



Neoliberal ideologies and philanthrocapitalist agendas: what does a 'smart economics' discourse empower?

Ruth Smith, Anna Mdee, Susannah M. Sallu & Stephen Whitfield

To cite this article: Ruth Smith, Anna Mdee, Susannah M. Sallu & Stephen Whitfield (2023) Neoliberal ideologies and philanthrocapitalist agendas: what does a 'smart economics' discourse empower?, Third World Quarterly, 44:3, 574-594, DOI: [10.1080/01436597.2022.2153030](https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2022.2153030)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2022.2153030>



© 2022 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 21 Dec 2022.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 1234



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Citing articles: 1 View citing articles [↗](#)

Neoliberal ideologies and philanthrocapitalist agendas: what does a ‘smart economics’ discourse empower?

Ruth Smith^a , Anna Mdee^b , Susannah M. Sallu^a  and Stephen Whitfield^a 

^aSustainability Research Institute, School of Earth and Environment, University of Leeds, Leeds, UK; ^bSchool of Politics and International Studies, University of Leeds, Leeds, UK

ABSTRACT

Emerging as this era’s most prominent philanthropist organisation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) wield unparalleled influence over global development agendas. Their philanthrocapitalist approach seeks to apply ‘market logic’ promoting neoliberal economic policies to development challenges – from global health to agricultural development, and, more recently, to gender equality and women’s empowerment. We apply Kashwan, MacLean, and García-López’s (2019) ‘Power in Institutions’ framework to the analysis of BMGF’s organisational documents around gender and triangulate findings through key-informant interviews to explore the multiple dimensions of power that the BMGF exert over mainstream approaches to gender. Overt power is exercised through direct control over the types of gender projects funded and the mainstream monitoring techniques used to track progress in line with the BMGF’s impact-orientated approach. Agenda power is exhibited through their ‘smart economics’ discourse rationalising investments in women that set global development agendas around increased yields, productivity and market integration. Discursive/ideational power is evident through shaping narratives around vulnerability – discursively defining global challenges, how they should be addressed, and by whom. Our findings thus contribute to a growing critique against the current neoliberal development landscape where philanthrocapitalists like the BMGF solidify their hegemony through wielding their immense power to push capitalist development agendas.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 12 May 2022
Accepted 25 November 2022

KEYWORDS

Philanthrocapitalism
Bill & Melinda Gates
Foundation
neoliberalism
women’s empowerment
power
smart economics

Introduction

The field of international development is loaded with powerful ideas and normative frameworks (Fejerskov 2017), where the neoliberal development paradigm has persisted and dominated for nearly four decades (Kashwan, MacLean, and García-López 2019). With diminishing government support in recent decades (Otter 2003), it is a space where major philanthropies increasingly exert their outsized influence over development agendas. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) has emerged as this era’s most influential actor (Birn 2014) in the field of global health and agricultural development – and, more recently, in gender equality and women’s empowerment. In directing their vast resources into business

CONTACT Ruth Smith  ee15srs@leeds.ac.uk

© 2022 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way.

partnerships and interventions aimed at improving their market presence (Morvaridi 2012), the BMGF are critiqued for their ‘philanthrocapitalist’ approach to development that conflates business aims with charitable endeavours (McGoey 2012). We use the BMGF as a case study to explore the political economy of mainstream approaches to gender equality and women’s empowerment. In applying a critical gendered discourse analysis to their organisational documents combined with key-informant interviews with a range of development actors, we adopt Kashwan, MacLean, and García-López’s (2019) ‘Power in Institutions’ framework to explore and disaggregate the multiple dimensions of power that the BMGF exercise over their grant-making and agenda- and discourse-setting around gender equality and women’s empowerment.

We first introduce ‘philanthrocapitalism’ and set the concept within broad critiques of the hegemonic neoliberal development agenda, before introducing the BMGF as a key actor within this space – outlining how they are a product of the neoliberal era and how they apply business principles and ‘market logic’ to their development approaches in order to uphold the tenets of neoliberalism. With much research already conducted on their philanthrocapitalist approach to global health (see, for example, Greenstein and Loffredo 2020), we focus on their ‘Agricultural Development’ programmes – part of their ‘Global Growth & Opportunity’ division. This is important in two ways. Firstly, the history of the BMGF’s philanthrocapitalist approach to agricultural development aids understanding of how they came to introduce a new division: ‘Gender Equality’ (previously incorporated within the ‘Global Growth & Opportunity’ but elevated to the divisional level in 2020). Secondly, the critiques waged against this philanthrocapitalist approach – of focusing on the symptoms rather than the causes of structural inequities, and a narrow capitalist interpretation of how to support smallholder farmers that promotes neoliberal economic policies and corporate globalisation (Curtis 2016; Brooks 2013) – are critiques that, we argue, can also be applied to their approach to gender equality and women’s empowerment. As such, we offer a novel contribution to the literature on philanthrocapitalism through bringing these critiques to an under-researched area (Fejerskov 2018; Haydon, Jung, and Russell 2021), and contribute to a growing critique of their hegemonic dominance in global development aid.

Philanthrocapitalism – can the rich ‘save the world’?

Haydon, Jung, and Russell (2021, 367) define philanthrocapitalism as the ‘integration of market motifs, motives and methods with philanthropy’ – where proponents consider it ‘effective’ philanthropy through which wealthy motivated donors ‘fill the void’ left by diminished government spending (McGoey 2012) and bring innovative ideas to scale by investing their time and energy to solve the world’s problems (Bishop and Green 2008; Eikenberry and Mirabella 2018). Development challenges are discursively framed as scientific problems in need of market-based solutions in which the ‘beneficiaries’ of philanthropy are presented as productive entrepreneurs and investment opportunities – contrasting with their inherent vulnerability within some development discourse (Haydon, Jung, and Russell 2021). Entwined in this approach are elements central to neoliberal capitalism (Morvaridi 2012): reducing the public sphere in favour of privatisation, deregulation, and data-driven solutions with a focus on measurable targets and results (McGoey 2012; Thompson 2014; Ignatova 2017; Eikenberry and Mirabella 2018; Mushita and Thompson 2019) – projects compatible with for-profit

capitalist business and investment to attract ‘innovative’ corporate actors (Haydon, Jung, and Russell 2021).

Questioning whether there is money to be made from eradicating poverty (Calkin 2017), a central ideological appeal of the growing trend in philanthrocapitalism is that philanthropy itself may be a lucrative business opportunity – where charity is a form of investment (Ignatova 2017; Haydon, Jung, and Russell 2021) through which philanthropists can ‘do good socially... [by] do[ing] well financially’ (McGoey 2012, 185). Yet not only do philanthrocapitalists have the authority to decide where to direct their investments and who gets to benefit, but with no economic or electoral accountability or transparency obligations (Eikenberry and Mirabella 2018), private philanthropies such as the BMGF are accountable only to their self-selected boards (Birn 2014). Widespread critiques surround the immense influence on public and social policy that comes with their ‘strings attached’ donations and investments, how their actions serve to weaken support for government programmes, and, importantly, how their strategies may indeed exacerbate the inequalities that philanthropists purport to remedy (Eikenberry and Mirabella 2018).

As much of the analysis of the BMGF is journalistic (Birn 2014), and indeed the term ‘philanthrocapitalism’ was originally coined by *The Economist* (2006), we have included considerable grey literature in our overview of the BMGF’s philanthrocapitalist approach to development. As such, this paper represents a much-needed academic contribution in this area.

BMGF and the hegemony of neoliberalism

The BMGF’s ‘California consensus’ approach puts its faith in the ability of innovation and technology to solve global development challenges (Desai and Kharas 2008; Fejerskov 2018) – where the strategic and management techniques honed at Microsoft underpin the Foundation’s approach to its philanthropy (McGoey 2012). Central to the neoliberal development agenda, inherent within this view is that with access to the right resources and technologies, individuals will prosper.

Yet the neoliberal model has failed to produce institutions capable of tackling such development challenges, and has fostered economic globalisation that has brought extraordinary capital accumulation and concentrated wealth in the hands of capitalists like Bill Gates (Morvaridi 2012). Criticising their problematic profit sources, the *Los Angeles Times* (quoted in Thompson 2014) estimate that over 40% of the BMGF’s assets derive from companies whose operations contradict foundation goals. Combined with reports of large-scale tax evasion within Microsoft (Americans for Tax Fairness 2012; Curtis 2016; ActionAid International 2020; Neate 2021), there is a paradoxical tension that money taken from the public sector and representative welfare systems, and which relies to some degree on the underdevelopment and exploitation of labour forces and countries (mostly concentrated in the ‘Global South’), is now being touted as funds that will ‘save the world’ (Morvaridi 2012; Birn 2014). The BMGF is thus both a product of the neoliberal era and a key development actor in sustaining its ideology: an economic system that has allowed Bill Gates’ net worth to double in the last two decades (Greenstein and Loffredo 2020) and that propels their self-generated legitimacy through its ‘philanthropy’ and the centrality of ‘aid’ in helping the poor (Curtis 2016).

Philanthrocapitalism and agenda-setting in agricultural development

There is a long history of philanthropic foundation influence in agricultural development rooted in neoliberal economic policy. This is exemplified through Rockefeller and Ford's backing of the first 'Green Revolution' that swept through much of Asia and South America - now widely critiqued for its unsustainable practices that have led to long-term declines in soil fertility and groundwater supplies, a loss of natural diversity, and the impoverishment of small-scale farmers unable to sustain the higher costs of input-intensive farming practices (Wise 2020).

The BMGF now wield huge influence over global agricultural development agendas (Spielman, Zaidi, and Flaherty 2011) – targeting much of its money into what it sees as the problems of African agriculture: low productivity of smallholder farmers, poor soils and plant disease, and the scarcity of formal markets (Schurman 2018). Philanthrocapitalism is perhaps best exemplified by the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) (Mushita and Thompson 2019) – launched by the BMGF in partnership with The Rockefeller Foundation in 2006. Based on the technology package of the first Green Revolution, AGRA focuses largely on vast monocultures, commodification, and capital-intensive technological and market models for increased agricultural output (Holt-Giménez 2008; Thompson 2014; Ignatova 2017) – with a distinct lack of participatory farmer-led approaches (Whitfield 2016) or recognition of international calls for food sovereignty (Holt-Giménez and Altieri 2012). Since its inception, widespread critiques have centred on AGRA's focus on hybrid or genetically modified seeds, fertilisers and pesticides reliant on fossil fuels, and on its primary goal of linking African food producers and consumers to global capitalist markets (Thompson 2014) – fostering increased control within private entities dominating the 'corporate-cartel controlled' global food chain (Birn 2014).

A central component to the promotion of genetically-modified organisms (GMOs) (Morvaridi 2012; Curtis 2016) is the strengthening of intellectual property (IP) regimes upon which genetically modified seeds and their associated petroleum-based inputs rely (Shaw and Wilson 2020). The BMGF's grants and close relationship with Monsanto (now Bayer) (McGoey 2015; Curtis 2016) and shares in fossil fuel companies like ExxonMobil, BP and Shell (Park and Lee 2014; Shaw and Wilson 2020) raise legitimate questions over whether its priorities lie more in profit-making than philanthropy. Linked to their promotion of such 'smart' technologies is their privatisation and exploitation of farmer seed systems and public seed repositories for financial corporate gain (Ignatova 2017; Thompson 2012, 2018; Mushita and Thompson 2019) – referred to as 'the appropriation of Africa's genetic wealth' (Thompson 2014).

The BMGF's philanthrocapitalist approach to agricultural development thus relies on 'market logic' – where African food producers and consumers represent an untapped market for their promoted 'smart' technologies and brand-name seeds (Thompson 2014). Since stipulating in 2008 that all agricultural grants have to explicitly address gender to be considered, the BMGF have been increasingly focusing on women's role in agriculture and are now arguably the most prominent funder of development projects towards gender equality (Garcia and Wanner 2017) – noting that it 'has consequences for the success of our work' (Gender-Responsive Programming document). Before bringing the above critiques to the BMGF's gender work – questioning what is meant by 'success' in this context: promoting transformational social justice reforms for women and girls, or integrating a new workforce into global capitalist market systems – it is important to first understand the international

development context within which the BMGF came to stipulate a gender focus within their grantmaking.

The 'gender agenda' and rise of smart economics

The 'gender agenda' has seen attention to gender within international development increasingly move from the margins into the mainstream from the late 1990s and early 2000s in the search for new development strategies following the failure of the structural adjustment plans (Bergeron 2016), bolstered by the feminist 'Women in Development' and 'Women, Environment and Development' movements of the 1970s and 1980s–1990s, respectively, pushing to get women's rights onto the international development agenda (Cornwall and Rivas 2015). 'Gender Equality as Smart Economics' became the title of the World Bank's 2007–2010 Gender Action Plan, mainstreaming gender into the Bank's core mandate: economic development and growth. The below quote taken from the BMGF's 2016 Annual Letter typifies 'smart economics':

Economists call it opportunity cost: the other things women could be doing if they didn't spend so much time on mundane tasks ... it's obvious that many women would spend more time doing paid work, starting businesses, or otherwise contributing to the economic well-being of societies around the world. The fact that they can't holds their families and communities back.

Discursively framing gender inequality as economically inefficient (Calkin 2017), this smart economics approach is also revealing of the BMGF's narrow capitalist approach to development – where the 'mundane' tasks of care and reproductive labour are not valued. Following the World Bank's Gender Action Plan, significant investments were made to build the 'business case' for gender equality through presenting it as not just necessary for economic growth but mutually reinforcing (Prügl 2017). Through this the smart economics agenda bypasses any critique regarding the meaning of growth in neoclassical economics through reinforcing its core commitment: growing economies through the expansion of capitalist markets, in which women need to be 'empowered' to take advantage of economic opportunities (Prügl 2017). Drawing on feminist notions of 'empowerment', 'agency' and 'choice' as selling points (Grosser and McCarthy 2019), this neoliberal co-optation of feminist discourse positions women and girls as the new frontier for further capitalist growth and accumulation, and devalues care and reproductive work even further (Moeller 2018).

In addition to launching their Gender Action Plan, the World Bank also engaged in a significant communications campaign to bring business on board through encouraging them to integrate women's empowerment within their corporate social responsibility initiatives. Numerous international accounting firms and private foundations, including the BMGF, fell in line through absorption of the smart economics rhetoric (Prügl 2021). The timing of the corporate focus on gender equality is not coincidental. Many critics have outlined how companies embroiled in public relations and/or legal crises such as Nike (Calkin 2015; Moeller 2018), Coca-Cola (Grosser and McCarthy 2019), and indeed Microsoft (Arthur 2009), and also investment banking companies like Goldman Sachs looking for post-financial crisis recovery following the 2008 crash and widespread reports of sexism in finance (Prügl 2021), promoted investments in gender equality as good public relations and to cover up the failures of capitalism (Byatt 2018). Through this 'transnational business feminism' (Roberts 2012), corporatised development thus shifted its neoliberal hegemonic project to adapt to

new economic and political realities through making gender equality a central focus within their investments (Prügl 2021).

The BMGF's increasing focus on gender equality and women's empowerment within their agricultural development work since 2008 can thus be understood within the context of a concerted effort within corporate development to entwine neoclassical economics with the pursuit of gender equality – in doing so presenting markets as the purveyor of equality rather than inequality. The 'gender agenda' has thus indeed been successful in making women and girls highly visible subjects within global development – but what exactly does the smart economics discourse empower? Legitimising the expansion of markets and corporate power, this rhetoric imagines gender equality as both congruent with and reliant upon innovation (Calkin 2017) – and, as we will now demonstrate, is central to the BMGF's philanthrocapitalist approach to agricultural transformation and gender equality.

Methodological approach

This research explores the political economy of mainstream approaches to gender equality and women's empowerment, focusing on the case study of the BMGF. We apply a critical gendered discourse analysis to their organisational documents around gender, exploring their use of language to reinforce societal power relations (Fairclough 1995) and discursively (re)produce narratives around gender. We purposively selected 37 key organisational documents from 2008 (when the gender requirement was introduced within their agricultural development grant-making) to the present from their programme resources to provide an overarching view of their gender work and gender 'journey' (Table 1). Documents were

Table 1. Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) organisational documents analysed.

BMGF document/website	Year	In-text reference
Gender Impact Strategy for Agricultural Development	2008	Impact Strategy
Annual Letter	2009–2022	(YEAR) Annual Letter
Annual Report	2014–2020	(YEAR) Annual Report
Creating Gender-Responsive Agricultural Development Programs	2012	Gender-Responsive Programming
Putting women and girls at the center of development	2014	Putting women and girls at the center of development
A Conceptual Model of Women and Girls' Empowerment	2017	Conceptual Model of Empowerment
White Paper: A Conceptual Model of Women and Girls' Empowerment	2017	White Paper
Gender and Agricultural Advisory Services Issue (AAS) Brief	2018	Gender and AAS Issue Brief
Gender Mainstreaming at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation: A Primer for Fresh Approaches and Sustainable Solutions	2018	Gender Mainstreaming Primer
What Gets Measured Matters: A Methods Note for Measuring Women and Girls' Empowerment	2019	Empowerment Methods Note
Gender, Agriculture and Climate Change Brief	2020	Gender, Agriculture and Climate Change Brief
BMGF Website: Gates Foundation Commits \$2.1 Billion to Advance Gender Equality Globally	2021	Gender Equality Commitment
BMGF Website: Gender Equality	2022	Gender Equality Website

analysed with NVivo 12 utilising inductive coding to enable narratives to emerge organically, with findings triangulated through 17 key-informant interviews conducted between May and July 2021, the transcripts of which were also inductively coded using NVivo software. Interviewees were purposively sampled to represent a range of major development actors who all had experience working with the BMGF across the donor–grantee relationship spectrum – including representation from the BMGF and other major philanthropies, international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), government bilateral development departments, consultancies and research institutes. Interviews explored the BMGF’s conceptualisation of and approach to gender and women’s empowerment within their agricultural development grantmaking and their relationship with grantees throughout the proposal, design, implementation and monitoring of funded projects. Where quotes are used, names and organisational affiliations have been removed to protect interviewees’ anonymity.

Power analysis

To disaggregate the tangible and covert ways that power shapes discourses and agendas in gender equality and women’s empowerment praxis, we adopt Kashwan, MacLean, and García-López’s (2019) ‘Power in Institutions’ matrix. This matrix builds on Lukes’ (2005) theoretical approach, which understands power as having three dimensions: (1) direct and observable power over behaviour and decision-making outcomes; (2) covertly and intentionally predetermining the agenda through manipulation of decision-making processes; and (3) discursively upholding and reinforcing persistent and dominant norms and ideals that guide mainstream development paradigms. In this research, this matrix enables exploration of how the BMGF exercises ‘power over’ through ‘overt power’ over, for example, stipulations around the use of particular measurement indicators within their funded projects. The matrix also enables the exploration of covert manifestations of ‘agenda power’ where certain discourses and approaches are promoted that can be seen to benefit and align to the BMGF’s neoliberal ideology. Lastly, the matrix also enables the analysis of manifestations of ‘discursive/ideational power’ that reinforce historical mainstream neoliberal approaches to development within which the status quo – and the BMGF’s position as a key development actor within this – is both beneficial and fixed, marginalising alternative perspectives in the process (Lukes’ first, second and third dimensions of power, respectively). The power in institutions matrix is also particularly useful in unpacking how the BMGF themselves conceive ‘power’ within their focus on and approach to ‘women’s empowerment’ – helping to explore how power is presented as something like a ‘property’ that can be bestowed upon others through philanthropic development. Suggesting a social relation of domination, a power-focused analytical framework that explores the ‘power over’ form is thus grounded in the BMGF’s own language and conceptualisation of power.

The ‘Power in Institutions’ matrix goes beyond standard power analyses through exploring how other development actors navigate this political space through the ‘power to’ form – building on Foucault’s (1984) conceptualisation of power as a force that flows through society and inherent in all social relations. Whilst our analytical focus is on the BMGF and how they exercise the ‘power over’ form within the ‘Power in Institutions’ matrix, our analysis also yielded two instances of the ‘power to’ form whereby other development

actors ‘coopt’ and ‘resist’ the overt and discursive power of the BMGF – thus contributing to Kashwan, MacLean, and García-López (2019) proposition that such facets of power often act in conjunction.

Overt power: first dimension of power

Overt power is exhibited through aid bureaucracy where the BMGF dictate the language used around gender and the measurement indices utilised to track progress within their funded projects (as noted in Smith et al., unpublished).

Controlling ‘investments’ in women

With regard to the BMGF exerting their immense hegemonic influence over what type of gender projects are funded, interviewees discussed how they were directed to align their project proposals to the BMGF’s philanthrocapitalist approach to gender equality – noting that they had to use ‘a bit of the instrumental language to promote it to the Foundation ... why you should invest in women, that smart economics kind of language’. Central to smart economics is this efficiency approach which rationalises ‘investing’ in women through touting increased economic development outcomes (Chant and Sweetman 2012; Hickel 2014; Fejerskov 2017; Farhall and Rickards 2021). Women are presented as a development resource which if overlooked would mean their ‘potential and talent continue to go untapped’ (2018 Gender Mainstreaming Primer). For example, the BMGF’s current Gender Equality website purports that ‘the global economy would grow by an estimated US\$28 trillion by the year 2025 if women were to participate in the economy to the same degree as men’. Arguments towards ‘investing’ in women are thus framed predominantly in narrow economic development terms, and, despite their 2017 White Paper purporting that their work is partly based on the motivation of ‘investing in empowerment of women and girls as a goal in itself’, the societal and transformational goals of equality are starkly overlooked.

This smart economics emphasis overtly dictates how projects are designed, with one interviewee reflecting on the proposal-writing process:

they [BMGF] adopted a ... technocratic approach. They were like: how much are the yields going to increase? What technological advancements are the farmers going to get? ... What are the market prices? What are the linkages? ... Are assets going to increase?

Another interviewee reflected on trying to highlight to the BMGF the important social and normative benefits of projects aiming to improve women’s empowerment, noting that the technocratic management within the BMGF wanted to see benefits in agricultural output: ‘Jeff Raikes was the guy who had to approve this as the COO [Chief Operating Officer]... this is not going to make any sense to Jeff! ... you have to show him that yields raised by 200 times or something!’ Interviewees from the grantee side thus noted having to demonstrate the projected impact of women’s empowerment interventions through quantification of increased yields and productivity and increased access to markets, thereby aligning with this neoliberal view of African women smallholders through a focus on profit-orientated and efficiency behaviour – ultimately ‘transforming’ them into producing consumers and tools in the hands of aid-providers (Shaw and Wilson 2020).

Philanthrocapitalist approach to measuring ‘women’s empowerment’

When it comes to ‘improving women’s empowerment’, the BMGF’s goal-orientated approach and expectation of linear progression casts empowerment as an endpoint rather than a process (Cornwall and Rivas 2015). In this way the BMGF conceive power as a property that can be ‘owned’ by an individual and thus counted (Galiè and Farnworth 2019) – where, conversely, the status of ‘disempowered’ can be assigned to individuals who are perceived to lack agency, again reifying the domination inherent within the ‘power over’ form. This is apparent across the vast majority of organisational documents, through a heavy reliance on standardised quantitative indicators to demonstrate ‘impact’ and ‘success’. Despite promoting both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods within their 2019 Methods Note, and stating that one of three requirements to guarantee that their grants are ‘gender responsive’ is to ensure that their grants are ‘accountable to her’, there is little discussion around the reductive nature of such standardised metrics, nor of the political nature of which knowledge(s) are privileged and deemed worthy in their design. ‘Indicator culture’ is a central component of the international ‘governance by numbers’ approach to development – evident in the Millennium and Sustainable Development Goals centring on a set of easy-to-understand goals and indicators that give the illusion of a managerial, quantitative and results-based agenda (Fejerskov 2018, 2020). Yet rather than revealing the truth, the reductionist nature of indicators creates it (Merry 2016a, 2016b; Fukuda-Parr and McNeill 2019).

For example, the BMGF is one of the main funders in the ongoing development of the Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) which attempts to produce measurements of empowerment that are comparable across time and space and that enable the monitoring of project impact (Alkire et al. 2013). However, rooted in an increasing debate around what ‘empowerment’ entails, who gets to decide, and the Global North’s fixation on ‘improving African women’s empowerment’ (Tamale 2020; Purewal and Loh 2021) – (Smith et al., unpublished) demonstrate that the WEAI is based on and promotes a Western individualist conceptualisation of empowerment centred on autonomy, asset ownership and decision-making around ‘productive resources’. As a leader in promoting gender-responsive programming, the methods and approaches the BMGF endorse towards ‘measuring women’s empowerment’ are deemed widely recognised and appropriate (Garcia and Wanner 2017). Thus, owing to their dependency on external funding, NGOs are often under pressure to create a ‘narrative’ of development that corresponds with donor requirements (Gideon and Porter 2016). As highlighted by interviewees, this is increasingly seen through an emphasis on standardised quantitative measurement indices like the WEAI to demonstrate that project implementation is proving ‘successful’ and addressing the priority areas of donors.

Agenda power: second dimension of power

The highly visible discursive presence of gender equality and women’s empowerment in mainstream agricultural development approaches is critiqued by feminists and grassroots movements who challenge the reproduction of neoliberal policy frameworks that fail to take meaningful steps towards gender equality (Farhall and Rickards 2021). We highlight two narratives that demonstrate how the BMGF’s hegemony in investments towards gender

equality and women's empowerment contribute to agenda setting in this area: BMGF's investments in women as 'smart economics', and the framing of women as adopters of 'smart' technologies.

Investing in women as 'smart economics'

Key to the 'smart economics' discourse is the narrative that female farmers are not meeting their 'potential' – and that for them to do so requires setting development agendas aimed at improving their agricultural productivity and further integrating them into agricultural markets. In the BMGF's 2012 Gender-Responsive Programming document it was claimed that empowerment of women would entail 30% increases in household yields and a 2.5–4% increase in agricultural output for countries 'across the developing world'. This was later compounded by Melinda Gates in 2014 in an article entitled 'Putting Women and Girls at the Center of Development', which reiterated that agricultural production across Africa would increase by 20% if women had equal access to productive resources, and also was outlined by a BMGF interviewee: 'we're very precise in how we define it [women's empowerment] at the Gates Foundation ... in our particular investments, we really want to see not only an increase in her productivity, but an increase in her income'. These types of stylised facts that persist in mainstream approaches to gender not only lack any sound empirical evidence but also negatively influence the design of effective policies and programmes that are both blind to and sideline gender relations through focusing solely on access to productive resources – in effect holding back progress on gender equality (Doss et al. 2018).

This persistent focus on the economic gains of 'investing in the women' thus covertly shapes the development agenda where the business case is prioritised over the goal and moral imperative of social transformation and equal human rights, shaping targets and interventions where progress is understood narrowly through economic growth. Pro-market solutions are central to neoliberalism and yet overlook that further integration of women into masculinised capitalist systems of production and consumption does little to challenge the social and political structures that constrain and marginalise them in the first place (Chant and Sweetman 2012; Hickel 2014; Farhall and Rickards 2021). The BMGF thus pay lip service towards goals of gender equality in its own right, yet they exercise agenda power through their arguments rationalising the funding of such programmes – influencing development agendas around what 'empowered women' can bring to the global capitalist economy.

Women as adopters of 'smart' technologies

Central to the agenda-setting within this 'smart economics' discourse is that female farmers are viewed as untapped adopters of the 'smart' agricultural technologies that the BMGF promote to increase productivity (Shaw and Wilson 2020). Within their focus on improving the agricultural productivity of women, a key focus is on the unequal adoption of new practices and technologies by male and female farmers – with their 2012 Gender-Responsive Programming document stating that 'Adoption differences are largely explained by women's unequal access to land, labour, and education, which reduces the likelihood of women's awareness of new technology or practices, and limits women's resources for obtaining them'.

Their smart economics framing of women as not just consumers and producers but also adopters of 'smart' technologies is perpetuated through the BMGF's commissioning of reports into the gendered adoption of climate-smart agriculture (CSA) practices such as the 2020 'Gender, Agriculture and Climate Change Brief' produced by the Global Center for Gender Equality at Stanford University. Such reports state that 'gender disparities in access to and agency over key resources – chiefly land, labor, financial capital, and climate-relevant information' – stand in the way of women reaping the touted potential benefits of CSA: 'improved yields, income and resilience, along with lower emissions'. 'Adoption' here becomes a goal and metric of success in its own right, simplifying the dynamic and contextual nature of agricultural decision-making and resource access (see, for example, Hermans et al. 2021) to numerical targets. Such statements rely on and perpetuate neoliberalist assumptions that if women are equipped with the right tools and productive resources, they will lift themselves out of poverty (Hickel 2014) – setting mainstream development targets around closing the 'gender gap' (Huyer 2016). Subsequent policy and programming based on this notion fails to acknowledge the structural antecedents that mediate such inequities and pursue 'gap-filling' within existing harmful social structures (Kantor, Morgan, and Choudhury 2015).

These technical fixes and 'smart' discourses serve to entwine women's empowerment with technological advancement, productivity and economic growth – further influencing development agendas around increased 'adoption' of CSA technologies and the combined goal of expanding markets – ultimately benefitting large corporations with whom the BMGF is closely associated.

Co-opting 'smart economics' language

As Prügl (2017) notes, there may still be openings for feminist agendas within the neoliberalisation of feminism – in effect co-opting these discourses in return. Our analysis highlighted how grantees exercise 'power to' through the cooptation subtype (Kashwan, MacLean, and García-López 2019) in their strategic aligning of language within project proposals to that of the BMGF's smart economics framing in order to receive grants in the interest of advancing social and transformational rights. One interviewee noted that including targets for increased agricultural yields and technologies in proposals to the BMGF is thus often viewed as a 'back-door entry' point for such social justice goals – where grantees are told by the BMGF that 'if you can align yourself with certain value chains [of the BMGF] that have funding attached to it, the more you can do that, the more money you'll get'. Bergeron (2016) argues we must take advantage of the 'cracks' opened up within the smart economics approach where its attention to equity and economic diversity offers space for feminist agendas to cultivate economic subjects opposed to the 'business case' and guided rather by motivations of care, cooperation and ethical concern. In this contested space, feminist social movements may offer innovative strategies to contest the neoliberalisation of feminism through navigating this political space in ways that emphasise opportunity rather than constraint (Grosser and McCarthy 2019).

Discursive/ideational power: third dimension of power

Discursive/ideational power is exhibited through two narratives: discursively framing the onus on the individual to become empowered – thus overlooking the need for structural

and radical reforms in the path towards gender equality; and the BMGF's strategic framing and positioning of themselves as a key development actor within the field of gender equality and women's empowerment.

The onus on the individual

The focus on the isolated individual economic unit inherent in the WEAI (Smith et al., unpublished) is also evident across the BMGF's organisational documents where the onus is often placed on women to pull themselves out of poverty. For example, their 2019 Annual Report states that 'more women and girls can transform their lives as barriers to economic participation are removed' (and this is reiterated across numerous other annual reports). Here the onus is placed on individual women to 'transform'—where, if given the resources, failure is personal (Farhall and Rickards 2021). Moreover, set within the smart economics discourse, references across the 2012 Gender-Responsive Programming document around the potential contribution that empowered women could bring to household nutrition—with Melinda Gates noting that because of this it 'makes sense to invest in ... women'—rely on essentialising and perpetuating maternalistic gender stereotypes (Chant and Sweetman 2012). Not only is the onus placed on individual women to overcome any discriminatory barriers to participate economically and to empower themselves, but they are also handed the moral burden of ensuring their family's well-being (Farhall and Rickards 2021). Considering that the BMGF's approach to agricultural development repeatedly favours the opening up of markets to GM crops that decrease nutrition (Shaw and Wilson 2020), and support for companies like McDonalds and Coca-Cola (Park and Lee 2014)—their arguments about investing in women and girls to ensure food security and household nutrition appear contradictory and disingenuous at best.

Importantly, this onus on the individual also exposes the assumptions that underpin the BMGF's neoliberal ideology: that poverty is not caused by marginalisation and structural inequities within the global economic system—a system that has enabled and sustains the vast and increasing global wealth divide and the existence of organisations like the BMGF—but rather that poverty and vulnerability are depoliticised: the result of identity-based disadvantage, lack of productivity, and lack of integration within market systems. Vulnerability is then marketised and turned into a form of investment (Mediavilla and Garcia-Arias 2019)—where if women are provided with the right tools and resources, they and their families will prosper. The onus of responsibility is thus shifted from the very institutions that have directly caused and perpetuate the marginalisation of women and girls, to place the burden on individuals to 'bootstrap themselves out of poverty' (Hickel 2014, 1366). This discursive power thus solidifies the BMGF's hegemony in which they control the neoliberal development agenda under the benevolent mask of philanthropy (Mediavilla and Garcia-Arias 2019).

Saviour narrative

Set clearly within this, the discursive language used that Bill Gates was 'lucky enough to accumulate the wealth that is going into the foundation' and that they are 'winners of the "ovarian lottery"' (2009 Annual Letter) for being born in the US paints a very clear divide between 'us' vs 'them' and the 'Global North' vs the 'Global South'. Such statements reinforce

the notion that it is 'luck' that has determined Bill Gates' unfathomable wealth and that it is 'generosity' that determines his philanthropy (Ramdas 2021). Similar to how poverty is depoliticised, this ideational framing thus overlooks that Microsoft's wealth was amassed through the exploitation of outsourced labour, monopolisation of markets and manipulation of IP regimes upon which the global economic system is predicated (see, for example, Birn (2014) and Curtis (2016)). Not only is Bill Gates painted as a lucky 'winner-takes-all' in the lottery of life, but he is elevated to saviour status through narratives around the BMGF having 'a role to play ... in making the world a more equitable place' and describing women and girls as 'beneficiaries of development programs' (Gates 2014). This, combined with the hegemonic dominance of the BMGF, increasingly portrays 'charity' as central to development – and reinforces a dependency narrative in which the poor are but recipients of favours from the rich who are portrayed as their saviours (Curtis 2016). Such narratives are reiterated throughout the BMGF's annual letters which repeatedly tout the benefits of philanthropy and aid in reducing the world's ills. This system of 'crumbs from the rich man's table' (Wilson 2014) embodies 'trickle-down economics' – predicated on the assumption that the vast wealth accumulated by capitalists like Bill Gates can and will eventually help to lift those at the bottom out of poverty (McGoey 2015).

Reflective of William Easterly's book *The White Man's Burden* (2006), which suggests development failure stems from 'Planners' who propose grand schemes to alleviate poverty, it is evident that both Bill and Melinda Gates perceive themselves as 'billionaires who know best' (McGoey 2015) in holding the solutions to a range of global challenges – from health and vaccines to agricultural technologies and genetically modified seeds, to gender equality and women's empowerment, and, more recently, to both climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic. This 'solutionism' rarely considers or attempts to embrace local knowledge (McGoey 2015) and is reinforced through their investments where the BMGF exert their self-generated legitimacy (Shaw and Wilson 2020) through the magnitude of resources they wield. Yet we must question the distribution of such resources – where, for example, in 2014 just 4% of the \$669 million channelled through the BMGF to agricultural NGOs went to NGOs based in Africa (Park and Lee 2014). In their 2022 Annual Letter, the reason given for this unbalance was 'a significant proportion of global technical expertise and capacity remains in the Global North and, thus, so does much of our grantmaking'. 'Expertise' is thus recognised as Western knowledge – again perpetuating and upholding the geopolitical hierarchy between the powerful Western core and the subordinate periphery it seeks to manage (Hickel 2014, 2022).

This saviour narrative is protected and strengthened within public discourse – of considerable importance in fostering support for public policy – as the BMGF wield significant power and influence over how its endeavours in global development are portrayed through its sizeable 'donations' to major media outlets (Greenstein and Loffredo 2020). In the UK, for example, the entire 'Global Development' section of *The Guardian* – where in 2003 and again in 2008 Bill Gates was named 'Saint Bill' – has been funded through a \$3.5 million grant from the BMGF since 2020 'to produce regular reporting on global health and development topics in its Global Development section'. Such 'donations' thus not only further the agenda of the BMGF within public discourse that aid is working (McGoey 2015) and generate positive publicity for its approach (Morvaridi 2012; Birn 2014), but also limit objectivity and any mainstream media critique of the BMGF (Curtis 2016; Macleod 2021).

Resisting the hegemony of Western knowledge

Inherent within the smart economics rhetoric that individualises women needing development assistance is the image of the oppressed 'Third World Woman' central to Western liberal feminism, discursively (re)producing colonial approaches to gender and women's empowerment (Mohanty 2003). Decolonial feminist scholars and activists exercise 'power to' by countering and resisting this discursive power through engaging with the structural and colonial antecedents of and contextual nature of gender (and intersectional) inequities – in effect re-politicising Western notions of poverty and gender inequality. These counter-hegemonic decolonial discourses promote the principles of communitarianism and collective and grassroots action in which individuals are part of a unity – disrupting the Western knowledge and autonomous individualism present within the smart economics discourse (see, for example, Tamale (2020)). The BMGF pay lip service to 'Intersectionality and engaging men and boys' in attempts to move beyond the Third World Woman, noting that 'Strengthening the voice and choice of women and girls requires challenging gender inequalities as well as other power inequalities that intersect with gender relations' (2017 White Paper), with a BMGF interviewee noting that 'gender transformative programming really requires the engagement of men and community leaders and other leaders as well as women ... it usually takes longer, it's usually higher risk'. Yet as the smart economics discourse has been purposefully absorbed into their approach to agricultural development, areas of the 'Global South' are targeted as laboratories for technological innovation with female farmers as their test cases – thus mobilising racial and gendered representations of women. Shaw and Wilson (2020) highlight how such colonial framings of appropriately productive subjects are inherent within the BMGF's necro-populationist promotion of unsafe, uncertain and ineffective 'population technologies' and 'climate-smart' agricultural technologies, with Canfield (2022) arguing the BMGF's ideology of innovation reasserts racial regimes of ownership necessary for capital accumulation. Combined with their saviour narrative, such discourses reinforce coloniality through extending regimes of racialised and gendered socio-spatial inequality (Shaw and Wilson 2020) – demonstrating that their engagement with the intersections of gender, race and class is done at a superficial level at best.

Conclusion: BMGF and agenda-setting in women's empowerment?

This analysis disaggregates the multidimensional power that the BMGF exerts over mainstream approaches to gender equality and women's empowerment. The power framework thus offers new insights into the BMGF's hegemonic power through a theoretically grounded approach, building on Foucault's conceptualisation that 'power and knowledge directly imply one another ... there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations' (Foucault 1977, 27). The BMGF use their immense power and influence to control 'knowledge' around gender equality and women's empowerment: what data is produced and how this shapes what we 'know', controlling how this knowledge becomes validated and sets development agendas, and even insidiously influencing how this production of knowledge discursively defines global challenges, how they should be addressed and by whom, in line with their neoliberal ideology (Gaventa and Cornwall 2008). The recurrent 'smart economics' discourse demonstrates that it is not always easy to disentangle and

differentiate among the various power dimensions – and yet highlights clearly how the BMGF's underlying assumptions around what 'women's empowerment' entails visibly shapes their grant-making and their ideological approach to agenda- and discourse-setting. We therefore agree that smart economics is no 'epiphenomenon' (Byatt 2018) – it is a neoliberal instrument of capitalist exploitation with a feminist face (Prügl 2021).

Bill Gates stated in his 2009 Annual Letter that the 'common sense of the business world, with its urgency and focus, has strong application in the philanthropic world'. Their business approach to gender equality and women's empowerment is exhibited through this 'smart economics' semantic displacement of the concept of philanthropy through terms like 'investment' and 'return on investment', a focus on 'market logic' to empower women, and their impact-orientated approach to measurement that promotes standardised metrics, which further centres narratives around asset and income generation. Their philanthrocapitalist approach to gender equality and women's empowerment goes hand in hand with their 'biocapital'/'biopiracy' approach to agricultural development (Thompson 2012) – where just as African food producers and consumers represented an untapped market for AGRA's philanthrocapitalist approach (Thompson 2014), so too do African women in BMGF's smart economics approach to women's empowerment. We thus contribute to Hicckel's (2014) argument that the BMGF and similar neoliberal development agencies have converged around the campaign for women's empowerment in order to stimulate further economic growth, expand market systems and produce consumers of their new 'climate-smart' technologies.

Philanthrocapitalism is thus a neoliberal artefact (Mediavilla and Garcia-Arias 2019) – a financing model of international development that continues to concentrate vast wealth and influence within the hands of elites who supposedly hold the solutions to global development challenges, whilst moulding the masses into their market subjects. Such elites legitimise their position in the social hierarchy through their vast wealth – a self-perpetuating cycle which is fertile ground for plutocracy by philanthrocapitalists themselves. Ironically, the power and perceived indispensability of philanthropies like the BMGF is not just a symptom of a neoliberal economic system that results in vast and increasing inequalities, but also relies on it – where, as McGoey (2015, 147) points out, 'the failure of philanthropy is its own success'. Discursively framed in the economic language of poverty alleviation, in reality philanthrocapitalism is a class strategy (Wilson 2014) that is both complicit with and reproduces the hegemonic power and domination of actors like the BMGF. Our analysis thus contributes to arguments that neoliberalism persists precisely because of its ability to serve powerful development actors in the status quo (Kashwan, MacLean, and García-López 2019) like the BMGF, who in turn uphold the hegemony of individualism and Western knowledges inherent in the neoliberal development agenda.

We therefore contribute to a growing critique against the current neoliberal development landscape in that prominent organisations like the BMGF are able to wield their power and influence to push capitalist development agendas – looking to how they can maximise their impact through economic gain and further monopolistic control. The result is that NGOs, non-profits and other development actors working in this space are under pressure to strategically use the kind of instrumental language around 'smart economics' in order to align their projects with the BMGF strategy. The resulting homogenisation of narratives amongst such proposals means that projects that aim to work towards social justice and gender equality but which lack such smart economics language are overlooked – as was reflected by one interviewee:

the unfortunate thing about women's empowerment ... is that the donors have not put the emphasis on it that they should ... you want to emphasise agricultural production, or livestock production, or increased incomes ... [but] if your overall goal is women's empowerment – that's been more difficult to get funding for.

We conclude with some concerns for the current and future development landscape and its funding models. That the scale of private philanthropy is increasing concurrently with the reduction in overseas development assistance – the magnitude of which dramatically intensified through the COVID-19 pandemic (Nowski, O'Flanagan, and Taliento 2020) – contributes to the immense power that philanthrocapitalists like Bill Gates exert over development approaches and priorities. Through this hegemonic dominance they influence approaches to global development – from health to agricultural development, and, as we demonstrate, to gender equality and women's empowerment – through increasingly centring their discourse and investments around neoliberal corporate interests. As researchers and practitioners working in this space, we should be concerned about the consequent homogenisation of discourse and development approaches that uphold Western knowledge, continuously silencing and eroding alternative knowledges and socio-political ideologies in the process, and work to resist their dominance. To fight for radical transformational reforms in the context of gender equality and women's empowerment, this in part means unifying, forming transnational alliances and strategising around the counter-power and resistance 'power to' subtype – challenging and resisting the 'smart economics' language that argues it is only worth investing in women if they can contribute to the global economy, and towards fighting for the contextually and culturally relevant empowerment goals in their own right.

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge helpful feedback from the anonymous reviewers. In addition, we thank the interviewees who generously offered their time and insights.

Declaration of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Ethical approval

Full ethical approval for interviews was obtained from the University of Leeds Faculties of Business, Environment and Social Sciences Ethics Committee – approval numbers AREA 19-016 and AREA 19-016 (Amd 1, March 2021). As per the Research Project Information Sheet shared with interviewees, full verbal consent was obtained prior to each interview, and all personal information that would allow the identification of any person(s) described in the article has been removed.

Funding

This work was jointly supported by the University of Leeds' Priestley International Centre for Climate, the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council through UK Research and Innovation as part of the Global Challenges Research Fund: AFRICAP program - grant number BB/P027784/1, and also the UK Research and Innovation's Global Challenges Research Fund: African Food Systems

Transformation and Justice Challenge Cluster - grant number EP/T02397X/1. The authors also acknowledge the financial support of The Annette Lawson Charitable Trust.

Notes on contributors

Ruth Smith is a PhD researcher at the University of Leeds, UK. Her research focuses on the power and influence of Global North institutions and how they shape gendered praxis in sub-Saharan Africa in the context of agricultural transformation policy and practice, with particular interest in the monitoring and evaluation of gendered social norms.

Anna Mdee is Professor in the Politics of Global Development at the University of Leeds and Associate Director of water@leeds. She is an anthropologist who has worked on agricultural livelihoods and local governance – primarily in Tanzania (for more than 20 years), but also in Kenya, Nepal, Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda, Nigeria and Tajikistan.

Susannah Sallu is Associate Professor in Environment and Development based in the Sustainability Research Institute of the School of Earth and Environment at the University of Leeds. She is an interdisciplinary research scientist who focuses on rural livelihoods, environmental change, marginalisation and natural resource governance – with a particular interest in East and Southern Africa where she has worked since 2000.

Stephen Whitfield is Professor of Climate Change and Food Security based in the Sustainability Research Institute of the School of Earth and Environment at the University of Leeds. His main research interests are in the socio-politics of agri-food systems, and he has worked on projects in the UK as well as in Africa and Latin America.

ORCID

Ruth Smith  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1481-3809>

Anna Mdee  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-8260-1840>

Susannah M. Sallu  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1471-2485>

Stephen Whitfield  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-3040-778X>

Bibliography

- ActionAid International. 2020. “\$2.8bn ‘Tax Gap’ Exposed by ActionAid Research Reveals Tip of the Iceberg of ‘Big Tech’s Big Tax Bill’ in the Global South.” ActionAid International. Accessed March 3, 2022. <https://actionaid.org/news/2020/28bn-tax-gap-exposed-actionaid-research-reveals-tip-iceberg-big-techs-big-tax-bill-global>
- Alkire, S., R. Meinzen-Dick, A. Peterman, A. Quisumbing, G. Seymour, and A. Vaz. 2013. “The Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index.” *World Development* 52: 71–91. doi:10.1016/j.worlddev.2013.06.007.
- Americans for Tax Fairness. 2012. “Highlights of Microsoft’s Tax Dodging, Americans for Tax Fairness.” Accessed March 3, 2022. <https://americansfortaxfairness.org/issues/corporate-taxes/hilights-of-microsofts-tax-dodging/>
- Arthur, C. 2009. “Is Microsoft a Tax Dodger?.” *The Guardian*. Accessed September 29, 2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/blog/2009/sep/23/microsoft-tax-avoidance-questions>
- Bergeron, S. 2016. “Transgressing Gender and Development: Rethinking Economy beyond “Smart Economics”.” In *Social Sciences for an Other Politics*, edited by A. C. Dinerstein, 65–77. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan. doi:10.1007/978-3-319-47776-3_5.
- Birn, A. E. 2014. “Philanthrocapitalism, past and Present: The Rockefeller Foundation, the Gates Foundation, and the Setting(s) of the International/Global Health Agenda.” *Hypothesis* 12 (1): 1–27. doi:10.5779/hypothesis.v12i1.229.

- Bishop, M., and M. F. Green. 2008. *Philanthrocapitalism – How the Rich Can Save the World and Why We Should Let Them*. London: A & C Black.
- Brooks, S. 2013. "Investing in Food Security? Philanthrocapitalism, Biotechnology and Development." SWPS 2013-12, *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 1-14. doi:10.2139/ssrn.2736850.
- Byatt, B. 2018. "The Case of Kiva and Grameen: Towards a Marxist Feminist Critique of "Smart Economics"" *Capital & Class* 42 (3): 403–409. doi:10.1177/0309816818799702.
- Calkin, S. 2015. "Post-Feminist Spectatorship and the Girl Effect: "Go Ahead, Really Imagine Her"" *Third World Quarterly* 36 (4): 654–669. doi:10.1080/01436597.2015.1022525.
- Calkin, S. 2017. "Disrupting Disempowerment: Feminism, Co-Optation, and the Privatized Governance of Gender and Development." *New Formations* 91 (91): 69–86. doi:10.3898/NEWF:91.04.2017.
- Canfield, M. 2022. "The Ideology of Innovation: Philanthropy and Racial Capitalism in Global Food Governance." *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 1–25. doi:10.1080/03066150.2022.2099739.
- Chant, S., and C. Sweetman. 2012. "Fixing Women or Fixing the World? "Smart Economics", Efficiency Approaches, and Gender Equality in Development." *Gender & Development* 20 (3): 517–529. doi:10.1080/13552074.2012.731812.
- Cornwall, A., and A. M. Rivas. 2015. "From 'Gender Equality and "Women's Empowerment" to Global Justice: Reclaiming a Transformative Agenda for Gender and Development." *Third World Quarterly* 36 (2): 396–415. doi:10.1080/01436597.2015.1013341.
- Curtis, M. 2016. "Gated Development – Is the Gates Foundation Always a Force for Good?" London, UK. Accessed January 31, 2022. <https://www.globaljustice.org.uk/resource/gated-development-gates-foundation-always-force-good/>
- Desai, R. M., and H. Kharas. 2008. "The California Consensus: Can Private Aid End Global Poverty?" *Survival* 50 (4): 155–168. doi:10.1080/00396330802328982.
- Doss, C., R. Meinzen-Dick, A. Quisumbing, and S. Theis. 2018. "Women in Agriculture: Four Myths." *Global Food Security* 16: 69–74. doi:10.1016/j.gfs.2017.10.001.
- Easterly, W. 2006. *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good*. New York: The Penguin Press.
- Eikenberry, A. M., and R. M. Mirabella. 2018. "Extreme Philanthropy: Philanthrocapitalism, Effective Altruism, and the Discourse of Neoliberalism." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 51 (01): 43–47. doi:10.1017/S1049096517001378.
- Fairclough, N. 1995. *Critical Discourse Analysis the Critical Study of Language*. New York: Longman Publishing.
- Farhall, K., and L. Rickards. 2021. "The "Gender Agenda" in Agriculture for Development and Its (Lack of) Alignment with Feminist Scholarship." *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems* 5: 1–15. doi:10.3389/FSUFS.2021.573424/BIBTEX.
- Fejerskov, A. M. 2017. "The Influence of Established Ideas in Emerging Development Organisations: Gender Equality and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation." *The Journal of Development Studies* 53 (4): 584–599. doi:10.1080/00220388.2016.1199859.
- Fejerskov, A. M. 2018. "Development as Resistance and Translation: Remaking Norms and Ideas of the Gates Foundation." *Progress in Development Studies* 18 (2): 126–143. doi:10.1177/1464993417750287.
- Fejerskov, A. M. 2020. *The Gates Foundation's Rise to Power: Private Authority in Global Politics, the Gates Foundation's Rise to Power Private Authority in Global Politics*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- Foucault, M. 1977. *Discipline & Punish*. London: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Foucault, M. 1984. *The Foucault Reader*. Edited by P. Rabinow. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Fukuda-Parr, S., and D. McNeill. 2019. "Knowledge and Politics in Setting and Measuring the SDGs: Introduction to Special Issue." *Global Policy* 10 (S1):5–15. doi:10.1111/1758-5899.12604.
- Galiè, A., and C. R. Farnworth. 2019. "Power through: A new concept in the empowerment discourse." *Global Food Security* 21:13–17. doi:10.1016/j.gfs.2019.07.001.
- Garcia, A. S., and T. Wanner. 2017. "Gender Inequality and Food Security: Lessons from the Gender-Responsive Work of the International Food Policy Research Institute and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation." *Food Security* 9 (5): 1091–1103. doi:10.1007/s12571-017-0718-7.
- Gates, M. F. 2014. "Putting Women and Girls at the Center of Development." *Science* 345 (6202): 1273–1275. doi:10.1126/SCIENCE.1258882.

- Gaventa, J., and A. Cornwall. 2008. "Power and Knowledge." In *The SAGE Handbook of Action Research: Participative Inquiry and Practice*, edited by P. Reason and H. Bradbury, 172–190. London: SAGE Publications.
- Gideon, J., and F. Porter. 2016. "Unpacking "Women's Health" in the Context of PPPs: A Return to Instrumentalism in Development Policy and Practice?" *Global Social Policy* 16 (1): 68–85. doi:10.1177/1468018115594650.
- Greenstein, M., and J. Loffredo. 2020. "Why the Bill Gates Global Health Empire Promises More Empire and Less Public Health." *The Grayzone*. Accessed January 31, 2022. <https://thegrayzone.com/2020/07/08/bill-gates-global-health-policy/>
- Grosser, K., and L. McCarthy. 2019. "Imagining New Feminist Futures: How Feminist Social Movements Contest the Neoliberalization of Feminism in an Increasingly Corporate-Dominated World." *Gender, Work & Organization* 26 (8): 1100–1116. doi:10.1111/gwao.12267.
- Haydon, S., T. Jung, and S. Russell. 2021. "'You've Been Framed': A Critical Review of Academic Discourse on Philanthrocapitalism." *International Journal of Management Reviews* 23 (3): 353–375. doi:10.1111/ijmr.12255.
- Hermans, T. D. G., S. Whitfield, A. J. Dougill, and C. Thierfelder. 2021. "Why We Should Rethink "Adoption" in Agricultural Innovation: Empirical Insights from Malawi." *Land Degradation & Development* 32 (4): 1809–1820. doi:10.1002/ldr.3833.
- Hickel, J. 2014. "The "Girl Effect": Liberalism, Empowerment and the Contradictions of Development." *Third World Quarterly* 35 (8): 1355–1373. doi:10.1080/01436597.2014.946250.
- Hickel, J., C. Dorninger, H. Wieland, and I. Suwandi. 2022. "Imperialist Appropriation in the World Economy: Drain from the Global South through Unequal Exchange, 1990–2015." *Global Environmental Change* 73 (2015): 102467. doi:10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2022.102467.
- Holt-Giménez, E. 2008. "Out of AGRA: The Green Revolution Returns to Africa." *Development* 51 (4): 464–471. doi:10.1057/dev.2008.49.
- Holt-Giménez, E., and M. A. Altieri. 2012. "Agroecology, Food Sovereignty, and the New Green Revolution." *Journal of Sustainable Agriculture* 37 (1): 120904081412003–120904081412102. doi:10.1080/10440046.2012.716388.
- Huyer, S. 2016. "Closing the Gender Gap in Agriculture." *Technology and Development* 20 (2): 105–116. doi:10.1177/0971852416643872.
- Ignatova, J. A. 2017. "The "Philanthropic" Gene: Biocapital and the New Green Revolution in Africa." *Third World Quarterly* 38 (10): 2258–2275. doi:10.1080/01436597.2017.1322463.
- Kantor, P., M. Morgan, and A. Choudhury. 2015. "Amplifying Outcomes by Addressing Inequality: The Role of Gender-Transformative Approaches in Agricultural Research for Development." *Technology and Development* 19 (3): 292–319. doi:10.1177/0971852415596863.
- Kashwan, P., L. M. MacLean, and G. A. García-López. 2019. "Rethinking Power and Institutions in the Shadows of Neoliberalism: (An Introduction to a Special Issue of World Development)." *World Development* 120: 133–146. doi:10.1016/j.worlddev.2018.05.026.
- Lukes, S. 2005. *Power: A Radical View*. 2nd ed. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Macleod, A. 2021. "Revealed: Documents Show Bill Gates Has Given \$319 Million to Media Outlets." *Mint Press News*. Accessed January 31, 2022. <https://www.mintpressnews.com/documents-show-bill-gates-has-given-319-million-to-media-outlets/278943/>
- McGoey, L. 2012. "Philanthrocapitalism and Its Critics." *Poetics* 40 (2): 185–199. doi:10.1016/j.poetic.2012.02.006.
- McGoey, L. 2015. *No Such Thing as a Free Gift the Gates Foundation and the Price of Philanthropy*. New York: Verso Books.
- Mediavilla, J., and J. Garcia-Arias. 2019. "Philanthrocapitalism as a Neoliberal (Development Agenda) Artefact: Philanthropic Discourse and Hegemony in (Financing for) International Development." *Globalizations* 16 (6): 857–875. doi:10.1080/14747731.2018.1560187.
- Merry, S. E. 2016a. "Cultural Dimensions of Power/Knowledge: The Challenges of Measuring Violence against Women." *Sociologie du Travail* 58 (4): 370–380. doi:10.4000/sdt.915.
- Merry, S. E. 2016b. *The Seductions of Quantification: Measuring Human Rights, Gender Violence*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Moeller, K. 2018. *The Gender Effect: Capitalism, Feminism, and the Corporate Politics of Development*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.
- Mohanty, C. T. 2003. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." In *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*, 17–42. New York: Duke University Press. doi:10.1515/9780822384649/HTML.
- Morvaridi, B. 2012. "Capitalist Philanthropy and Hegemonic Partnerships." *Third World Quarterly* 33 (7): 1191–1210. doi:10.1080/01436597.2012.691827.
- Mushita, A., and C. Thompson. 2019. "Farmers' Seed Systems in Southern Africa: Alternatives to Philanthrocapitalism." *Agrarian South: Journal of Political Economy* 8 (3): 391–413. doi:10.1177/2277976019872327.
- Neate, R. 2021. "Microsoft's Irish Subsidiary Posted £220bn Profit in Single Year." *The Guardian*. Accessed March 3, 2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jun/03/microsoft-irish-subsidiary-paid-zero-corporate-tax-on-220bn-profit-last-year>
- Nowski, T., M. O'Flanagan, and L. Taliento. 2020. "A Transformative Moment for Philanthropy." *McKinsey & Company*. Accessed February 25, 2022. <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-and-social-sector/our-insights/a-transformative-moment-for-philanthropy>
- Otter, M. 2003. "Domestic Public Support for Foreign Aid: Does It Matter?" *Third World Quarterly* 24 (1): 115–125. doi:10.1080/713701372.
- Park, A., and J. Lee. 2014. "The Gates Foundation's Hypocritical Investments." GRAIN. Accessed January 31, 2022. https://grain.org/bulletin_board/entries/4853-the-gates-foundation-s-hypocritical-investments
- Prügl, E. 2017. "Neoliberalism with a Feminist Face: Crafting a New Hegemony at the World Bank." *Feminist Economics* 23 (1): 30–53. doi:10.1080/13545701.2016.1198043.
- Prügl, E. 2021. "48 Smart Economics." In *The Routledge Handbook of Feminist Economics*, edited by G. Berik and E. Kongar, 468–477. London: Routledge.
- Purewal, N. K., and J. U. Loh. 2021. "Coloniality and Feminist Collusion: Breaking Free, Thinking Anew." *Feminist Review* 128 (1): 1–12. doi:10.1177/01417789211020249.
- Ramdas, K. N. 2021. "Philanthrocapitalism: Reflections on Politics and Policy Making." *Society* 48 (5): 393–396. doi:10.1007/s12115-011-9458-z.
- Roberts, A. 2012. "Financial Crisis, Financial Firms... and Financial Feminism? The Rise of "Transnational Business Feminism" and the Necessity of Marxist-Feminist IPE." *Socialist Studies* 8 (2): 85–108. doi:10.18740/S40W2K.
- Schurman, R. 2018. "Micro(Soft) Managing a "Green Revolution" for Africa: The New Donor Culture and International Agricultural Development." *World Development* 112: 180–192. doi:10.1016/j.worlddev.2018.08.003.
- Shaw, A., and K. Wilson. 2020. "The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Necro-Populationism of "Climate-Smart" Agriculture." *Gender, Place & Culture* 27 (3): 370–393. doi:10.1080/0966369X.2019.1609426.
- Smith, R., C. Akurugu, K. Deering, A. Mdee, P. Mohanraj, S. M. Sallu, and S. Whitfield. 2022. "Towards decolonizing 'women's empowerment' praxis: Problematizing universal applications of Western definitions and measurement indicators." *Unpublished*.
- Spielman, D. J., F. Zaidi, and K. Flaherty., 2011. "Changing Donor Priorities and Strategies for Agricultural R&D in Developing Countries: Evidence from Africa." Conference Working Paper 8. Accra, Ghana.
- Tamale, S. 2020. *Decolonization and Afro-Feminism, Journal of Contemporary African Studies*. Ottawa, Canada: Daraja Press. doi:10.1080/02589001.2021.1938976.
- The Economist. 2006. "The Birth of Philanthrocapitalism: The Leading New Philanthropists See Themselves as Social Investors." *The Economist*. Accessed February 2, 2022. <https://www.economist.com/special-report/2006/02/25/the-birth-of-philanthrocapitalism>
- Thompson, C. 2018. "Philanthrocapitalism: Rendering the Public Domain Obsolete?" *Third World Quarterly* 39 (1): 51–67. doi:10.1080/01436597.2017.1357112.
- Thompson, C. B. 2012. "Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA): Advancing the Theft of African Genetic Wealth." *Review of African Political Economy* 39 (132): 345–350. doi:10.1080/03056244.2012.688647.
- Thompson, C. B. 2014. "Philanthrocapitalism: Appropriation of Africa's Genetic Wealth." *Review of African Political Economy* 41 (141): 389–405. doi:10.1080/03056244.2014.901946.

- Whitfield, S. 2016. *Adapting to Climate Uncertainty in African Agriculture: Narratives and Knowledge Politics*. London: Routledge. doi:[10.4324/9781315725680](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315725680).
- Wilson, J. 2014. "Fantasy Machine: Philanthrocapitalism as an Ideological Formation." *Third World Quarterly* 35 (7): 1144–1161. doi:[10.1080/01436597.2014.926102](https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2014.926102).
- Wise, T. A. 2020. "Failing Africa's Farmers: An Impact Assessment of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa." Glob Working Paper No. 20-01. Tufts University.