

# Growing the Pie: The Social Impact of Black Owned Business



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# Research Question



- ▶ What is the Social Impact that Black owned Businesses have on the Development of the Memphis Community?
- ▶ What does social impact mean?

For this project I defined social impact as “Having a voluntary or involuntary change or significant effect in the environment of a community”.



# Core Questions

- ▶ I used these questions in my interviews to solve the broader research question.
- 1. What are the barriers in achieving a social impact in Memphis?
- 2. What roles do Black businesses owners have in the community?
- 3. What do Black businesses tell us about the social and economic state of Memphis?
- 4. Why are black owned businesses essential for the growth and development of Memphis?

Process





# Memphis Massacre

- ▶ Read “A Massacre in Memphis” by Stephen V. Ash
- ▶ Read a few scholarly articles on the Massacre
- ▶ Read “Beale Street Dynasty” by Preston Lauterbach





# Rise of Beale Street

- ▶ Read “Beale Street Dynasty” by Preston Lauterbach
- ▶ Looking at key players in the rise of Beale Street such as Robert Church Sr., Ida B. Wells, William C. Handy, etc. These people shaped Beale Street.



# The Age of the Crump Machine

- ▶ Read "From Boss Crump to King Willie: How Race Changed Memphis Politics" by Otis Standford
- ▶ Read "Race politics and Memphis' Reign of Terror" by Jason Jordan
- ▶ Examined Crump's role in the destruction of the infrastructure of Black owned business
- ▶ Also, how Black Business owners played a role in keeping his power





# Present Day

- ▶ Interviewed Business owners, and people in positions in organizations who work trying to help minority owned businesses to thrive in Memphis.
- ▶ Looked at news papers that are highlighting events concerning Minority owned businesses.





# Findings

- ▶ “For Memphis to move forward as a successful community, we must improve the performance of minority owned business or African American owned businesses.” -Roby Williams

# What are the Obstacles?



"We always have to have entrepreneurs, people who are building businesses and who are venturing out and trying to be entrepreneurs. And giving back to the community. You can't sustain yourself as a people, as a community."

-Van Turner



# Opportunity



"People say you need to pull yourself up by your bootstraps. Hell, I aint got no shoes"

-Melvin Jones

"Of every \$100 spent in this community of every \$100 of revenue spent in this community. Exactly three cents. No, excuse me. Exactly 83 cents go to African Americans."

-Roby Williams

"The black community in America is weak because black businesses are virtually nonexistent."

-Melvin Jones

# Time

There is not enough time  
to do all the nothing  
we want to do.





# Sustainability

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“ Sustainability and scaling up I think would be things that are of concern. You know, business ownership is difficult especially in the beginning. You have to have a lot of support to sustain that new business. Sometimes we don't get that support.”

-Van Turner

“Sustain ability is what's so critical going forward. And that's why I have an interesting strategy about how to sustain the project is just so critical to certain points within a an endeavor, but that is not the end game. The end game is 23 years from now, is this project still here?”

-Jimmie Tucker

# Conclusion: What is the Social Impact?

- ▶ “The work that we do here, I believe impacts the child that no one thinks about or no one knows because that child's parents are able to provide for them a better quality of life. Which means that child is ready to learn when that child goes to school, graduation rates, crime rates. All of those things are impacted. I believe, because of the work that we do and the jobs that are created by our minority owned businesses.” –Jozelle Booker



# Conclusion? What is the Social Impact?

## ► Opportunity

"Minority businesses take chances on individuals, they bring them in and they train them."

-Jozelle Booker

"The fact of the matter is this, black owned businesses employ people who look like you and me for Memphis to move forward successfully. We must have more successful Black owned businesses"

-Roby Williams

"We need to give back to the community and use the expertise that we have to benefit the community and not be a parasite to the community."

-Van Turner

"My greatest moments, as a lawyer wasn't the big transactions that I've done, or the big deals that I close, the big fee I collected, it was being a partner, offering a young man a job that I knew changed his life."

-Al Bright

# Conclusion? What is the Social Impact?





# Politics

We always have to have entrepreneurs, people who are building businesses and who are venturing out and trying to be entrepreneurs. And giving back to the community. You can't sustain yourself as a people, as a community.

-Van Turner

I mean, you have to really get the business down and then you have to engage in politics because politics, as I've just stated, controls a lot of the flow of business in and out of a city

-Van Turner

"Policies outlasts people"

-Floyd Tyler

"So having the ability to assist in removing it [Nathan Forrest Statue] along with other fighters in the community, Tami Sawyer, Walter Bailey, Earl Fisher, Charles McKinney and Natalie McKinney and all the others, , you know, it was, it was an honor"

-Van Turner

# Creation of a foundation for the community.



“If you don't have a strong business base, your nothing.”

-Melvin Jones

“Now what it means to us to see black people achieve it means everything because we're proving everyday that our black seeds keep on growing.”

-Roby Williams

“They [Black owned businesses] mean the success or the failure of Memphis as a vibrant economic growing community.”

-Mark Yates



# Hope and Pride



"I think entrepreneurs should be, you know, they should be applauded because not everybody can do that because not all of them succeed, but just to have the courage to step out there and do that."

-Jozelle Booker

"So I think ownership of this law firm in doing what I'm doing can hopefully set an example for others to follow."

-Van Turner

"Memphis to me can be the model. We can be the model for the world"

-Jozelle Booker

# What does it mean to be a Black Entrepreneur?

"A regular entrepreneur must be a good risk taker, but Black one must be excellent."

-Al Bright

"We also need to retrain in entrepreneurs that we need to be supporting black business owners and we, you know, we need to be encouraging that in our community."

- Van Turner

"African-Americans, your blocks are set behind where the starting line really is, so you've got to run that much faster to get to the starting line and then you got to compete against the racers who've already been racing for hundreds of years."

-Mark Yates

"A lot of non black entrepreneurs that enter into the marketplace, they have friends who may have access to money, who they can call on and give them a loan to get started, personal loan, or they may know someone at a bank or they might have a trust or somebody in their family might give them money. So they go into it with that advantage from the capital standpoint and the connection standpoint"

-Jozelle Booker



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- ▶ Melvin Jones
- ▶ Jozelle Booker
  - ▶ Al Bright
  - ▶ Floyd Tyler
- ▶ Herbert Boyd
- ▶ Archie Willis



Questions?

“What benefit is a “leader” if he does not devote his time, talent, and wealth to the alleviation of the poverty and elevation of his people”  
- Ida.B.Wells

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