International Philanthropy in Southeast Asia: Case Studies from Indonesia and the Philippines

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Introduction

My Asian Public Intellectuals (API) Fellowship allowed me to carry out research in Japan, Indonesia, and the Philippines on what I feel are some worrying trends in the field of international philanthropy generally, and specifically in a few Southeast Asian countries.[1] Although the research involved gathering a lot of data, ideas, opinions, and supporting materials, it was not academic, my intention being to do a kind of "advocacy research," or something more journalistic than scholarly hypothesis-testing. My own experience working for four international foundations in Asia over a period of 23 years served as a base. I started with a general hypothesis about these problematic trends and elicited the reactions of people on both the grant-giving and grant-receiving ends, in addition to gathering some secondary data. Throughout I have tried to emphasize that more local voices in reaction to those trends need to be heard and directed back to the donors.

Philanthropy has been receiving a lot of public attention lately. We are witnessing, I feel, a shift in paradigms, and even in basic core values, in the assumptions of philanthropic foundations and their role in addressing the key issues of development—poverty and inequity. I will first try to describe this shift and then attempt to bring out its implications—and here is where I hope the connections to the API program, to this workshop, to this panel, and to several crucial, broad social and political issues will become clearer.

Foundations, New and Old

The first part of the argument concerns private charitable foundations. There has been an impressive growth in the number of new, northern-hemisphere-based foundations, with the United States providing the most numerous and largest examples. While most of these foundations were founded to address domestic or local problems, there are some that are ambitiously working internationally, too. Many of the new foundations claim to work in new ways, and explicitly distance themselves from older foundations that have been working on international development and related issues for many decades. So, I am positing here a contrast between "old philanthropy" and "new philanthropy." The gist of the difference centers on how the new and the old foundations answer questions about "accountability," "efficiency," and "impact."

The new philanthropists, also called "philanthrocapitalists,"[2] take as their model for-profit corporations, and extol business-like ways of working, business-like efficiency, and market-driven solutions to social problems. They claim to be accustomed to posing and answering questions about accountability from their experience in business. For example, accounting for programs and grants is like accounting to shareholders or boards of directors. There is still a "bottom line," they claim, but it is not dollar profits for shareholders, but the measurable "bottom line" of social impact. As businessmen, they are used to showing how efficiently their money is spent; in their philanthropy, they will show how much "bang" they get for their "buck."

The philanthrocapitalists have been much in the news recently. Just to give a flavor of what I am referring to, let me provide a few examples.

- Melinda Gates gave an October 2010 speech broadcast on the TED website (Gates 2010), in which she suggested studying the success of the Coca-Cola Company's marketing for salutary lessons for social development. "Coke's success is relevant. . . . They take real-time data and immediately feed it back into the product. They tap into local entrepreneurial talent, and they do incredible marketing. . . . Let's contrast that for a minute to development. In development, the evaluation comes at the very end of the project. I've sat in a lot of those meetings. And by then, it is way too late to use the data. I had somebody from an NGO once describe it to me as bowling in the dark. They said, 'You roll the ball, you hear some pins go down. It's dark, you can't see which one goes down until the lights come on, and then you an see your impact.' Real-time data turns on the lights."

- In his article in *The Guardian* on 13 July 2010 entitled "Inside the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation," Andy Becket reported on the "inside view" of the foundation from interviews with several of its staff: "Foundation staff describe the [grant-giving] process, and indeed all their work, in business-school language—achieving 'leverage,' building the foundation 'brand,' serving 'markets' and 'customers.' Or they use the language of management consultancy and computing. 'Bill is about numbers,' Steiner [deputy director for agriculture] said. 'He wants to see the data. He values data more than ideology'" (Becket 2010).
- Jacob Weisberg in a 2006 article in the *Washington Post* relates the new foundations to an older one: "Just as Microsoft wanted to avoid becoming IBM, the Gates Foundation—despite protests to the contrary—dreads turning into the Ford Foundation."
- Similarly, in a recent talk to students at the University of Michigan, Charles Munger, business partner of Warren Buffet (who has donated or pledged much of his immense fortune to the Gates Foundation), opined that corporations themselves help society more than philanthropies: "'I believe Costco [a chain of retail stores of which he is director] does more for civilization than the Rockefeller Foundation. I think it's a better place. You get a bunch of very intelligent people sitting around trying to do well, I immediately get kind of suspicious and squirm in my seat. . . . I've seen so much folly and stupidity on the part of our major philanthropic groups, including the World Bank,' Munger said. 'I really have more confidence in building up the more capitalistic ventures like Costco'" (Frye 2010).
- Finally, in a *Forbes* article about credit card billionaire T. Denny Sanford, titled "Dying Broke: Where's the glory in creating a charitable foundation that's still around in a century?" Whelan (2007) wrote: "'Very plainly, very succinctly, I look at life as an investor,' he says. 'What will give me or my community the best return?' This just-the-facts approach served him well in building his successful business career, Sanford says. He's now applying it to philanthropy."

So, what am I trying to show with this quick romp through the press clippings of the rich and famous? Philanthropy, especially American philanthropy involving private charitable foundations newly created by prominent business figures, is currently growing in dollar terms and numbers of foundations, and, is garnering more and more public attention. Partly this is due to the celebrity of the various new philanthrocapitalists; partly it is because of the huge size of the foundations they have created. Finally, it is because of the impressive claims that several of these philanthrocapitalists have made for what their giving programs will produce: "saving the world" or "changing the world," and doing it in "new" ways unlike those of the older foundations.

So, in recent years, along with the growth of a bubble economy, which now looks so disastrous from hindsight, we have seen a rise in what is variously called "venture philanthropy," "new philanthropy," "strategic philanthropy," or "philanthrocapitalism," which proclaims market principles and business models as the sources of strategies to address social problems. These strategies assume that the public sector's role is outmoded and inefficient and that market-driven solutions carried out by private institutions can eliminate the scourges of disease, poverty, and inequity. These claims, while inflated to read "saving the world," actually have to do with the whole set of terms subsumed under the rubric of accountability: effectiveness, efficiency, success, impact, "return on investment," or "bang for the buck." The philanthrocapitalists claim that they are working more efficiently and successfully in effecting positive social change, and that this can be demonstrated in concrete, measurable form.

I now want to shift focus to the older, longer-established American foundations and how their histories, approaches, and claims differ in important ways from the "new philanthropy," and have recently become heavily influenced by it. In fact, it is that influence and a change in the "old philanthropy" that interest me here, and that I want to direct attention to. Of course, the new philanthropies do not *own* the new vocabulary or its earlier versions, and the old foundations, too, have always been concerned with accounting to themselves and to the public for their successes or failures. But they have not been obsessed with strategy and measurable impact to the same degree, and they have tended to make somewhat less grandiose claims for what they are about. I will try to give some examples of the effects of the influence I am talking about and what the trends are.

Older private foundations in the United States (especially the small subset of them that work internationally, such as the Ford, Rockefeller, MacArthur, Carnegie and Pew foundations) have in recent years been undergoing radical retrenchments. In their announcements of cutbacks of staff, closing of offices, and changes in programs, they have blamed the fiscal pressures of their shrinking endowments as major reasons. Part of the retrenching can be put down to the financial and economic crises of late 2008, perhaps—but not all, as some of the plans were afoot before the crisis. What is going on?

I would argue that the rise of the "new foundations" and a trend among independent philanthropic foundations to seek their models from the for-profit business sector may be a big part of it. Actually, I think the big "old foundations" have been going through a period of being scared by the likes of big "new foundations" (often vastly bigger, as in the case of the Gates Foundation)—scared, that is, into thinking that they are old-fashioned, old-hat, old-culture, with outmoded programs that fail to produce the positive "metrics" and "measurables" in the short term that the new foundations, endowed and often run by successful super-rich businessmen, can produce. (This fear is compounded by other fears relating to stricter government regulation of private foundations.)

This has led to a double hit to the grantees and beneficiaries of the large, independent American foundations. First, there are fewer grant dollars to go around. Second, as result of the shift by old foundations into thinking along corporate lines, which preceded the crash, program focuses have shifted, and many of the ways of traditional "grant-craft" have changed as well, often in ways that disadvantage the typical partners and beneficiaries of these foundations.

Let me go through some of these changes in more detail below.

- In the corporate-inspired "new philanthropy," grants are seen as "investments" and are thus expected to yield measurable social "profits," often within a fairly short time frame. The "old philanthropy" approach of building local institutions that would, in turn, develop networks to work for social change or public advocacy, does not fit well with this paradigm, and is becoming less common. In Southeast Asia, for example, the social science training centers that the Ford Foundation helped to set up in Indonesia in the 1970s would now presumably not fit with the new model, based as it is on short-term measurable impact.[3]
- To satisfy critics demanding to know what the "measurable impacts" of a foundation's "investments" have been, there has been a building up of in-house or externally contracted evaluation capacities to provide evidence of "accountability." New divisions are created to provide the necessary positive "metrics" for evidence of measurable success. Several of the grantees I interviewed complained about the amount of time they must now spend on multiple rounds of proposal reviews, refinements, and strategic planning. In an article criticizing the excesses and mediocrity of what passes for "strategic philanthropy," Susan Berresford, former president of the Ford Foundation, quotes a grantee: "'Foundations and large NGOs have become more focused on developing portfolios of projects, managing risks, and producing outcomes rather than on listening to communities, healing deep inequalities, and supporting innovation. With their new strategies and new staff, foundations today are increasingly treating organizations like ours not as innovators but as contractors who are hired to deliver donors' visions.'" Berresford also warns that the data required for benchmarking progress can sometimes "miniaturize ambition, because they focus on what can be measured in the near-term, and not on what might be the most important long-term goals. Andrew Natsios, who led the U.S. Agency for International Development from 2001 to 2005, has written that over many years, the federal agency has suffered from this phenomenon—a malady he gives the wonderful label 'obsessive measurement disorder'" (Berresford 2010).
- There is a growing suspicion of viewing program staff as "professionals." The "new foundations" aim to be lean and not to waste money on paying the salaries of professional staff that could be more profitably used by beneficiaries or grantees. The founder of the Omidyar Foundation, who created Ebay, is said to have only two staff to help him and his wife spend their $3 billion in foundation assets. One informant told me that the new president of the Ford Foundation, aiming to retrench and reform his foundation, expressed the view that he did not value the term

"grant maker," but preferred "change maker"—someone who understands how to "make change happen," rather than someone trained in a particular field or with a particular expertise. There seems to be a tendency among the old foundations to move away from program staff who are disciplinary experts or experienced in "development" fields, toward those who come from the business sector, especially business consulting, management, and new communications media. Several grantees in Indonesia and the Philippines complained to me that since the program officers they now interact with are not experts in the fields of their work, they have to spend much more time "educating the program officer."

- The "new foundations" have influenced the "old foundations" to look for vertical, top-down solutions that can show measurable results within relatively short periods (three to five years). This implies avoiding the long-term institution-building grants—grants for the capacity-building of NGOs or intermediaries—or grants to individuals that were the "bread-and-butter" of the "old foundations" like Ford, Rockefeller, Carnegie, Mellon, and MacArthur. In Southeast Asia, such institutions that thrived on the support of the old foundations would include the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore; the economics, population studies, and women's studies departments at the University of Indonesia and Gadjah Mada University; and various key Indonesian NGOs such as Indonesian Planned Parenthood (PKBI), Indonesian Institute of Management (LPPM), Indonesian Legal Aid Society (LBH), Institute for Social and Economic Research, Education and Information (LP3ES), Rural Development Foundation (YPMD), Indonesian Consumers Association (YLKI), Indonesian Forum for the Environment (Walhi), and many others. The new approach devalues patience and the willingness to be in for the long haul to address long-standing, difficult, seemingly intractable problems. Former Ford Foundation program director Michael Edwards refers to "impatience [as] one of the hallmarks of the 'new philanthropy.'" The stated wish of some of the billionaires who have started new foundations to spend their fortunes while they are still alive, or within a fixed period after their deaths, seems to reflect this impatience.
- Another tendency reflecting how "new foundations" influence "old foundations" is the streamlining of program priorities, or what can become an obsession with "focus." In the case of the Gates Foundation, this can mean, for instance, focusing on eliminating particular diseases—and because of its huge endowment size and the US tax requirement of an annual pay-out of five percent of assets, a relatively small number of enormous grants. Huge grants require intermediaries able to absorb and spend that money quickly. This has led to the beefing up of large, usually northern-hemisphere-based intermediaries, and the devaluing of smaller local NGOs as grant recipients. In general, it has also led to an aversion to funding unsolicited requests from the general public. Most of the programs of the Gates Foundation do not accept outside proposals; they know what they want to do and seek out the institutions that they know can use their funds to do it. (And some of those funds go to for-profit grantees or contractors, a tendency the old foundations are emulating.)
- For large "old foundations" that work internationally, a shift is occurring that centralizes decision-making at the headquarters by directors or thematic group teams, instead of devolving decision-making to field offices in various parts of the world and to program officers based in those offices. This shift derives perhaps from the experience of multinational corporations that can move in and out of labor or supply markets, or can outsource, as they wish, and from a view inspired by globalization proponents that geography is no longer important, that the "world is flat," in Thomas Friedman's words. Thus, geography and context are de-emphasized. An effect of this is to work globally, but without regard to differences or nuances of place, language, history, politics, or governance. This attitude, I fear, can be very risky to the success of technical solutions applied in multiple, varying contexts.
- Emphasis on technological or scientific, top-down solutions is related to this—for example, giving large grants to northern-based intermediaries for finding cures for this or that disease, or for the laboratory cultivation of this or that super-seed for greater agricultural productivity. It may account, too, for the preference for "hard science" or "technical" fields

such as agriculture or health, or for social welfare schemes such as insurance or credit, to the detriment of "soft" fields, such as humanities, culture, and the arts. The "new foundations" have little tolerance for these "soft" fields as they seem to deal with immeasurables and stand in the way of the notion that technological solutions applied universally will yield the best metrics. The "old foundations," on the other hand, saw the benefit of supporting work in the fields of humanities and culture. These benefits included stronger cultural structures that take into account local values, histories, and ways of understanding and that may be crucial in the success of technical or development interventions. An outsider foundation that demonstrates its concern for local values may also thereby provide credibility for its work in other, non-cultural fields. In a way, the international philanthropic work led by the "new foundations"—and now taken up in a kind of trendy conformism by the "old foundations"—harks back to an earlier, technocratic style of development practice typical of the 1950s and the Cold War. It is as though they were saying, "The developed world will find the solutions for the developing world (whether new vaccines, new seeds, new forms of credit instruments, or better democratic governance structures); these then need only be implemented locally and scaled up." This attitude thus flies in the face of 60-plus years of hard-learned lessons by development practitioners which show that context, culture, and locally "owned" solutions do indeed matter, and that without taking them into account, the best-intentioned technical innovations or trendiest new ideas can be doomed in practice in the field.

- There is a corresponding devaluing of certain modalities of foundation support that were a hallmark of the old foundations, but do not fit well with the results-driven approach. These include, for instance, support for individual fellowships and scholarships, for which the Rockefeller and Ford foundations were famous; the building up of academic fields and departments; capacity-building grants including operational support for local institutions; and support for developing local philanthropy. None of these have great attraction in the new approach. Support to individuals is seen as just scattering money without being able to show what the "pay-back" is. Providing endowment funding is seen as ceding to others the control of agendas, which may change over time, and whose impact will be hard to measure. From Southeast Asia we can name the following examples: the Toyota Foundation's support for translation and publishing (the "Know Our Neighbors" program), or for the Southeast Asian Studies Regional Exchange Program (SEASREP); The Nippon Foundation's own API Fellowships program; the Ford and Rockefeller foundations' support for media and journalism. None of these fit with the new priorities of the old foundations. Toyota has closed its "Know Our Neighbors" program and has ceased funding SEASREP; the Nippon Foundation is under internal pressure to show what the social impact of API is, and indications are that the awarding of fellowships will cease in a few years. Similarly, the large foundation support for journalism in Southeast Asia is a casualty of the new trends. Susan Berresford quotes a grantee: "'I am trying to strengthen the field of journalism that is so important to the success of our democracy. When I report that our grantees have fostered new kinds of coverage of crucial topics and reached wide audiences, my board says: "So what? What of significance has really changed?" The board used to ask us to have ambitious visions of change. Now their demand for strategies with near-term results is steering us away from more ambitious aims.'"
- Taking a favorite word from the corporate book, the new approach sees "innovation" as a value in and of itself. Sometimes, this means changing the labels of program categories, or putting old wine in new bottles. To a certain degree, this may only be public relations, in other words.
- A complementary trend among the large American foundations (and the virus has spread beyond the United States to Japan and Europe) is the emphasis on "putting out the word," "branding," or "rebranding" the foundations' work—that is, what to its critics seems to be public relations, or mere hype. Excessive attention to "branding" in philanthropy is usually a criticism directed against corporate philanthropies or the practice of corporate social responsibility (CSR) generally. But branding and competition among donors are still problematic even among non-corporate, independent foundations. The approach of the earlier

foundations was humbler and more back-seat, and involved putting forward the work of those they supported and not claiming the credit (or blame, in some cases) for themselves.

A Look at Europe and Japan

So far, most of my attention has gone to American foundations, as these make up most of the "new foundations." And it is the old American foundations with long histories in Southeast Asia that have been most affected by the "new foundations" and are currently going through radical changes. My research, though, also looked at non-American foundations working in Southeast Asia; they are mainly from Western Europe and Japan. These are not exactly the same "animal" as the American foundations, whether new or old. After all, the political economies in Europe and Japan are historically different. They have governments with more of a social welfare role; they allow less of a free rein to the for-profit sector; they have higher personal and corporate taxes; they provide fewer tax incentives for the growth of private philanthropies; their private, non-profit sectors have more connections to government; and their non-profit organizations frequently partner with government donors. But, things have been changing, and foundations in Europe and Japan, too, show signs of being influenced by the "new philanthropy" jargon and paradigms—or at least have reacted to the new accountability movement—though perhaps for different reasons from their American "old foundation" counterparts.

In the United States, emphasis on private philanthropy is built into public policy through tax laws. The philanthropic sector has become an enormous and "successful" sector in 20th- and 21st-century America. But, like so many American institutions and traditions, it is sui generis, and is linked with certain social attitudes and practices that may not be shared in other political or economic systems. For instance, a larger role for private philanthropy seems to be closely linked to an historical American suspicion of "big government," which itself is related to Big Business's suspicion of regulation and to an ideology of market-driven solutions to economic, social, and political problems. Needless to say, these attitudes flourished in the neoliberal Reagan-Thatcher era and persist in the post-Cold War globalization era.

The modern European system of philanthropy—and the Australian, Canadian and Japanese versions used to be closer to the European than the American system, though they are now shifting—is, on the other hand, more geared to complementing the stronger role assigned to the public sector or government. Through higher personal and corporate taxation schemes to fund its public welfare government programs, the European model limited the amassing of enormous pools of private wealth and did not provide tax exemption schemes for private philanthropy. Hence, the private philanthropic sector there has been historically smaller. This has been changing over the past decades, with the triumph of neoliberal market ideologies, and welfare state systems have eroded to some degree in northern Europe, Australia, and even Japan, though Japan still has a very strong government sector.

The Europeans present some interesting hybrid models of overseas funding that involve collaborations across the private, non-profit, and the public sectors. For instance, the Dutch and German systems let private, or semi-public partisan foundations (for example, those connected to political parties in Germany, or to religious or cultural groups in Holland) use public overseas development assistance (ODA) funds in addition to their own funds and funds donated from the public, but according to their own grant-giving agendas. Those agendas look quite different from those of the large bilateral development donors (USAID, AUSAid, Japan International Cooperation Agency [JICA], CIDA, SIDA) and the multilateral banks, and are more akin to the "old foundation" model referred to above. They include funding for social sciences, human rights, advocacy, journalism, or culture, for instance. The funds must be accounted for to the government bodies supplying the funding, of course, as well as to the public at large. So far, the parliaments and the public at large in those countries have not insisted on seeing "something new." But, there are warning signs that things are changing in that direction; there is increasing demand to prove and measure impact in quantitative terms, for instance. According to an interview with a director at the Humanist Institute for Development Cooperation (HIVOS) in Jakarta, the Dutch public is tiring of "the whole foreign aid thing." He predicted that we may be heading for a period when ODA will shrink considerably under pressure from voters and conservative parliaments. The German public's reaction to the use of German funds for bailing out the Greek and, perhaps, other southern European economies in crisis is remove evidence of donor fatigue and a harbinger of what the HIVOS director was predicting.

Japan is in the throes of a taxpayer/voter rebellion. The election of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) is evidence of this, as its platform was specifically to "regain control of the government bureaucracy." The DPJ has been trying to end the cozy relationship that the bureaucracy has had with the private sector—for example, in the case of ODA, with the notorious practices of "tied aid" involving Japanese contractors. And it has been going after semi-governmental agencies, like the Japan Foundation, JICA, the Agency for Cultural Development (Bunkacho), Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), and many others, for having padded budgets, and most importantly, for their basically unaccountable programs. In November 2009, citizen committees were assigned to scrutinize the budget proposals of these agencies and others, and to make decisions up or down on their budgets at the end of the one- to two-hour meetings. The committees were also empowered to decide whether the agencies could hold on to government-provided endowments. These meetings were broadcast live on the Internet for the public to watch. The citizens appointed by the DPJ—with many economists and academics among them—were quite demanding and scathing in denouncing the agencies' ineffectiveness, waste, unaccountability, and lack of transparency. Unfortunately, the effect of the slashes in the budgets of agencies like the Japan Foundation and JICA, and the liquidation of their endowments, may turn out to be quite severe for their overseas beneficiaries and partners. The few Japanese private foundations working internationally, like the Toyota, Sasakawa Peace, and Nippon foundations, are also indirectly caught up in the public cry for accountability for their programs, and questions about the indirect subsidies they receive through tax exemptions or their use of public funds have surfaced. Private foundation boards are alarmed, too, and unwilling to take the risk of defending the future of programs that seem to hold out little measurable impact. No doubt, the focus on accountability was long overdue for these agencies and foundations; but the net effects so far are a big contraction of their funding overseas and the inward-looking, even nationalistic-sounding rhetoric of "Japan first."

Implications

I want to try to draw out some of the implications of the shifts in thinking and practice that I have shown to be happening among international foundations, especially those working in Southeast Asia. And I want to relate them to the questions put to us in this panel on the impacts of globalization on socio-political processes and institutions.

One of the trends or, perhaps better, drivers of the trends, is a huge anxiety about "accountability." And this relates to "good governance," not just by governments themselves, but by the institutions in the private and civil society sectors that are increasingly expected to shoulder the burden of promoting social welfare, as governments in neo-liberal models shrink and decentralize. As Frances Loh has said, for the countries of Southeast Asia previously characterized by authoritarian rule, perhaps better governance is one of the positive effects of post-Cold War globalization.

With respect to my topic, maybe one could ask: "Isn't it good if private philanthropic foundations are increasing in number and in dollars spent?" "Isn't it positive that foundations (and taxpayers) are now finally paying more attention to whether what they are paying for actually has real-world benefits for people in need?" "What is wrong with the new philanthropy and its results-driven approach, then, and why shouldn't the old foundations adapt to this new, more rigorous approach?"

There are some problems with the assumptions behind these questions.

1. Producing social change is not a simple matter, and obsessive emphasis on "results-driven" strategies and measurable impacts resulting from particular inputs can lead to inflated hopes. A simple input-output model may not transfer well to the messy world of the "field." The realities of attacking complex and persistent social and environmental problems (poverty, disease, inequality, inequity, social exclusion, and environmental degradation) may threaten the model.
2. The model may indeed work in solving certain problems that are more amenable to technological fixes. As Michael Edwards (2008) writes, "there is justifiable excitement about the possibilities for progress in global health,

agriculture and access to micro-credit among the poor that have been stimulated by huge investments from the Gates Foundation, the Clinton Global Initiative and others. New loans, seeds and vaccines are certainly important, but there is no vaccine against the racism that denies land to 'dalits' ('untouchables') in India, no technology that can deliver the public health infrastructure required to combat HIV, and no market that can reorder the dysfunctional relationships between different religious and other social groups that underpin violence and insecurity." In other words, philanthrocapitalism may be unable to handle systemic problems that require contextual, nuanced, holistic approaches that may not be amenable to measurement of impact using business metrics. Some fuzziness, uncertainty must be tolerated. Not everything can be measured. Poverty is too crucial a problem to leave to economists alone; it also has political, cultural, historical, and environmental dimensions. These problems may require coalitions of actors working together to change whole systems. Complex and deep-rooted problems of injustice require social movements, advocacy, and informed public debate. Again, to quote Edwards (2008), "systemic change involves social movements, politics and the state," which most of the philanthrocapitalist experiments ignore.

3. The accountability movement has been beneficial, even if it has gone too far and become too mechanistic or simplistic, and has led to distortions of mission and misanalyses of need. Philanthropies need to be accountable, no question, but that includes accounting for what they have omitted to do, or distortions they may have inadvertently caused. There should be more public attention to philanthropies, more critical feedback and pushback where necessary—e.g., where whole fields of work are abandoned to chase better metrics or the latest trend. Now is a time for more critical evaluations of the claims made in the name of business efficiency, or neoliberal trade fundamentalism, or philanthrocapitalism. The general public, and, inevitably, voluntary, elected or appointed watchdog agencies will need to keep a close watch on the ways of working, the governance structures, and styles of those "new foundations." (Note that the Gates Foundation, the world's largest, has a board of trustees that consists only of three Gates family members, Mr. Buffett, and an ex officio president—not exactly a model of NGO or corporate governance, one would have thought!)

4. There should likewise be more critical examination, even suspicion, of a certain totalizing kind of rhetoric. When people promise to save the world, our antennae should go up. And when everyone starts spouting the same rhetoric and following the same paradigm, we should beware. Let diversity of approach be considered an inherent value, in other words.

5. There needs to be a critical examination of the balance of the three sectors. The neoliberalism of the last thirty years has led to huge growth in the scope and power of corporations. Civil society organizations have grown to a certain degree and civil society resource organizations—such as foundations—have, too, but under very strong influence of the corporate sector. The public sector has been de-emphasized, central governments have devolved power to local governments, and social safety nets and the provision of welfare services have weakened. ODA has been questioned, pledges made, but not met. There thus needs to be a rebalancing, and a reining in of the unregulated corporate sector. Someone should be keeping an eye on the corporate sector's role in philanthropy, too. And there is no one-size-fits-all; not every country needs to aspire to be Denmark or the United States, the Millennium Development Corporation's criteria notwithstanding.

6. All these critical examinations imply the need for better knowledge-building. There is a value to building up independent knowledge—not only commodifiable, market-driven knowledge, but knowledge both theoretical and applied—crucial to analyzing and dealing with social problems. The private foundations historically played a large role in recognizing this and were well placed to support this kind of knowledge-building, but the need now seems to go unrecognized. The negative effects of neoliberalism and globalization on higher education and research have yet to be assessed. In academe, too, whole fields of knowledge are being devalued because they are not

commodifiable; they do not improve the metrics (read, rankings) of universities in competition with each other for customers (read students). We will live to regret the results of this critical shift if it is allowed to continue unabated. Private foundations can play a role in examining, warning against, and resisting that trend.

7. Finally, I must make a personal plea for culture. Context, geography, history, culture do matter. Rather than abandoning the humanities, they should be recognized as part of any holistic analysis of social phenomena and therefore of any solutions. This does not imply a "cultural industries" approach, a narrow "cultural heritage" approach, or the instrumental use of arts for social marketing. Cultural expressions are important ways of representing how people see the world—whole cosmologies, even. These are not only enriching and fascinating to understand in and of themselves; but an understanding of them may be crucial in the struggles for justice and equity, and against poverty and disadvantage.

NOTES

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[2] The term is taken from Bishop and Green (2008).

[3] See Clifford Geertz's account of his involvement as a Ford Foundation consultant in advising on this program in Geertz 1995: 79-80, 179-180.

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