



Moving Towards a Racial and Reparative Justice Model in UK Philanthropy

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UK philanthropies are still rooted in historical colonial ideals, which limit their ability to meaningfully engage with race and racial injustice. Via an in-depth literature review, this paper provides a historical exploration of the roots of philanthropic practice and explores the racial limitations of modern-day philanthropy.

How do considerations of race and racial (in)equity factor into the practice of philanthropy in the UK?

The author identifies that UK philanthropies have failed to interrogate the colonial roots of their organisations and as such they replicate harmful racial inequitable approaches as part of a neo-colonial philanthropy. The author proposes clear actions that philanthropic organisations can take to integrate racial justice into their philanthropic practice, and shift from neocolonialism to a more reparative philanthropy approach.

[#RacialInjustice](#) [#RacialEquity](#) [#Colonialism](#) [#Repair](#) [#ReparativeJustice](#)

Background & Context



- Historically, **philanthropy in the UK was based upon paternalistic concepts of charity** and had direct links to Christian Missionary Philanthropy emerging directly from the abolitionist movement.
- This philanthropy was **heavily influenced by concepts of race and ethnicity, which were shaped via the lens of white supremacy, colonialism and slavery.**
- This **reinforced the power imbalance** between those who were revered as gracious enough to provide charity (the wealthy and elite British) and those who were deemed worthy to receive this charity (the racialised colonised communities).
- This power imbalance is still reflected in the modern-day dynamics that are typically seen within philanthropic organisations in what is termed modern-day **neo-colonial philanthropic practice.**
- Within UK philanthropies, **this practice is underpinned by indicators of white supremacy** which include unclear decision making, euro-centric norms, applying a deficit lens instead of an asset-based lens, short termism, lack of racial diversity amongst decision makers, and maintaining the status quo.

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Academic articles on philanthropy through a practitioner lens

Take aways & Learnings



- Once organisations understand how the colonialism continues to impact their current practice, it is necessary for them to adopt a **new grant making framework that can challenge historical inequities and catalyse long term transformation** at the systemic level.
- There is work taking place in the philanthropic space in the USA to **decolonise philanthropy and develop a new restorative framework** that explores how power can be more evenly distributed, how communities can be engaged in decision making processes, and **how philanthropy can centre justice instead of charity**.
- Unfortunately to date, with the exception of a handful of funders, **there has not been a significant exploration in the UK** about the connection between the colonial and imperialist roots of philanthropic practice in the UK, and modern-day racial inequities and racial disparities. This has meant that these **restorative justice practices are yet to be adopted by many UK philanthropies**.
- UK philanthropies are reminded that **as public awareness of racial inequities continue to grow, they continue to face greater public scrutiny** around their engagement with racial justice issues.
- They are encouraged to undertake exploration about the racial roots of their endowments, as a first step to making the shift from neo-colonialism to adopt a more *reparative justice* focused approach and follow this with focused actions to improve racial literacy, power distribution, community engagement, and racial justice advocacy.

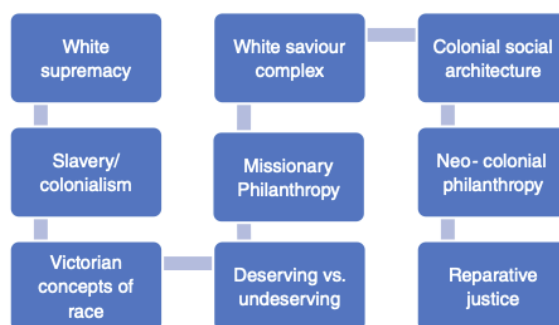


Figure 1: The pathway from white supremacy to reparative justice in UK philanthropy.

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