

Promoting Philanthropy in the Black Community: A Macroscopic Exploration

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*This paper examines Black philanthropy as a distinct strand of American philanthropy. Although exploratory, this study is historically informed and conceptually oriented, focusing on philanthropic activism or social marketing to attain social justice and racial equality. To frame the discourse on Black philanthropy, we pursue a sociohistorical perspective, documenting its patterns and evolutionary stages. This sets the stage for constructing a macroscopic social marketing framework for the strategic promotion of philanthropy in the Black community in order to achieve socioeconomic empowerment. The proposed framework is built on the twin pillars of **cause identification** (the causes Blacks share and identify with) and **institutional trust** (the institutions Blacks trust). As such, it is expected to offer a conceptual direction for future research on Black philanthropy/social marketing.*

In the mid-1990s, Mr. John Jacob, Executive Vice President at Anheuser-Busch, was invited to give a *Forum* lecture in the School of Business & Industry at Florida A&M University—a historically Black university. Prior to joining Anheuser-Busch, Jacob, a familiar name within the civil rights circle, had served as executive director of the National Urban League, the nation's oldest and largest community-based movement devoted to the sociopolitical and philanthropic agenda of enabling "African Americans to secure economic self-reliance, parity, power and civil rights" (nul.org; see also Smith et al. 1999, 22).

When a student asked why he had moved to Anheuser-Busch from the NUL, Jacob said that "Selling beer is a lot easier than selling social justice" because beer is a physical product a buyer can hold and consume to achieve instant pleasure. Selling social justice, a philanthropic cause, is an entirely different matter; it is *social marketing*¹—a project that demands commitment from its subscribers (buyers) and whose "ultimate objective...is to influence action" (social-marketing.org). As Brown (1999) clarifies, marketing a philanthropic cause is a purposeful activity whose productive value is not captured by its buyer. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that unlike finding buyers for beer, finding

subscribers to pay for social justice for the greater good of society is a constant challenge, especially when such a cause is directly associated with groups that have been disadvantaged or discriminated because of their race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, or some other factors. By implication, social marketing usually goes against the status quo and its socioculturally ingrained norms and values.

The key question guiding this study is: How to market² philanthropy so that it can serve its social justice cause in the public domain? To be more specific, its primary focus is on exploring ways to promote philanthropy in the Black community and to provide a conceptual direction for future research. In proposing a macroscopic framework for cause-based philanthropy, the study locates the discourse on Black philanthropy within a broader sociohistorical context. As a leading marker of what is often referred to as the third sector (civil society), philanthropy is a powerful agency although devoid of any direct ability and legal authority to make (change) social policies or regulate them. What it does possess is moral authority to influence both the state and the market with respect to social policies and their outcomes for the greater good of society. With this premise, we approach Black philanthropy as a sociohistorical phenomenon immersed in social justice advocacy and a sociocultural practice driven by racial survival and self-help imperatives (CPCS 2003; Gough 2001; Hall-Russell and Kasberg 1997; Sweet 1996). Thus informed, the paper is divided into three major sections: a conceptual direction for philanthropic social marketing, the patterns and evolution of Black philanthropy, and a macroscopic framework for promoting philanthropy in the Black community to achieve socioeconomic empowerment.

PHILANTHROPIC SOCIAL MARKETING: A CONCEPTUAL DIRECTION

There is a tendency to make a distinction between charity and philanthropy. Bremner (2002) aptly notes that *charity* was invariably seen as religious in origin, traditional in method, and ameliorative in result and *philanthropy* as secular, innovative, and enlightened in orientation and preventive and curative in effect. However, these

distinctions, he adds, are fading as “giving” is increasingly used to replace both charity and philanthropy, also referred to as the nonprofit or independent sector. We agree that this change in nomenclature is a necessary step to bridge the divide between charity and philanthropy. Nevertheless, we have elected to apply the latter in this study, partly because it is now broadly defined to include different forms of giving (Smith et al. 1999), but mainly because of its historical social justice advocacy role and resiliency, specifically as related to the Black community. Bremner (2002, 5) states:

“The meaning of philanthropy as the word was used in the 18th and 19th centuries was *advocacy* for slaves (and other groups). Philanthropists were men and women who loved their fellow-men, especially the oppressed, despised, weakest members of society, and devoted their lives to improving the lot of the wretched. In the opinion of contemporaries, advocates of the abolition of slavery... were *cranks, troublemakers, disturbers of the peace*. Only later generations recognized the benefit they rendered society, as well as the classes they helped, by their persistence in attacking cruelty and promoting freedom, reason and kindness (emphasis and parenthetical words added).”

It is precisely this historical tradition of advocacy and determination to act as an agent of social justice and change by challenging the prevailing discourse on status quo that finds its appeal in this study as a guiding principle of social justice philanthropy (Carson 2002; Community Foundations of Canada 2002; NCRP 2003). To extend the logic of Thomas Kuhn’s (1962) scientific paradigm, society rarely advances to a higher level of civilizational standards merely through a linear organic process unless there is a determined challenge to prevailing and generally regressive norms and values from “troublemakers” and “trouble-making” agencies like social justice philanthropy. While it would be a folly to claim that every change is good, without change it is unlikely to see meaningful progress to elevate humanity to its much deserved summit.

In other words, Jacob’s remark goes right to the heart

of American philanthropy with a long socioinstitutional history of its own (Bremner 1960; Carson 1989; Friedman and McGarvie 2003). As many social problems fester and the demand for social justice persists in stark contrast to the country’s unsurpassed national achievements and ideals (*that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights*), the basic necessity of philanthropy magnifies. For those who are deprived and downtrodden, it is perhaps the last resort of some relief, the only accessible societal institution that is not only imbued in the culture of caring and sharing (Council on Foundations 1999), but also promotes it. Yet the comment’s implication for philanthropy and its civil society role is apparent and ominous. Philanthropy would be severely handicapped in its ability to serve the cause of social justice without necessary resources and support from the public and private sectors. Simply put, philanthropy’s vitality and viability as an agency of advocacy and change would be in jeopardy unless it can continuously sell the *idea* of “giving” to generate resources for actionable causes.

As depicted in Figure 1, philanthropic activities can generally be divided into three strains: donations (giving of money and other resources), volunteering (giving of time), and social justice (cause-based activism). Social justice philanthropy normally requires a long-term commitment, including both time and money. As a cause, it is invariably directed toward the upliftment of a larger group or community that has long been disadvantaged because of their race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, or some other ingrained biases. It is plausible to argue that the greater the cause and more controversial it is, the more difficult it is to sell it to the general public and to the public and private sectors. That is why marketing a humanitarian cause, normally a short-term concern associated with natural disasters, is easier as it is a lot less contentious than the cause of social justice and racial equality.

Since social cause-based philanthropy is invariably intent on remedying systemic and systematic injustices, it often turns into a project, mobilizing sustained efforts and

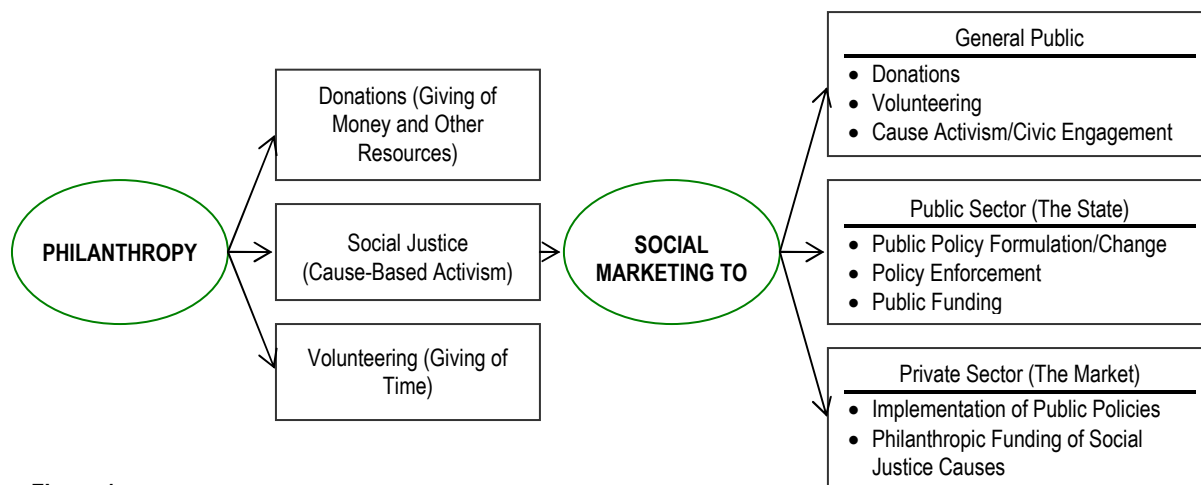


Figure 1
Philanthropic Cause Marketing

resources and demanding certain policy initiatives and change. It does so by performing its role as a change agent, exerting pressure, when necessary, on both the state and market forces to formulate and implement policies based on the principle of social justice for all. Simply expressed, philanthropic advocacy is all about marketing the cause of social justice, for it requires convincing the public to “buy” it with tangible investment of money and time for the greater good of society. It must have public support in order for it to be able to exercise its moral authority and to act as an effective agent of social change and progress. Once again, to quote Bremner (2002, 6):

“Service, advocacy, and litigation sometimes have the happy result of putting members of a disadvantaged group once deemed in need of help in a position to help themselves and look out for their own interests. This is empowerment. Empowerment corresponds to the highest stage in the medieval philosopher Maimonides’ ranking of the “eight stages of charity”: helping a needy person become self-supporting and independent. This is the objective of much of American giving. Its achievement and even conscientious effort to attain it are the best answer to popular misgivings about giving and useful reminders that generosity is better served by practice than praise.”

Paradoxically, however, the very need and existence of philanthropy is a symptom (and outgrowth) of fundamental weaknesses on the part of the *state* (the guardian and representative of its people with policymaking, regulatory, and resource redistributive powers) and the *market* (the producer and distributor of goods and services, along with jobs) with respect to their policy performances and social responsibility (see Brown 1999). That is to say, when and where the state and the market fail to secure social justice in society to alleviate social maladies (as they have time and again), there is a dire need to fill the void through self-help or alternative measures and mechanisms to manage existing social injustice and ailments to maintain some semblance of social order in society before it is consumed by crimes, violence, and many others social ills associated with social injustice³ (see Carson 2002; CPCS 2003; Friedman and McGarvie 2003; Gaudiani 2003; McCarthy 2003).

When the state and the market—the two large and largely impersonal institutions—fail, Americans give and volunteer to fill the gap (Brown 1999; McCarthy 2002). In other words, alternative social measures and mechanisms, history informs, mostly fall on *philanthropy*, especially in the United States (for a cross-national or comparative picture, see Anheier and Salamon 1999; Moore 2001). Yet, to repeat, the fact remains that philanthropies, particularly those not privately endowed by corporations and wealthy individuals, cannot give what they don’t get; they would not be able to provide social services and serve social justice causes unless they receive resources.

So serving the cause of social justice requires selling philanthropy to three key entities that constitute American society: (1) the *general public* (individuals/families) to demonstrate their generosity for the cause of social justice so that their fellow beings long denied equal opportunity and treatment could have a chance to share the bountiful American harvests; (2) the *public sector* (the state) to rectify its failures by formulating policies and providing funding to address various social ills for the greater good of society, and (3) the *private sector* (the market) to mend its market biases and distortions as well as to contribute resources to nonprofit organizations so that they can effectively manage social injustice and deprivation, which, if left unaddressed, could create a climate of sociopolitical instability, thus shaking the pillars of democracy and market confidence (see Boris and Steuerle 1999; Gaudiani 2003; McCarthy 2003).

PATTERNS AND EVOLUTION OF BLACK PHILANTHROPY

Petty (2002, xxi) contends that to successfully market philanthropy and cultivate fundraising in minority communities, it is crucial first to gain an understanding of their philanthropic patterns and motivations. This requires piecing “...together the available data on demographics, history and traditions, and cultural patterns to assemble some understanding of what is necessary and appropriate to both fundraise and increase philanthropic awareness in racially and ethnically diverse communities.” With this premise, we now turn to a brief overview of the patterns of Black philanthropic motivations.

Patterns of Black Philanthropic Motivations

A cursory survey suggests that the literature on Black philanthropy is on the rise although its conceptual anchor is generally lacking. Most of the available studies appear to be utilizing the same sources of information, with only a handful of them shedding new light. The academic interest in the topic is still in its early stages. Historically, Black philanthropy is seen as the target of philanthropic benefits rather than being targeted for philanthropic contributions (wkkf.org). “Few African Americans define their tradition of giving as ‘philanthropy.’ Surveys indicate that many African Americans see their donations of time and money as unremarkable” (Ball 1998). But such a perception does not tell the whole story. In reality, philanthropy has deep roots in Black America; roots shaped by the social geography of slavery and segregation (Brake 2001; Mary-Francis 1999; Stanfield 1993). Scott (2006, 1) writes:

“The enslaved people sought to improve their condition by developing cultures that provided relief from their daily

struggle. Thus emerged the concept of “self-help.” People helping people out of a sense of justice and duty not because of an intended financial gain. Herein lies the birth of black philanthropy. The desire of people to give of their time, energy and meager resources in service of others constitutes philanthropic acts. Free blacks who organized the Underground Railroad and took part in the abolitionist movement were engaged in acts of philanthropy. The various civil rights organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) were, in a sense, expressions of black philanthropy.... A recurring theme throughout definitions of philanthropy is ‘unity.’ Unity of mind, effort, will, courage and determination to make positive change in the lives of people. One of the most important roles of the black church was, and continues to be, to create a feeling of unity. From black churches spawned educational institutions to teach blacks to read, thereby opening up a new world of opportunities and possibilities.”

It is important to note that Black philanthropy has various strains, but they share a common bond to the Black community’s sense of self-help and commitment of time, money, and other resources to a greater cause. The cause of social justice and civil rights for uplifting the entire race is perhaps the most defining and enduring motivation of Black philanthropy (Conley 2000; Carson 1989; CPCS 2003; Edmondson and Carroll 1999; Fairfax 1995; Hall-Russell and Kasberg 1997; Jones 1996; Pollard 1978). In their attempt to map the patterns of Black philanthropy, Smith et al. (1999, Chapter 1) identify eight motivations which we have compressed into five to cover the most common ones. They are not only overlapping; they also exhibit, as Carson (1993) stresses, a profound tradition of kinship and community-based self-help:

The Church: The church is the single most important focal point of giving in the Black community as about 75% of giving is channeled through it (Ball 1998; Chaffin 2004). “One respondent referred to it as one of the last black-owned and operated businesses” (Smith et al., p. 24).

Kinship and Community: There are different degrees of fictive kin as Black people tend to define the family broadly, including “homies”—members of one’s age group, neighborhood, or school grade, of the same gender. This is a common form of giving, and it occurs in good times and in bad times.

Give Back: The idea of giving back embodies what may be called the economics of reciprocity. It conveys that the lives of poor and rich Blacks are intertwined and that those who have made it owe their success to the sacrifices of those who have not (Smith et al., p. 17). This sustains the system of mutual support.

Uplifting the Race: The savage history of slavery and oppression is a source of a collective call among Blacks to uplift the race. It engenders a sense of racial cohesion across

class, age, gender, and even ideologies at times. This is integral to both social justice and self-help.

Giving to Organizations: Giving goes to local and national organizations, including HBCUs and civil rights organizations (e.g., NAACP) that carry active sociopolitical and philanthropic agendas to support minority causes.

Evolution and Efficacy of Black Philanthropy

Black philanthropy has come a long way since its birth during the days of slavery when it was mostly characterized by support of each other, a necessity reinforced by the imperative of survival of the race. To highlight Black philanthropic changes and challenges since its early days, Carson (cited in Gray and Hall 2005) has divided Black philanthropy into three main periods: (1) the 1700s–1800s, (2) the 1960s, and (3) the 1990s. Relying on this schema, we first summarize these stages in Table 1 to shed light on their strategies, cause agencies, tactics, marketing channels, and outcomes and then provide a short description of each phase to highlight how Black philanthropy has evolved.

Stage 1 (1700s–1800s)

This was an era when church and organizational giving to help develop educational institutions, social programs, and Black-owned businesses took center stage (see Gray and Hall 2005). This was also a period when the self-help tradition of Southern Blacks converged with Northern philanthropies, especially those engaged in social activism, for the greater good of society as they strived to make educational opportunities available for Southern Blacks.

Regardless of their intent, Northern philanthropic foundations were at times accused of using their resources as a mechanism of social control (engineering). Since their efforts to educate Blacks were mostly carried out within the framework of industrial education, which rarely prepared them for high-skilled jobs, Finkenbine (2003) maintains that Northern philanthropic support only reified segregation and reinforced Blacks’ professional subserviency (see also Donohue, Heckman, and Todd 2002; Clegg 2003; Myrdal 1944). Perhaps the most notable and influential advocate of industrial/vocational education was Booker T. Washington (1901), a masterful salesman of the philanthropic cause of Black education.

Although factually based, much of the criticism would amount to intellectual marginalization, if we failed to see the historical role of philanthropy in its proper context, i.e., as an agent of social change or “advocacy, litigation, and empowerment” as Bremner (2002, 5) put it. In other words, the critics of Northern philanthropies overlook critical elements of the value they created, especially given the historical time frame in which they operated. For instance:

1. Without philanthropic endeavors, the schooling of

Southern Blacks would have been very difficult to achieve, especially in view of institutional racism that permeated every fiber of life in the South. Those endeavors found ways to force government agencies in the South into action. For example, the Rosenwald Fund stipulated terms to ensure their commitment to new schools for Blacks.

2. The fund required Black communities to furnish volunteer labor or money, thus inspiring waves of “desire for education” and commitment for self-advancement. According to Donohue, Heckman, and Todd (2002), the task was made simple, for local Black communities already had a strong tradition of “self-help.” Plus the litigation by the NAACP, an advocacy institution championing the philanthropic cause of social justice and civil rights, was a highly effective vehicle to bring about substantial improvements in the quality of Black education.

facilities and support systems that generated institutional capacity to educate Blacks. To illustrate this point, let us offer a short account of the founding of Spelman College.

Spelman College: A college founded through the combined philanthropic zeal of two Black women and White financial support, Spelman exemplifies the power of social marketing (social justice philanthropy) as an agent of change. The outcome is informative of what is required to sell a philanthropic cause to the public. As McKinley-Floyd (1998, 8-9) documents:

“Spelman was founded by two devoutly religious and determined New England women, Sophia Packard and Harriet Giles. [T]hey undertook the ambitious project of educating the “colored women and girls” in the South who were so desperately in need of their help (Read 1961).

TABLE 1
HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF BLACK PHILANTHROPY: EMPOWERMENT STRATEGIES, CAUSE ADVOCACY AGENCIES, CAUSE MARKETING TACTICS AND CHANNELS, AND OUTCOMES

Key Strategies and Goals	Major Cause Advocacy Agencies	Major Apparatus and Cause Marketing Tactics	Major Cause Marketing or Public Relations Channels	Major Outcomes
<i>Education</i> (1700s – 1800s)	<u>Internal to the Black Community:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Churches • Civic Groups/Community Organizations • Citizens <u>External to the Black Community:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern (White, institutional) Philanthropies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School construction • Curriculum development • Teacher training • Industrial/vocational education • Community/civic engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black churches • Northern philanthropies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational infrastructure development • Human capital (labor force) development and formation
<i>Sociopolitical Empowerment; Racial Equality</i> (1960s)	<u>Internal to the Black Community:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Churches • Black Advocacy Organizations (e.g., NAACP, NUL, Black Panthers, etc.) • Citizens' Civic Engagement & Activism <u>External to the Black Community:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other Ethnic, Civic Groups, and Activists 	<u>Civil Rights Movement and Its Offshoots:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organized protests • Boycotts • Litigation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black churches • Media (TV, Radio, Newspapers, etc.) • Civil rights brigades (organizers, participants, volunteers, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various civil rights gains, e.g., legal desegregation, legal protection against racial discrimination (relatively improved equal opportunity) • Electoral victories • Voting rights
<i>Socioeconomic Empowerment; Wealth Development</i> (1990s –)	<u>Internal to the Black Community:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Churches • Black Advocacy Organizations (e.g., NUL, NCBP [ncfbp.net]) • Wealthy Black Entrepreneurs, Entertainers, and Sports Personalities <u>External to the Black Community:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional Philanthropies • Corporate support 	<u>Civil Rights Movement and Its Offshoots:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil rights activism • Entrepreneurship development • Civic engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black churches • Black and mainstream philanthropic foundations • Civil rights organizations (e.g., NUL) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black philanthropic funds and foundation building • Increased Black business ownership • The future is still unfolding....

3. Northern philanthropies in conjunction with Black philanthropic efforts were instrumental in creating educational infrastructure that included both physical

After several pleas for financial support from the Women’s American Baptist Home Mission Society in Boston, and a few setbacks, the two old friends set out for

Atlanta, where, with the help of a number of African American ministers, they established the college. With the combined support of the ministers, several African American women, and the president and faculties of the Atlanta Baptist Seminary and AU, they were able to accomplish their mission.

On April 11, 1881, classes began, with 11 students. For the first year, the women worked arduously under horrible conditions. Fortunately, they were introduced to John D. Rockefeller by two of their former students and longtime friends, Rev. and Mrs. George Olcott King of Cleveland. The Kings invited the Spelman founders to speak about their work in Atlanta and arranged for Mr. Rockefeller to be present. On this occasion, Rockefeller “emptied his pocket when the box was passed” and pledged to do more if the women were committed to “sticking” (Read 1961, 64). It was Rockefeller’s first gift to an African American educational institution and the beginning of a very important source of finances to foster Spelman’s growth. The college, in fact, changed its name...to Spelman Seminary (later College) in honor of Laura Spelman Rockefeller.

Hundreds of alumnae have served in rural schools in the U.S., the Caribbean, and Africa. The African connection has been particularly strong” (see also www.spelman.edu/about_us/facts/).

In short, this phase of social justice philanthropy, McCarthy (2002, 2) asserts, was exciting in its own unique way as it brought together White and Black abolitionists and philanthropists, working men and women, educated and uneducated, rich and poor, fundraising clergymen, and others from all walks of life to help reshape a single narrative of the United States: the meta narrative woven around the axis of institutionalized racism and segregation that denied countless Americans the benefits of American ideals and achievements. That is, the merger between the Black philanthropic tradition and social activism of Northern (White) institutional philanthropies created a level of “level playing field” never seen before. One could now discuss former slave masters and slaves within the same construct. McCarthy writes:

“And by looking at philanthropy and nonprofits, we can begin to see the ways in which...African-Americans used social advocacy through their participation in the abolitionist movement to spark public debates about the viability and morality of slavery. In effect, they were political roles. Simply stated, philanthropy and the nonprofit sector played a vitally important role in broadening the array of political actors, both through public/private partnerships... and through social advocacy.”

Stage 2 (1960s)

The second definable stage in Black philanthropy was when civil rights organizations waged vigorous battles to sell the cause of social justice and racial equality to the

general public and to the political establishment. One can thus call it the decade of civil rights philanthropy, a decade no less momentous and memorable than its predecessor in the life cycle of Black philanthropic social marketing. Although the civil rights movement spawned various strains ranging from nonviolence to the Black Panther Party, they all shared one objective that could be characterized as Black empowerment. Regardless, the decade was a period of glory for Black philanthropy as its cause echoed across every fragment of America, bringing them together to form a rainbow of colors to sing in unison a national hymn of social justice and racial equality. For a fleeting decade, it looked like America was finally on its way to reconcile with its purgatorial past to chart a new course as one nation and one people (see also Garrow 1987). Black philanthropy did not just give money and time, people actually shed blood and sacrificed their lives for the cause, for the soul of America, eventually leading to actionable outcomes.

When people give their lives for a cause greater than their own self, we can call that the ultimate height of social marketing in the form of philanthropic giving: self-sacrifice for collective empowerment. The cause of racial equality was so close to the heart of Black America that it needed little philanthropic sales pitch. There was a massive outpour of community commitment and buy-in from all quarters of Black America as cause spread all across the US (although some of it appears to have dissipated over the years, raising many concerns among Black leaders and advocates).

While Black America deployed various tactics to sell the philanthropic cause of social justice in the 1960s, Black churches, the public media, and what we call the “civil rights brigades” (i.e., volunteers, activists, and organizers) proved to be the cause’s primary marketing and public relations channels. In short, the gravitational force behind social justice marketing during this phase was its ability to bring people together and to furnish a forum and strategic framework for the voiceless and powerless to have a voice in public discourses and policymaking while acting as an axis of civil society (third sector) that sustains the core of democracy (or American creed as McCarthy [2003] puts it), a cornerstone of capitalism (the market), and a sense of equal opportunities and representation (the general public). Such a merger and mingling of various forces through social marketing efforts suggests that philanthropy could create the necessary space (third space) for socioeconomic empowerment. In the meantime, if the three primary forces of society (the state, the market, and the general populace) consistently fall short in fulfilling their social responsibility for the greater good of society, one can imagine what is at stake for democracy, social order, and capitalism.

Stage 3 (1990s–)

This is the latest phase in the evolution of Black philanthropy. While social justice and self-help remain the twin pillars, the goals and approaches have evolved. As

presented in Table 1, the strategic drivers of Black philanthropic social marketing during Stages 1 and 2 were *education* and *sociopolitical empowerment*, respectively. Although those goals are still high on the agenda of Black America, the strategic focus during Stage 3 is to achieve *socioeconomic empowerment* and *wealth development* (ncfbp.net; NUL 2005, 2006). Even though giving through estates by Black entertainers, sports figures, and other wealthy Blacks have gained popularity, the phase is still in its infancy. However, as the Council on Foundations (1999, 3) states, this new orientation represents an exciting trend in Black philanthropy. Black America is calling on its citizens to develop “...resources to engage in more institutional philanthropic enterprises than it had before, adapting tools of institutional philanthropy to their own needs (and) shaping those tools to fit their own heritage and traditions and greatly benefiting their communities.” With this new development in view, the following section focuses on how to promote philanthropy in the Black community.

PROMOTING PHILANTHROPY IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY: A FRAMEWORK

“Empowering Communities. Changing Lives.”

This quote is the motto of the National Urban League. In the context of this study, it captures the essence of what social marketing of philanthropy in the Black community is all about or why it is still necessary as a path to achieve socioeconomic power and parity. In other words, social marketing needs to find subscribers willing to make a commitment to a cause and contribute money, time, or social activism to carry it out. Its primary goal, therefore, is to generate a pool of necessary resources, including volunteer time and social activism, to serve a cause for the greater good of society. The challenge is: How?

Let us first provide a context for why philanthropy is still necessary to uplift Black America and why it needs to be vigorously marketed within the Black community. Even a cursory observation of the US sociopolitical landscape reveals that it is changing, with significant repercussion for philanthropy in the Black community. The W.K. Kellogg Foundation states:

“Social expectations, corporate downsizing, and public policy trends—especially welfare reform and devolution—are signaling a need for communities of color to gear up even more toward self-empowerment. Among other things, this will mean taking the initiative to nurture, guide, and sustain the philanthropic growth and stability within the respective communities. These changing expectations are rooted in shifting perceptions about who is responsible for improving people’s lives and community circumstances. ‘Self-help’ principles figure as important elements in this age of accountability. Rather than looking to government or corporate resources to solve social problems, individuals,

families, and communities are expected to improve their own lots.”

The days of the state as the regulatory guardian of social justice and equal opportunity for Blacks and other disadvantaged minorities may be over.⁴ Such a scenario is further compounded by the fact that the private sector is still tainted by its labor market distortions and institutional biases that stunt Black progress. As state support declines and the market remains unreliable and unpredictable as an equal opportunity generator and distributor of jobs, Black communities are forced to look inward and depend on the vaunted practice of self-help and other philanthropic practices for socioeconomic empowerment and progress. Such is the reality facing Black America today, a reality confirmed by *The State of Black America* (National Urban League 2005, 2006). The aggregate equality index for Blacks remains at 0.73 compared to Whites. In 2006, the largest disparity was found in economics at 56 percent, although the rise in Black business ownership over 2005 was significant and encouraging. In light of this reality, the NUL argues that socioeconomic empowerment is not merely a goal; it is an absolute imperative if Black America is to become self-sufficient.

The reports make specific recommendations, including a call for active civic engagement to promote the philanthropy of socioeconomic empowerment in the Black community. The 2005 report stated: “African Americans, especially the African American middle class should increase their commitment to ‘civic tithing’...financially supporting as well as giving volunteer time to African American institutions like Historically Black Colleges and Universities, churches, civil rights organizations like the Urban League and more.” Kilson (2005) categorically asserted that “the black middle class needs ‘human capital’ stored in the forty percent of blacks at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder if they themselves are to even hold onto, not to mention advance, in what promises to be a very harsh economic environment for the foreseeable future.”

Given these sociopolitical changes and economic challenges, the need for philanthropic social marketing to generate necessary resources and volunteer time so that the Black communities can fully embark on the project of socioeconomic empowerment is as pressing as ever. To quote the Kellogg Foundation report, “As an element of community stability, philanthropy is as basic to a community’s well-being as education, jobs, housing, and health care” (p. 9). The only difference between the past and contemporary requirements is that the responsibility is now shifting almost solely to Black America and its constituents to demonstrate a much higher degree of self-help than before (wkkf.org). In view of this, we outline in the following section *challenges, opportunities, and a macroscopic framework* for promoting philanthropy within the Black community.

Challenges to Philanthropic Promotion

Aside from the obvious fact that marketing social justice causes is invariably an uphill climb, there lie some tangible challenges to philanthropic marketing in the Black community. These challenges include:

Waning Commitment to Civil Rights Issues: Perhaps the single most important philanthropic cause for Blacks is social justice and racial equality to achieve socioeconomic progress. Yet this historical cause might be waning with the post-civil rights generation. In a recent study, this new generation showed less social sensitivity in their buying behavior than the civil rights generation (Smith, Evans, and Shrestha 2004). If this trend continues, it could impact the philanthropic marketing approach to the Black community, in that using civil rights causes as a sales pitch may not yield the same results as they did in the past. According to Jackson (2001, 243), however, one hopeful indicator is that “the notion of uplifting one’s race remains a powerful motive for giving” in the Black community.

Geographical Mobility of Wealthy Blacks: Wealthy Blacks are moving to suburbs in growing numbers or what Gray and Hall (2005) call “black sprawl.” This trend affects the sense of community and makes neighborhood-based fundraising and voluntarism more difficult. This growing physical separation may lead to social distance from the plight of poor Blacks and, therefore, potentially less commitment to Black causes.

Limited Resources: The average Black household income is around \$28,000 compared to over \$44,000 for Whites. For those living below the poverty line, the respective figures are almost 24% and less than 8%. This means Blacks have less money to give (see Conley 2002).

Low Trust in Institutional Giving: There is general distrust of philanthropic institutions, partly because Blacks in general may not view civil rights organizations (the NAACP, UNCF, and NUL) as philanthropic organizations. There are also questions about where their donations to “philanthropic organizations” go or if any of that money came back to their community (McKinley-Floyd 2005).

Opportunities for Philanthropic Promotion

The task of promoting socioeconomic empowerment through philanthropy that goes beyond providing temporary relief to tackle in meaningful ways many ailments facing Black America is daunting, but not insurmountable. There are opportunities that can help promote such a philanthropic cause in the Black community. They include:

External Support: In recognition of these unfolding changes and challenges, the Kellogg Foundation has formed partnership with other foundations to enhance minority institutional philanthropic foundations and capacity. The foundation’s focus on increasing the fiscal security of

philanthropies serving ethnic populations represents a promising new tool. This could allow them to get off the fund-seeking “treadmill” and plan for the long term. Within this context, Black philanthropy, like other organizations seeking to promote sustainable change, must strive to become more systematic and rigorous in their methods and more strategic in their modes of support. Evidence suggests that if Black America mobilized its internal resources, external resources will be available to help it achieve the goal of socioeconomic empowerment.

The Church: The Black church is a proven and powerful agency with an active agenda to protect civil rights and advance socioeconomic empowerment. It is one agency that Blacks trust the most, and that has the ability to pool the resources of small donors for substantial capital formation for community investment. In addition, mega Black churches are emerging. Although these churches represent an unchartered territory, they could prove to be very significant in the drive for community empowerment.

History of Self-Help: Black America is endowed with a strong tradition of self-help which, if systematically harnessed, should move Blacks to take on greater roles to become self-empowered.

Commitment to Uplifting the Race: Uplifting the race is an enduring hallmark of Black America, and a running theme manifested in many forms (Winters 1999). As a result, Blacks are more than likely to make contributions for causes designed to uplift Black America (Jackson 2001).

Increasing Wealth: Although the average household income of Black America is only about 60 percent of the average White household, its total wealth is rising, along with the percentage of Black households making more than \$50,000.

Increased Awareness of the Need for Socioeconomic Empowerment and Advancement: The call for economic self-empowerment seems to be resonating across Black America. Most civil rights organizations are pushing for this agenda. Our own limited observation suggests that the trend toward Black entrepreneurship is on the upswing. For example, in the School of Business & Industry at Florida A&M University, the call for entrepreneurship courses is growing. Many of its graduates who joined the corporate world have returned to launch their own successful business enterprises. Many became entrepreneurs after graduation, running their own businesses or family businesses. The National Urban League also reported a sharp increase in Black business ownership from 2005 to 2006 (NUL 2006).

Growth of Organized Giving and Black Philanthropic Foundations Building: A quick internet search displays that many such organizations exist in the country. The 1990s saw a growing trend on the part of Black entertainers, sports figures, and other wealthy Blacks toward giving through estates. For example, in 2004, Minnesota alone had at least 40 Black grantmaking funds and foundations (Gray and Hall 2005). One organization pushing for a greater level of Black involvement in philanthropy is the National Center

for Black Philanthropy (NCBP) whose “mission is to promote giving and volunteerism among African Americans...educate the public about the contributions of Black philanthropy, strengthen people and institutions engaged in Black philanthropy, and research the benefits of Black philanthropy to all Americans” (ncfbp.net).

A Macroscopic Framework for Philanthropic Promotion

Like any other type of marketing, social marketing involves tapping opportunities (or creating new ones) and overcoming challenges. But, to repeat, a cause is unlike any other product as its marketing is largely embedded in social benefit (cost) implications of commitment to the cause rather than its immediate utility function to those who commit. In the area of charity fundraising, there is much emphasis placed on donor behavior and motivations. Such an understanding is important. Our argument, however, goes further: marketing cause-based philanthropy would be more effective if our understanding of donor behavior is closely contextualized into social issues with which givers can identify in terms of their meaning either personally, organizationally, or from a societal perspective.

In view of the above opportunities, social marketing of philanthropy in the Black community must be strategically organized and aligned with those opportunities, stressing socioeconomic empowerment and community development as the way to uplift the entire race, the core cause and its associated values that most Black donors share and support. The strategy should also clearly lay out the short- and long-range benefits or implications of philanthropic commitment and contribution to such a cause. The macroscopic social marketing framework proposed here is built on two pillars we call *strategic social marketing channels* and *strategic social marketing anchors* (see Figure 2). While strategic promotion of philanthropy in the Black community is anchored to *cause identification* (i.e., causes Blacks readily identify with), its marketing channels rely on *institutional trust* within the community (i.e., the institutions that Blacks trust the most). The two most grounded anchors that Black communities identify with and have relied on to serve them are social justice and self-help. In the same vein, the two institutions in which Blacks have historically vested their trust are Black churches and civil rights organizations. There is a third one emerging that could garner the trust of Black America if managed effectively: Black philanthropic foundations and funds.

Within this two-pronged framework of philanthropic social marketing, we emphasize some key promotional themes and channels that are equipped to provide a strategic but practical platform for promoting philanthropy in the Black community. Specifically, the focus is on three promotional themes and two promotional channels.

Promotional Themes

Uplifting the Race: Whenever philanthropy is marketed in the Black community, racial upliftment should be used as a primary driver because it has a tremendous appeal. The message is clear: under the current sociopolitical climate facing Black America, if Blacks fail to uplift themselves as a people, it is unlikely that anybody else will. If the race is doomed, individual members of the race will lose their identity and be left to fend for themselves without the collective support and strength that the race offers.

Socioeconomic Empowerment and Advancement: In the present context, the fundamental objective of philanthropic marketing in the Black community must be socioeconomic empowerment. One simple message of this theme is the preeminence of Black entrepreneurship. Imagine, for example, resources pooled together at the community level that result in sufficient capital formation, almost like a coop. This pool of capital is then invested to open a community supermarket that is competitive in every respect (e.g., price, quality, cleanliness, and customer service). The community will patronize it not only because it is competitive, but also because it is, at least indirectly, owned by the community to serve the community. Moreover, geographically it is right in the community requiring less commute time and money. It also generates multiplier effects as it produces jobs, a sense of community and commitment, and attracts other businesses to the area, thus creating an agglomeration economy which, in turn, produces more jobs and, hence, more disposable income to support new businesses in the community. Concrete and viable plans should be provided to potential Black donors to highlight in practical terms the multiple benefits of empowerment-focused philanthropic contributions.

Think Globally, Act Locally: In her study, McKinley-Floyd (2005) applies this practical concept. She argues that the local chapters of national charities “should utilize every opportunity to be on the hearts and minds of local citizens. Activities should be tailored to the needs of the local community... A strong presence in the community is critical to a successful image and donor recall. In essence, an aggressive marketing and public relations campaign should be undertaken by these organizations.” To extend the logic of the concept in the present context, the notion of philanthropic social marketing should certainly be global, in that it must consider the entire universe of Black America and its socioeconomic empowerment and upliftment. In terms of designing a specific marketing strategy and its implementation, however, the primary target should be local communities to insure that much of the giving that social marketing generates in a given Black community must go to empower that community first.

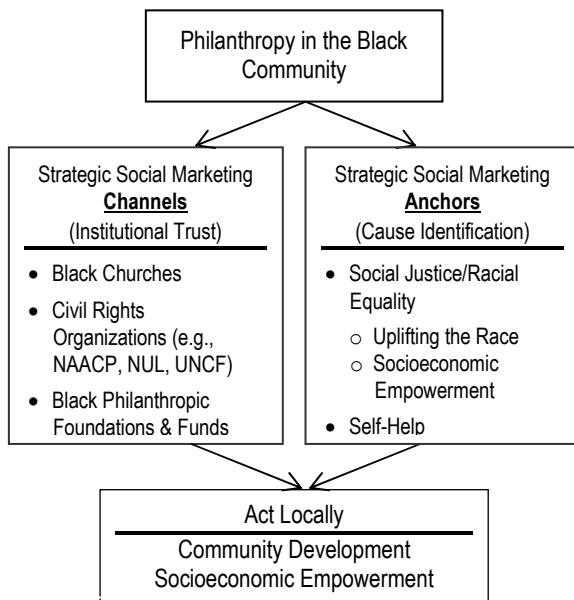


FIGURE 2
PHILANTHROPY IN THE BLACK
COMMUNITY

Promotional Channels

The Church and Civil Rights Organizations: These institutions have historically been at the forefront of struggles for civil rights, social justice, and racial equality, all geared toward uplifting the race and toward helping America finally live up to its universalistic ideals. Few would dispute their records of achievements; they have served Black America well. They are also the institutions most trusted by most Blacks. So they should be actively deployed as effective vehicles to market the philanthropic message of socioeconomic empowerment in the Black community.

CONCLUSION

The above discussion reveals that philanthropic social marketing has deep roots in Black America as its history is steeped in philanthropic giving and receiving as well as philanthropic activism. While such activism during its early days was largely geared toward making educational opportunities available for Black communities, it evolved into a powerful and history-making civil rights movement during the 1960s, one that led to a fundamental transformation of American society and its singular meta narrative. Despite its many achievements over the years dating back to the early stage in its evolution, the fundamental necessity of philanthropic social marketing in the Black community remains intact. This is a clear indication that Black America still has long ways to go

before it can attain socioeconomic security and parity with White America.

As the systematic opposition to civil rights gains of the 1960s grows increasingly vocal and organized, Black communities can no longer rely on those gains to offer them a sense of socioeconomic security. History has shown time and again that whenever and wherever the state and the market fail to fulfill their social responsibilities, the burden of taking care of those left at the margin of society and social justice falls on the institution of philanthropy and on self-help. So it is hardly any surprise that Black America still finds itself in need of philanthropic social marketing and activism, but this time primarily bent on achieving socioeconomic empowerment. If Black America can't help itself, it is unlikely that it can get much help from other segments of society. It must rise and walk on its own two feet, not just on one.

It is precisely in recognition of this sobering reality that we have proposed a macroscopic social marketing framework to promote philanthropy in the Black community, a framework that is not only deeply rooted in the long tradition of Black philanthropy and institutions, but also designed to achieve socioeconomic empowerment and self-sufficiency. Despite its historical grounding, the proposed framework is exploratory. However, as part of our future research agenda, we expect to test it based on detailed case-based investigations of those Black philanthropic organizations and entities that are engaged in Black socioeconomic empowerment projects. Such investigation will shed light on the veracity of the framework as well as on how those organizations and entities are designing and implementing such projects, and what makes those projects successful.

NOTES

1. *Social marketing* is defined as “the planning and implementation of programs designed to bring about social change using concepts from commercial marketing” (Social Marketing Institute: social-marketing.org). It is marketing a cause but should not be confused with the growing use of “cause-related marketing” (see Ricks 2005; Waddell 1999).
2. Although *sales* is often treated separately from *marketing*, for the purpose of this study the term “market” is interchangeable with the term “sell” and “promote.”
3. Social injustice can be both absolute and relative: *absolute* because it is real as there are people and groups of people who are denied social justice (fundamental rights and basic needs) and *relative* because such rights and needs are greatly magnified in a materialistic society like the US that is defined by consumerism, on the one hand, and growing material gaps between the haves and have-nots, on the other. As the rich get richer and the poor poorer in relative terms, a sense of deprivation and social injustice tends to deepen.

4. These changing public policy trends are not new. The anti-affirmative action (AA) ripple the Allan Bakke case (*Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, 438 U.S. 265 [1978]) created in the mid-1970s turned into a swelling tide during the Reagan administration as its concerted assault was most vocally directed at the federally mandated affirmative action policy within the framework of “reverse discrimination” and “quota.” Since then, civil rights gains have experienced steady erosion. In response to growing anti-AA sentiments, the Clinton administration launched its “Mend It Don’t End It” policy. But it did not stop the ongoing volleys of attacks. Despite some history-making appointments of Blacks and other minorities to highly visible and powerful positions within the federal government, the current Bush administration has reopened the frontier of attacks common during the Reagan era, but under the guise of what President George W. Bush terms the “Soft Bigotry of Low Expectations.”

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