A new academic program requires hundreds of thousands of dollars for faculty salaries, staff, office space, and equipment. Because an academic program has significant financial needs, university administrators can deliberate for years as they weigh a proposal’s intellectual merits and develop new budgets. Black studies’ sudden appearance during the 1968–1969 school year took college administrators by surprise. There simply had been no time to properly budget a new program. University administrators and black studies advocates turned to their allies in the nonprofit sector for financial assistance when confronted with unanticipated financial needs.

In response to urgent requests and a desire to promote racial equality in the university, the Ford Foundation awarded millions of dollars to universities for black studies departments and programs. From 1970 to 1978, the Ford Foundation gave more than $10 million (in 2005 dollars) to universities and other organizations active in the black studies field. The foundation supported academic programs, journal publications, and conferences. It engaged in a second wave of black studies grant-making in the mid-1980s, which continues to the present. The foundation’s reputation as one of black studies’ most generous and steadfast patrons stems from its continuing support of the field.

This chapter addresses unanswered historical and sociological questions about the Ford Foundation’s sponsorship of black studies programs. For example, what was the Ford Foundation’s purpose in supporting black studies? How did support for black studies emerge from the philanthropy’s prior com-
mitments? From a sociological perspective, one might ask how a group outside the university contributed to the stabilization and growth of a social movement’s outcome.

One of this chapter’s arguments is that black studies grants were viewed as a natural extension of earlier work in higher education and civil rights. Inside the foundation, black studies programs were viewed as a tool for integrating American universities because these units brought white and black students together. Black studies programs were often framed by foundation officers as an early form of multicultural education, which institutionalized nonwhite culture for the benefit of mainstream American society. This position brought the foundation into conflict with cultural nationalists, who viewed black studies as an institution created for the benefit of the black community.

A second historical point is that foundation grant-making shifted from supporting civil rights to supporting the development of a discipline’s research infrastructure. When the philanthropy gave to black studies programs in the 1960s, foundation officers were responding to the civil rights movement and cultural nationalists. The philanthropy wanted to promote racial integration by sponsoring black studies units in predominantly white research universities. By the late 1980s and 1990s, the foundation adopted a different stance. Instead of responding to external political events, foundation officers focused on developing black studies’ capacity for knowledge production. Black studies professors and their colleagues in the nonprofit sector viewed black studies as having moved beyond an initial conflict stage. Black studies programs needed to be seen as the intellectual equals of other interdisciplinary programs, such as American studies. This chapter argues that foundation actions after the mid-1980s were less motivated by movement politics than by black studies’ institutional development. As the field matured and took its place among the disciplines, black studies supporters in the nonprofit sector thought that it urgently needed a reputation as the center of highly visible research on the African diaspora.

The shift from an engagement with black politics to a concern with disciplinary maturity motivates this chapter’s sociological argument. By insisting that black studies adopt an integrationist stance and acquire legitimacy through research, the Ford Foundation tried to enforce the social order found within the American university system, where individuals and entire organizations are judged by their ability to advance knowledge. In the terminology of organizational scholar W. Richard Scott, the Ford Foundation acted as an “institutional carrier,” an organization or other agent that enforces rules in other organiza-
tions.¹ The point made by Scott and other sociologists is that higher education, like any industry, has its own ideologies, practices, and rules that align universities with the broader society. This view suggests that emergent disciplines will find a place in academe only if they can show compliance with the cultural imperative to produce disinterested knowledge. Those who manage and promote higher education insist that their clients demonstrate compliance with the norms of scientific research and teaching.

A concern with the Ford Foundation’s role as an enforcer of organizational practices leads to questions about the relationship between foundation grants, specific programs, and the protest that resulted in the creation of black studies programs. It is an open question whether the Ford Foundation actually served to stabilize programs by aligning them with the academic system, and how the foundation’s actions were a response to student protests. If grants did somehow shift the field in a specific direction, then the foundation’s actions illustrate how nonprofits influence academic disciplines by underwriting the field’s infrastructure. If the link between grants, program behavior, and student action is weak or nonexistent, then the foundation’s role as an “institutional carrier” is tenuous, which begs for a reassessment of the hypothesis that the influence of the nonprofit sector has a weight equal to other forces within higher education.

The argument I advance is that the Ford Foundation’s ability to shape black studies was surprisingly limited because of the foundation’s sporadic interest. While foundation president McGeorge Bundy showed interest in black studies, his immediate successors did not direct as much attention to it. The cohort of officers who administered higher education grants in the late 1970s and early 1980s showed limited interest in the topic. Not until the mid-1980s was that interest revived. The foundation has never developed consistent procedures for funding and evaluating black studies programs. Supporting black studies never became a leading priority within the organization, and therefore, no effort was made to create the practices and routines that could routinely channel funds toward the field.

The conclusion I draw from this history is that the Ford Foundation’s role as higher education patron brought an opportunity to influence black studies, but this influence was mitigated by the institutional environment of higher education and fluctuating interest within the foundation. The link between black studies programs and the nonprofit sector was never formalized, and sponsored programs moved in many directions, not just the direction desired
by the Ford Foundation’s staff. Only by understanding that the Ford Foundation was an occasional actor in a complex institutional environment can one appreciate the uneven contours of the philanthropy’s impact.

The rest of this chapter provides a detailed analysis of the foundation’s actions. The chapter begins with a brief description of the Ford Foundation’s turn toward the civil rights movement in the 1960s and the philanthropy’s concern with black higher education. The next section provides an overview of the foundation’s grant-making. Using interviews and archival sources, I then describe the motivations behind black studies grants. The subsequent section discusses three programs that received foundation grants, showing how programs could adhere to the model preferred by the foundation, align with nationalists, or disappear altogether. The final empirical section uses statistical data to examine the grant-making process to establish the correlation between a university’s status, association with black protest, and prior history of receiving grants. This section shows that the foundation did have systematic preferences for research schools but that decisions to request and receive funds were not connected with campus protest. A social movement may have created the initial demand for black studies but support for the field was channeled according to the norms of the philanthropic and academic sectors. The concluding section argues that the Ford Foundation’s impact stems from the organization’s attempts to sever connections between black studies programs and cultural nationalism and respond to the changing needs of an academic field, as well as wavering interest within the foundation.

From Traditional Philanthropy to Civil Rights Advocacy

This section describes the foundation’s general direction in the period before it became engaged in social change and black politics. In the decades preceding the civil rights and black power movements, the Ford Foundation was viewed as one of the most important charities, a position ensured by its enormous financial endowment. The Ford Foundation was created in 1936 so the Ford family could retain some control over the Ford Motor Company fortune.² The foundation was initially awarded thousands of shares of Ford Motor Company stock. Dividends were used to fund the first grants and pay staff members. Over time, the foundation dissociated itself from the Ford Motor Company, with an initial sale of 22 percent of its Ford stock in 1956 and complete divestiture in 1974.³ The sale’s proceeds were used to create a professionally managed
endowment, which continues to provide most of the foundation’s operating budget. The growth in the endowment’s value has been astronomical. After the recession of the early twenty-first century, the foundation’s endowment still has a value of more than $11 billion. The David and Lucile Packard Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation are the only organized charities with larger financial endowments.⁴

For the first thirty years of its existence, the Ford Foundation gave money to relatively uncontroversial causes. Grants were made to universities, museums, and hospitals. This is not to say that the Ford Foundation awarded its money to unimportant causes that attracted little attention. But most of the foundation’s grantees were well within the confines of moderate liberal politics as they were understood in the mid-twentieth century. Institutional reform and improvement were central, not radical social change. In this spirit, the foundation gave millions to other large institutions, such as hospitals and museums, with well-defined goals to serve and educate the public. For the most part, the foundation did not give to political parties or interest groups such as the NAACP.

Giving to academic disciplines, such as black studies, was not unknown to the foundation in this period. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the foundation used its money to become involved in a wide variety of new academic disciplines, such as Chinese and Russian studies.⁵ The Ford Foundation was also influential in the development of graduate business education.⁶ Supporting the academy gave the foundation the opportunity to promote its liberal values. Ford Foundation officers saw elite business education, such as the M.B.A. program, as an opportunity to cultivate ethical business leaders who would use social science to manage American enterprise. Similarly, the Ford Foundation viewed area studies, especially Russian studies, as an intellectual institution that could help liberal capitalist democracies persevere in the Cold War.

The Ford Foundation’s image changed in the mid-1960s with a turn toward the civil rights movement, as signaled by Henry T. Heald’s 1966 resignation as Ford Foundation president. Although he was considered competent, Heald’s vision for the foundation attracted criticism as the civil rights movement escalated. An academic and an engineer, Heald encouraged the kind of giving that typified big philanthropy in this era. As civil rights came to dominate American politics, foundation trustees viewed Heald as a conservative leader who was missing an opportunity to make a lasting impact because he was not using the foundation’s resources to promote racial integration.

The move toward social activism involved a reworking of the foundation’s
public image and McGeorge Bundy’s appointment as president. Bundy was not cut from the same cloth as previous foundation presidents. McGeorge Bundy was one of two sons of a professional family in New York. He went to privileged boarding schools, attended Yale University, and quickly joined the nation’s political elite. Bundy worked for General Robert Stimson’s staff and helped coordinate the Allied invasion of Europe. After leaving the U.S. Army in 1945, Bundy held a number of powerful positions: Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Harvard University and advisor to President Kennedy. Bundy was someone who wanted to change the world; he was not happy with piecemeal reform.

Bundy was a dynamic person, willing to tackle large, tough problems. He did not hesitate to put the Ford Foundation at the forefront of the civil rights movement. Bundy repeatedly expressed his desire to work on race relations on a grand scale. He told the *New York Times* in 1965 that the nation should commit resources to fight racism equal to those deployed in Vietnam. In a 1968 speech, he said, “The most deep-seated and destructive of all the causes of the Negro problem is still the prejudice of the white man.” He was prepared to take the Ford Foundation into controversial areas. Bundy told the *New York Times*, “Our job is to make decisions, to defend and explain them, and then go on to the next with serenity. Otherwise, we might as well throw our money up and see where it blows down.” Bundy also told friends that he wasn’t afraid to be a “lightning rod” for criticism and that previous foundation work reflected “conventional wisdom.”

Bundy wasted no time pursuing the civil rights agenda. With almost $200 million per year to spend, he turned the Ford Foundation into a major financial backer of the civil rights movement. During the next two years, Bundy directed $40 million toward projects related to the movement. Grants included $230,000 to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in 1966 and $175,000 to the Congress of Racial Equality in 1967. Grants also went to older, more established black political groups such as the NAACP and the Urban League.

Bundy funded court litigation and the negotiation of racially motivated campus disputes. In 1967, the foundation awarded grants to groups in Wilmington, Delaware, and St. Paul, Minnesota, who were suing for school desegregation. In 1969, the Ford Foundation paid Samuel Houston, a well-known labor negotiator and Johnson administration official, to mediate the San Francisco State College strike, an event that ultimately led to the creation of the nation’s first black studies program. Bundy became personally involved with black studies and even attended a black studies symposium at Yale in 1969.
Bundy’s main contribution as Ford Foundation president was steering one of America’s premier philanthropies toward the civil rights movement. In doing so, Bundy and the foundation attracted a great deal of criticism. During the late 1960s, southern congressmen attacked the foundation’s activities and claimed that the foundation had abused the public’s trust. Instead of pursuing humanitarian goals, the foundation had become too involved in politics, a violation of the philanthropy’s charter. These criticisms resulted in the Tax Reform Act of 1969, which regulated the nonprofit sector. Although Bundy was a lightning rod for criticism and many in the foundation felt threatened by the federal government’s regulation, Bundy succeeded in making the foundation an important participant in civil rights, which opened the door to involvement in black studies.

Bundy deserves much of the credit for pushing the Ford Foundation into civil rights struggles. But it would be misleading to suggest that the attention given to black studies, and black education more generally, stemmed exclusively from Bundy’s interest in politics. In fact, foundation officers had been working to help black Americans gain access to higher education since the 1950s. For years, officers within the foundation had taken an interest in opening the gates of higher education to African Americans. Toward this goal, officers supported historically black colleges in the late 1950s. Foundation officers felt that the impact of *Brown vs. Board of Education* had not been felt in higher education, and some thought that many colleges had done little to recruit black students. The best strategy was to support historically black colleges. Program officer John Scanlon expressed this strongly in his 1974 report to the foundation on educational initiatives for ethnic minorities: “Although the Supreme Court decision of 1954 outlawed segregation in higher education as well as in public schools, most colleges and universities throughout the country dragged their feet throughout the Fifties and early Sixties in admitting black students. As a consequence of this reluctance, the eighty-six degree-granting colleges and universities that had been established to serve Black Americans continued to represent the one best avenue into higher education for thousands of Black students in the South as well as for many outside the South.” Support for black colleges was enormous. From the early 1950s to 1974, the Ford Foundation gave at least $250 million to historically black colleges. Adjusting for inflation, that would be approximately $1.58 billion in 2006. By any measure, the foundation’s support for historically black colleges was enormous.
Grants went to organizations prominent in black higher education. For example, in 1953, the foundation gave $1 million to the United Negro College Fund. Other grants included a gift to the Atlanta University Center so it could coordinate the activities of its constituent colleges and a grant to Howard University for faculty development. The grants were designed to improve every aspect of a college, including its accounting system, its admissions office, and the quality of its faculty: “We developed over a period of time in that program what I called a coordinated vertical program of general support to a wide variety of the Black colleges and another series of grants, that I called a horizontal structure, which meant making grants for specific parts or programs of these colleges such as curricular development or faculty development, admissions activities or fund raising activities—the whole group of areas that the Black colleges needed expertise in that they didn’t have at that time.” Awards were not limited to black colleges. The Ford Foundation developed a broader program of support for minority higher education. With the intention of increasing the number of minority professors through increased minority graduate school enrollments, the Ford Foundation started fellowships for graduate study. In the 1970s, the foundation also funded ethnic and women’s studies, research projects investigating minority history and culture, and academic programs in related fields such as urban studies and environmental studies.

To summarize, the foundation’s internal culture encouraged officers to help black studies programs. From the top, McGeorge Bundy directed his subordinates to award large grants to prominent civil rights groups. There was a feeling that the foundation was a crucial participant in the push for racial integration. Bundy was also a visible proponent of black studies in 1969. Among the officers, there was already a tradition of focusing on black higher education, which followed from the belief that universities could not be trusted to integrate campuses. With agreement on the importance of black higher education and a willingness to work with more radical groups like the late-1960s CORE, it is not surprising that the Ford Foundation gave so much to black studies.

Overview of the Black Studies Grants

Table 5.1 lists black studies grants from 1969 to 1994. Support for black studies can be clumped into two broad categories: an early grant-making wave from 1969 to 1971, and a later wave from the mid-1980s to the present day. A
Table 5.1. Ford Foundation grants for black studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grantee (year of grant)</th>
<th>Purpose of grant</th>
<th>Amount of grant (in dollars)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First wave (1969–1971)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard University (1969)</td>
<td>Undergraduate program</td>
<td>134,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln University (1969)</td>
<td>Undergraduate program/seminar</td>
<td>91,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princeton University (1969)</td>
<td>Undergraduate program</td>
<td>88,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rutgers University (1969)</td>
<td>Undergraduate program</td>
<td>89,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yale University (1969)</td>
<td>Undergraduate program</td>
<td>184,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morgan State University (1969)</td>
<td>Undergraduate program</td>
<td>89,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princeton University (1969)</td>
<td>Undergraduate program</td>
<td>88,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanderbilt University (1969)</td>
<td>Undergraduate program</td>
<td>47,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisk University (1969)</td>
<td>Undergraduate program</td>
<td>62,220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanford University (1970)</td>
<td>Undergraduate program</td>
<td>135,866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackson University (1969)</td>
<td>Syllabi project</td>
<td>23,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York University (1969)</td>
<td>Institute of Afro-American Studies</td>
<td>150,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duke University (1969)</td>
<td>Undergraduate program</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta University (1970)</td>
<td>Graduate program</td>
<td>315,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuskegee University (1970)</td>
<td>Library materials/archives</td>
<td>33,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston University (1971)</td>
<td>Graduate program</td>
<td>65,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute of the Black World (1969)</td>
<td>Research institute</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academy for Educational Development (1970)</td>
<td>Conference</td>
<td>39,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daedalus (1971)</td>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>99,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Endowment for the Humanities (1970)</td>
<td>Conference</td>
<td>200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Company of Philadelphia (1970)</td>
<td>Library materials/archives</td>
<td>60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total in 1970 dollars</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>2,168,500</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second wave (1980–1990s)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yale University (1991)</td>
<td>Graduate and undergraduate education</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Pennsylvania (1991)</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td>326,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvard University (1981)</td>
<td>Lecture series</td>
<td>125,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Michigan (1988)</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston University (1980)</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td>59,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornell University (1987)</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td>325,260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Council for Black Studies (1988)</td>
<td>Faculty seminars/research</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
handful of grants were made between these two waves. Grants from later years are not in the table because the foundation does not allow researchers to view recent grant files.

The grants to academic programs are substantial, especially for small interdisciplinary units. In the first wave, more than $10 million was awarded, and millions more were donated in the 1980s and 1990s. There are only about 120 black studies degree programs, and the foundation gave money to about 14 percent, or one out of seven of them. Financial aid targeted elite research schools and, in the first wave, a few historically black colleges. In both waves, the foundation gave money to organizations or institutions that were not university departments, such as the National Council for Black Studies and the National Academy of Sciences.

The foundation also used the bully pulpit. It published two well-publicized reports on black studies in 1985 and 1990 that assessed the state of the field.16 Foundation officers also participated in black studies by attending conferences and advising students and faculty members. The Ford Foundation’s support has continued to the present, with multimillion-dollar grants made to Harvard and Columbia Universities in the late 1990s.

It is important to situate grant-making within the bureaucratic structure of the foundation. Officers in the Special Projects in Education group within the Division of Education and Research managed the first black studies grants.

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### Table 5.1. (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grantee (year of grant)</th>
<th>Purpose of grant</th>
<th>Amount of grant (in dollars)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of California, Berkeley (1991)</td>
<td>Research and undergraduate education</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCLA (1988)</td>
<td>Research and undergraduate education</td>
<td>312,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Maryland, College Park (1989)</td>
<td>Graduate and undergraduate education</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Wisconsin, Madison (1989)</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total in 1990 dollars</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,725,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total in 2000 dollars</td>
<td>First wave</td>
<td>9,873,315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Second wave</td>
<td>3,649,579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Both waves</td>
<td>13,486,895</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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16 Foundation officers also participated in black studies by attending conferences and advising students and faculty members. The Ford Foundation’s support has continued to the present, with multimillion-dollar grants made to Harvard and Columbia Universities in the late 1990s.
This division was responsible for many grants awarded to historically black colleges, postgraduate minority fellowships, and ethnic studies. The Special Projects in Education group included seven program officers and the occasional consultant, although the documentary evidence suggests that two or three officers did most of the work managing black studies grants. During the 1980s and 1990s, black studies grants were administered in a division called Education and Culture. Although the staff listing reports that seven individuals were in this group, interviews and documentary evidence suggest that only two people were involved in selecting and administering black studies grants.

Officers were fairly autonomous when they sponsored black studies. Although the foundation presidents supported black studies, it was mainly the responsibility of the officers to select and administer grants. Interviews with individuals who worked in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s all suggest that program officers had much leeway in selecting black studies grants. I asked officers if the Ford Foundation presidents or other executives ever guided or otherwise interfered with their grant-making proposals, and none said that this was the case. Two officers even claimed that black studies was a peripheral activity within the foundation.\textsuperscript{17} As long as foundation priorities were pursued, officers were free to do as they wished with respect to black studies.

## Integrating Higher Education and Avoiding Nationalism

Support for black studies coincided with the foundation’s turn toward the civil rights movement. And black studies grants followed a program of assistance for black higher education in the 1950s. What is missing from this broad overview is an explanation of how officers understood their actions in the context of higher education, their efforts to integrate American society, and the emerging nationalist movement.

One theme that stands out is that grants made to black studies programs were often seen as examples of the foundation’s more general efforts to eliminate racial barriers within institutions of higher education. Benjamin Payton, a senior program officer in the 1970s who is now president of Tuskegee University in Alabama, clearly expressed this perspective in an interview when asked about the motivation behind the black studies grants: “There’s something I want to emphasize. Ethnic studies was one component in a larger effort to eliminate discrimination—there were fellowships; there were attempts to increase participation in some fields, although we stayed away from the professions. We
primarily focused on higher education as traditionally understood; we did general grants to historically black and historically white colleges—to improve curricula, to increase faculty salaries, to challenge trustees to build endowments. We never had a program for ethnic studies per se.” Payton thought that black studies could be part of a larger intellectual trend toward producing knowledge that reflected the entire range of human experience: “We provided resources so the public could benefit from more diverse sources of knowledge and information about the people who make up this country, and to advance the quality of higher education by ending its parochialism and introducing broader intercultural and nontraditional studies, such as African American Studies.” Payton compared the motivation behind the support for ethnic studies to contemporary concerns about multiculturalism: “It’s all about the foundation’s mission to increase human understanding of ourselves in a global society. In those days, we called it international studies or intercultural studies, and we saw ethnic studies as an important and growing component of intercultural studies.”¹⁸ For foundation officers, black studies grants were going to push American academic culture toward a more global orientation and make it more sensitive to different ethnic experiences.

The focus on desegregation and a nascent multiculturalism meant that foundation officers were in strong disagreement with those activists and scholars who saw black studies as an institution primarily for the African American community. Much evidence indicates that the Ford Foundation, from President McGeorge Bundy down to the officers, discouraged black militancy within the academy. The foundation was interested in racial integration, not separatism. A 1970 grant made to Morgan State College for the publication of black studies syllabi illustrates this tendency well. In an internal memorandum, officer John Scanlon approves of the grant, in part because Morgan State’s administration was fiercely opposed to separatism:

Jenkins [president of Morgan State], incidentally, holds the same views as Sir Arthur Lewis of Princeton about “separatism” and “Black studies.” He said the separatist philosophy is Black chauvinism and will lead to “something worse than what we’ve been trying to get away from.” He also said that on many campuses Black students were “being sold a bill of goods” by Black militants who argue that nothing is relevant unless it is relevant to “my Blackness.” “Even if you want to build a separate Black society,” he observed, “you still need doctors, lawyers, engineers, and scientists.”¹⁹
The opposition to nationalism in black studies continued into the early 1980s. There was some hesitancy by the foundation to fund programs that were viewed as political and “noninclusive,” an indirect reference to nationalism. The documentation of one of the few black studies grants made in the early 1980s illustrates the ongoing avoidance of nationalism, the difficult experience with nationalists, and the marginal state of many programs. In 1981, an award was made to the W. E. B. DuBois Institute at Harvard University. The foundation gave $125,000 to Harvard so that the DuBois Institute could initiate a visiting lectureship program.²⁰ The grant was justified on the grounds that it would help Harvard University develop a high-quality program in African American studies. Program officers felt that black studies units often failed to develop into reputable teaching and research units. According to the grant’s précis, “Few of America’s outstanding research universities have established ethnic studies programs that are fully consistent with the highly selective charter of the institution. Most of the difficulties such institutions have faced arose from questions of quality of faculty and the inclusiveness of the particular program.”²¹

The program officer who authored the précis wrote favorably of Nathan Huggins, the new director of Harvard’s African American studies program. According to the précis, Huggins was a savvy operator experienced in the workings of research universities.²² He would help establish black studies as a legitimate field of inquiry unsullied by politics; he would “brook no interference from political elements from either the left or the right wing of the faculty or student body.” In a grant action summary, Huggins is described as a “force to contend with among those who had become disaffected by the highly political nature of Harvard’s earlier program, as well as those who clearly profited from keeping the situation unstable and highly politicized.”²³ The grant would help Huggins institutionalize a depoliticized black studies.

Within the foundation, “politicized” black studies was often synonymous with cultural nationalism. Consider the following exchange between Ford Foundation president McGeorge Bundy and black studies scholar/cultural nationalist Maulana Karenga, who was the founder of the militant US organization.²⁴ The exchange takes place during a 1969 black studies conference at Yale University. After Karenga implies that black studies programs might have a duty to serve the African American community, Bundy says:

There is nothing wrong with providing a sense of direction, identity and purpose; but it is a very dangerous thing to start pushing around the subject for that
purpose. It has to be taken on its own terms—and I took that both with respect to the politics at the edge of the subject and with respect to the quest for personal identity at another edge of the subject, we were being warned by one or two of the speakers, with whom I found myself in agreement, that it was important to distinguish. When Professor Kilson told us that he smelled a rat, he was speaking of a political worry, and once or twice in other parts of the discussion it seemed to me that other speakers were saying, “Look, these topics will help you whether you’re Black or White”—and I had great sympathy with the point that the white man has at least as much to learn as the black man here [emphasis added].

By the late 1980s eliminating racism and combating separatism had declined as motivations for grant-making. I asked officers who worked at the foundation in the 1980s if there was a concern about nationalist politics. One officer reported that the issue was moot by that point. Many program officers who supervised grants in the 1970s were retired or had moved on to other careers by the 1980s, so the conflicts of the 1970s were not carried into the late 1980s or early 1990s. One officer noted that nationalism was not raised by most black studies scholars who contacted the foundation in later years, except for one prominent nationalist whose request was denied because the nationalist perspective was the only one represented in the curriculum of this person’s program. Aside from this single comment, I could not find evidence either in the documentary materials or in interviews that it was an issue of concern to foundation officers in the late 1980s. I am not claiming that nationalism was absent from black studies at this time, merely that it was absent in the evidence I have regarding the interactions between foundation officers, grant recipients, and applicants. This absence could be due to many factors: grant applicants knew to avoid the issue; nationalism ceased being a justification for black studies in general; or nationalists simply avoided the foundation. The point is simply that nationalism was not articulated as an issue in the funding of black studies programs after the 1980s.

The Search for Academic Legitimacy

Promoting racial integration was not the only issue that concerned foundation officers. The men and women within the foundation who supported black studies programs were keenly aware that the field needed to be perceived as
legitimate. Grant-makers understood that black studies needed the support of university administrators, donors, and students, who would insist that the field be taken seriously as an intellectual enterprise. Otherwise, the field would be susceptible to critics, who would press for its removal from the university.

The pursuit of academic legitimacy manifested itself in many ways. Officers preferred to give money to universities that were already prestigious, such as Yale and Stanford, and well-respected historically black schools, such as Howard. When I asked retired officers how they selected grant recipients, they insisted that they gave money to “good people.” When asked to elaborate on what made someone “good,” they would refer to academic credentials or to first-hand knowledge of the person. Given that foundation officers themselves were often graduates of leading research universities, it should not be surprising that they focused on these institutions. This emphasis on research universities might be interpreted as a sort of elitism, but it also can be framed as an attempt to protect black studies by aligning the field with individuals and institutions that had strong reputations.

Aside from understanding that black studies might be helped if it were associated with prestigious schools, Ford Foundation officers also knew that legitimacy could be gained only if credible professors and administrators were willing to fight on the field’s behalf. Benjamin Payton succinctly stated this view when I asked him about how the foundation tried to legitimize black studies: “The degree to which we were supporting something with not much academic legitimacy. . . . Curricula do not fall from the sky with inherent legitimacy; they evolve out of particular historical struggles, and they take on legitimacy as people with strength and substance join their ranks and do research with the same level of quality as people in other disciplines. All academic disciplines go through a period of evolution and change. We try to help people understand the process of change, and we were very deliberate about selecting programs that had great promise.”

Because the foundation was strongly committed to academic legitimacy, highly unorthodox applicants were rejected out of hand. As one officer put it, “We got all kinds of silly proposals. . . . Just to be polite, the reason [that we gave for rejecting the proposal] was that ‘it doesn’t fit into our program’s purposes.’ . . . Often that’s a euphemism for ‘God, I never saw such a goofy thing in my life.’” This officer did not mention specific grants. However, foundation documents record numerous unorthodox proposals. These may have included a grant to fund a freestanding Institute for Black Studies and Economic
Development, a request for financial aid for black students from the unconventional Friends College in Vermont, and support for Rutgers University at Newark’s Black Organization of Students.²⁹ The emphasis on legitimacy meant that grant applications for completely new organizations were routinely denied, because the foundation required that an organization be held accountable for the award and that there was, at least, “a place to do it.”³⁰

More than once, foundation officers reported that they felt black studies at nonelite campuses would gain legitimacy if it succeeded in highly visible institutions. In the eyes of some program officers, foundation grants in schools like Yale could confer legitimacy on black studies and promote the field’s adoption in other colleges: “It seemed best to help interested universities and colleges add a new and active ‘center’ and hope that, in time, contagion would result.”³¹ Other foundation officers shared this attitude but felt that immediate emulation of model programs by professors and administrators at other universities was too much to ask. Because many black studies programs were poorly designed and unstable, some program officers thought that they would likely offer poor courses. According to foundation officer Roger Wilkins, the foundation intended to influence the field through sponsorship of strong programs: “Many of these offerings will be hastily conceived and taught. As a result, thousands of students—black and white—are likely to be disappointed and disillusioned. There isn’t much that the Foundation can do to prevent this. It can, however, make an important contribution to the orderly development of this hitherto neglected field of studies by helping a few strategic institutions get off on the right foot. The grants proposed here are designed to do that.” Wilkins noted in his report to Bundy that student activism might prevent the emulation of such models and that the foundation would have to be content with sponsorship of strong programs. In the long run, well-designed programs would survive and become centers of the field.³²

The attempt to sponsor model black studies programs and thus gain legitimacy continued into the 1980s and 1990s. Starting in 1987, the Ford Foundation created new strategies for developing black studies’ reputation. The 1980s approach was quite different from that taken in the 1970s. Instead of supporting new degree programs, the Ford Foundation sponsored a variety of research projects, workshops, and visiting professorships. The goal of these grants was to make existing programs more efficient and improve a program’s standing in the larger academic community.³³

One retired foundation officer addressed this shift in emphasis from under-
graduate education to research. Aside from a decline in the number of new academic programs created (see chapter 6), an important factor behind the shift was that the 1980s were generally a less contentious time. Black studies advocates were often the “warriors of ’68” who were fighting for the establishment of degree programs. Later cohorts of black studies instructors were more interested in developing a research program for black studies than supporting black undergraduates. This officer also noted that black studies had evolved to a point where it was no longer necessary to provide funds for undergraduate instruction. University administrators routinely budget money for existing programs and departments. What was needed, in the view of this officer, was assistance in helping black studies faculty members and graduate students gain the prominence needed to make black studies more than a specialized interdisciplinary program for undergraduates.

Program officers developed a more comprehensive grant-making strategy to expand the field’s research capacities. In October of 1987, a meeting was held to solicit the opinions of scholars in black studies as to what might be the appropriate way to develop the field. As with the earlier attempt to bolster Harvard’s program with a visiting lectureship, program officers sought to retrench black studies where it already existed and develop some “centers of excellence.” As a result of this meeting, foundation officers invited sixteen universities to submit proposals for funding of black studies programs. Not surprisingly, these sixteen universities were elite private and public schools, many with established African American studies programs. The only university without a degree-granting black studies program was UCLA, which has a well-known black studies research center. All but two universities are “research” universities in the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. The Ford Foundation awarded grants to some of these programs and, in later years, to a few others such as the University of Rochester and the National Council for Black Studies. The grants were designed to improve existing black studies programs. Activities supported by these grants included workshops, conferences, and research projects. The goal was to increase the research output of existing programs instead of creating new ones.

By the mid-1990s, foundation officers seemed pleased with the results of this group of black studies grants. A consultant’s report prepared in March 1994 discusses the importance of foundation grants for the development of research capacity in grantees. The report’s authors point out that in public universities, grants were used to support research activities of graduate students and un-
tenured faculty at a time when internal research was declining. In private universities, conferences created links between faculty members and students who felt isolated from other black studies units. The consultants believed that the grants had served their purpose by allowing faculty to develop career-building research agendas.37

Paths of Development: After a Ford Foundation Grant

This section discusses three organizations that received foundation money—the black studies departments at Howard University and Vanderbilt University and the Institute for the Black World—and shows the different responses to foundation grants. The black studies programs at Howard and Vanderbilt moved in different directions after they received grants. Howard University’s program is an example of adherence to the interdisciplinary black studies model. The department chair and foundation officers viewed black studies in similar terms, as an interdisciplinary field that eschewed cultural nationalism. Foundation officers considered this program to be successful. Aside from its positive evaluation by program officers, the Howard University program is relevant to this discussion because it resembles most of the academic programs supported by the Ford Foundation. Grant-making provided much-needed funds at a crucial time. After the grant, the Howard Department of Afro-American Studies continued to be a functional academic unit within the university. In contrast, Vanderbilt University’s program showed signs of adopting a nationalist orientation, which increased tensions among Vanderbilt administrators, the department chair, and the foundation. While foundation funding gave the program much-needed support, the program atrophied soon afterward and did not recover for many years.

The third organization discussed is the Institute of the Black World (IBW), labeled by its director as a “black-conscious operation.” Because of its early ties to the family of Martin Luther King Jr., the institute received a large foundation grant even though it did not strictly adhere to the interdisciplinary black studies model. The IBW would today be called a think tank—an organization that sponsored research, issued reports, and tried to be influential within a certain intellectual community: black intellectuals and educators. The IBW represents a failed attempt to institutionalize nationalist politics with foundation money.
Howard University

The grant made to Howard University is an example of an award made to a black studies program that rejected nationalism and offered an interdisciplinary approach to black studies. In many ways, Howard University’s program represented what Ford Foundation officers thought was worthy of support—the high-quality, historically black college employing reputable scholars who could teach black studies courses. John J. Scanlon wrote a memo describing Howard’s strengths and opined that the school’s program might be very good, considering “Howard’s prestige, capability, and interest in doing an outstanding job.” Scanlon’s memo emphasized the interdisciplinary nature of the major at Howard and the fact that there were already reputable scholars in existing departments who could teach in Howard’s program.³⁸

The Afro-American Studies Department at Howard was like many others, in that student protesters demanded its creation.³⁹ The Howard University administration eventually acceded and set out to develop a black studies program. By the time the Ford Foundation received a proposal from Howard, the school’s administration had rejected nationalist black studies and pushed it in a more interdisciplinary direction. The proposal explicitly mentions that Howard University’s administration was rejecting calls for the school to become a center of “Black provincialism, separatism or propaganda.” The faculty rejected a proposal to establish a College of Black Studies within Howard University and opted instead to create a new department that would coordinate the courses at Howard that dealt with black history and culture, as well as develop new courses for students who wished to major in the topic.⁴⁰

The Afro-American Studies Department at Howard had an interim chair for one year and was then chaired by Russell Adams, a political scientist who specialized in American race relations. Adams reports that the Ford Foundation grant did much to improve the department’s visibility nationally and within the university. He reported that when the Ford Foundation selected Howard for a grant, he received calls from other black studies chairs asking how they, too, could get a grant, and he expressed some surprise that the Ford Foundation would deign to support something as controversial as black studies. The grant also helped Howard’s department survive, because it provided crucial operating funds and helped bolster the department’s reputation within the university.⁴¹
The curriculum that Adams and others developed reflected the educational philosophy shared by the Ford Foundation. Adams stated in an interview that the Howard program was, and continues to be, an interdisciplinary program that does not try to completely capture the black experience in microcosm, as nationalists might want, but views the black experience from historical, sociological, and cultural perspectives. Soon after opening, the Howard department established what now might be considered a typical social science approach to black studies. The program’s summary statement to the Ford Foundation indicated that the curriculum was developed so that students could use the “disciplinary tools” of economics, sociology, and history to study the black experience. The curriculum included basic courses on black history and more specialized courses on black education and the history of black business.

Completely lacking in the material I examined was any sense that the department included nationalist perspectives in its courses. When asked about this, Russell Adams responded that the people hired by the department did not adopt those perspectives. This may reflect the strong influence that a departmental chair has on a small department like Howard’s.

In the years after the foundation grant, the Howard University department developed a small tenure-track faculty and a number of regular lecturers. Although small, the department has offered black studies for more than thirty years, graduated hundreds of students, and considered expanding to offer a master’s degree program.

Vanderbilt and the Move toward Nationalism

Some sponsored programs started to move in directions that conflicted with the Ford Foundation’s values. One such program was Vanderbilt’s, which originally offered interdisciplinary black studies but was soon chaired by an individual who shifted the program toward nationalist black studies.

In the spring of 1968, the Vanderbilt faculty Race Relations Committee was formed, and the student Afro-American Association submitted a proposal to the faculty senate for the establishment of an Afro-American studies program. Committee chair Carroll E. Izzard asked the Ford Foundation in June 1969 for financial assistance. The proposal asked for $47,000 to help pay for the start-up costs of the program at Vanderbilt, funds for start-up costs for a joint project with Fisk University, and funds to help pay for seminars that would be the seed of an interuniversity consortium.

The most notable aspect of the Vanderbilt proposal was that it stressed the
interdisciplinary nature of Afro-American studies. The program would allow students to major in any one of five social science and humanities disciplines while taking courses specific to the program. A special interdisciplinary course was designed around the topic of government policy toward racial minorities. In a letter to foundation officer John Scanlon, Izzard mentioned a course in black drama, in which students were to stage plays written by black playwrights, that was supposed to have “socio-educational value as well as artistic merit.” The program began as an attempt to create a set of courses that would at once appeal to the university community, the Ford Foundation, and black student groups.⁴⁵

During the 1969–1970 year, the Vanderbilt administration hired Akbar Muhammad to chair the Afro-American studies program. Muhammad might be appealing to both mainstream academia and black nationalists. His legitimacy within the academy came from the fact that he was a scholarly expert in Islamic history, was working on a history doctorate from the University of Edinburgh in Scotland, and was also published in academic history journals.⁴⁶ Muhammad might have appealed to student groups at Vanderbilt because of his impeccable nationalist credentials: he was the son of Nation of Islam leader Elijah Muhammad. Although Akbar Muhammad had renounced much of the Nation of Islam’s ideology by this point, he might still have commanded some respect from students.

Upon his arrival, Muhammad restructured the program, much to the dismay of some at Vanderbilt. According to one administrator, he “Blackwashed” the courses.⁴⁷ The new courses were more focused on topics such as slavery and third world liberation instead of the general social science topics that were taught by the members of the Race Relations Committee. Muhammad also started to reorient the program toward members of the black studies movement rather than the faculty at Vanderbilt. In correspondence with the foundation, he favorably cited the unpublished proceedings of the Aspen conference, an event sponsored by the Ford Foundation where nationalists asserted themselves. The conference proceedings were perceived by many to be a separatist document. More tellingly, Muhammad requested an extension of the Ford Foundation grant so that a survey of black studies programs could be conducted. If the results of the survey were published, Muhammad argued, then Vanderbilt would be seen in a more favorable light by black studies directors everywhere.⁴⁸

John Scanlon denied the request on the grounds that grant money could go
only to projects designated in the original grant proposal, and the grant expired without incident.\(^49\) In the final report submitted to the foundation, Muhammad thanked the foundation for its assistance, pointed to what foundation money had helped accomplish, and concluded by noting that despite all the progress, the program still had problems being accepted at Vanderbilt.\(^50\) In the 1970s and 1980s, the Vanderbilt program shrank, as did the black studies programs elsewhere (see chapter 4). Enrollments and the total number of faculty decreased, a trend that was not reversed for many years. In Vanderbilt’s case, foundation money helped the program survive, but it did not prevent the department’s decline, which was likely due to an overall decline in interest and chilled relations with the university administration.

\textit{The Black Think Tank}

In only one instance did the Ford Foundation award a grant when program officers suspected that the recipient would promote nationalist black studies. In March 1970, the Ford Foundation awarded $100,000 to the Martin Luther King Memorial Center in Atlanta, Georgia. Founded by the King family after King’s murder, the center’s goals were to preserve King’s papers, promote the civil rights movement, and become a research center. The grant supported the development of the center’s archives and the Institute of the Black World, an academic research organization located at the King Center.\(^51\) The IBW’s leader was initially Julius S. Scott, but much of the effort in securing funds for the institute and setting its agenda lay with Vincent H. Harding, a University of Chicago history Ph.D. and theorist of the black university.\(^52\)

Before coming to the King Center and founding the institute, Vincent Harding was involved with the civil rights movement and was a history professor at Spelman College.\(^53\) When the King Center was founded, Harding became its library director and eventually the head of the IBW. Harding frequently contacted the Ford Foundation in order to ask for funds for the institute. His efforts to receive a Ford Foundation grant culminated in September 1969, when the King Center formally submitted a request for $300,500. Proposed activities for the institute included the development of “experimental” black studies curricula, the publication of a book called \textit{Documents in Black Studies}, and training for future black studies instructors.\(^54\) The grant was eventually reduced to $100,000, with $65,000 for the institute’s operating costs and $35,000 for collecting and archiving materials related to the civil rights movement.\(^55\)

Ford Foundation officers knew that Vincent Harding did not share their
views on black studies and that there were political risks associated with funding the institute, even though it was associated with the King Center. One foundation officer expressed concerns that the grant might attract attention from a hostile southern congressman, who had repeatedly attacked the foundation and tried to regulate its activities.\textsuperscript{56} A second foundation officer pointed out that Harding had written a militant article in \textit{Ebony} magazine that was compared to \textit{Mein Kampf} by a distressed Atlanta University Center administrator.\textsuperscript{57} Another program officer noted that Harding proposed to hire Gerald McWhorter, a sociologist who \textquote{speaks and acts like a revolutionary.} He had helped organize the student occupation of Morehouse College\textquotesingle s administration building and had, in the words of the foundation staff, caused \textquote{considerable trouble} for the administrators at Fisk University.\textsuperscript{58} Perhaps the harshest assessment of the institute was expressed in John Scanlon\textquotesingle s response to an early proposal for black studies submitted by Vincent Harding. According to Scanlon, Harding tried to provide substance for his black studies proposal but did nothing except to show that his version of black studies was \textquote{of the Blacks, by the Blacks and for the Blacks.}\textsuperscript{59}

Despite these reservations, Ford Foundation officers supported the institute. Two retired officers reported in an interview that they felt pressured to support projects associated with the King family. Vincent Harding reported that he felt that the Ford Foundation was very interested in supporting organizations with ties to the civil rights movement: \textquote{On a certain level, Ford was helping Black Studies programs when they helped us, but they were also helping the Martin Luther King archives. I went with Mrs. King to talk to McGeorge Bundy, and what was clear was that they were trying to identify themselves with King. That is an understandable kind of agenda for them.}\textsuperscript{60} Foundation officers later reported in memos that Vincent Harding could be diplomatic in face-to-face meetings, and it is quite possible that he was able to address the concerns of foundation officers and staff in person.\textsuperscript{61}

When the institute received the grant money, it was used as promised. Harding reported to the foundation that he hired a number of scholars-in-residence. These scholars included Joyce Ladner, a Chicago-trained sociologist and future president of Howard University, and Lerone Bennett, a historian widely known for his support of black history. Harding also hired Robert Hill, a historian who specialized in Marcus Garvey, the African American nationalist. Other institute activities included a meeting of black studies chairs in the fall of 1969 and the preparation of a book regarding the operation of black studies programs.\textsuperscript{62}
The IBW severed its ties with the King Center by 1970 and tried, unsuccessfully, to merge with the Atlanta University Center. After that, Harding tried to establish the institute as an autonomous political and intellectual organization. A grant proposal demonstrates the niche that the institute was trying to occupy in African American politics. The undated document, circa 1970, shows that the institute was trying to create a “black agenda network.” The network started as a group of one hundred artists, scholars, and activists who would produce position papers and try to steer black discourse on cultural and political issues. The document argued that such a group would be significant because there was currently no group dedicated to black research. Most black intellectual organizations, such as the Center for Black Education and the McKissick School, were for teaching. The IBW was the first black think tank.

The institute continued to exist for about ten years after the end of the Ford Foundation’s grant. The IBW hired intellectuals, published books, and sponsored lectures. For example, Robert Hill’s treatise on Marcus Garvey was published with support from the institute. IBW president Vincent Harding developed a lecture series on the black civil rights struggle, and he wrote a number of papers that appeared in forums like Black Books Bulletin. Other institute activities included the IBW occasional paper series, which were pamphlets distributed to IBW sponsors and black intellectuals. In the mid-1970s, staff members organized an ambitious audiotape series on black history, planned the launching of a magazine or newsletter, and cosponsored academic conferences. The institute also maintained mailing lists of black professionals, such as librarians and teachers, with the goal of disseminating publications.

The institute’s fortunes declined in the mid-1970s, beginning when its offices were burglarized in 1974. Although the IBW continued to receive funding from its publications, donations, and grants from philanthropies, the burglary disrupted the daily operation of the institute and signaled its demise, imposing severe and unexpected burdens. Ten thousand dollars worth of office equipment was stolen or damaged. Security guards were hired to patrol the premises. Although this was never conclusively proven, the institute staff believed that an anti-Castro group attacked their office because some IBW publications included positive words about the Castro regime. Whatever the truth was, the burglary forced the institute to ask for more funds and exhaust its resources in order to survive.

By the late 1970s, the situation had grown worse. Like most other organizations, the institute was hit hard by the recession. In 1977, income was down by
percent, and 49 percent of the institute’s operating funds were provided by a flurry of grants late in the year. The unstable financial situation meant the IBW could not function properly. There was high staff turnover. Employees whose job it was to generate income—such as the institute’s bookstore manager—frequently left and were replaced by part-time employees. The executive staff often had to help with these tasks. The drop in income meant that the normal division of labor within the institute crumbled, and the organization lived from paycheck to paycheck.

The organizational decline of the IBW coincided with its financial disintegration. The largest grant it ever received was the Ford Foundation’s 1970 grant. After it seceded from the King Center, the IBW turned to other financial sponsors, who could provide only a fraction of what the Ford Foundation was willing to give. Harding was able to acquire $30,000 from the Cummins Engine Foundation, in addition to modest grants from other philanthropies. There were also unsuccessful attempts to win grants from other large philanthropies such as the Rockefeller Foundation. By the late 1970s, the IBW’s philanthropic contributors were often southern black religious groups who could offer only relatively small donations.

The IBW survived in reduced form until the early 1980s. As late as 1981, the institute head was still searching for money to promote the IBW’s publication activities. The institute received a few funds from the sale of publications and from donors. But it was reduced to a single room in an Atlanta office building by the early 1980s. By 1983, the IBW shut down its operations.

When asked about the overall decline of the IBW, Harding thought that the impetus for black studies was tied to the rise of black power and urban violence. According to Harding, many found it hard to see the need for a black-oriented research institute once urban violence, the civil rights movement, and the student movement all receded: “There were several factors in the institute shutting down. . . . The edge and excitement had grown out of black power. Consciousness and urban explosions—all of that were no longer at the forefront. It was harder and harder to get funding for a politically conscious and black-conscious operation.” The slow erosion of financial support reflects this broader judgment. The IBW and other black-oriented institutions were justified by unusual political events. While this may have created an opportunity for initial funding and success, it is not the basis for the ongoing maintenance of an organization. An unsupportive political environment prevented
the IBW staff from converting any gains made with foundation funds into long-term stability.

The three programs developed differently. Howard University illustrates the more traditional approach to black studies. The Howard department adhered to an interdisciplinary model and tried to bring black culture into the curriculum. Foundation grants likely helped this program gain some credibility and financial stability, which allowed it to survive long enough so that it became an accepted unit within the university. In contrast, Vanderbilt’s department chair aligned with nationalist intellectuals. Although this strategy may occasionally work (see chapter 7 for a discussion of the Temple University program), it is likely to alienate administrators and other university allies who can provide assistance.

The case of the Institute of the Black World demonstrates what happened when the foundation supported an independent nationalist organization. The Ford Foundation provided start-up funds for a think tank, which was then expected to raise more funds from individuals and other nonprofits. The effort was initially successful, but the institute did not possess the social connections needed to raise funds in bad times. The audiences to whom the institute tried to appeal did not support the organization in the recession of the 1970s, and the IBW did not recover from disruptions caused by staff turnover, physical attack, and operating during a recession. The implication is that nationalist segments of the black community were unable or unwilling to support an explicitly nationalist organization such as the IBW. The social infrastructure that supports most institutions, like firms or universities, was simply absent for a “black-conscious” operation.

**The Grant-making Process**

This section uses statistical data to provide a broader picture of how the Ford Foundation awarded grants, illustrating the effects of an applicant’s characteristics on the chance an application would be approved. The findings show in systematic terms how foundation officers attracted applicants, selected grantees, and responded to the wave of protest in the 1960s. Combined with the archival evidence presented in previous chapters, the statistical analysis shows how attitudes toward black studies translated into a pattern of targeted giving to universities.
Evidence suggests that foundation officers favored applications from research universities because they wanted black studies programs to be associated with reputable institutions. One might also hypothesize that research universities are better equipped to prepare applications. Similarly, one might hypothesize that the Ford Foundation was more likely to attract applicants from elite private universities, such as Ivy League schools, and historically black colleges. This leads to:

Hypothesis 1: Research universities, private colleges, and historically black institutions are more likely than others to submit black studies grant applications and have them approved.

The second hypothesis is that the Ford Foundation actively avoided campuses where black studies was strongly associated with student radicalism and protest. Foundation officers were able to accept black studies if it was not associated with militancy and disruption. Thus, one would expect that a campus with much protest would not be as likely as others to have a proposal accepted. One would also suspect that grant submission is driven by protest. Only on those campuses where students mobilized for black studies, as indicated by protest, would professors bother to search for external funding for a black studies program. This leads to:

Hypothesis 2: Black student protest increases the probability that a campus will submit a grant for a black studies program. Black student protest will decrease the chance that a proposal will be approved.

To test these hypotheses, I collected data on grant applicants, universities, and campus protest. I appended grant application data to a larger data set describing the characteristics of all 1,414 accredited four-year colleges and universities constructed from the 1968 Higher Education General Information Survey. The variables are self-explanatory, except for “research,” “doctoral,” and “master’s” institutions. These categories are drawn from the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, which labels a university by how much research is conducted there. The “research university” variable represents the most research-intensive institution, followed by the “doctoral” and “master’s” categories. The comparison category is the liberal arts college, which offers little or no instruction at the graduate level and is not a research center. I included variables for the number of campus protest events conducted by black students in the 1968–1969 academic year as reported in the New York Times.
and the Los Angeles Times. As a control variable, I included a variable indicating the number of prior foundation grants given to a university for promoting black higher education. I collected this data from an internal foundation report in 1973 that listed grants made for improving the infrastructure of historically black colleges and recruiting black students to predominantly white colleges.

Table 5.2 shows the descriptive statistics for 120 black studies grant applicants and the 1,414 four-year colleges and universities. The pool of applicants resembled the population of colleges in most ways. The single exception is that applications were much more likely to have received money from the foundation in the past. Later analysis will show if this is a significant predictor of grant submission and approval. It is also useful to note that undergraduate education was a popular reason for seeking funds.

In the first analysis, I examine the tendency of a university to submit an application to the Ford Foundation for support of black studies. Table 5.3 shows the estimated effects of a university’s characteristics on the number of black studies grant applications submitted by individuals or instructional units from a given university. I used Poisson regression, a statistical model used when the dependent variable is a count such as the number of applications from a sin-
ingle university. The pattern is clear: historically black colleges and research universities are much more likely to submit grant proposals than other universities. The other variables do not have statistically significant effects on grant proposal submission at the $\alpha = .05$ level. That is, black campus protest of any kind and prior foundation support do not affect the likelihood that a person affiliated with a university will ask the Ford Foundation for support for black studies.

The interpretation of this finding is straightforward. The Ford Foundation had developed a reputation as a supporter of historically black colleges, which probably encouraged these institutions to apply for grants. The Ford Foundation was, and remains, one of the most prominent supporters of universities, academic conferences, and research projects. Thus, it is not surprising that research universities would be most likely to ask for money. It is also important to note that research universities are in the business of raising money from grants, so they would be more likely to pursue foundation grants.

Table 5.3 reveals another important fact. Controlling for other factors, grant submission is not correlated with campus protest. While it is true that protest prompts the creation of black studies programs, protest does not encourage professors, administrators, and students to submit applications to the Ford Foundation.\textsuperscript{71} It is possible that protests at a few campuses legitimate black studies as a topic worthy of consideration at other colleges. Entrepreneurial professors and administrators can then exploit this atmosphere to submit ap-

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**Table 5.3. Effects of university status and campus unrest on number of black studies applications to Ford Foundation, 1969–1973. Poisson regression analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Standard error</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of black student protests in 1968</td>
<td>0.436</td>
<td>0.239</td>
<td>0.070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research university</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>0.319</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral university</td>
<td>0.229</td>
<td>0.632</td>
<td>0.717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s college</td>
<td>0.285</td>
<td>0.349</td>
<td>0.414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public university</td>
<td>−0.335</td>
<td>0.261</td>
<td>0.199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historically black institution</td>
<td>1.630</td>
<td>0.478</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of prior Ford grants for black higher education</td>
<td>0.048</td>
<td>0.163</td>
<td>0.765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>−3.776</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=1,414  \quad R^2=.180
lications for black studies at their own campus, even in the absence of substantial student mobilization.

Table 5.4 shows the estimated effects of grant applicant characteristics on the log-odds that they will receive a foundation grant for black studies. I used a logistic regression model, which estimates the effects of the variables on the odds that a grant proposal will be approved. The analysis reported in Table 5.4 uses data from the 120 proposals submitted to the foundation. The table shows the effect of institutional characteristics (e.g., public vs. private), prior foundation funding, and campus unrest. In this analysis, I have added extra variables designating the type of grant submitted: support for an undergraduate program, support for a graduate program, support for a nonuniversity organization such as the American Academy of Sciences, and support for a conference. Model 2 estimates the effects of variables describing the type of university. Model 3 adds variables describing the proposed activities, such as organizing a conference.

Does the data support hypotheses 1 and 2, which suggested that officers are more willing to support research universities and to turn down applications from campuses with protest? The results are fairly clear. When the type of proposed activity is controlled for, the Ford Foundation preferred to give money to research-oriented universities, historically black institutions, and those universities that promised to create degree programs. Foundation officers were less likely to fund public universities and educational institutions as opposed to nonprofit organizations. There is no statistically significant link between protest and grant-making.

While some findings are obvious, other findings require some explanation. A theme in this chapter is how foundation officers wanted to assist black colleges. Officers also believed that a new academic discipline needed stable degree programs in elite research universities. The statistical analysis shows that these views translated into grant-making patterns. The tendency to reject applications from educational institutions is due to the fact that many universities submitted weak applications. In contrast, applications from nonprofit organizations, such as the Library Company of Philadelphia, were solicited by foundation officers. That is, nonprofit organizations submitted applications for money only because foundation officers wanted the organization to contract out activities like journal publication or conference organization.

The analysis is also interesting because it shows that protest did not have an
Table 5.4. Effects of applicant characteristics on log-odds of receiving Ford Foundation grant by 1973.
Logistic regression analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Model 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coefficient</td>
<td>Standard error</td>
<td>P-value</td>
<td>Coefficient</td>
<td>Standard error</td>
<td>P-value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of black student protests in 1968</td>
<td>–.322</td>
<td>.664</td>
<td>0.627</td>
<td>–0.402</td>
<td>.721</td>
<td>0.577</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research university</td>
<td>0.700</td>
<td>.610</td>
<td>0.251</td>
<td>3.638</td>
<td>1.537</td>
<td>0.018</td>
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<td>Doctoral university</td>
<td>0.245</td>
<td>1.280</td>
<td>0.894</td>
<td>4.113</td>
<td>2.103</td>
<td>0.050</td>
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<tr>
<td>Master’s college</td>
<td>–.860</td>
<td>1.349</td>
<td>0.524</td>
<td>1.334</td>
<td>1.938</td>
<td>0.491</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public university</td>
<td>–1.370</td>
<td>0.775</td>
<td>0.077</td>
<td>–2.037</td>
<td>1.049</td>
<td>0.052</td>
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<tr>
<td>Historically black institution</td>
<td>1.988</td>
<td>1.226</td>
<td>0.015</td>
<td>4.139</td>
<td>1.828</td>
<td>0.024</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. of prior grants for black higher education</td>
<td>0.373</td>
<td>0.246</td>
<td>0.130</td>
<td>0.369</td>
<td>0.344</td>
<td>0.283</td>
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<tr>
<td>Undergraduate education</td>
<td>2.212</td>
<td>0.776</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate education</td>
<td>3.764</td>
<td>1.221</td>
<td>0.005</td>
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<td>Nonprofit organization</td>
<td>1.250</td>
<td>1.350</td>
<td>0.354</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>–4.096</td>
<td>1.997</td>
<td>0.040</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Conference</td>
<td>–0.657</td>
<td>1.244</td>
<td>0.597</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>–1.756</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>–2.20</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>N=120</td>
<td>R²=.130</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>R²=.3816</td>
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</table>
effect on obtaining a grant. There is neither a positive nor a negative protest
effect, which is consistent with the view that foundation officers simply did not
factor campus unrest or student mobilization into their decisions. It is quite
possible that foundation officers simply disregarded protest. Unless a program
or administrator explicitly endorsed student demonstrators, the foundation
likely focused on credentials, personal ties, and the substance of an application.

Tables 5.3 and 5.4 paint a straightforward picture that supports hypothesis 1
and rejects hypothesis 2. In the late 1960s, the foundation was more likely to
receive and approve proposals from research universities and historically black
colleges. Protest did not have a significant effect on submission or proposal
approval. Public universities were much more likely to be rejected than private
schools. Nearly all proposals submitted by nonprofit organizations were ap-
proved because the foundation outsourced the activities associated with build-
ing a discipline, such as publishing journals and staging conferences.

A similar analysis cannot be carried out for later waves of grant-making at
the foundation because the data does not exist. According to foundation ar-
chivists, there is no comprehensive list of applicants because the foundation
stopped collecting data on rejected applicants in the mid-1970s. Another rea-
son for the missing data is that the nature of the grant-making process changed.
Ford Foundation procedures screen out applicants who are unlikely to receive
grants. Foundation officers in the 1980s and 1990s cultivated potential appli-
cants and did not encourage unsolicited applications. Official applications are
accepted only after the foundation receives an acceptable letter of inquiry,
which usually follows informal contact with the foundation. Therefore, there
is no paper trail left by rejected applicants.

However, one can examine accepted grants and perform some basic content
analysis of the proposals to assess grant-making trends. I found the grant pro-
posals for every grant awarded by the foundation and coded them for content:
if the applicant frames the grant in terms of racial integration by saying that
black studies would include white students, mentions rejecting nationalists or
separatists as part of the proposal’s rationale, mentions black studies research
as an activity to be supported, and frames black studies as an interdisciplinary
project, and whether the applicant requests funds for undergraduate or gradu-
ate education.

Table 5.5 presents the results of this analysis. The biggest shift is the move
toward research. A little less than half of black studies grants went to organiza-
tions conducting or organizing academic research. In the late 1980s and 1990s,
90 percent of the grant proposals included a research component. While the proportion of grants that directed money toward graduate education remained constant, the proportion of proposals requesting money for undergraduate education decreased from 55 percent to 36 percent. This finding suggests that the foundation perceived that departments were themselves stable. There was no need to help black studies retain its place in the menu of course offerings, but the field required help in developing research agendas that would improve its academic reputation.

The intellectual justifications provided by grant applicants shifted as well. Early grant applicants were much more likely to claim that black studies was interdisciplinary and needed to include white students. But after 1980, not a single applicant framed their request in terms of rejecting nationalism. I interpret this in three ways: (1) the black student movement had changed and separatism was not as prevalent; (2) black studies, as a field, had less need to justify its existence and more need to improve its research reputation; and (3) campuses where nationalists were active were not likely to be invited to submit applications.

Overall, analyses show that foundation officers awarded their grants to prestigious institutions, historically black colleges (in the first wave of grants), and institutions that promised to use funds for degree programs rather than individual research or conferences. Interestingly, protest had no statistically significant effect on either grant application or grant approval. The second wave of grants focused primarily on research. The grantees themselves shifted in their justifications for money from the 1960s to the late 1980s, moving away from general multicultural education and cultural nationalism toward research support.

### Table 5.5. Justifications offered for support of black studies programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Justification</th>
<th>Percent in first wave: late 1960s (N=20)</th>
<th>Percent in second wave: after mid-1980s (N=11)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black studies is for white students and black students</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black nationalism is rejected</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black studies is interdisciplinary</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money will support original academic research</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money will support undergraduate teaching</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money will support graduate teaching</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sporadic Interventions

This chapter situates the foundation’s actions within the broader context of the civil rights movement. The foundation, at first, was responding to this movement. The foundation’s trustees forced Henry Heald from office so they could appoint McGeorge Bundy, who put the foundation at the financial center of the civil rights movement. When black studies became a pressing issue, Bundy and other foundation officers were eager to support the field. The black studies grants were an effort to channel the outcomes of the civil rights and black nationalist movements by supporting individuals at universities who endorsed racial integration. The strategy for doing so hinged on the recognition that an academic discipline can survive and thrive only if it successfully engages with the university system. Ford Foundation officers and their allies in the black studies programs believed that legitimacy was best cultivated by association with already elite schools, emphasizing education for white and black students, and an interdisciplinary foundation for the field. This view encouraged the foundation to support programs at schools like Yale, which they hoped would become a model for the rest of the field. Explicitly, the Ford Foundation wanted to be a “carrier” of academia’s social norms.

As the civil rights and black nationalist movements peaked and faded, attention within the Ford Foundation shifted elsewhere. When the philanthropy again focused on black studies in the late 1980s, the Ford Foundation officers and black studies chairs were faced with a different institutional environment. Racial integration was simply no longer a pressing issue. Programs needed improved reputations as research centers, not undergraduate support. The issue was how the foundation could help black studies units become centers for knowledge creation. This new agenda was developed by a group of program officers who joined the philanthropy in the 1980s, and they pursued their goal by cultivating a carefully selected clientele of leading research universities. This effort culminated in a series of grants that paid for basic social science and humanities research. The foundation also gave funds to groups such as the National Council for Black Studies so it could promote the field as a whole. The lack of support for black studies in the late 1970s and 1980s meant that the field had to evolve.

Overall, the foundation had a modest effect on the black studies field. Foundation money helped fifteen programs, out of hundreds, survive the early years.
The foundation gave one independent organization, the Institute for the Black World, an opportunity to create a niche for a black think tank, a project that ultimately failed. Although there was much conflict over nationalism, there is little evidence to suggest that the foundation had any direct effect in changing anyone’s orientation. The foundation was not involved in black studies grant-making when programs declined in the 1970s and 1980s (see chapter 4). In later years, the foundation’s largest impact was in helping a small group of programs complete research projects. Thus, while the Ford Foundation staff may have wanted to act as a standard-bearer of academic standards, the evidence suggests that the foundation’s most enduring impact was in helping programs at selected research universities and historically black colleges survive the tumultuous early 1970s. Grant-making stabilized the outcome of the black student movement in a few schools, but it accomplished little else.

The changing nature of the foundation’s grant-making and its limited impact speaks to the social science literature on the impact of philanthropy. Sociologists and historians often view philanthropic giving as an issue of control and institutional development. The most critical researchers see philanthropists as enacting elite agendas. Marxist scholars, for example, have argued that philanthropists support colleges so they can train workers, especially ethnic minorities, for the capitalist labor market. Other radical scholars think that the major philanthropies, like the Ford Foundation, support universities so they can train intellectuals who help the United States maintain its dominant position. In contrast, social movement researchers and nonprofit-sector scholars think philanthropies influence social change processes by targeting clients who are politically moderate or by insisting on client accountability and bureaucratic organization, which favors more mainstream groups.

The conclusions reached in this chapter are consistent with some themes in this literature. While it would be wrong to portray the Ford Foundation as a conservative force that stopped social change or perpetuated class hierarchies, it is true that the foundation actively tried to moderate black studies’ more radical tendencies, especially in the first wave of grants. One could also argue that it reinforced the hierarchy of American higher education by favoring the best-established universities. That is to say, the foundation indirectly “chilled out” the field by helping programs survive in universities like Stanford and Yale while letting more radical programs wither.

However, other important aspects of the foundation’s actions are not captured by this literature. For example, the foundation’s assistance was very epi-
sodic. Unlike prior attempts to improve the bureaucracy of historically black colleges, there was no sustained giving program for black studies. The foundation did not award a major grant in the period from 1970 to 1982, when it supported a lecture series at Harvard. Most of the second wave grants were awarded in the mid to late 1980s, leaving another period of about five years without a major award. Inconsistent support meant that black studies, as a field, did not have routine ties to a major institution that could provide funding and legitimacy. To the best of my knowledge, no other organized philanthropy or state agency acted as a patron for black studies in the same way that the National Science Foundation or the National Endowment for the Humanities supports academic work in established disciplines. Although it is by no means necessary for the development of an academic discipline, the lack of a prominent institutional sponsor that bankrolls and certifies research meant that black studies programs were limited to their teaching duties, a secondary function in research universities.

The social science literature on the moderating effects of philanthropy does not address another significant feature of the foundation’s sponsorship of black studies. It does not discuss how foundation grant-making in the late 1960s was decoupled from protest. A key finding from the quantitative analysis of grant applications is that there is no statistically significant correlation between campus protest and the tendency to submit an application for foundation money or to have the grant approved. If foundations do indeed try to undermine campus activists with temptations of money, then one might expect a positive correlation of grant approval and protest. If foundation officers try to punish campus activists by avoiding them, then one would expect a negative correlation. Yet, there is no significant correlation. Similarly, if campus protest actually drives demands for extramural funding, then there would be a significant positive correlation, but there is none.

The decoupling of protest from soliciting and acquiring funds suggests that protest has an indirect effect on philanthropic organizations and their clients. In some cases, philanthropists will try to directly influence movement groups, the process studied by nonprofit scholars. In other cases, such as the Ford Foundation’s support of black studies, protest sets institutional agendas and defines interests but does not affect decisions regarding new practices. The original social movement creating change is shut out of the institution it targeted because it is too radical and seen as incompatible with the values motivating the institution. Decisions about new organizational forms, such as academic programs,
are then made by people outside of the movement, such as university administrators and philanthropists. In this situation, protest forces philanthropies to deal with the movement’s issues, but because philanthropists and universities have their own independent power, they are free to follow their whims or the cultural norms of the domain where they try to assert influence.

The evidence presented in this chapter suggests that sociologists should expand their view of how nonprofit actors interact with social movements and should not depict the relationship between grantor and grantee as primarily a battle over co-optation. The philanthropist does have substantial tools for influencing movements and the organizational change they spawn, but these efforts can be resisted, as the Vanderbilt case shows, or a grantee may decide to work completely outside the established methods of their field, as in the IBW case. Furthermore, these tools can be exercised intermittently, reducing a nonprofit organization’s influence even more.

A nonprofit group’s interventions may be a response to protest, but resources are awarded according to the conventions of the nonprofit sector and the targeted institutional domain. Without firm commitment, a philanthropic group must settle for responding to the shifting institutional needs of grantees, such as academia’s constant demand for research, instead of setting agendas that will be accepted by their clients. Therefore, to understand the complex impact of a major philanthropic organization on an emerging field like black studies, one must see how philanthropy moves away from the realm of political struggle and into institutional decision-making. Shifting priorities within a nonprofit organization and the grantee’s trajectory of development will determine the long-term impact of philanthropic efforts.