



Race, Self-Employment, and Upward Mobility: An Illusive American Dream (Woodrow Wilson Center Press)

Professor Timothy Bates

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"The argument is important and very well buttressed by statistical analysis. The sociologists who have worked on Asian and minority entrepreneurship will certainly respond, and the debate will be lively." -- Nathan Glazer, Professor of Education and Social Structure, Harvard University

Race, Self-Employment, and Upward Mobility refutes conventional notions about entrepreneurship with a wealth of unimpeachable data. Timothy Bates finds that self-employment and upward mobility are open to those who are highly educated and skilled, often possessing significant personal financial resources. This is true among Asian Americans, African Americans, and everybody else, too. Asian immigrants are prominent in low-profit, high-risk small-scale inner-city retailing, Bates explains, because they are often pushed into it by poor English language skills and problems of credentialing -- when they can secure other employment, they do so. African Americans, in contrast, who have the education, capital, and inclination to become entrepreneurs find better-paying opportunities and avoid ghetto shopkeeping.

Bates compares black and Asian self-employment. He reviews who becomes self-employed, what factors encourage continuing self-employment, and how people escape unsuccessful self-employment. He addresses the place of entrepreneurship in upward mobility among disadvantaged persons and the role of government in assisting them. Bates's analysis is based largely on the massive Characteristics of Business Owners survey compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau, which provides nationwide information on small business success and survival patterns.

This book is an important contribution to the economic and sociological literature on ethnic groups and labor. It belongs in all libraries with extensive holdings in economics and sociology. In paperback, it can be used in upper division and graduate level courses.

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