

Diversity and Philanthropy at African American Museums

Diversity and Philanthropy at African American Museums is the first scholarly book to analyze contemporary African American museums from a multifaceted perspective. While it puts a spotlight on the issues and challenges related to racial politics that black museums collectively face in the 21st century, it also shines a light on how they intersect with corporate culture, youth culture, and the broader cultural world. Turning the lens to philanthropy in the contemporary era, Banks throws light on the establishment side of African American museums and demonstrates how this contrasts with their grassroots foundations.

Drawing on over 80 in-depth interviews with trustees and other supporters of African American museums across the United States, this book offers an inside look at the world of cultural philanthropy. While patrons are bound together by being among the distinct group of cultural philanthropists who support black museums, the motivations and meanings underlying their giving depart in both subtle and considerable ways depending on race and ethnicity, profession, generation, and lifestyle. Revealing not only why black museums matter in the eyes of supporters, the book also complicates the conventional view that social class drives giving to cultural nonprofits. It also paints a vivid portrait of how diversity colors cultural philanthropy, and philanthropy more broadly, in the 21st century.

Diversity and Philanthropy at African American Museums will be a valuable resource for scholars and practitioners engaged with African American heritage. It will also offer important insights for academics, as well as cultural administrators, nonprofit leaders, and fundraisers who are concerned with philanthropy and diversity.

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To my parents—Cherry A. McGee Banks and James A. Banks

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1 Diverse patrons, diverse values

It is around 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, September 24, 2016, and I am sitting on the grass by the Washington Monument for the dedication ceremony of the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC). A gray overcast sky frames the jumbotron in the middle of the field that is broadcasting from the main stage. Between a speech by Mayor Muriel Bowser of Washington, DC, and a musical set by the African singer Angélique Kidjo, the screen flashes facts about the museum and inspiring words about the struggle for racial equality. While the quotations, including excerpts from Sam Cooke's song "A Change Is Gonna Come" (1964), speak to the unyielding spirit that guided the century-long effort to bring this museum into reality,¹ the names of major donors projected onto the screen, such as the media mogul Oprah Winfrey, the basketball star Michael Jordan, the tech entrepreneur Bill Gates, and the television producer Shonda Rhimes are a reminder of the philanthropists who made the museum possible (see Figures 1.1 and 1.2).

Philanthropy is not only partly responsible for the establishment of the NMAAHC, it also undergirds the broader black museum renaissance during which hundreds of African American museums have opened across the United States since the 1960s and 1970s.² While patrons are arguably the backbone of this museum boom, the motivations and meanings that surround their philanthropy are largely unknown. Drawing on more than 80 in-depth interviews with trustees and other patrons of black museums in 11 cities, as well as archival records, and firsthand observations, I provide an inside view of the philanthropy that fuels this renaissance. I find that though supporters share membership in the upper-middle and upper class, their philanthropic values vary in both subtle and considerable ways depending on race, generation, profession, and lifestyle.

Black and white patrons alike stand firm that African American museums are truly American museums. However, while the former are often especially conscious of the importance of African American museums within the black community, the latter are typically more cognizant about the roles that they play in the lives of whites. Supporters who work in business often



Figure 1.1 Oprah Winfrey (left), who donated over \$20 million to the National Museum of African American History and Culture, at the museum’s opening ceremony, with the actor Will Smith (right). Leah L. Jones for the NMAAHC.

view black museum philanthropy as a means to not only “do good” but also “do well” through promoting their careers, while supporters who work in other sectors are less likely to view giving as having direct professional benefits. Cultural connoisseurs typically see art and history as the lifeblood of black museums, yet cultural appreciators are often less interested in black museums as purely cultural institutions. And, although supporters across the generations share a concern with positioning African American museums as 21st-century institutions, it is often Generation Xers and Millennials who are the most committed to a focus on contemporary culture, politics, and technology.

In *Diversity and Philanthropy at African American Museums* one of my primary goals is to richly describe how these various types of supporters define the worth of black museums in assorted ways. However, my analysis also advances research and perspective on a much broader issue: museums and diversity. A common view of museum patronage is that it is ordered around a class divide between the lower and upper classes—or, that museums and other cultural institutions are the domain of the elite (Alexander 1996b; Bourdieu, Darbel, and Schnapper 1991; DiMaggio 1982a, 1982b; Ostrower 1999, 43–53, 2002).³ What gets lost in class-centric theories of museums is that there is a plurality of cultural values



Figure 1.2 The television producer Shonda Rhymes (center), who donated \$10 million to the National Museum of African American History and Culture, at the museum's opening ceremony. Alana Donocoff for the NMAAAHC.

among the upper-middle and upper class. By elaborating how subgroups within the upper-middle- and upper-class value black museums in distinct ways, *Diversity and Philanthropy at African American Museums* sheds light on the intraclass divisions that mark museum patronage. It also offers new theoretical insights on the interconnections between social boundaries and cultural participation more broadly. Before delving into the world of philanthropy at black museums, it will be helpful to understand their trajectory of growth. In the next section, I provide an overview of the development of the field of black museums.

The boom

The earliest collections of black culture and history in the United States trace back to the 19th and early 20th centuries. During this period, museums were founded on the campuses of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) such as Hampton and Howard Universities; historical societies were established, such as the Bethel Literary and Historical Association at the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and

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cultural organizations, such as the Division of Negro Literature, History and Prints at the New York Public Library, opened. However, it was from the 1950s through the 1970s that the seeds of the black museum movement were planted. The black museum movement's political and cultural foundations were grounded in the civil rights, Black Power, and Black Arts movements (Ardali 1989, 1–73; Burns 2013; Fleming 2018; Mack and Welch 2018). The calls for black equality, self-determination, and cultural empowerment during this period were institutionalized through the founding of black museums.

The first museums established during this era were modest storefronts (Burns 2013). Museums in this storefront period often had meager budgets, volunteer staff, unassuming buildings, and informal acquisitions and exhibitions programs. For example, when the DuSable Museum of African American History (Chicago, Illinois) was founded by Margaret Burroughs in 1961, it was housed in an old mansion where her family lived, and it was maintained by an all-volunteer staff (Feldman 1981). Similarly, when the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History was founded in 1965, it was a grassroots affair that was housed in the founder's apartment (Burns 2013, 64). Although some museums, such as the African American Museum in Philadelphia founded in 1976, had grander beginnings (Dickerson 1989), even these were relatively small-scale institutions in comparison with what was to come in the next several decades.⁴ Over time, the field itself became more professionalized with the establishment of the Association of African American Museums (AAAM) in 1978 (African American Museums Association 1988, ix). The number of museums also swelled, and the scale of museums themselves shifted “from storefronts to monuments” (Burns 2013).

There were a dozen or so African American museums in the 1960s, but by the 1980s the number had reached close to 100, and at the dawn of the 21st century they numbered around 230 (African American Museums Association 1988, 3; Austin 2003, iv).⁵ By 2016, there were more than 300 African American museums and related cultural institutions across the United States (see Figure 1.3).⁶ Although many are still best characterized as storefronts, there exists a critical mass of larger African American museums (see Figures 1.4–1.9).⁷ Over time, as the field matured, the number of museums ballooned, and so did the ambitions of their founders. Some African American museums established since the 1990s boast award-winning buildings designed by famous architects, staff across a variety of organizational units, diverse collections with valorized objects, endowments, and multimillion-dollar campaigns to pay for it all. For example, in 2004 the \$110 million National Underground Railroad Freedom Center opened in Cincinnati, Ohio. The architects for the 158,000-square-foot building were chosen after a national design competition. Well-known figures in political life, such as Laura Bush, and celebrities, such as Oprah Winfrey,⁸ also attended the groundbreaking ceremony. The next year, in 2005, the

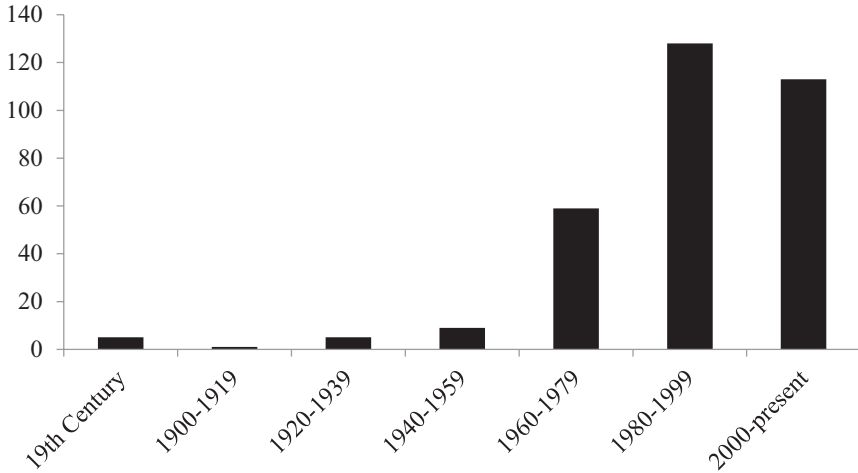


Figure 1.3 Founding dates of African American Museums.

\$34 million Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture opened in Baltimore. After the Reginald F. Lewis Foundation donated \$5 million to the effort, the museum was named after the deceased black business pioneer, who was born in the city. The 82,000-square-foot museum houses a gift shop, café, classrooms, and theater. Its architects, the celebrated Freelon Group (Edsall 2005), are also notable in that they are among the architects of choice for other monumental African American museums. The firm also worked on museums such as the \$125 million Center for Civil and Human Rights in Atlanta and the over \$500 million NMAAHC. The architecture firm Perkins and Will, which merged with the Freelon Group in 2014, designed Pittsburgh’s multimillion-dollar August Wilson Center for African American Culture and won a 2010 American Institute of Architects (AIA) award soon after the building opened.

The NMAAHC arguably represents the apotheosis of the black museum movement and the even longer efforts rooted in the 19th century to nationally institutionalize black culture and history. It is the monumental black museum super-sized. The distinct building was designed by celebrated architects (not only the Freelon Group but also the British “starchitect” David Adjaye). It has a world-class collection with 34,000 artifacts, a theater, educational space, a family resource center, and a restaurant led by the chef and television star Carla Hall. This era of the African American museum movement continues with multimillion-dollar fundraising efforts underway to build museums such as the International African American Museum in South Carolina, and major campaigns to upgrade existing museums such as the Motown Museum in Detroit, Michigan, and the Studio Museum in Harlem (SMH) (see Table 1.1). There are also proposals to



Figure 1.4 National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, DC.

build new black museums in states such as Florida, Georgia, and California (Harris 2018; McMorris 2018; Prabhu 2018).

Just as this has been the era of the big African American museum, it has also been a period during which several institutions have been riddled with severe financial crises. Some, such as the \$100 million United States National

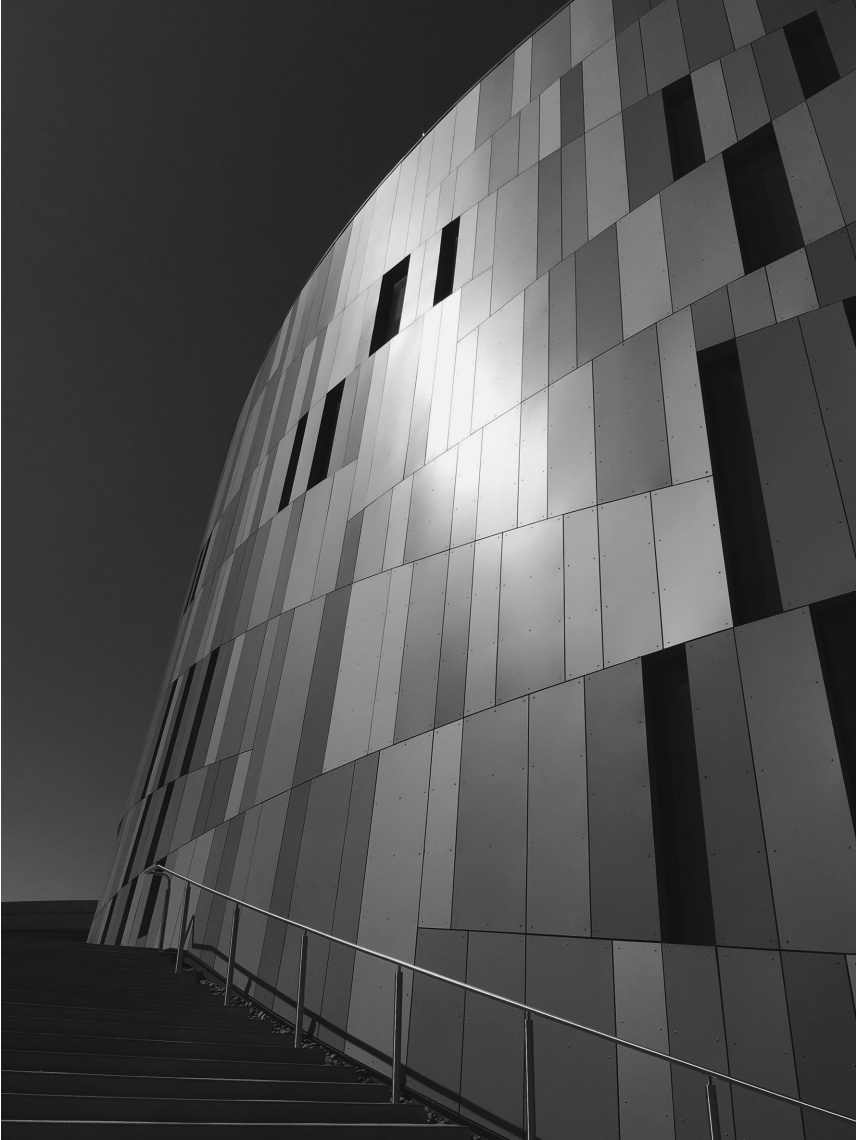


Figure 1.5 Center for Civil and Human Rights, Atlanta, Georgia.

Slavery Museum still have not gotten off the ground despite years of efforts (Manly 2016). Others had noteworthy capital campaigns yet quickly ran into financial challenges after opening. For example, soon after the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center opened, it faced a \$5.5 million deficit (Post Staff Report 2007). Similarly, four years after the August Wilson Center in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, opened to wide acclaim in 2009, it went



Figure 1.6 The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York.

into bankruptcy and closed. It reopened in 2014 after foundations in the city formed a consortium to raise funds and purchase the center (O'Toole 2015). Even old guard museums like the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History have faced financial difficulties. In 2004, the Detroit institution needed emergency funding from the city to remain open (Montagne 2004).

These financial challenges emerge partly because the adage “If you build it, they will come” is not always realized. Some monumental museums attract donors to pay for multimillion-dollar start-up costs but cannot retain them to help pay for costly operating expenses. Ongoing philanthropy is necessary after buildings go up. Commenting on the continuing need for private funds, Lonnie Bunch, founding director of the NMAAHC, notes, “We need money for an endowment because the federal money is uncertain” (Trescott and Freedom du Lac 2012).⁹ When existing African American museums undergo renovations, the costs to run them can also increase.¹⁰ For example, to help prepare for the rising operating costs that are expected to accompany the Studio Museum in Harlem’s \$175 million makeover, the organization’s advancement infrastructure is being expanded.¹¹

As it has been in other periods of cultural flowering, philanthropy is one driver of the black museum renaissance. Patrons provide the economic, cultural, social, and other forms of capital to establish and sustain these



Figure 1.7 Reginald F. Lewis Museum, Baltimore, Maryland.

institutions. Understanding the meanings and motivations underlying their philanthropy can help us gain both insight into the development of this field of museums and broader perspective on social boundaries and cultural patronage. This line of inquiry can also offer practical insights that are important for the sustainability of black museums.¹²



Figure 1.8 National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Patrons and museums

To understand patronage at African American museums, I draw on in-depth interviews with 84 supporters, participant observation at museums, and archival documents related to giving.¹³ Most supporters are trustees, with



Figure 1.9 Museum of the African Diaspora, San Francisco, California.

the remaining mainly members of committees or friends groups. I identified the majority of participants from publicly available lists of supporters such as annual reports. The semistructured interviews typically took place in participants' offices, though in some cases I also met them in other places, such as museums, homes, and restaurants. Most often the interviews began

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Table 1.1 Selected recent multimillion-dollar African American museum campaigns

<i>Name</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Fundraising goal</i>
African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund ^a	n/a	preservation projects	\$25,000,000
African American Museum in Philadelphia	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	endowment fund, programming, build capacity, technology and marketing	\$5,000,000
America's Black Holocaust Museum	Milwaukee, Wisconsin	new building	\$7,000,000
Hip Hop Hall of Fame + Museum	New York, New York	new museum	\$150,000,000
International African American Museum	Charleston, South Carolina	new museum	\$75,000,000
Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts + Culture	Charlotte, North Carolina	endowment fund	\$10,000,000
Jackie Robinson Museum	New York, New York	new museum	\$42,000,000
Mississippi Civil Rights Museum ^b	Jackson, Mississippi	new museum	\$17,000,000
Motown Museum	Detroit, Michigan	new building	\$50,000,000
National Museum of African American Music	Nashville, Tennessee	new museum	\$25,000,000
National Museum of African American History and Culture ^c	Washington, DC	new museum	\$270,000,000
Studio Museum in Harlem	New York, New York	new building	\$175,000,000

Source: Author's documentary analysis. In some cases, fundraising goals changed over time.

Notes:

- a This campaign through the National Trust for Historic Preservation focuses on preserving national historic sites including but not limited to museums.
- b Includes private-sector campaign. Fundraising for this museum was combined with its partner museum, the Museum of Mississippi History. By December 2017, \$19,000,000 was donated by the private sector.
- c Includes private-sector campaign. Ultimately, \$320 million was raised.

with me asking how and why patrons first got involved with supporting African American museums. This led to broader conversations about their views concerning the merits of and challenges surrounding African American museums, other philanthropic commitments, and personal backgrounds—for example, participation in other cultural activities, communities they grew up in, family involvement in nonprofits, and the like. At the end of interviews, participants also filled out a demographic questionnaire.

As a whole, this is a group that is best described as upper-middle and upper class. The majority have graduate degrees and family incomes of at least \$200,000 or more. While their socioeconomic status generally places them in the upper-middle and upper class, they are a diverse group with respect to factors such as race and ethnicity, profession, generation, and lifestyle. Racially, most participants are black, but whites make up about 27 percent of the group. In addition, I talked with a small number of Caribbean Latinxs who also identify as members of the African diaspora.¹⁴ Professionally, most work in the private sector, but around one-third work for nonprofits or the government. In terms of generation, most participants were born before 1965, but about one-third were born after and are members of Generation X or are Millennials. With respect to lifestyle, the group is about evenly split between cultural connoisseurs and cultural appreciators, with the latter being less involved with cultural activities, such as art collecting, more broadly.

Along with the formal in-depth interviews with supporters, on occasion I conducted formal interviews with museum staff. I also had many informal conversations with other supporters and staff over the course of my research. I also consulted several documentary sources, such as annual reports and published interviews with supporters. In addition, I visited archives that hold records for museums such as the NMAAHC and the Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Artists. My observations at African American museums, such as at fundraisers, and in the communities where they are located inform the analysis as well. In each city, I visited other cultural institutions and spent time in the surrounding neighborhoods. Because I try to visit African American museums whenever I travel, I also draw on observations and photographs from these visits. Finally, I created databases that include more than 2,000 donations of \$25,000 or more to African American museums and more than 500 black museum trustees.

In the tradition of ethnographic research, I use pseudonyms to keep confidential the identities of the people I interviewed and the museums that they support.¹⁵ Real names of supporters and institutions are used when information is garnered from publicly available sources. I also use the real names of institutions when I refer to my casual visits to exhibitions and the opening weekend of the NMAAHC. Because my visits to African American museums and analysis of archival and other documents cover a broader range of museums and supporters than the primary ethnographic research, it should not be assumed that any named individuals or museums are part of the ethnographic portion.

The in-depth interviews include supporters of seventeen museums in eleven cities, across each region of the United States. While most of the museums that these patrons support are among the larger African American museums in the country, they are a diverse group. They include museums with a range of focuses—history, art, history and culture, and so on—as well as sociodemographic contexts.¹⁶ Despite these differences, there

was a consistent set of interests and concerns that emerged during the interviews. While dominant theories of museum patronage would assume that participants' takes on these issues would be shared by virtue of their common class position, I found that this was not entirely the case. In the next section, I discuss the scholarship on museum patronage and how the argument here advances it.

Social boundaries and museum patronage

There is a long tradition of sociological scholarship on museum patronage (Alexander 1996b; Balfe 1993; DiMaggio and Useem 1978a, 358–367; DiMaggio 1982a, 1982b; Zolberg 1974, 1981). For example, the influential cultural theorist Pierre Bourdieu argues that museums are mainly the province of members of the middle class not because they have a natural taste for fine art, but rather because social conditions—particularly, educational and family socialization—have habituated them to appreciate the art that is in these temples of culture (Bourdieu 1984; Bourdieu, Darbel, and Schnapper 1991). Similarly, Paul DiMaggio (1982a, 1982b) uses 19th-century Boston Brahmin society as a lens to explicate cultural and class boundaries. He argues that through the establishment of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston “cultural capitalists” not only formalized distinctions between high and popular culture but also strengthened their position as the ruling class. In other research on arts participation, DiMaggio and Michael Useem (1978c) also assert that institutional engagement with high culture, such as sitting on arts boards, nurtures social and ideological cohesion among members of the upper-middle and upper class. Similarly, Francie Ostrower’s research (1999, 2002) highlights how museums are sites of class cohesion. She shows that by carving out a unique space within cultural organizations, specifically the space of philanthropy, upper-class relationships and identity are nurtured.

While various studies in this body of literature identify different mechanisms that link social boundaries and museum patronage, they generally share a focus on majority museums and a focus on class.^{17,18} More specifically, this scholarship emphasizes how middle- and upper-class engagement with museums is characterized by shared cultural values that emerge out of distinct class-based experiences.¹⁹ Given the disproportionate involvement of the upper-middle and upper class with cultural institutions, analyzing museum patronage through the lens of class is important. However, it is increasingly critical to also more thoroughly analyze how museum patronage is linked to other social divisions, such as race and ethnicity. While the upper-middle and upper class are overrepresented among museum patrons, there is increasing diversity *within* this group (Grams and Farrell 2008). Or, while museum patronage, such as trusteeship, is still a distinctively upper-middle- and upper-class practice, there is growing diversity among the upper-middle- and upper-class individuals who engage in it. For example,

when major museums in the United States were founded in the mid-19th century, they were often governed by all-white boards. Although exclusively white cultural boards still exist, it is now more common for majority cultural organizations to have a small number of racial and ethnic minorities as trustees (Pogrebin 2017b; Bernstein 2016).²⁰ A national report by the American Alliance of Museums and BoardSource finds that only 46 percent of museums boards are now all-white (BoardSource 2017, 9).²¹ Similarly, a recent study on diversity in New York City cultural organizations found that though whites make up the lion's share of board members, racial and ethnic minorities constitute around 20 percent of the city's cultural trustees (Schonfeld and Sweeney 2016, 27). The ranks of museum patrons are also becoming more diverse in other ways, such as age. For example, though most people on cultural boards are age 50 or older (Ostrower 2013), many museums are actively recruiting individuals in their 20s, 30s, and 40s to become members of special young professionals patron groups (Gelles 2014).

Not only has the diversity of museum patrons increased but also shifting demographics may accelerate this trend. With growth in the racial and ethnic minority middle and upper classes there is an increasing number of minorities who have the capital—economic, cultural, and otherwise—to participate in museum patronage.²² Understanding how a range of social identities intersect with cultural philanthropy is not only necessary because of shifting demographics, but also because of the growing mandate to diversify museum patronage. For example, in 2017 New York City released a cultural plan to encourage diversity, including board diversity, at the city's cultural institutions (Pogrebin 2017a). Some foundations also take board diversity into consideration when determining grants to cultural organizations and other nonprofits (Bertagnoli 2012). The pressure to diversify museum patrons also comes from within the field of museums itself (Facing Change, 2018). For example, the 2022 Smithsonian Strategic Plan includes a commitment to increasing board diversity (Goal 4, 2017).²³ The growing concern with board diversity in the museum field is also evident by a national survey showing that 57 percent of museum directors believe that increasing board diversity is important (BoardSource 2017, 9). Similarly, when Johnnetta Cole (2015), then president of the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD), delivered a diversity-themed keynote address at the 2015 AAMD annual meeting, she made reference to the importance of philanthropic diversity noting that:

we cannot fully carry out the visions and the missions of our museums, and indeed our museums cannot continue to be of social value if we do not do what is required to have more diversity in ... the philanthropic and board leadership in our museums.²⁴

While calls to diversify museum supporters generally focus on majority institutions, ethnic museums have also been addressed. At minority

cultural institutions that typically have fewer resources than their majority counterparts,²⁵ diversifying patronage is encouraged as a strategy to mobilize resources (DeVos Institute of Arts Management 2015, 16; Institute of Museum and Library Services 2004, 10). By having a more diverse philanthropic base, it is assumed, ethnic cultural institutions will have access to more money and other forms of capital. As Juanita Moore, CEO of the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History asserts, racial wealth disparities mean that “African American museums cannot look solely to African American contributors” (Moore 2018, 87).

Globally, there are also stirrings to create a more diverse pool of museum patrons. For example, when the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa opened in September 2017 in Cape Town, South Africa, critics voiced concern that its founder and major donor, Jochen Zeitz, is white and critiqued low black representation on the board (Sargent 2017; Suarez 2017). In the United Kingdom, the Arts Council England has supported efforts to increase diversity among museum board members across such lines as ethnicity and age (“Developing Sector Leaders” n.d.).

Demographic shifts, along with external and internal pressure, mean that it is critical to build theory and develop concepts that will allow us to better understand how a range of social boundaries intersect with museum patronage. However, as noted earlier, the sociological scholarship on museum patronage centers on one social boundary—class. We still know very little about how museum patronage varies within the upper-middle and upper class along lines such as race and ethnicity and generation. *Diversity and Philanthropy at African American Museums* departs from this conventional approach to studying museum patronage not only by analyzing African American museums, but also by analyzing in depth a range of social boundaries, including race and ethnicity, profession, lifestyle, and generation.

Diversity and museum values

I analyze diversity and philanthropy at black museums through the lens of what I term “museum values.” I define “museum values” as the ways that patrons define what matters about the museums that they support. Museum values encompass broad understandings about why these museums should exist; specific perspectives about their strengths and weaknesses; and views about how they should be organized, governed, and adapted in the future. I explore how and why *racial values* vary among black and white patrons, *professional values* vary among patrons who work inside and outside of the business sector, *cultural values* vary among cultural connoisseurs and cultural appreciators, and *contemporary values* vary among older and younger supporters. I approach museum values as socially situated—or, as shaped by the environments and identities of supporters, as well as the cultural repertoires to which they have been exposed.²⁶ Within this analytical

framework, supporters' perceptions about what is peripheral or central to black museums can be understood as influenced by the beliefs and values of the various communities of which they are a part and their experiences and identities as members of those communities.

This explanatory approach engages the broader literatures on valuation and cultural reception. While Bourdieu's concept of the habitus, "a structuring structure which organizes practices and the perception of practices" (1984, 170), has been very influential in cultural sociology, more recent scholarship extends the concept beyond social class. In Bourdieu's formulation, class-related conditions of existence produce a set of universally coherent dispositions and competences. However, more recent research on cultural participation argues that class is only one of many social categories that structure taste and cultural engagement (Bennett et al. 2009; Banks 2010, 2017, 2018, forthcoming; Carter 2003; Dávila 2008, 2012; Gans 1999; Hall 1999). For example, in *Culture, Class, Distinction*, Bennett et al. (2009) preserve Bourdieu's concept of the habitus to explain cultural participation. However, they liberate the habitus from its sole focus on class to also account for categories such as ethnicity and age. Similarly, research on the cultural values of the upper-middle class also argues against Bourdieu's over-attentiveness to class. Critiquing Bourdieu's singular concern with class-related material conditions as a driver of values, as well as asserting that values are influenced not only by structure but also by culture itself, this research finds wide-ranging differences in how varying segments of the upper-middle class draw symbolic boundaries (Lamont 1992).

Research on cultural reception not only takes account of a range of social categories to understand cultural engagement, but it also puts a spotlight on how cultural objects acquire meaning at the time of reception (Griswold 1987; Hall 1980; Scott 2008). This approach asserts that, rather than being created solely at the time of production, the cultural meanings of objects, such as artworks and artifacts in museum exhibitions, emerge out of the process of consumption (Karp, Kreamer, and Lavine 1992). From this view, how audiences interpret or "decode" cultural objects is influenced by their lived experiences along with their preexisting beliefs and values. For example, in her research on natural history museums Monique Scott (2008) finds that visitors' interpretations of exhibitions vary across categories such as race and nationality and are influenced by their earlier experiences and ways of making sense of the world. Summarizing this approach, she writes, "Diverse individuals bring different understandings to museum exhibitions" (Scott 2008, 3).

Diversity and Philanthropy at African American Museums engages this scholarship by arguing that museum values are organized around a range of social categories and enabled by a combination of structural and cultural factors. Moreover, by centering patrons in the study of African American museums, the fluid meanings of these cultural institutions are revealed.

Overview of the book

In the pages that follow I describe in depth how supporters of African American museums define what matters about these institutions. Each chapter presents a case study on how one domain of value—race, work, culture, and contemporaneity—is understood variously by different subgroups of supporters. While the analytic focus is on elaborating the distinct museum values of different segments of patrons, each chapter also considers the varying structural and cultural factors that can help to account for these differences.

Chapter 2 documents how patrons define the racial and ethnic value of black museums. I show how black and white patrons alike embrace a vision of African American museums as African American and all-American institutions. However, black patrons often slightly emphasize the former, and white patrons, the latter. I examine these differences in three contexts—philanthropic space, neighborhoods, and narrative. This chapter also examines how first- and second-generation African and West Indian supporters are often especially cognizant of African American museums as black diasporic spaces. Differences in how patrons define the racial and ethnic value of black museums are accounted for by factors such as individuals' varying racial and ethnic identities, social and organizational ties, access to racial ideologies, and experiences of racial and ethnic isolation. By illustrating how patrons from different racial groups place varying weight on the African American and all-American sides of black museums, Chapter 2 reveals the complexity of race at black museums.

Chapter 3 explores how patrons understand the value of African American museums in relationship to work. I describe how supporters who work in the for-profit sector, especially entrepreneurs, managers, and lawyers, have a heightened awareness of the professional value of African American museums. For them, giving to African American museums is appreciated not only for articulating values of corporate social responsibility that are espoused in firms and broader professional settings, but also as an avenue for enhancing professional relationships. On the one hand, giving reinforces understandings of the professional self as a moral community member, and on the other, it is recognized as an avenue for maintaining and enhancing professional outcomes. In contrast, supporters who work outside of business are less likely to see their patronage at black museums as part of a collective endeavor at their workplaces, or among their broader group of colleagues, to do good. It is also less common for them to see support of black museums as an opportunity to build relationships that will enhance their careers. The heightened emphasis on professional value among supporters in business is accounted for by factors such as the embeddedness of the business world in museum and other nonprofit philanthropy and the ideology of corporate social responsibility.

Chapter 4 explores the cultural side of African American museums. While research on cultural capital emphasizes how members of the middle and

upper class share a deep enjoyment of high culture (Bourdieu 1984), a significant proportion of the supporters I interviewed are best described as appreciators rather than connoisseurs. While the latter are deeply engaged with culture in their broader lives, the former have a more distant relationship with culture. They enjoy culture and history, but it is not a defining feature of their lifestyles. I show how connoisseurs are distinguished from appreciators by paying particular attention to the cultural strengths and weaknesses of African American museums. Seeing themselves as cultural authorities, connoisseurs are comfortable making judgments about what African American museums must do to position themselves as leading cultural institutions. Their cultural eagle eyes are especially attentive to issues such as the legitimation of artists and the care of artworks and artifacts. I suggest that the social conditions associated with the lifestyles of connoisseurs enable their heightened focus on cultural value. With extensive exposure to culture, along with regular and intimate interaction with other cultural experts, connoisseurs have a high level of cultural competence that sensitizes them to the cultural dimensions of African American museums. Moreover, the conditions of their connoisseurship arm them with the knowledge and confidence to make authoritative cultural judgments about these institutions.

Chapter 5 turns the lens to contemporaneity. Like museums across the nation, staff at many African American museums are concerned with cultivating the next generation of supporters. To that end, museums such as the NMAAHC and the Museum of the African Diaspora (MoAD) have friends' groups for young professionals in their 20s, 30s, and 40s. In this chapter, I explore how these younger supporters place particularly strong emphasis on African American museums as contemporary spaces. While supporters across the generations are often attentive to positioning African American museums for success in the future, younger supporters are often most aware of, and open to, progressive shifts that will take them down this road. They are often especially adamant about the need for African American museums to be forums for dialogue about today's political issues, technologically savvy, and engaged with contemporary culture. Building on the sociological literature on generations, I discuss how these differences may be influenced by the distinct experiences and cultural exposures of older and younger generations, such as coming of age before or after the civil rights period and before or after the digital revolution and rise of hip-hop. This chapter brings to the fore not only how African American museums are engaged with recent political movements, such as Black Lives Matter, but also how they are aligned with contemporary culture, such as hip-hop music.

Although each substantive chapter centers on comparing patrons across one dimension of their identity—their race, generation, profession, or lifestyle—there are also differences within these categories. For instance, white and black connoisseurs assess the cultural value of black museums in varying ways, with the former often more concerned with issues such as

black museums fostering a community of black collectors and hiring black staff. It is also the case that museum values vary across other social categories such as gender. For example, black women are often more focused on the role of black museums in the racial socialization of children. With the exception of ethnicity, which is analyzed in depth in Chapter 2, other identities and further within-group differences are occasionally noted but not extensively theoretically elaborated.²⁷

Chapter 6 summarizes the book's empirical chapters, synthesizes the contributions for research on museum patronage and cultural patronage more broadly, and offers directions for future research. In particular, it elaborates how analyzing a range of social background characteristics provides a more complex understanding of the linkages between social and cultural boundaries. The conclusion also discusses findings in the context of practical concerns related to cultural patronage and diversity. While *Diversity and Philanthropy at African American Museums* focuses on patronage at black museums in the United States, the conclusion broadens the discussion to also address museums in other parts of the world, majority museums, and ethnic museums linked to other racial and ethnic minority groups. Since the conclusion highlights contributions related to cultural patronage, next I briefly outline the contributions to scholarship on African American museums.

Rethinking African American museums

In recent years there has been a small flowering of research on the establishment of black museums in the 1960s and 1970s (Burns 2008, 2013; Cahan 2016, 13–30; Wilson 2012). This scholarship makes visible how African American museums grew out of the broader movements for racial equality during this period. For example, it documents how founders' resolve to establish museums centered on black identity was in part a direct response to the absence of black history and culture in majority museums. From this angle of vision, African American museums appear as progressive counterpoints to majority museums. *Diversity and Philanthropy at African American Museums* contributes to the scholarship on African American museums not only by analyzing contemporary museums,²⁸ but also by complicating the common understanding of the African American museum as the prototypical grassroots museum.

On the one hand, the values of patrons that are documented in this book do indeed reveal the progressiveness of today's African American museums. Among various subgroups of patrons there is heightened attentiveness to a host of issues that are progressive. This includes issues such as black membership on museum boards and museum engagement with contemporary political movements. Yet, other values of patrons reveal the establishment side of black museums. For example, just as some patrons at majority museums emphasize their value as institutions that anchor white upper-middle- and

upper-class social life (Ostrower 2002), some patrons place value on black museums as contributing to social cohesion among the black middle and upper class. Similarly, just as patronage at majority cultural organizations is valued by some patrons as a career-enhancing activity (Useem 1984), it is also so valued by some supporters of black museums. In the same vein, just as some supporters at majority museums value them as vehicles to valorize culture that they personally deem worthy and have invested in (Zolberg 1974), so do some patrons at black museums. Finally, the hesitancy among some supporters to fully embrace the contemporary is in keeping with long-standing notions that the appropriate role for museums is to preserve the past (Altshuler 2005). These more conventional values of patrons reveal how rather than standing in pure opposition to majority institutions, African American museums are to a degree very “mainstream” themselves. In complicating the portrait of black museums as standing outside of the center, this book joins other recent scholarship on black museums. The sociologist Robin Autry (2017) argues that though black museums may appear to present alternative histories that are objective correctives of the past, the historical narratives that they put forward are in fact subjective and in some ways favor the status quo.

This book also advances the scholarship on black museums by shining a spotlight on how social boundaries other than race are negotiated within them. Focused on the emergence of black museums in the midst of the racial upheavals of the 1950s through 1970s, the existing literature highlights the racial politics that surround them (Burns 2008, 2013; Cahan 2016, 13–30; Wilson 2012). *Diversity and Philanthropy at African American Museums* adds to this scholarship by analyzing contemporary African American museums from a multifaceted perspective. While it elaborates the issues and challenges that black museums collectively face related to racial politics in the 21st century, it also reveals how they intersect with professional cultures, generational cultures, and varying styles of life. Given that cultural objects related to people of African descent—such as artworks produced by African Americans—are often understood through a purely racial lens (English 2010), it is critical that the extraracial meanings of African American museums are given more attention. As the next chapter demonstrates, race is fundamental to how African American museums should be understood. However, the subsequent chapters show the ways that other social boundaries are intertwined with these cultural institutions.

Notes

Chapter 1

- 1 The efforts to establish a museum focused on African Americans on the National Mall date back to 1915 (Taft and Green Burnette 2003, 7–9).
- 2 I use the terms “African American museum” and “black museum” interchangeably to refer to museums and related cultural institutions in the United States with a significant focus on the history and/or culture of people from the African diaspora. See Appendix 1 for a discussion of this category of museums. It should also be noted that while museums centered on culture and history from the African diaspora can be categorized according to this focus, they are also typically placed in other groupings depending on other relevant factors. For example, a museum such as the Museum of African American History in Boston can be categorized as both an African American museum and a history museum.
- 3 Sociological research on class and arts participation often distinguishes between the cultural engagement of the middle and working classes. At times, more fine-grained distinctions are made such as distinguishing the upper-middle and upper class from all other classes or segments of the upper classes from one another (Bourdieu 1984; DiMaggio and Useem 1978b). Following other research on cultural patronage (DiMaggio and Useem 1978b, 359), I occasionally use the term elite to refer to members of the upper-middle and upper class.
- 4 Over the years, the names of these older black museums changed. The DuSable Museum of African American History, the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, and the African American Museum in Philadelphia were formerly known, respectively, as the Ebony Museum of History and Art, the International Afro-American Museum, and the Afro-American Historical and Cultural Museum. The Association of African American Museums (AAAM) was also founded under a different name—the African American Museums Association.
- 5 An important development in the field of black museums in the 1980s was the establishment of the National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center in Wilberforce, Ohio in 1988. The museum didn’t receive a federal allocation, but it was authorized by Congress earlier in 1981 (Ruffins 1998, 80).
- 6 This estimate is based on research that I conducted in 2016 to identify the population of black museums in the United States (see Appendix 1). As part of this research, I analyzed when the museums were founded. While on its face the founding date of a museum seems as if it is an objective fact, there are different understandings of what founding means. In museum histories, founding has a range of meanings, such as the date when a group first assembled to agree to open a museum, when an organization was granted 501(c)(3) status as a nonprofit, and when it opened to the public. Because of the variable definitions of founding, the dates that Figure 1.3 is based on refer to dates with a range of meanings. The general trend of more openings over time that is illustrated in Figure 1.3 broadly corresponds with other research on the development of the field (Association of African American Museums 2017, 18; Hayward and Werner 2008, 8; Hayward and Larouche 2018, 165).

- 7 Given that even the biggest African American museums today are relatively small compared to the largest “majority” museums (DeVos Institute of Arts Management 2015, 2), the classification of some black museums as “large” is a relative designation grounded in shifts in the historical evolution of the field.
- 8 Winfrey gave a million-dollar donation to the museum.
- 9 The need for sustainable philanthropy is also illustrated in the NMAAHC’s 2017 budget request to Congress, which notes,

In 2017, strategic goals include planning and development strategies to include fund raising for support of Museum programs and research. Advancement staff will leverage visibility from the grand opening to motivate institutional and individual donors to fund the Museum’s ongoing educational and public programs, exhibition development, and other activities.

(Smithsonian Institution 2016, 145)

- 10 Across the museum field there are examples of institutions of various types that have faced financial challenges partly related to costly building projects (Pogrebin 2011; Rich 2006; Whiting 2016).
- 11 This was noted in a grant application for the museum seeking \$1 million to help build capacity in “development, marketing/communications and earned revenue.” It also notes that staff were “preparing to increase their income by approximately \$1.5 million over the current levels, from all sources, in the first year of the Museum’s reopening” (New York Empowerment Zone 2016, 3).
- 12 A recent survey of black museums shows that staff describe funding as their biggest need (Association of African American Museums 2017, 7).
- 13 The interviews mainly occurred in three groups over the years from 2008 to 2016. Most took place in 2016. Other fieldwork and archival visits also took place during this period.
- 14 To provide perspective on the racial and ethnic composition of this sample, it is helpful to review the available evidence about who supports black museums more broadly. First, although there has been little systematic research comparing the racial and ethnic backgrounds of supporters of black and majority museums, available evidence suggests that there is a higher concentration of black supporters at the former (Banks 2017; Pogrebin 2004). Concerning trustees, though it is typical for large majority cultural organizations to have a white majority (Ostrower 2002, 11), this does not appear to be a common pattern at black cultural organizations. For example, in a study of over 400 arts organizations across the United States, Francie Ostrower (2013) finds that while mainstream arts organizations tend to have majority white boards, most organizations with a majority black board focus on African American culture. Among a sample of trustees at fifteen large black museums analyzed for this study, only three have boards that are 60 percent or more white. In contrast, slightly over half have boards that are 60 percent or more black, and most of the remaining have boards with around a black–white split. Most supporters in this study give to black museums where the boards are 60 percent or more black. A smaller number of participants support museums where there is a roughly even split between black and white trustees. None give to museums with a majority white board. In the sample of trustees from large museums, there is not a high presence of Latinx, Asian, or Native American supporters. This is also the case among the black museums that interviewees in this study support. Concerning

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donations, there is also very limited systematic evidence comparing the race of donors to majority and black museums. As part of this study, I analyzed million-dollar gifts to the Smithsonian museum over the period 2005 to 2016. Gifts by blacks were overwhelmingly concentrated at the NMAAHC. I also analyzed gifts of \$25,000 or more at a sample of black museums. Here, I found that gifts by whites and blacks (rather than Latinx, Asians, and Native Americans) predominated, but it was more common for museums to have 60 percent or more of donations be from whites than to have 60 percent or more of donations be from blacks.

- 15 In some cases, other identifying characteristics of individuals and institutions are altered to protect confidentiality. For example, names of cities and other geographic areas, as well as names of some artists and schools, are also often given pseudonyms when mentioned.
- 16 See Appendix 1 for an overview of how African American museums are defined and the types that exist in the broader population.
- 17 Across the literature there are varying definitions of what constitutes an “ethnic” versus a “mainstream” or “majority” cultural organization, and the preferred terminology used to refer to them (Matlon, Van Haastrecht, and Mengüç 2014, 36–38). I use the term “ethnic” museum to refer to cultural organizations that have an explicit focus on the history and culture of specific racial and ethnic groups, as well as institutions that have a significant focus on the history and culture of racial and ethnic minority groups. The former part of this definition captures any cultural organization that is explicitly named for a specific racial or ethnic group, such as the NMAAHC. The latter part of it speaks to organizations that do not include a specific racial or ethnic group in their name, yet the themes of concern significantly overlap with the history and culture of racial and ethnic minority groups. This includes organizations such as the National Civil Rights Museum and the proposed United States National Slavery Museum. Civil rights and slavery are not specifically African American subjects, yet they are themes that significantly overlap with the African American experience. In contrast, I use the terms “majority” and “mainstream” to refer to organizations that make claims of racial and ethnic universality, even if in reality the focus is on the history and culture of people of European descent. This includes organizations such as the National Museum of American History and the Museum of Modern Art in New York.
- 18 The focus on class and majority institutions is also common in research on other forms of patronage of such as music patronage (Accominotti, Khan, and Storer 2018).
- 19 Important exceptions to the focus on class are Ostrower’s discussion of race and ethnicity in Chapter 3 of *Trustees of Culture* (2002), Ostrower’s (2013) statistical analysis of racial and ethnic, age, gender, and occupational diversity on 476 cultural boards, and Diane Grams and Betty Farrell’s *Entering Cultural Communities: Diversity and Change in the Nonprofit Arts* (2008), which investigates a range of forms of diversity.
- 20 The pattern of increasing board diversity is not unique to museums. In her research on the demographic profile of trustees at a range of nonprofits, including six museums, Rikki Abzug (1994, 116–117) finds that in 1931, just one organization in her sample had a nonwhite trustee. By 1961,

boards were still 98.8 percent white. However, by 1991, boards were only 86.7 percent white.

- 21 In her analysis of diversity on cultural boards, Francie Ostrower (2013, 8) finds that only 29 percent of the largest cultural organizations have all-white boards. While the percentage of all-white boards increases as the size of organizations becomes smaller, even a significant number of the smallest cultural organizations—around 31 percent—are racially and ethnically diverse (Ostrower 2013, 8).
- 22 Although significant economic inequalities between racial and ethnic groups remain (Conley 1999; Oliver and Shapiro 1995; Shapiro 2005), there are improvements by some measures. In their research on the “power elite” in the United States, or those at the top of the class hierarchy, Richard Zweigenhaft and G. William Domhoff document how it has transformed to become more racially and ethnically diverse (Zweigenhaft and Domhoff 1982, 2003, 2011, 2018). For example, in 1955 the CEOs of all *Fortune Magazine*’s leading 500 companies were white males; over time, this corporate elite added individuals from racial and ethnic minority groups to its ranks. In 2011, there were 15 Asian Americans CEOs and seven black CEOs, and in 2008 there were 13 Latinx CEOs (Zweigenhaft and Domhoff 2011). The boards of Fortune 500 firms have also diversified. For example, the first black became a board member of a Fortune 500 firm in 1964 (Zweigenhaft and Domhoff 2018, 88). By 2004, one estimate put the percentage of blacks on these boards at 8.1 (Zweigenhaft and Domhoff 2018, 95). Beyond the corporate sector, the class position of blacks improved dramatically between 1960 and 1980: for example, the number of blacks in white-collar jobs, a measure of middle-class status, increased by 124 percent (Collins 1997, 3). By 1970, one out of every four blacks could be considered middle-class, as opposed to one out of eight in 1960 (Landry 1987, 70). Although by some measures black class gains have slowed since this golden age, by 1995 almost half of all black workers could be considered middle-class (Pattillo-McCoy 1999, 3). Also, between 1970 and 2014 the proportion of blacks making six-figure salaries almost doubled, and the percentage of those making \$75,000 more than doubled. The percentage of blacks in these categories was 13 percent and 21 percent, respectively (Edsall 2017). Educationally, black college attainment has been in a long upward trend, with 23.3 percent of blacks 25 and over holding a college degree by 2017. In 1965 the figure was just 4.7 percent (US Census Bureau 2017).
- 23 Under Goal 4 in the Strategic Plan there is a commitment to “accelerating the diversification of our [the Smithsonian Institution’s] constituents, boards, and workforces” (“Goal 4” 2017). A 2018 report is critical of Latinx trusteeship at the Smithsonian noting that “only 4 Latina/os have served on the Institution’s Board of Regents; with no Latina/o representation on the Board since 2016” (Vera et al. 2018).
- 24 Also, in its online guide “Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion,” the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) (n.d.) directs members to resources for building diverse boards. Similarly, in 2015, a blog post including a “primer” on “Art Museums, Diversity, and Leadership” was posted on the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) website. Accompanying the post was a video conversation between Darren Walker, president of the Ford Foundation, which is a major funder of the arts, and Agnes Gund, president emerita of the Museum of

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- Modern Art board. In their discussion they talked about the need to diversify museum boards (“Diversity in the Arts: Darren Walker and Agnes Gund” 2015).
- 25 Comparing the budgets of the largest African American and Latinx museums, theaters, and dance companies to the largest mainstream arts organizations in those categories, the DeVos Institute finds that those of the former are substantially smaller (DeVos Institute of Arts Management 2015, 2). A report from the National Center for Arts Research finds that after accounting for organizational age and sector, “culturally specific” and “mainstream” cultural organizations have budgets of similar size (Voss et al. 2016, 2).
 - 26 In their research on ethnoracial stigma and discrimination, Michèle Lamont and her coauthors define cultural repertoires as “a set of tools available to individuals to make sense of the reality they experience” (Lamont et al. 2016, 21).
 - 27 While dimensions of value associated with each broad category—for example, race, work, culture, and the contemporary—are generally discussed in one dedicated chapter, given their overlapping nature they are also at times discussed in other chapters. For example, racial value is comprehensively discussed in Chapter 2. However, aspects of racial value are also implicitly and occasionally explicitly discussed in all other chapters. In general, black patrons tend to place greater weight on the significance of black museums for the black community across contexts such that there is more consideration among this group about black aspects of work, cultural, and contemporary value. Similarly, dimensions of value associated with culture are generally discussed in Chapter 4. However, in some cases they are also explored in other chapters. For example, racial narratives are explored in Chapter 2, and contemporary culture is analyzed in Chapter 5. While the distinct orientations of connoisseurs are systematically explored in Chapter 5, their greater emphasis on cultural value is typically evident across the board. Generally, black connoisseurs place more value on black narratives than do black appreciators, and younger generation connoisseurs are typically more concerned with certain aspects of contemporary culture—such as emerging visual artists—than are their younger appreciator counterparts.
 - 28 Robin Autry’s (2017) work is also among the new books looking at contemporary black museums.

Chapter 2

- 1 This bill, H.R. 3442, was introduced by Representative John Lewis of Georgia and focused on the formation of a special commission to put together a course of action to establish the NMAAHC. As noted in the legislation, the commission was directed to create racially specific fundraising plans.
- 2 I also discuss whites’ greater emphasis on black museums for specific white ethnic groups such as Greeks.
- 3 In making this argument, I build on the sociologist Peggy Levitt’s (2015) research on the cosmopolitan-nationalism continuum at museums. Levitt argues that museums often fall along a spectrum of emphasizing either the collectivity of the nation or the humanity of all people. In her analysis, these are objective differences between museums that are a function of the broader historical and cultural contexts in which they are embedded. Here, I extend Levitt’s research by turning the focus to a particular type of museum, the African American museum, and exploring the balance between African American and all-American, as well as

the weight of African American and African Diasporic. Moreover, instead of analyzing objective differences between museums themselves in these orientations, I focus on perceptual distinctions among patrons.

- 4 Research on museum-going also finds that race organizes cultural consumption. For example, in her research on natural history museums, Monique Scott (2008) finds that black visitors are more likely to emphasize Africa as an important site of cultural heritage and to offer more critical interpretations of exhibitions.
- 5 Highlighting race and ethnicity as poles of difference render internal variations within racial and ethnic groups less visible. These differences do exist, and some, such as gender, are explicitly touched on in this chapter. Others, such as profession, are not formally accented but are manifest in the discussion. While intraracial and intraethnic differences in understanding racial and ethnic value do exist, the focus on intergroup variations highlights patterns of evaluation that are more or less common within particular categories.
- 6 Black fraternities and sororities are foundational organizations in black middle-class life (Graham 1999, 83–100). These organizations are highly active outside of colleges and universities. Individuals who pledge in college often maintain active membership after they graduate. In addition, it is common for members to join these black fraternities and sororities after graduation.
- 7 The role of black museums in black middle-class life is also illustrated by the fact that in my sample of more than 2,000 donations of \$25,000 or more to black museums, all of the gifts from social organizations are from black middle-class social organizations.
- 8 These are both single-sex professional and social organizations. The former is for men, and the latter for women.
- 9 Lucy's comments are brought into further context when considering the sociologist Milton Gordon's work on race and class (Banks 2017). In his research on assimilation, Gordon (1964) distinguishes group boundaries based not only on racial and ethnic "vertical stratifications" but also on social class "horizontal stratifications." He describes groups created by these intersecting boundaries as "ethclass" groups. Under Gordon's classification, the middle and upper class are subdivided into specific ethclass groups such as the black upper-middle class and the white upper-middle class. According to Gordon, while the middle and upper class "tend to act alike and have the same values even if they have different ethnic backgrounds" (1964, 52), social participation within the middle and upper class, including primary relationships and organizational affiliations, is concentrated within the ethclass group. Put into Gordon's terms of ethclass groups, Lucy emphasizes that for the black elite, African American museums are a central organization that facilitates ethclass bonds. In contrast, majority museums bring together the white elite.
- 10 For twenty years, Joan Weill was a trustee of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, serving as board chair from 2000 to 2014. Over several years she and her husband Sandy donated over \$50 million to the organization, including one-time pledges of \$18.4 million and \$16 million. The former gift by the white couple was the single largest donation to the organization to date. In recognition of the gift, the company's new Manhattan building was named the Joan Weill Center for Dance (Catton 2014).
- 11 In an analysis of more than 2,000 donations of \$25,000 or more to a small sample of black museums, I found that at most museums it was more common

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- for 60 percent or more donations from individuals (including family foundations) to come from whites than blacks.
- 12 There are also exceptions to this pattern. For example, there is a black patron at the Goldsville African American Museum who is highly integrated into the city's white elite, even extending to the prep school that she attended as a youth.
 - 13 In educational research, the term "temporary minorities" has been used to refer to white students who attend Historically Black Colleges and Universities (Strayhorn 2010).
 - 14 The couple met while attending a Historically Black College and University (HBCU). Their school is an elite HBCU that is part of the black middle-class organizational network (Graham 1999, 63–82).
 - 15 In November 2015 when historical photographs were projected onto the NMAAHC's facade, one image showed Iakovos standing next to King.
 - 16 The major immigration law contributing to this shift is the Hart-Cellar Immigration Act (1965), which eliminated national quotas favoring Europeans.

Chapter 3

- 1 Supporters in cultural fields—for example, individuals with jobs directly connected to culture and/or history—who work outside of business also place high emphasis on giving to African American museums in relationship to work. However, given that cultural professionals' engagement with history and/or culture is typically part of a broader lifestyle of deep cultural engagement, I exclude them from the analysis in this chapter. Thus, this chapter compares patrons who do not work in cultural fields. While not a significant focus in this chapter, workers in the private sector, such as entrepreneurs, managers, and lawyers, tend to place more emphasis on work value than certain types of professionals such as engineers. The heightened focus on work value among the former is likely influenced by factors such as it is among the executive ranks that involvement in the nonprofit sector is especially high.
- 2 Although not all patrons who work in the private sector specifically work at corporations, for shorthand I sometimes refer to them as "corporate patrons" or "corporate supporters." At times, I use the terms "noncorporate patrons" and "noncorporate supporters" to refer to patrons who work in government and the public sector.
- 3 In her research on over 400 cultural boards Francie Ostrower (2013) finds that business is the most common employer for trustees.
- 4 In her research on museum and opera trustees, Francie Ostrower (2002, 12) finds that some women take on board seats previously occupied by their husbands.
- 5 The sociologist Emily Barman uses the term "caring capitalism" to refer to corporate pursuit of "both money and mission" (2016, 1), or corporations' efforts to make a profit and a better society.
- 6 In 1970, the economist Milton Friedman wrote an essay for the *New York Times Magazine* that laid out an argument against corporate philanthropy. In the essay, Friedman argues that the core responsibility of corporations is to make money. Therefore, any gifts that compromise economic returns to shareholders are unethical. He does acknowledge that in some cases firms cloak self-interested philanthropy in the dress of social responsibility.

- 7 In his research on corporate philanthropy in Minneapolis, Joseph Galaskiewicz (1985, 1997) also finds that giving is influenced by peer pressure from other managers.
- 8 Research on gift-giving more broadly describes how it is a practice that builds social bonds and obligations (Mauss 1966).
- 9 In my sample of more than 2,000 large donations to African American museums, just a fraction of donations were from schools. A much larger proportion are from the corporate sector.
- 10 Although some supporters who work in education mentioned their schools' engagement with black and other museums for educational purposes—for example, to enhance school curriculum related to history and/or culture—it was much less common for them to describe high levels of involvement of their schools in museum philanthropy.

Chapter 4

- 1 To protect confidentiality, this chapter uses pseudonyms not only for interviewees and cultural institutions but also in some cases for artists.
- 2 The analysis in this chapter centers on how connoisseurs and appreciators define the cultural value of black museums. Although there are fundamental differences in the cultural evaluations of connoisseurs and appreciators, it should be noted that there are subtle differences in cultural evaluation within these groups. Among connoisseurs, cultural values vary depending on degree and type of connoisseurship. For example, some patrons are new to collecting, whereas others have been collecting for decades. Both the new collector connoisseur and the long-standing collector connoisseur can be distinguished from noncollector appreciators by their greater emphasis on the cultural value of black museums, but it is typically long-standing collector connoisseurs who place the greatest emphasis on the cultural value of these institutions. Connoisseurs' areas of cultural interests also vary. For example, in comparison to connoisseurs who are deeply engaged in history, connoisseurs with high involvement in fine art appear more sensitive to certain issues such as specific artists who have gone unrecognized. There are also racial differences among connoisseurs, with black connoisseurs more sensitive to issues such as hiring black staff at black museums.
- 3 David Halle (1993) makes a similar argument concerning the appreciation of abstract art by the upper-middle and upper class. In his research examining art in the homes of New Yorkers, he finds that residents of upper-middle- and upper-class neighborhoods are more likely than those in working-class neighborhoods to display abstract art. However, while members of the upper-middle and upper class may be more likely to own abstract art, Halle (129–131) finds that a slight majority appreciate it for its merely decorative qualities.
- 4 In his research on race and art prices, the economist Richard Agnello (2010) compares prices for art by black and white painters from 1972 to 2004. Despite narrowing over time, a price gap favoring white artists existed throughout this entire period. There has also been underrepresentation of contemporary African art in the art market (Banks 2018).
- 5 Concerns about interior views have also surrounded museums associated with other racial and ethnic minority groups, such as Native Americans (Lonetree 2012; Simpson 1996).

Chapter 5

- 1 I define older supporters as those born before 1965, which includes members of the following groups: G.I. Generation (–1936), Silent Generation (1937–1945), Older Boomers (1946–1954), and Younger Boomers (1955–1964). Younger supporters are those born 1965 and after. This includes members of Generation X (1965–1976) and Millennials (1977–1992). While being born before or after 1965 is a common cutoff to denote different generations with respect to the changing racial structure in the United States, the specific cutoffs for generational groups such as Generation X and Millennials vary slightly from study to study (e.g., see Zickuhr 2010 and Fry 2018).
- 2 On occasion this chapter uses pseudonyms for artists.
- 3 In “Building Youth Participation,” Betty Farrell (2008) explores generational distinctions in cultural participation through another lens—programs that encourage engagement with cultural institutions among teenagers.
- 4 While recent newspaper articles and other media report that cultural organizations are pursuing younger patrons because of a concern that audiences are aging (Gelles 2014), survey research offers mixed findings concerning the greying audience hypothesis. For example, in their research using Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA) data from 1982, 1992, and 2002, Paul DiMaggio and Toqir Mukhtar (2004, 177) find that since 1982 younger cohorts have had lower attendance rates at classical music concerts. Yet, participation in other cultural activities shows a different pattern. For example, museum-going rose among people aged 18 to 49 from 1982 to 1992, but then fell between 1992 and 2002. In another paper using SPPA Data, Richard Peterson and Gabriel Rossman (2008, 308) evaluate the greying audience hypothesis by exploring the median age of arts attendees at different periods of time. They find that the median age of opera, classical music, theater, musical, ballet, museum and jazz attendees has risen across time.
- 5 While the main generational division that I find is between those born before and after 1965, it is important to note that museum values also vary within these groups. When it comes to culture—specifically an emphasis on hip hop—Younger Boomers are often more similar to patrons born after 1965. Given that hip hop emerged during their formative years in the 1970s and 1980s, this is not surprising. Similarly, the focus on new technology and BLM is greater among Millennials than Gen X’ers. This is also not a surprise, given that the digital revolution was in full swing by the time that the former reached adolescence, whereas it was still emergent during the formative years of even the youngest Gen X’ers. Similarly, BLM did not emerge until 2013, when Gen X’ers were well into adulthood.
- 6 The art fair, which is sponsored by Bacardi, allows artists to sell their work and keep all of the profits for themselves. This is a contrast to typical art fairs, where gallerists take a percentage of sales. The fair debuted in Dean’s hometown of the Bronx, New York, but since then has traveled to other cities across the world.
- 7 While I propose that the tendency of supporters born after 1965 to focus on the new is partly a function of a distinct set of generational values that should remain with them after they age, I also posit that it is related to other factors, such as their patron roles. As this cohort advances in the life cycle and more members take on the role of trustee, we might also expect them to become more sensitive

to the costs of embracing contemporary political issues that have not yet become legitimized.

- 8 See Lacy (2007, 173–174) and Pattillo-McKoy (1999, 117–145) for discussions about the vulnerability of black middle-class youth who adopt a lifestyle associated with poor, black urban communities.

Chapter 6

- 1 As John H. Falk (2013, 110) notes in his research on museum engagement, “thousands of visitor studies have been conducted” by museums to gain insight into the demographic characteristics of visitors. While much of this research remains unpublished, race and ethnicity are among the background factors that are analyzed.
- 2 For example, although in 2009 close to half of Asian Americans had at least a Bachelor’s degree, around one-third of whites had a similar level of education. The same year, the median family income for Asian Americans was \$78,529 and \$65,319 for whites (“Selected Characteristics of Racial Groups” 2012, 41). The proportion of Asian and Pacific Islanders making \$100,000 and over in 2009 also surpassed whites at 37.7 percent versus 27 percent, respectively (Money Income 2012, 455).
- 3 In 2009 only 12.6 percent of Latinxs had a BA or higher degree, compared to 31.1 percent of non-Hispanic whites. However, among Latinxs that year, 27.9 percent of Cuban Americans had a college degree, while only 9.5 percent of Mexican Americans had one. Despite lower socioeconomic outcomes among some Latinx ethnic groups, such as Mexican Americans, there is some evidence that these groups will experience upward mobility over time and join the middle class (Agius Vallejo 2012; Jiménez 2009).
- 4 It is estimated that there are more than 2,000 ethnocultural arts organizations in the United States. This does not include cultural organizations that do not focus specifically on the arts. For example, some black history museums are not included in this count (Matlon et al. 2014, 4, 24).
- 5 In Uganda there are plans to build a museum focused on the regime of former president Idi Amin that will also focus on the nation’s pre- and postcolonial history (“Uganda to Build” 2018). There are also plans to build the Benin Royal Museum, which will house, among other objects, bronze sculptures taken from Benin City by British troops in 1897 (Hickley 2018).
- 6 There are approximately 255 ethnocultural arts organizations in Canada (Matlon et al. 2014, 4).
- 7 While not focused on patronage per se, Robin Autry’s (2017a) *Desegregating the Past: The Public Life of Memory in the United States and South Africa* offers a comparative analysis of how museums in the United States and South Africa narrate violent racial pasts. Also, in her research on museum-going at natural history museums in London, Nairobi, and New York, Monique Scott finds that national residence is associated with how visitors interpret exhibitions (Scott 2008, 145–47). Specifically, Kenyan residents are more attentive to linkages between museums and colonialism.
- 8 Other scholars assert that claims of a transnational elite are overstated (Korsnes et al. 2018).

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- 9 While no longer exclusively focused on art, the center still promotes art from Africa as part of its mission (The Africa Center 2017).
- 10 Research of this nature could be undertaken at African museums that center on African culture or history but also include art and artifacts from other parts of the African diaspora. For example, the Zeitz MoCAA collection includes work by African American artists such as Glenn Ligon, Kehinde Wiley, and Hank Willis Thomas.
- 11 Scholarship focused on the effects of leadership diversity on organizational outcomes in the corporate sector also suggests that it could either enhance or compromise performance (Cook and Glass 2015).
- 12 See, for example, the Friends of African and African American Art programs at museums across the United States, such as at the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Detroit Institute of Arts, and the Saint Louis Art Museum. Internationally, museums such as the Tate in London are devising patron programs directed at the African diaspora, such as the Africa Acquisitions Committee focused on collecting contemporary art from the continent.
- 13 In 2014, Darby English was hired as a consulting curator at MoMA to enrich holdings of art by African Americans, and in 2016 the Detroit Institute of Arts launched a multimillion-dollar initiative to acquire work by African American artists (Solomon 2014; Stryker 2016).Appendix 1

Appendix 1

- 1 This appendix is adapted from blog posts on www.patriciaannbanks.com.
- 2 For example, in the History section of the Association of African American Museums website, both terms are used. Similarly, the name of the organization uses “African American” in the title, but its website uses “black museum” (www.blackmuseums.org/).
- 3 In preparing the African American Museums Database (AAMD), I researched a range of factors about each museum, such as their location, founding date, and budget. To determine this information, I relied on sources such as IRS Form 990 filings and museum websites. My discussion of the field of black museums is based on data from the AAMD as well as findings from AAAM surveys.
- 4 This estimate of the number of black museums in the United States is based on research that I undertook in 2016. At that time, I used multiple sources to identify cultural institutions that fit my working definition of black museums—cultural institutions with a significant focus on the history and culture of people from the African diaspora. To begin the list, I added all museums included in the *National Survey of African American Museums* (Austin 2003). I also searched for black museums in various news databases and search engines using search strings such as “museum [and] black” and “museum [and] African American.” This was a time-consuming process that required reviewing many websites and articles that were not in fact related to black museums. For example, my search brought up articles related to African Americans at majority museums. However, I did add dozens of museums that were not included in the initial list. I also added museums that I came across through my broader ethnographic and archival research on black museums. Once I had this initial list, I checked to see whether each museum

was currently open to the public by seeing if it had what appeared to be an active website or by calling. Several museums were eliminated because they seemed to no longer exist or have ever been fully established. Through this process, I came up with a list of 345 museums. I made the list available to the public as part of a searchable online database, the African American Museums Database (AAMD), in September 2016. As I was preparing this list, AAAM was undertaking a needs assessment that involved identifying the population of African American museums. At their annual meeting in August 2017, they presented findings from their study. Their count of black museums is 215 (Association of African American Museums 2017, 4). Given the variable definitions of terms such as “African American” and “museum,” it is not surprising that there are different estimates of the number of black museums. Indeed, the counts of other ethnic museums, such as tribal museums, also vary significantly (Abrams 2004, 3). It is also likely that varying methods for identifying black museums may also contribute to different estimates. The process of using search strings related to black museums to find them in search engines and databases may have contributed to identifying a larger number.

5 Partly to mitigate the effects of one dominant institution in the field, the legislation for establishing the NMAAHC included a grant program to support other African American museums. The IMLS Museum Grants for African American History and Culture established in 2006 are part of the broader support at the federal level for these organizations.

Appendix 2

- 1 Although individuals were recruited based on their support of one black museum, in the course of interviews, I discovered that some are also supporters of other black museums.
- 2 See Appendix 1 for a discussion about black museums and size. It is likely that findings are shaped by the fact that supporters in this study generally give to large and mid-sized black museums.
- 3 In a few cases, I was not able to arrange interviews with patrons while I was visiting their cities, so I conducted phone interviews with them.
- 4 At some points, I also draw on ethnographic and archival data from my earlier study on art collecting.
- 5 In the course of collecting data for my first book, I was also a member of a young professionals group at a black museum in another city.
- 6 The donations database was compiled from publicly available information on annual gifts and campaign gifts from 16 mainly large black museums. The trustee database includes board members from the largest black museums, along with trustees from museums that patrons in this study support.
- 7 A few participants were retired. Given that they often discussed patronage in relationship to work—for example, former managers discussing the job skills and knowledge that they bring to trusteeship—retired participants’ work classification is designated as the last job that they held for which they were paid a salary.

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Chapter 1

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