

Секция «Иностранные языки и регионоведение»

Роль афроамериканской филантропии в американском обществе// The role of African-American philanthropy in American society

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Аспирант

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Philanthropy is one of the few activities of our daily lives in which we can express a love for and a concern about our fellow human beings. The great thing about giving your time, talent or treasure is that as long as it is freely given, without agenda or expectations, it is always a win.

The aim of this work is to analyze the role and importance of African-American philanthropic organizations in the American society today.

To achieve the goal, the following **objective** has been set: to look into experiences of community foundations that hold funds for specific ethnic communities.

As a “melting pot” or, nowadays, “a salad bowl”, the United States is the most pluralistic country in the world. According to the 2000 Census survey, out of the total of 281,421,000 Americans, 75.1% are white, 12.3% are Black, 3.6% are Asian, and 0.9% is of American Indian and Alaskan Native origins.[1] The rest of the population is bi- or multi-racial. “Therefore, no one race or ethnic group in America can now securely assert that its particular heritage is the one which defines the national identity”[2].

Although Black philanthropy is often discussed, a few scientists provide a working definition. *Black philanthropy* is defined as “the giving of time, talent, goods, and services or money by African Americans for charitable purposes.” [3] Black philanthropy should not be viewed as limited to charitable donations by African Americans to African American causes or organizations, as some believe. After all, White philanthropy has never been defined by the recipient of the charity or the charitable gift.[4] The next concept to convey is that black philanthropy is not a static concept but rather an evolving one based on its environment. Black philanthropy is shaped by the social, economic, and legal issues faced by African Americans at different points in history. As the social context changes, so does black philanthropy.

The term “Black philanthropy” as it is generally used refers to the giving traditions mostly of African Americans who were born in the United States. The concept of black philanthropy should be expanded to include practices derived from African diasporan cultural traditions that have had both historical and contemporary influences on American philanthropy. Unfortunately, there are very few studies of either African or black philanthropy in diasporan context.

Black philanthropy in the United States, as well as Black American culture in general, has always developed within a global context with cultural influences from various parts of Africa as well as the Caribbean and Europe.[5] Black philanthropy can be more fully understood in the context of the intercontinental dynamics that also helped to shape it.

By the beginning of the 20th century, a number of Black foundations were formed to provide support for minority interests. Among the tens or hundreds of thousands of nonprofit organizations that serve minority group interests, some possess extraordinary significance. The most prominent of these include:

[see graph 1: Important African-American Foundations]

Minority protection is naturally bound to the philanthropic sector in various ways. Historically, minorities began protecting their own rights due to the unavailability of philanthropy directed toward them from the domineering white society. Organizations were established to respond to the minorities' most immediate needs, such as education, religion, health care, higher political status, and protection of group members' lives. A shift occurred in post Civil War, post Civil Rights movement: globally economic country after a number of major social upheavals, increased education, and racial integration occurred.

The paradigm now is that the greatest portion of the white majority has realized that minorities are Americans; so, now the lines of color have begun to dissipate and have been replaced with cultural recognition and cooperation. As a result, this common recognition has produced momentum for philanthropic unity in the new age.

[1] The U.S. Census Bureau. All Across the *U.S.A.: Population Distribution and Composition, 2000*. [cited September 12, 2002]. Available from <http://www.census.gov/main/www/cen2000.html>.

[2] Rhea, Joseph Tilden. *Race Pride and the American Identity*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997. ISBN: 0674566815, p. 125.

[3] Black philanthropy's past, present, and future; Emmett D. Carson.

[4] Ibid.

[5] J.E. Harris, 1982; Yelvington, 2001.

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Иллюстрации

Important African-American Foundations	
Name of the foundation	What they have done
The Ford Foundation (1936) and the Rockefeller Foundation (1913)	In the last century have donated large amounts of money to the improvement of education, health-care.
American Civil Liberties Union (1920)	Founded in 1920 as a nonprofit and nonpartisan organization, the ACLU is designed to defend American citizens' civil liberties. Basically, it is the ACLU's conviction that despite an individual's race, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, or disabilities, every person in the United States should possess the same basic rights.
The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) (1909)	It is the country's oldest civil rights organization, whose purpose is to protect the rights of African Americans by ensuring equal opportunities in health care, education, employment, housing, and all other facets of life. For a history of the organization and information on available resources and programs, see the NAACP Web site at http://www.naacp.org .
National Black United Fund (1972)	It is a national organization with local affiliates that works to unite black communities by providing philanthropic funds as a catalyst for social and economic change.

Рис. 1: Important African-American Foundations