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Bridges, platforms, and satellites: theorizing the power of global philanthropy in international development

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Bridges, platforms, and satellites: theorizing the power of global philanthropy in international development

Global philanthropy, especially large US philanthropic foundations, has played an active but not unproblematic role in international development. In this article, we theorize the institutional strategies by which global philanthropy exercises disproportionate influence. In particular, we offer bridges, interdigitates, platforms, and satellites as metaphors for theorizing the connections and disconnections that philanthropic foundations engineer. We draw on the interdisciplinary scholarship on philanthropy and development to identify three epochs: scientific development (1940s – 1970s), partnerships (1970s – 2000s), and philanthrocapitalism (2000s – present). In each of these, we outline how philanthropic foundations have used the above metaphorical institutional mechanisms—separately and increasingly in combination and more sophisticated ways—in making connections and disconnections across developmental geographies, histories, imaginaries, and institutions. Potentially generative, metaphors, we conclude, both offer ways to interpret the disproportionate power of philanthropy as well as challenge it by identifying philanthropy's underlying assumptions, telos, and exclusions of development.

Keywords: metaphor; international development; philanthropy; power; US foundations.

> Waving his hand toward a patch of willowy, pale green rice stalks, Benigno Aquino showed an American reporter what the Green Revolution meant to the Philippines in the fall of 1966. "Here is the bullock cart. Here is the nineteenth century," he said. Then, pointing across the road to a paddy of stubby, dark shoots planted in orderly rows, "here is the jumbo jet! The twentieth century." (Cullather, 2004, p. 227).

In 1959, the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations pledged seven million US$ to establish the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) at Los Baños in the Philippines. With the founding of the institute, they implanted not only new technologies from twentieth century US onto the nineteenth century Filipino landscape but also new institutions, infrastructures, and attitudes (Cullather, 2004). In the name of international development, philanthropic foundations such as Ford and Rockefeller, we argue in this article, were trying to *bridge* developmental lag. In endowing new scientific institutions such as IRRI that juxtaposed spaces of modernity and underdevelopment next to each other, US foundations supposedly helped bring third world countries such as the Philippines into present–day modernity from elsewhere by *leapfrogging* historical time. In doing so, they purposively bypassed both crucial development actors such as post–colonial governments, trade unions, and peasantry, as well as their respective interests and demands; and provided *platforms* for certain other ideas, institutions, and interests to dominate. These notions of connection and disconnection in developmental geographies, histories, institutions, and imaginaries, we argue in this article, can be useful in theorizing the power of philanthropy. Specifically, we offer *bridging*, *interdigitating*, *leapfrogging*, creating *platforms,* and *satellites,* as metaphors for theorizing the institutional mechanisms by which philanthropy exercises its disproportionate power in international development.

We focus on large US philanthropic foundations—both new and old. While we acknowledge the presence on other, non–American cultures of gift–making in international development, it should not detract from the fact that that prior scholarship and practice relies, to a disproportionately large extent, on US philanthropic foundations' involvement in international development (see for example: Arnove, 1980; Cullather, 2004; Kumar, 2019; McGoey, 2014, 2015; Parmar, 2012; Roelofs, 2003). This is not surprising given the scale and global ambition of their work, the imbrication of US foundations' international development programmes within US foreign policy interests, and their contribution in the USA's rise as the dominant neo-colonial power, globally.

The rest of the article is structured as follows. We begin with a brief but considered review of literature on the motivations and machinations of philanthropic foundations' power in international development. This is followed by a brief description of the suggested metaphors and the periodization we offer. A detailed discussion of the three epochs follows. In conclusion, we outline the main contributions of the article and its limitations.

Philanthropy, power, and international development: A review

A significant source of philanthropic organizations' power emanates from their leaders' elite status and access it enables (DiCaprio, 2012; Khan, 2012). Having accumulated enormous personal fortunes, elites such as Carnegie, Ford, Gates, Mellon, and Rockefeller engaged in world–making as a means of their personal aggrandizement. Their 'entrepreneurial philanthropy' involved addressing major social ends on a non–profit basis. The move from the commercial world into the social realm, however, was not simply a dissociation from their core businesses, but served as an additional source of capital returns: social, cultural and symbolic, for the elites (Harvey et al., 2011; Shaw et al., 2011). In this way, elites are able to trade or convert one form of capital to another (DiCaprio, 2012; Khan, 2012). Through their command over resources and their distinctive abilities to transfer value from one form of resource into another (Khan, 2012), elites are able to set agendas and priorities in international development, frame how developmental discourses are perceived by the public; and influence public opinion, thus, legitimizing their own perspectives (DiCaprio, 2012). In turn, elites' own power is further consolidated and enhanced (Harvey et al., 2011).

Significant in discussing elites' power and philanthropy, internationally, is Parmar (2012). In *Foundations of the American Century*, he outlines both the reasons behind the US foundations' actions and their mode of exercising their power. The 'Big

Three' US foundations (Carnegie, Ford, and Rockefeller), Parmar argued, were driven by their desire to establish US elites' hegemony, globally. Despite their seeming distance and difference from the state as part of civil society, foundations have been working closely throughout the twentieth century to fulfil US foreign policy objectives in support of the United States' rise as the predominant neo–colonial power. They do so, Parmar details, through the construction of elites' and elitist knowledge networks. Belying their stated development objectives of poverty alleviation and third world development, the purpose of the networks created and sustained by the foundations is to: 'interpret the world after the event and to sell their version of cause and consequence to American publics, to draw lessons for future policy, and to advance concrete plans for implementation' (*Ibid.*, p. 259). Armed with science, technology, and deploying their characteristic scientific philanthropy, elites who founded and led the foundations have engaged in world–making on a global scale.

Informed by this world–making ambition of elites, numerous scholars have taken a Gramscian approach to deconstructing the power of philanthropy in international development (Arnove, 1980; Fisher, 1980, 1983; Parmar, 2002, 2012; Roelofs, 2003, 2015). This has involved, briefly and belying the nuance and detail that has been involved in this work, maintaining and consolidating the institutions and practices that have maintained the same social and economic institutions that generate inequalities and injustices, while claiming to fight them. Through their policies and programmes on research and education in the social sciences, the US foundations have perpetuated both a 'sophisticated conservatism' (Fisher, 1980, p. 17) and the myth of US–supremacy in the social, economic, and political realms (see Arnove, 1980; Cooke & Kumar, 2020 and Kumar, 2019 for management; Fisher, 1983 for sociology; Parmar, 2012 on democratic peace theory). Such a 'cultural hegemony' of US supremacy, Arnove (2017) explains, has involved ‘determining how people perceive and name the world (...) the way they [foundations] shape what societal issues are studies by whom with what consequences for differently situated groups’.

Crucial to establishing the US–status of a hegemon, globally, were its foundations’ overseas programmes in the post–World War II period, as part of what became international development. In shaping and carrying out US President Truman’s (1949) desire set out in his infamous Point Four speech to ‘help the free peoples of the world (…) to produce more food, more clothing, more materials for housing, and more mechanical power to lighten their burdens’, the US philanthropic foundations played a significant but not unproblematic role. While we are cognizant of the US foundations’ earlier international development, most notably the Rockefeller Foundation in South and East Asia and Latin America, the foundations’ efforts in the post–War period, however, were remarkable both in scale and extent (Parmar, 2012; Roelofs, 2003). They came to be implicated, quite intensively in the on–going US efforts at promoting USA’s ‘soft power’ (Nye, 2004), and countering communism and anti–Americanism, abroad (Parmar, 2012). Since then, development became inextricably linked to US foreign policy, especially in the Cold War era. Its contemporary manifestations can be found in the USA’s ‘3D’ national security strategy that has placed development, defence, and diplomacy on an equal footing since 2002 (Kauffeld, 2014). From the George W. Bush administration to that of Barack Obama, the US establishment, whether Republican or Democrat, has been careful to use development as an integral part of its overseas foreign policy (Parmar, 2012).

While this configuration of relationships between US state, business and philanthropy have evolved over subsequent decades, the influence of American foundations in articulating and extending US interests and influence has remained a continuous thread throughout (Parmar, 2012). Taking an international relations perspective, Parmar (2012) concludes that foundations' programmes overseas, conducted in the name of international development, and were driven by its global rise as *the* dominant neo–colonial power (Kumar, 2019). The roots of the foundations' activities to consolidate its soft power, globally, Parmar has skilfully demonstrated, were closely linked with and built on their domestic programmes in the United States.

Fulfilling elite philanthropists and their foundations' agendas, however, were their trustees and philanthropoids or long–serving experts and professionals serving the US philanthropic foundations. Themselves part of the power elite—who attended Ivy League universities, were involved, variously, as corporate directors, leaders of significant educational institutions, partners in leading law firms, or in senior positions within US administration—philanthropoids shaped and were shaped by long–term project for the United States' global hegemony (Parmar, 2012). It came about as a result of the 'revolving door' that existed between foundation executives and the US foreign policy establishment at that time (Perkins, 1997). They worked tirelessly to both fulfil and also challenge the foundations' mission and modes of attaining development. Whitaker (1974), for example, has argued that they should be understood as 'radicals' who had the potential to draw philanthropists and their trustees' attention beyond their techno–managerial concerns towards more challenging socio–economic issues. Similarly pointing to their power as insiders, Roy (2010) calls them 'double agents' who helped find common ground and build consent between the techno–managerial approaches organized around impact, returns, and control favoured by the foundations on the one hand, and more social and political challenges their grantees deal with, on the other (Kohl–Arenas, 2017).

Related but somewhat dissimilar from entrepreneurial philanthropy is contemporary philanthrocapitalism and its variants, whose power and influence emanate from its reliance on principles and practices from the worlds of business and management. Unlike Harvey et al.'s (2011) insistence on the not–for–profit mode for dealing with the *social*, proponents of philanthrocapitalism are less concerned with such distinctions (Bishop & Green, 2008). However, like entrepreneurial philanthropy, philanthrocapitalism shares common concerns around impact of its actions and, ultimately, the pursuit of return on capital: financial, cultural, reputational, or symbolic. It involves the use of managerial concerns, approaches, and techniques in philanthropy (see Porter & Kramer, 2002 on corporate philanthropy and links with competitive advantage); such as randomized controlled trials, evidence–based practice, results–based management, etc. Relying on our 'trust in numbers' (Porter, 1996), broadly speaking, philanthrocapitalism's power lies in its seemingly scientific nature, its measurability and verifiability, and claims to being objective, neutral, reasoned, and logical (see Kelly & McGoey, 2018 for a problematization of evidence). As can be expected, this is not without consequence regarding the ways by which we conceive of and *do* development, on which more later in the article.

Just like businesses, philanthropic foundations have increasingly accumulated discursive power (Fuchs, 2005). Governing by discourse, US foundations have been able to—on an increasingly global and 'grander' scale (Varmus et al., 2003)—set 'problems' and agendas, narrow down possible routes to identifying *a* prospective 'solution', and building consortia, alliances, and networks. In their use of seemingly systematized, value–free, managerial techniques for decision–making, combined with a quasi–scientific numericalization of evidence, and associated practices of reporting and accountability, foundations are able to conceal yet maintain the sociopolitical order they claim to be changing (Liu & Baker, 2016). They do so by turning the attention away from inequalities or social problems they are meant to be addressing on to the organizations fighting it, thus, preserving their own role in society (Jensen, 2013).

Metaphors, and philanthropic epochs

Metaphors imply both 'a way of thinking and a way of seeing' (Morgan, 2006, p. 4). They work by pointing us to resemblances between two unrelated subjects, or evoking responses within us, or intimating us without necessarily having to tell us (Davidson, 1978). Thinking about theory as metaphor is particularly useful as it acknowledges that 'no single theory can provide us with an all–purpose point of view' (Morgan, 2006). Before moving on, we briefly describe the metaphors and outline our periodization of US foundations' involvement in international development.

In suggesting the use of *bridging* we refer to philanthropic foundations' bridge building in terms of joining and making connections, crossing over or spanning, traversing (not just forwards and backwards but also sideways), providing a means of passage over, but also spreading over, curtailing, and arching developmental geographies, histories, imaginaries, and institutions. *Satellites* as metaphors refer to deputized agents (even pejoratively followers or those seeking patronage through obsequiousness), secondary citizens, states, cities, or regions that are dependent on the metropolis, and those which transmit—here, modernity and modernization—or orbit. By *leapfrogging*, we refer to philanthropy's institutional power to vault over both hurdles but also incremental development stages; as well as its military usage of attack by strategically isolating enemy positions. *Platforms*, we suggest, are useful in theorizing philanthropy's distinctive ability to build foundations or bases from which doctrines, principles, and plans of action can be disseminated (in religion, platforms refer to plans for governing and disciplining, which is also useful here). Following its computational usage, platforms can also be understood as systems architecture from which various applications and services can be run.

Common to using the metaphors are ideas of connection and disconnection, scale and ‘scale making’ (Tsing, 2000). Extending, deploying and playing with the suggested metaphors, we believe, can help us re/frame continuity and discontinuity across developmental geographies, history, imaginaries and institutions. Eschewing a ‘smooth’ narrative, we are particularly interested in critical, geographically–specific, yet conceptually rigorous accounts of the institutional power of philanthropy, globally. Instead of offering these metaphors as *the* theory of philanthropy’s institutional power, we conceive of them as resolutely modular, that is they can connect institutional, individual, and macro–theories of philanthropic power to each other.

In order to illustrate how these metaphors might work, we offer a periodization of philanthropic influence in international development. It is derived from the object of our study (Cooke & Kumar, 2020)—here, philanthropic gift making adopted by the US foundations at different times in history. In each of which US foundations adopted a distinct philanthropic mode and imaginary. To name, the three epochs are as follows: scientific development (1940s – 1970s); partnership (1970s – 2000s) and philanthrocapitalism (2000s – present). Throughout each of these epochs, philanthropic foundations have used metaphorical institutional mechanisms in combination and in increasingly sophisticated ways.

We begin with scientific development, which refers to foundations’ interventions in a variety of fields—health, agriculture, education—that sought to transfer disciplinary knowledge and skills deemed necessary for development. Driven by capital and animated by modernization, the foundations hoped to replicate new institutions in developing countries. The establishment of IRRI during the Green Revolution was emblematic of philanthropic ambition during this development epoch. We then turn to the epoch of partnerships. It reflected the wider changes to the development landscape, overseas and at home—with local development actors less willing to be bypassed and a fall in the assets of the Big Three US foundations in the 1970s—which necessitated approaches that were more modest than the 'high modernist' projects of the post–war era (Scott, 1998). Initially focused on supporting civil society groups that burgeoned in the 1970s and 1980s and became increasingly influential (Charnovitz, 1997), partnership later became synonymous with public–private partnerships (PPPs) in the 1990s. Finally, if the latter stages of the partnership epoch reflected the marketization of development with the proliferation of PPPs bypassing traditional domestic and international development actors, the philanthrocapitalism epoch to follow signalled its financialization (Carroll & Jarvis, 2014; Mawdsley, 2018a). Trading on its role as broker of PPPs, US philanthropy—with its new centre of gravity in Silicon Valley and the West Coast—was able to normalize the concept of blended finance; providing a bridge to the institutionalization of overtly profit–oriented model of philanthropy as impact investing.

A discussion on each of the epochs follows.

Scientific Development

The knowledge base for the 'heroic age' of post–war development (Scott, 1998) was drawn from the US foundations' recent experience of domestic programming. Since the 1920s, the Big Three foundations had eschewed traditional approaches to charitable giving in favour of a more systematic approach that involved diagnosing the root causes of poverty and attacking them instead of its symptoms, an approach they termed scientific philanthropy (Howe, 1980; Sealander, 2003). They accomplished this, via scientific development, in three main ways. Firstly, by funding disciplines and knowledge–production—in economics, sociology, and later behavioural sciences to understand poverty as 'part of the study of the economic life of the people as a whole' (Bremner, 1956: 173)—to govern the masses by attacking the growing conflict between capital and labour (Guilhot, 2007)). Secondly, they endowed institutes and centres of scientific research and training (Cooke & Kumar, 2020), and thirdly they invested in training programmes that equipped individuals with 'skills and abilities that were useful in laboratories, offices, and factories' (Wren, 1983, p 335). By defining the new project of development according to its established parameters of scientific philanthropy, the foundations were thus asserting a causal connection between the transfer of knowledge, skills and technologies required to build a modern capitalist economy with peace and prosperity in the third world, and protection of US national security and economic interests.

The primary mode of intervention for development–as–modernization was the replication of institutional forms—through which these capacities had historically developed in the US—in its hitherto 'underdeveloped' allies. Implicit in this approach was the assumption that models of science and development that had evolved within a particular US context were, in fact, universally applicable, and amenable to replication in diverse and distant lands. In public health, for example, 'success against hookworm in the United States helped inspire the belief that such programs could be replicated in other parts of the world, and were indeed expanded to include malaria and yellow fever, among others' (Smith, 2009, p. 464). Similarly but far more extensively than before, Tennessee Valley Authority model of river–basin integrated regional development was transferred and replicated in India, Laos, Vietnam, Egypt, Lebanon, Tanzania, and Brazil (Carter, 2014). This strategy of institutional transfer and replication can be understood as the development of satellites—as organisations invested with a distinct local/regional identity remained, nonetheless, within the orbit of the 'metropolis' (Frank, 1966). US foundations endowed such satellite institutes in selected disciplines such as city planning, management education, and public administration, which were deemed important given the limited administrative capacity in such countries and for their significance to the development of private enterprise and industry (Staples, 1992). This transfer and replication of particular kinds of scientific institution as part of third world development were, ultimately, attempts at 're–inscrib[ing] the non–West into a history not of its own making' (Seth, Gandhi, & Dutton, 1998, p. 8). Curtailing their own histories in this way, the foundations sought to harness 'resources of science to discovering the impediments to such development, in order that social engineering could remove them' (Seth, Gandhi & Dutton, 1998: 8).

US foundations' preference for satellite creation as their primary mode of intervention in the scientific development epoch is exemplified by the 'Green Revolution'; an ambitious programme of agricultural modernization in South and Southeast Asia spearheaded by the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations. It built on Rockefeller Foundation's earlier programmes in the US and in Mexico, conducted under the banner of 'scientific agriculture', where it had invested 'vast sums of money' from the 1930s through to the 1950s into developing the plant sciences, including the establishment of the new discipline of molecular biology (Smith, 2009, p. 464). Such investments led to the institutionalization of a 'classic cluster' of crop science disciplines, with plant genetics at its apex, across a network of research stations located in US land–grant universities all with close links to large–scale agriculture (Anderson et al., 1991). This disciplinary configuration was a crucial factor in realizing a satellite–creation mode of intervention. The transfer to developing countries of a genetics–led model enabled, not only the 'planting' of a network of US–style agricultural research stations in strategic locations, but also the dissemination of its outputs as universally–applicable technologies though domestic infrastructures (Chandler, 1992).

The Green Revolution offered a technocratic solution to the problem of food shortage in South and Southeast Asia, the frontier of the Cold War. The ideological alignment necessary for such an ambitious programme flowed from an interlocking network of individuals and institutions involved in it. Through the imaginary of 'revolution', a close network of officials from American foundations, the government, and figures from key land–grant universities helped create dense connections that linked agriculture, development, and scientific research in ways that precluded alternative visions of agrarian change—for example those based on redistributive land reform (Smith, 2009). Perkins (1997) coined the term 'population, national security theory' for a set of ideas that connected Malthusian ideas about overpopulation and food scarcity with fears about regional instability and the spread of communism which foundation officials championed before US policymakers. Meanwhile a technocratic framing of the problem of third world hunger in productivist terms was attractive to US policy makers, since it enabled them to bypass inconvenient debates about alternative, redistributionist solutions.

The institutional template for the Green Revolution satellites was the Mexican Agricultural Programme (MAP): a programme of US–Mexico bilateral cooperation implemented in the 1940s. Financed predominantly by the US government, it was formulated, steered and part–funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. Central to its design was the installation of a satellite agency in the form of an Office of Special Studies (later to become the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre or CIMMYT. Along with IRRI, on which more below, CIMMYT became part of an international network that was the institutional legacy of the Green Revolution).[1] While based on Mexican soil, the status of the OSS was that of a public but 'autonomous' institution. Its celebrated autonomy, however, referred to its detachment from the institutions of the Mexican state, but not from the American institutions that had crafted it. In this way, the OSS acted as a vehicle for leapfrogging over the more gradual, incremental processes of change that would otherwise have been necessary in order to modernize Mexican agriculture (Perkins, 1997).

In 1962, the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) opened as 'the first tax–exempt foundation in the Philippines' (Cullather, 2004), following a period of intense negotiations between the Rockefeller Foundation, in alliance with the Ford Foundation, and the Government of the Philippines. As with MAP, IRRI replicated the

1. Founded in 1971, the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research is a consortium of fifteen agricultural research centres over five continents and leading funders. It works on agrifood science and innovation to enable the poor to improve productivity, nourishment, and resilience.

US agricultural research station model, and with it the idea of US–style large–scale agriculture as an ideal to be emulated, initially in the Philippines, and subsequently in neighbouring countries. This modernizing vision went beyond the replication of US–style agriculture to the broadcast and transfer of 'strips of reality' (Appadurai, 1990, p. 299) across development geographies. For example in the design of IRRI's research station buildings, foundation officials engaged 'Ralph T. Walker—a modernist famous for his designs of American military bases, suburban research campuses, and industrial pavilions at the 1939 World's Fair.' Making 'no concessions to either climate or local conventions,' Walker's design aimed, above all, to broadcast 'the power and richness of American life' (Cullather, 2004, p. 233)

Institutions such as IRRI, in whose creation the US foundations played a key role, served as the prototype and a platform for creating an international system of 'autonomous' research centres (Anderson, Levy & Morrison, 1991). This institutional building role of philanthropy—that led Ford Foundation's Paul Ylvisaker to characterize foundations as 'America's passing gear' (Dowie, 2001, p. xix)—enabled it to leapfrog over institutions of the Philippines state in order to implement a strategy that raised food production while at the same time opening up agriculture in developing countries to foreign investment (Cullather, 2004; Griffin, 1979; Pearse, 1980). As in the case of MAP, this was a publicly funded endeavour as it was financed by the US government (with inputs from the two private foundations), with land and facilities provided by the Government of the Philippines, to create a new type of public institution.

While such levels of public funding were unlikely to attract scrutiny in the US given the Cold War context, the establishment of satellite institutions in developing countries was facilitated by the political winds of change. In the Philippines and other third world countries, socialist governments were replaced by a new generation of developmentalist regimes for whom technocratic solutions provided a welcome diversion from redistributive politics. In this context, institutions like IRRI, and their 'miracle seeds', were enthusiastically showcased as investments in and symbols of modernity and development (Cullather, 2004). Meanwhile, an increasingly transnational agribusiness sector expanded (as Nelson Rockefeller, 1951 had predicted) into new markets for seeds, agrichemicals, machinery, and, ultimately, land.

The turn to partnerships

By the 1970s, the era of large–scale investment in technical assistance to developing country governments and public bureaucracies was coming to an end. The Ford Foundation—by then the largest of the Big Three in terms of its assets and financial disbursements—led the way in pioneering a new approach through its population programmes in South Asia. This involved a 'transition from western technical assistance programmes to the perspectives of indigenous community–based grass–roots organizations, … marking a transition from the progressive faith in the notion of "disinterested expertise" to a belief that local experience … constituted the optimum guide to twentieth–century policy–making' (McCarthy, 1995, p. 293). This shift resulted, in no small part, from a fall in the assets of Ford and other foundations; as well as the practical obstacles faced, during and after the Emergency period in India, in implementing its population programmes.

As a result of which, the Foundation developed a new mode of intervention through which they were able to bypass obstacles thrown up by the changing domestic political situation and reduce programme costs while maintaining their influence in a strategically important country. What resulted was a more arms–length mode of satellite creation in which local administrators rather than American technical experts took the lead (McCarthy, 1995). This move towards a community–based approach to development that paid more attention to place and context was, however, accompanied by a reframing of local communities from obstacles to progress to ‘potential reservoirs of entrepreneurship’ that could be mobilized for economic development (Rahman & Pokrant 2014, p. 217; see Villadsen, 2007 for a similar argument).

The Foundation’s programme in Bangladesh, the newly created nation neighbouring India, soon became the exemplar for other US foundations to follow. Having established a new programme in 1974 following the war of independence and the famine that followed, the Ford Foundation played an influential part in what came to be known as the Bangladesh development success story (for a review, see Hossain, 2016) which served as a platform for the advocacy of a similar approach elsewhere. Although there are competing theories behind its success, most feature the role of its large and influential NGO sector, which provided a new kind of replicable development model for the partnership era. One of the Foundation’s most successful initiatives was its series of grants to the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC); which by 1984 was lauded as ‘a premier national NGO’ and model for other civil society organizations to follow. By the early 1980s, ‘the Dhaka office's population programme centred almost entirely on NGOs’ (McCarthy, 1995, p. 307).

In Bangladesh, the Ford Foundation also supported the group Concerned Women for Family Planning (CWFP), which during this time grew from ‘five branches and fifteen clinics, offering literacy training, income–generation activities, marketing assistance, family planning and nutritional information to over a quarter of a million Dhaka women’ (McCarthy, 1995, p. 307). Alongside support for NGOs, therefore, was a broadening of the field of action from population and family planning to ‘women's empowerment’. This reflected a long–held interest of Foundation's New York staff for whom an emphasis on civil society action around reproductive issues provided a platform for a new agenda linking feminism and development. This was also reflected in the leadership of foundation–supported NGOs, many of which were run by women (McCarthy, 1995).

The women's empowerment agenda and its interpretation of feminism has come under criticism, however, particularly in light of the increasingly narrow emphasis of NGO sectors in Bangladesh and elsewhere on women's *economic* empowerment. Such a focus was part, without doubt, of the wider interlocking macroeconomic policies imposed by international financial institutions in the same period—in the wake of the debt crisis, which devolved what had once been state service provision to communities and households. In this context, NGOs were co–opted as service providers within a New Public Management (NPM) model that cast citizens as discerning consumers (Banks et al., 2015; Edwards & Hulme, 1996). Meanwhile, following the Washington Consensus, microfinance became attractive to donors and foundations alike as the ‘missing piece’ that could transform poor people into self–reliant microentrepreneurs (for a critique, see Bateman, 2014). The rationale for the targeting of women by microcredit programmes combined an espousal of women's empowerment with a pragmatism that saw women as reliable borrowers. The mainstreaming of economic empowerment programmes in general and microfinance in particular thus opened up new areas of social life to marketization, creating effective market subjects (Rankin, 2001).

While the language of partnership was in circulation during the civil society phase of philanthropy and development, from the late 1990s there was a discernible shift in which the term partnership referred to more complex arrangements in which private sector actors, rather than civil society organizations, were now the central players in interlocking networks of development institutions. This rearticulation of partnership as a mode of philanthropic intervention was itself part of a new set of interdigitating agendas and interests that formed an emerging post–Washington Consensus. If development in the Washington Consensus years of macroeconomic adjustment was framed in terms of a simple 'market versus the state' binary, in the *post*–Washington Consensus this was resolved by concluding that state intervention was necessary to *support* the market if it was to deliver desirable outcomes (Fine, 2011, p. 14). In response, philanthropic interventions evolved accordingly, embedded in multiple partnerships—sometimes brokering, sometimes gatekeeping—facilitating partnerships across (international) borders, connecting (local, national, global) scales, and bridging (public, private, not–for–profit) sectors. In so doing, the 'developing' state, hollowed out through structural adjustments of the Washington Consensus years, was recast as 'just one of many partners in this patchwork quilt of complex alliances' in which philanthropic foundations continued to enjoy disproportionate influence (Mitchell & Sparke, 2016, p. 734).

In the partnership–epoch, therefore, foundations have been able to retain and often increase their influence despite a decline in monetary contribution. An exemplar is the Rockefeller Foundation's support for product development partnerships (PDPs) such as the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI), throughout the 1990s and 2000s, through which it was able to establish its PDP model as the norm in global health governance. Through its 'instrumental role in establishing a blueprint for PDPs, as well as convening meetings that led to the development of financing partnerships like the GAVI Alliance [Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization, or Vaccine Alliance]', the Foundation combined strategies of interdigitating (embedding itself in the partnership) and platforming (ensuring its preferred model became the global standard). In this way it was able to 'retain influence in the health sphere, despite its relative decline in assets and diminished importance in the philanthropic sector more generally' (Moran, 2007, p. 2).

The partnership mode of philanthropy adopted by US foundations also gravitated towards a more personalized approach to giving, exemplified by the approach taken by the (then) newcomer, the Gates Foundation, through its Grand Challenges Programme (McGoey, 2014; Mitchell & Sparke, 2016). Grand Challenges allows philanthropists (and their staff) more direct involvement in policy formulation, bypassing government decision makers. In 2003 (and again in 2008), the Gates Foundation, together with the US National Institutes of Health, launched the 'Grand Challenges in Global Health' (GCGH) initiative to meet fourteen global challenges identified by a 'scientific board' to address 'seven long term goals to improve health in the developing world' (Leach & Scoones, 2006, p 21). By targeting particular challenges or fields themselves, philanthropists attempt to, again, bypass traditional developmental intermediaries such as trustees, government actors, development organizations, and research experts to 'solve' development problems. While proponents believe that such a direct approach facilitates innovation and risk taking, critics warn of a lack of accountability and democratic oversight (Brooks et al., 2009; Moran, 2007).

In addition to building partnerships between hitherto dis– or less–connected organizations, US foundations have also partnered with each other to propagate or platform particular development imaginaries. In 2006, for example, the Rockefeller Foundation teamed up the Gates Foundation to launch the 'Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA)'. Focusing now on the smallholder farmer, AGRA 'centred on the "value chain" as its organising principle'—smallholder agriculture was to be reinvigorated through integration into global markets (Brooks, 2016a, p. 770). This view was echoed in the World Development Report 'Agriculture for Development', published the following year (Byerlee & Janvy, 2007, McMichael, 2009). What AGRA and the World Bank were advocating represented both change and continuity from the Asian Green Revolution. They retained faith in technocratic solutions, and adherence to a plant genetics–based scientific model that suited a now established international agricultural research system for which, as discussed in the last section, IRRI had served as the prototype. Meanwhile, it interdigitated with the ambitions of an agribusiness community with which under–resourced public research institutions were increasingly having to 'partner' in order to access financial and intellectual property resources (IFPRI, 2005). Again, two sets of ideas merged in a model that bridged the prevailing 'technical fix' mentality of the Asian Green

Revolution with a new orthodoxy of the ‘market fix’ in terms of policies to facilitate smallholder access to markets (Scoones et al., 2005). Meanwhile, critiques of the top–down technology transfer model that characterized the earlier scientific development epoch (for example, see Chambers et al., 1994) were bypassed once more, but within a new, private sector–led configuration (Ashby, 2009).

The AGRA example illustrates the multiple philanthropic strategies at work: interdigitating networks between two generations of American philanthropy (Rockefeller and Gates) and private agribusinesses that were keen to position themselves as necessary allies in the fight against hunger (Morvaridi, 2012, Patel et al. 2015). It drew on pre–existing Green Revolution institutional infrastructure, which became crucial to the showcasing of AGRA as a platform for a new Green Revolution for a new age. But in contrast to the public institutional blueprints of twentieth century philanthropy, the new approach was to facilitate public–private partnerships as the primary vehicle for development cooperation and transfer of technologies now in the private sector and subject to intellectual property protections (Brooks, 2016b). While the Asian Green Revolution ‘was a product of a carefully negotiated partnership between philanthropists and states’, AGRA is the product of markedly different understandings both of philanthropy and partnership that sustains an ‘ideology of market–led capitalist development’ (Morvaridi, 2012, p. 1192).

Philanthrocapitalism: Philanthropy as investment

In the lead up to the 2015 UN conference at which the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were agreed as the successor to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) framework that had guided international development efforts between 2000 and 2015, there was an emphasis on private development financing as both desirable and necessary. Indeed, this was the only way that the ‘trillions’ needed to meet the ambitious new agenda would be found, and the ‘financing gap’ closed (Mawdsley, 2018b). This reflected the domestic politics of DAC donor countries, for whom privatization of aid was a way to maintain commitments to international development while implementing economic austerity at home, in the wake of the global finance crisis (see Mawdsley, 2015, for example, on the UK's Department for International Development, DfID).

The justification offered by the donor countries was clearly inherited from the latter stages of the partnership epoch. For example, arguments that the role of public finance should be to ‘leverage’ much needed resources from the private sector were repeated again. A key World Bank publication brought out in advance of the Addis Ababa conference on financing the SDGs (which, tellingly, took place several months before the conference at which the SDGs were finalized) drew heavily on philanthropy–supported case studies as exemplars (World Bank Group, 2013). In this way, the practice of drawing on success stories generated from the institutional experiments of US foundations (even where they had yet to produce concrete results) helped bridge to a new era in which private financing—and by now financing, rather than funding, was the term in use—was mainstreamed, with the role of traditional development agencies cast as that of de–risking development in order to facilitate flow of private finance (World Bank Group, 2013).

Even as the line between funding and investment was often blurred (McGoey, 2014, 2015; Morvaridi, 2016) in the partnership epoch, US foundations’ primary mode for financing development continued to be grant–making. Distinguishing philanthrocapitalism from its predecessors, Stotz and Lai (2018, p. 8) argue that while 'philanthrocapitalism's underlying concept of reconciliation between market and morals' is not new; philanthrocapitalists 'see themselves as social financiers, or more technically speaking, as impact investors. By harnessing the logic of capital, they transform the act of philanthropic giving into a profit–oriented investment process' (Stotz & Lai, 2018, p. 8). By this logic, the traditional practice of grant–making has given way to a new generation of *investment* vehicles.

The term 'impact investing' was not new, however. It was coined as early as 2007 at a meeting hosted by the Rockefeller Foundation at its Bellagio Center to refer to investments that generate financial returns alongside social and/or environmental impacts (Rockefeller Foundation, 2016). Related terms like 'innovative finance', 'philanthropic risk capital,' and 'patient capital' have since emerged which collectively refer to the use of public and/or philanthropic funds to accompany private money from global financial markets to high risk but potentially high yield markets in poor countries; thus, 'de–risking' development as an investment opportunity (Jafri, 2019, Mawdsley 2018a). Impact investing in its various forms—for example, Development Impact Bonds (Saldinger, 2016) and Catastrophe Bonds (see Mitchell & Sparke, 2016 on vaccine bonds)—have since proliferated. Importantly, while often wrapped in pro–poor 'bottom of the pyramid' narratives (Prahalad, 2006), the spread of these new development investment vehicles is inextricably linked with the promotion and spread of shadow banking (Jafri, 2019).

The normalization of impact investing across the development landscape was made possible by the widespread implementation of, first, public–private partnerships (PPPs) and, subsequently, blended financing strategies. These served as interim steps – or transit platforms – from which emerged a new generation of interlocking networks of a wider range of development actors whose interventions were shaped by financial logics. As such, PPPs and blended finance mechanisms, both of which had been championed by American foundations for some years, served as platforms for the institutionalization of impact investing as a mechanism through which all aspects of development could become financialized (Jafri, 2019, Mawdsley, 2018a). The crucial transformation came with the second of these transitions, from blended finance as a strategy to impact investment as 'an *asset class*' (Jafri, 2019, p. 6, emphasis added).

A new foundation that embodies the transition of American philanthropy from the partnership mode to philanthrocapitalism is the Omidyar Network, created by eBay founder Pierre Omidyar in 2004. The Network is 'structured as both a non–profit organisation (a 501c(3) under the US Internal Revenue Code) that makes grants much like a traditional foundation and a for–profit venture that invests in entities with a broad social mission' (Moran & Stone, 2016, p. 302). Thus, while it operates across a range of sectors in a similar manner to other foundations, it includes in its list of 'investees': investment firms, for–profit advocacy platforms (Moran & Stone, 2016), and financial technology or 'fintech' start–ups (Aitken, 2017; Gabor & Brooks, 2017).

The contribution of the Omidyar Network to the spread of digitally–enabled financial inclusion (FI) as a development strategy for the SDG era is illustrative—not least in how it has complemented the partnership–brokering role of more established foundations like the Gates Foundation in these efforts. The Gates Foundation, together with the German Development Agency Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ), has played its familiar role of bringing together a wide range of institutions in global alliances. They have used instruments like the 'Maya Declaration' (through which 66 countries have committed to national financial inclusion targets) as a platform to secure country–level commitments to an agenda that prioritises partnerships with private sector actors, particularly from the fintech sector (AFI, 2014). While supporting these same institutional infrastructures, the Omidyar Network is also pursuing its distinctive strategy by investing directly in fintech start–up firms. This for–profit activity is viewed by the Network as an integral element of a mission that combines 'venture capital investments in innovative ideas to advance financial inclusion' with grants that generate 'the knowledge and advocacy necessary for an ecosystem in which these ideas can mature' (Costa & Ehrbeck, 2015, p. 56). The result is an evolving interdigitating 'fintech–philanthropy–development (FPD) complex' that brings together states, conventional international development organizations, philanthropic investment and fintech companies (Gabor & Brooks 2017, p. 423).

Meanwhile philanthrocapitalism of the kind pioneered by the Omidyar Network is also shaping development futures envisaged by leading bilateral donors. In 2013, for example, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and UK's Department for International Development (DFID) launched Global Development Innovation Ventures (GDIV), 'a global investment platform, with Omidyar Network as a founding member.' GDIV's stated mission is to 'focus resources in international development towards innovative approaches and unlock investment capital from both private and public sectors, and to scale solutions commercially or through public sector adoption' (Moran & Stone, 2016, p. 303). The launch of development investment platforms like GDIV is an indicator of the success of philanthrocapitalism in interdigitating with ODA agencies to transform development financing according to the logics and methods of the financial sector. The word platform is used here in manner common to that from the financial world—as an online service that allows investments to be bought and tracked online. GDIV performs a similarly 'disinterested' online intermediation service between development 'solutions' in need of financing and potential 'investors'. By creating a global digital marketplace of solutions and investment options as a 'level playing field,' it is assumed that only those projects offering the optimum mix of social and financial returns will succeed.

While foundations like Omidyar are well positioned to bridge the 'old' world of partnership–building pioneered by the Rockefeller and Gates Foundations and the shape–shifting practice of philanthrocapitalism pioneered by Omidyar, there are signs that emerging philanthropic actors in East Asia and Latin America may be even better positioned to capitalize on these new developments. Recent studies suggest that emerging philanthropy among wealthy elites in these regions may leapfrog the grant–making stage completely and go straight for an impact investing model (Sklair, 2018); 'aligning their philanthropic giving with the new financialized paradigm' (Stotz & Lai, 2018, p. 6). Such developments, unencumbered by expectations carried over from earlier eras of philanthropy, may yet be indicative of the future of philanthropy. In East Asia, for example, 'apart from being investors themselves' more powerful philanthropists 'invest into the institutional infrastructure of the market, especially into fund vehicles and private network platforms' (Stotz & Lai, 2018, p. 11). The latter functions like a conventional stock exchange, providing liquidity for investors through trading of 'impact securities'.

Meanwhile this evolving mode of philanthropy is generating new types of satellite intermediaries able to build bridges between the world of global finance and local social enterprise—'speak[ing] the language of finance of investors and fund managers' as well as that of social entrepreneurs and their employees and translating between the two (see Mosse & Lewis, 2006). They act as 'business intelligence advisors' who liaise with local banks, courts and administrations, as necessary, performing a range of administrative and accounting functions 'all in close dialogue with the fund management to assure returns on investment' (Stotz & Lai, 2018, p 10–11). Key to understanding the significance of philanthropy as *investment*, or philanthrocapitalism, then, is that it is taking place in the context of 'a proliferating financial market, creating new streams of capital and 'value', and incorporating more people and territories into global financial networks' (Stotz & Lai, 2018, p. 2).

Conclusion

Reading across the three philanthropic epochs: scientific development, partnership and philanthrocapitalism, we can see how US foundations have sought to curtail history and geography in the name of 'helping' the third world poor leapfrog their way, somehow, into development. The foundations have been able to project and platform their own imaginaries of development as a fundamentally technocratic enterprise; and in the process, bypass critical scrutiny, structural causes and alternative, redistributive solutions. Throughout, their preference has been for context–independent approaches, crafted by selected sources of expertise; and replicated, transmitted, and broadcast within institutions designed to bypass governmental – and later intergovernmental – bodies that would otherwise have been held accountable for addressing society's problems.

Foundations have achieved this in large part by using their influence and connections to forge development technoscapes centred in purportedly scale–neutral technologies and techniques – from vaccines to 'miracle seeds' to management's 'one best way'. With their financial independence, foundations have been able to commit themselves to long term investment, sometimes over lengthy periods of time, in the development of satellites, such as the funding and founding of applied research in order to govern the masses—as part of its scientific philanthropy approach (Guilhot, 2007; Kumar, 2018). Knowledge from which was later used to frame the case (and evaluation criteria) for major interventions in areas such as 'scientific agriculture', public health and medicine, and expansion of capitalism and growth of private enterprise through management studies (Cooke & Kumar, 2020). Management studies, it is worth pointing out, has been particularly instructive in that its global expansionism has, in many ways, championed the rise of philanthrocapitalism (both through managerialism in development and financing) and associated practices of evidence in global development.

While the power of philanthropy, by definition, draws on its own source of wealth, foundations have been consistently able to 'punch above their weight' and exercise power beyond that associated with their financial means. The foregoing discussion has illustrated how, across the three epochs, foundations have become increasingly sophisticated in their development of ideational and institutional platforms from which to influence, not only how their assets are deployed, but how, when and where public funds are channelled and towards what ends; accompanied by strategies for creating dense, interdigitate connections between key actors and imaginaries of the epoch. In the process, US foundations have been able to influence debates about development financing itself; presenting its own ‘success stories’ as evidence of preferred financing mechanisms, allocating respective roles of public and private sector actors, and representing the most cost–effective way to resource development.

One of the ways in which US foundations have sustained and increased their influence is their use of strategic collaboration amongst themselves. They have used it to increase their leverage at pivotal moments (for example the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations’ cooperation in making the Green Revolution the development success story of its time, and one that continued to frame the debate about agricultural development) and also to sustain influence across epochs (for example the collaboration between the Gates and Rockefeller Foundations in launching the African Green Revolution, symbolizing both continuity and a new age of development partnerships).

Using ‘simple’ metaphors, we have explored their potential and power to map, analyse, theorize, and interpret philanthropic organizations’ disproportionate influence in development in the article. Our suggested use of metaphors is significant for three main reasons. One, it provides us with a conceptual language that reaches across to connect, but also enables the contrasting of, extant and emergent critiques of philanthropy and development, instead of theorizing philanthropy *de nouveau*. It enables working through both theory and evidence available to us at different scales—from macro–scale explanations (Arnove, 1980; Fisher, 1983; Parmar, 2012) to micro–, and agential discussion (Harvey et al., 2011; Kohl–Arenas, 2017) of philanthropic power—and from diverse disciplinary and theoretical locations.

Secondly, metaphors can be used to both deconstruct its inner machinations and understand how philanthropic power accumulates over time and geographies—working both within and somehow above the 'field' of development. Working through various units and scales of analyses, diverse conceptual apparatus, and from diverse locations, metaphors enable us to connect the 'why' of philanthropic power (that is, their motivations) with its 'how' (machinations of operationalizing power). Most importantly and thirdly though, the use of metaphors is revealing not just of developmental inclusions but also its exclusions. The developmental *telos* cast aside, routes not pursued, and important actors excluded can help mount challenges against elites and their philanthropy by presenting and pursuing viable development alternatives.

We are conscious, though, of the limitations of such an approach. Metaphors are known to be paradoxical as they offer both insight but also constrain thought and action. Not bound by any specific rules for formulation or interpretation, metaphors, Morgan (2006, p. 5) argues, also become distortions: a 'way of seeing created through a metaphor becomes a way of *not* seeing'. Metaphors, therefore, reveal but also obscure. We invite future scholarship that both uses, pushes against, and challenges the use of metaphors: bridges, interdigitating, leapfrogging, platforms, and satellites to map, analyse, and theorize the power of philanthropy in development.

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