicate a high percentage of first born becoming scientists, though she did conclude that being a first-born, or being born close to a first-born may result in the "development of personal independence to a high degree", and that being a first-born, or near a first-born, "they might and sometimes did, get considerable indulgence in the matter of pursuing their own interests which was of benefit to them." (IBID, 72). When asked how well they got along with siblings when they were growing up, the vast majority indicated "very well." The "well" category was second. The "so-so" and "not so good" categories each had one response.

V. The Occupations of Parents

When discussing parental occupations, it is important to note that respondents often distinguished the time sequences of parental occupations. For example, many parents worked on multiple jobs simultaneously. In addition, many respondents replied that their parents worked on jobs in one area for five to ten years, then moved on to other jobs. Consequently, the list given by respondents reflects multiple jobs in one period, and multiple jobs over a five-to-ten-year period.

The Occupations of Mothers

Seamstress

Hospital Attendant

Factory Worker

Maid

Nurse

Teachers Aid

Bus Driver

Government Supervisor

Cleaning Homes

Teacher

Moonshine Operator
Housewife

Regarding the above list of occupations, six respondents cited maid, three cited housewife, and three cited factory work.

The Occupations of Fathers

Fathers worked in twice as many occupations as mothers. There is great variance in the occupations of fathers, and the occupations of fathers are different from the occupations of mothers. This fact may reflect the diversity of occupations made available to men in the society, in contrast to those available to women.

Bus Driver
Teacher
Tractor Trailer Driver
Grounds Foreman
Correction Officer
Factor Worker
Janitor
Cook
Construction Worker
Taxi Driver
Lawn and Landscape worker
Clerk in Grocery Store
Brick Layer
Stevedore
Railroad Worker
TV Repairman
Electronic Business
Grounds Foreman at High School
Furniture Maker
Operated Small Fish Market
Operated a Small Cleaners

“Who had the greatest influence on you while you were growing up, and who encouraged you to engage in entrepreneurial activities?”

Respondents’ answers to these two questions were so similar that the two headings were combined. The two questions were combined because it might be difficult to disengage entrepreneurial issues and interests while growing up from other purely family social and personal issues. In any case, there was a high degree of consistency among respondents to the two questions. In fact, respondents often mentioned more than one influential, both as

entrepreneurial encourager and as people having the greatest influence on them while they were growing up.

Fathers were listed seventeen times as the person who encouraged them to engage in entrepreneurial activities, and mothers were listed eleven times. For encouraging entrepreneurial activities, grandfathers were listed 7 times; grandmothers, 6 times; uncles, 7 times; aunt, 1; friends and peers, 8; sister, 4; stranger, 2; brother, 1; no one, 5.

Fathers also headed the list of the person who had the most influence on respondents while respondents were growing up, being listed ten times, followed by mothers who were listed eight times. Others followed in this order: grandfathers, 6; grandmother, 5; sisters, 3; uncles, 3; aunt, 1; high school teacher, 2; church member, 2; football coach, 1; neighbor, 1; no one, 2.

The Case of Missing Fathers

As indicated in the discussion above, fathers were both important in encouraging early entrepreneurial interests and engagements, and as important people in the lives of respondents while they were growing up. However, poignant observations and insights by Roe (1952) and McClelland (1961) on the role of fathers on the success of sons are interesting. In this present study of entrepreneurs, respondents were asked whether there was a death, or divorce, in the family before they were twelve years old. Ten respondents, almost half, had experienced a death in the family before they were twelve, two experienced a divorce. Six respondents lost a father, two, a mother, and four lost grandparents. Both Roe (1952, 86) and McClelland (1961, 404-405) suggest that a father's absence from the home may encourage and promote more independence and a greater achievement orientation in sons. This is an interesting point, as more contemporary studies have highlighted the negative consequences of missing fathers.

VI. The Education of Entrepreneurs

Collins and Moore (1964) cited the lack of formal education as a reason why many become entrepreneurs. Whereas, this might be true in some cases, it is not the case for respondents in this study. All respondents in this study finished high school, twenty-five percent finished college and twenty-five percent attended a vocational trade school. Despite finishing high school, and for a few, attending college or vocational trade school, and despite their entrepreneurial successes, they all agreed on one point: They were not book readers, and did not like to read. Books, therefore, were not the inspiration for their interest in entrepreneurial ideas and activities. But they did read, however. Not books, but magazines such as National Geographic, Ebony, and Black Enterprise, and they watched quite a few television shows such as the Discovery Channel, music and video shows. A few respondents noted that being acquainted with the life and experiences of national figures such as Malcolm X, Langston Hughes, and other national leaders sparked an interest in entrepreneurial activities.

In elementary and high school, respondents cited these courses as their favorites, listing their importance in this order: History, English, Math, Science, Art, and Business. Football was the favorite extra-curriculum activity in high school, with basketball a close second. Other activities,

from most favorite to less favorite were choir, playing a musical instrument, running track, drawing, and art classes. Also mentioned with single listings were church choir, Sunday school, wood workshop, gym classes, theatre, tennis, writing classes, fraternity, soccer, and band.

VII. Initial Entrepreneurial Experiences

It is important to note that many of the entrepreneurial experiences highlighted in this study could, and often did, begin while the respondents were quite young. This is why it was not unusual for some respondents to have begun their initial entrepreneurial experiences as early as six (2) and eight (4) years old. The activities engaged in at these early ages were confined to newspaper home deliveries and the use of bicycles and wagons to deliver items from grocery stores to the homes of store customers. Other entrepreneurial activities respondents engaged in when they were relatively young were shining shoes, raking leaves, and yard work. For the two women respondents, babysitting at an early age for family members, church members, and neighbors would be their first venture into the world of work. Though the above respondents were early entrepreneurial starters, most respondents began their activities between the ages of ten and eighteen. Included in this list are respondents who also delivered newspapers, shined shoes, delivered groceries for store customers, and did yard and landscape work.

Working as Teenagers

The age in which respondents began entrepreneurial work at young ages may also represent the types of work engaged in as teens. The difference is the freedom of the teenagers versus the limited freedom of the child worker who enters the work world doing one specific thing, like shining shoes on the corner, delivering groceries for customers living two to three blocks from a grocery store. The child worker who becomes a teen worker now has more options and more freedom to move from locality to locality and from one job to another, or from several jobs simultaneously. This point was emphasized by many respondents when asked about employment as teenagers. Indeed, their work as teenagers was often an extension of their first entrepreneurial experiences. Only one respondent did not work while a teen. Most respondents had multiple jobs, often simultaneously. There were many isolated jobs listed by respondents, but there was also employment opportunities connected to what many had been doing during their early entrepreneurial experiences. For example, five respondents continued to shine shoes, along with other work, five respondents continued to have newspaper routes, and five respondents continued to engage in lawn work and landscaping. Other types of employment included working as cooks, waiters, custodians, and clerks in grocery and clothing stores.

VIII. Current Entrepreneurial Activities

Respondents engaged in a variety of entrepreneurial activities, and as was true of many when they held multiple jobs as teens. For example, the respondent who organized the painting and cleaning crew also operated a small flea market and thrift shop on weekends. There was also the entrepreneur who advertised for sewing projects, i.e., designing and sewing shirts and jackets, and dresses, who also worked for an hourly fee, for a local dry- cleaning establishment, hemming

and sewing trousers, skirts, and men and women's suits. Examples like these made it clear that many of the respondents in this study were multi-talented and were therefore able to move in and out of a variety of entrepreneurial activities and interests. The central theme in the activities was the quest for independence and the pursuit of an area of interest that was tied to an earlier dream or aspiration. The organizer and owner of the lawn and landscape group, the organizers and owners of the painting and cleaning group, the tailor who organized the sewing unit, and the barbers who not only owned the one-man barbershop, but who also advertised his business as he rode through communities on his bike, and would give a quick haircut to a customer upon request.

The multiple entrepreneurial activities represent not only the flexibility within the entrepreneurial world. It also depicts a work world for Black Americans where, given racial discrimination and restrictions, it pays to be multi-dimensional workwise. Such is the case with the custodian who works as a barber on the evening and operates a small thrift shop on weekends. In addition, a few small entrepreneurs who once operated businesses from their homes have been able to rent small spaces for their businesses, for example the tailor and hair weaver, and small book publisher.

Most respondents in this study owned their businesses, and a few informed the interviewer that they were the presidents of their small companies. Also important is the fact that most respondents had a relative or spouse working in the business. These were the family members employed: Four wives, six sons, two daughters, one father, one mother, three sisters, one brother, and three cousins. The jobs included bookkeepers, accountants, and financial assistants.

When asked if they would choose the same entrepreneurial activity if they had to start over again, most respondents would not. That answer is not a total surprise, after all, in the works by Weber, Collins and Moore, and Schumpeter, cited earlier, a central theme in all their works is the entrepreneur as an adventurer and a chance-taker, loving a challenge. The adventurer and chance-taker, having experienced one line of work, now seeks an opportunity to do and experience something different, unique, and more challenging. Here is the breakdown:

a. Teaching

Most responded to the question by listing "becoming a teacher". Some listed a desire to teach history, science, geography, computer science, social science, working within Virginia's educational department system, and teaching in the Virginia state museum system.

b. Computers

Others expressed an interest in working on computers, working on advanced technological systems, smart energy computer systems, creating an internet-based business, and becoming a senior programmer.

c. Religious Work

Some respondents who chose religious work as a desired field wanted to become spiritual leaders to address hunger, poverty, and inequality; others wanted to use religion to address constitutional, national, and state laws.

d. Assorted Choices

Those not currently in these areas of work chose the following: military career, banking, welding, operating a restaurant, real estate, community agency to address alcoholism, drug use, major league baseball, and crime in the Black community.

IX. Current community involvement

Most respondents were actively involved in community affairs, and local religious affiliations and involvements headed the list.

a. Religion

Many respondents were involved in groups operating within churches. These included working with teen groups such as “Who Am I” and “Created in His Image,” offices held in churches, Christian Business Institute, Religious Outreach, and church-sponsored Women in Prison Group.

b. Social and Civic Groups

These groups included fraternities, sororities, civic associations, merchant’s associations, NAACP, Urban League, National Business League, Masonic Lodge, community and neighborhood watch, History Lecture Group, and 100 Black Men.

c. Community Groups

These groups included Programs for those with Substance Abuse, Transitional Housing for Women with Children, and The Organization for Single-Parent Women-Headed Households.

X. Are racial problems in the United States solvable?

In this section respondents were asked to discuss the question of whether the racial problems in the United States were solvable. In response, eight responded, yes, fifteen responded, no, and three responded, maybe. This is a crucial question, since most respondents were born and spent their formative years in the South, only three having been born and spending their early formative years in the North. The follow-up questions were, if yes, why, and if no, why?

a. The Racial Problem is Solvable.

1. Eventually color will disappear as an object of discrimination.
2. A new generation of whites with different backgrounds will change race relations in a more positive direction.
3. We seem to be making progress, although slow, but it’s a good sign.
4. Racial division is not as bad as it was in the past. Relations will improve.
5. The rich and educated whites will eventually move beyond color
6. Most of the racial hatred is gone, and the racism of the past will never return

7. Race relations are better, but the media spin makes it seem worse
8. Yes, but not in my lifetime

b. The Racial Problem is not Solvable.

1. Many whites refuse to change their racial views passed down to them
2. Whites will always hate, older whites teach younger whites to hate
3. Whites will never accept Black people
4. Racism is too ingrained in the American culture.
5. Whites are unwilling to share power in the U.S.
6. Equality means power sharing, and whites will never do that.
7. Race and skin color are weapons to maintain power in America.
8. Whites have power and they're not going to share that with another race
9. Racism shows a lack of Godliness. Whites have racial greed
10. Whites won't give up racism, because they have a need to feel racially superior.

c. Maybe

1. Racism will be solved when people have Christ in their hearts, only then are we able to move from the flesh to the spirit and place the love of God in our hearts.

XI. While growing up, was your community integrated, or segregated? In either situation, did it help, or hurt, your social and economic life?

The last two questions in the survey inquired whether respondents were raised in segregated or integrated communities, and whether either of those situations helped, or hindered, their social and economic life. Twenty- three of the twenty-six respondents were born in the segregated South, whereas three were born in the North. One respondent born and raised in the North indicated that being born and raised in an integrated community had no effect on him. The other two, born in the North indicated that it helped them. One replied that an integrated community gave him an early exposure to different people and different cultures, and in addition, made it possible for him to see positive role models and realize the importance of hard work and determination in achieving social and economic success. Two respondents born and raised in the South also indicated that segregation helped them, a point we will discuss later.

Seven respondents born in a segregated community replied that segregation had no impact on their social and economic life, and three respondents born in the South replied that they did not know if there was an impact. Ten respondents, born and raised in the South, indicated that segregation did hurt, or harm, them. Those asserting the positive view of segregation, while not necessarily supporting segregation, surmised that, as one said, "segregation made me want to do better. It made me more determined to do well and learn all that I could."

"Segregation made me stronger, I had to stay focus, it made me plan better for my future."

"Segregation made me more determined to succeed, despite the odds."

“My friends and I knew we had to struggle to succeed in a segregated world, so we tried to prepare ourselves.”

“Segregation strengthened my will to succeed and made me look for viable options in the community.”

“Segregation taught me one lesson I continue to keep: Never give up the struggle to realize your dream.”

For the ten respondents who indicated that segregation hurt them socially and economically, they responded could be summarized with these words:

“Segregation held us back. It affected our education and work experiences and closed the doors to many opportunities white guys had.”

“Segregation made us start late and prevented us from starting the race on an equal footing with whites.”

“Segregation slowed our education and made us waste a lot of time playing ‘catch-up’.”

“Segregation made me doubt myself and question whether I could succeed, or whether I was good enough to succeed.”

“Segregation killed the opportunity structure for Black people, and made it much more difficult to succeed, or to achieve.”

While acknowledging the negative impact of segregation, some respondents cited how the Black community helped, and saved, them during the era of segregation:

“Segregation often had little impact on many of us, because we were in our own world: our churches, segregated schools, and segregated community and cultural affairs. We really didn’t think very much about white people, and when we did, we just thought they were mean people who thought they were better than other people.”

“Growing up, I only interacted with Black people and the Black community. They gave me a healthy view of life and living.”

“I attended segregated schools, but I was largely educated in the segregated world of Black institutions and businesses-the barber shops, funeral parlors, candy stores, and small Black grocery stores. They all gave me a living and practical education.”

Entrepreneurs tell their stories of becoming young entrepreneurs

“I was eight when I started delivering the morning newspaper for my block, even though the rule was that you had to be twelve to deliver paper. I continued to deliver the newspaper in high school, and because my grades were so poor, my grandmother convinced me to attend evening vocational ed classes, which I did after attending regular classes during the day. I took courses in auto mechanics, and stayed with that awhile, then later became a route manager for the local newspaper and organized a crew to deliver batches of newspapers throughout the city.”

“I became a young barber entrepreneur when I was fourteen years old. A distant relative trained me. But I was also engaged in other entrepreneurial activities like landscaping, selling clothes, and jewelry. I have been cutting hair professionally, since I was seventeen.”

“I am an events planner and organizer. It all began when I was sixteen, and I convinced my mother, my parents divorced, to allow me to have a party at our house. She did, and I made cookies, and two cakes, and served punch, and charged a quarter for those who came. We played music and had a good time. That experience drew my interest in becoming an events organizer and planner, which is my business.”

“I started working when I was eight years old, helping my dad clean churches in the evening during the week after attending elementary school during the day. He paid me for helping him. Then during weekends, he would mow the lawn for his customers, and I would help him. Then when I was twelve, I began delivering newspapers in the community and had to get up at 5am to deliver the papers before heading off to school. I did that for three years. Then in high school, after classes, I worked part-time in the kitchen at the Medical College of Virginia. When I wasn't working, I was taking classes in electrical work and computer education at the Richmond Tech Center. Later, I took vocational classes in welding and construction work. All my friends asked me why I was tormenting myself by taking all of these classes. I told them I liked money, and to have money you have to possess many skills. Acquiring skills require hard work, and I was willing to work hard to get what I wanted. I grew up in segregation, and I didn't like it, but it didn't bother me much, because I was trying to get what I needed to help myself. I am currently a board-certified electrician and I have a work crew of three other board-certified electricians assisting me.”

“I began lawn work and landscaping because my stepfather was doing it, and when I became sixteen, I began working with him throughout high school. After finishing high school and working for Phillip Morris, I put together a lawn and landscaping crew like my stepfather had done, and we worked on weekends. I've been doing this now for twenty years.”

“I was six years old when my grandfather began taking me to the small jewelry store, he owned, and I watched him deal with customers, blacks and whites. When grandfather died my father inherited the business. Later, my father died, and I inherited the business when I was thirty years old. We went through hard times, and to help pay the rent for the business, I drove cabs and became a custodian at the Federal Reserve Bank building where I cleaned toilets. I did what was necessary to keep the business, and we succeed.”

“My father was a bricklayer, and I went to vocational classes in high school and became a bricklayer. After my high school graduation, I worked on many jobs, but I decided to organize a crew of bricklayers which I have today. Along with that, I also have a lawn improvement crew.”

“I was raised by my grandmother until I was nine. That's when I started shining shoes. Then when I was thirteen, an uncle who was a tailor got me interested in sewing. Although I shoveled snow, had a paper route, caddied, and did custodial work as a teen, my heart was attached to

sewing, and at a young age I began to make shirts, blouses, and dashikis, etc. Sewing has been the center of my life since I was a teenager. I've had my small tailor shop for more than fifteen years.”

“I began to work as a shoe cobbler when I was eighteen years old and worked in a Jewish shoe repair shop. I worked in the shop for ten years, but on the side, I worked as a brick layer and also as a auto transmission repairman. I held down these jobs at the same time, because I needed to make enough money to open my own shoe repair shop. I was able to open my own shoe repair shop when I was forty years old.”

Discussion

This article focuses on the patterns of socializations among a small sample of Black Urban Entrepreneurs in Richmond, Virginia. As stated in the introduction, this study sought to capture and depict the process of socialization among small entrepreneurs, or entrepreneurs who provided services that were confined to local everyday needs of the local population. For this reason, the study was not interested in entrepreneurs who established large banks, insurance companies, electronic companies, or mega companies. Instead, we wanted to explore the world of those who provided the everyday needs of a population: the lawn and landscape companies, the local paint crews, thrift shops, small barber shops, tailor and shoe shops, brick layer and construction crews, and event and party planners.

When we read the entrepreneur's narratives on becoming entrepreneurs as such young ages, Bandura's (1971) social learning theory is clearly demonstrated in these narratives. The success stories depicted in this study clearly demonstrate that the entrepreneurial work by respondents fulfilled needs crucial to the communities in which they resided. This study also supports assumptions germane to the theories of entrepreneurship exemplified in the early studies of the entrepreneur by Weber (1922, 1930) and Schumpeter (1934, 2017), and more recent studies by McClelland (1953, 1961, 1969) and Collins and Moore (1964).

The above theories and principles of entrepreneurship hold just as true for Black urban entrepreneurs as they do for entrepreneurs in general, except for the intense and deeply structured racial and color lines in the United States which must be factored in when analyzing the American scene. To understand racial legacy, it is important to read Booker T. Washington's *The Negro in Business* (1907) that outlined some of the obstacles confronting early-to-late nineteenth century and early-twentieth century Black entrepreneurs. To get an in-depth picture of the successes and failures of contemporary Black entrepreneurs, we turn to recent works from which we get in-depth critiques and analyses of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship from John Sibley Butler (1991), Michael Woodward (1998), Butler and Kozmetsky (2004), and the biography of Reginald F. Lewis (1995). Earlier Anne Roe's *The Making of a Scientist* (1952) was cited, because so many features of becoming a scientist were just as evident and relevant in the making of Black entrepreneurs.

This study illustrates the fact that certain people are motivated to pursue their passions even in circumstances where, due to racial discrimination, which greatly restrict their options. This study illustrated the fact that there were triple, double, and single dimensions of this restriction, for as a few respondents noted, this racial restriction was multi-generational, affecting grandparents, parents, and respondents. What is clear and evident, and this clarity is seen more keenly in the brief quotes by respondents towards the end of this paper, is the fact that structured barriers, whether weak or strong, cannot, in the end, totally inhibit, destroy, or kill, the dreams and personal desires, individuals have incorporated as defining and representing their sense of self-who they currently are, and who they, in their dreams, wish to be.

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