



Private foundations, philanthropy, and partnership in education and development: mapping the terrain

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ABSTRACT

There has been increasing interest on the role of private foundations in education finance and delivery. We argue that this is due to a macro-policy context of stagnating levels of official development assistance for education and an uncritical acceptance of a logic of neutrality and the efficiency and effectiveness of partnerships and philanthropy. This paper reports on the results of a literature review on private foundations in education and development. It found significant contestation against the claims of neutrality, efficiency, effectiveness. It also identifies salient methodological and substantive issues for the development of a research agenda on the issue.

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1. Introduction

'Partnership' between the public and private sectors is increasingly touted as an advantageous way of financing and delivering education in developing countries. Within this context, there pervades a general belief that partnerships with and philanthropy by private foundations, in particular, are ideologically neutral and procedurally effective and efficient. This is despite previous research, though largely on American foundations and Western philanthropy, that shows highly complex and often self-interested motivations and colonial, neo-colonial, and imperialist paradigms underpinning education delivery through private foundations (Arnove, 1980; Berman, 1983; Davis, 1976; King, 1971). Given the reported increase of private foundations globally, and their growing prominence in key international fora such as the World Economic Forum, the main purpose of this review is to more solidly grasp the role that private foundations are currently playing in education finance and delivery in the global 'South'. The guiding intention is to call attention to this influential group of actors, and establish a renewed research agenda on the topic. As such, the paper is a first step towards a critical examination of private foundations in education internationally in the current context.

Results of the review indicate that as a set of actors, private foundations form a complex matrix of local and international actors about which we know very little, and claims about their efficiency and effectiveness in education finance and delivery. We argue that a renewed interest in private foundations by

international policy actors is driven by two particular discourses—one resulting from the macro-policy backdrop for education finance, and the other entrenched in an uncritical ideological acceptance of a logic of neutrality, and the efficiency and effectiveness of partnerships and philanthropy. Our concern in this review was with the second discourse with regards to philanthropy and private foundations, which forms the bulk of the discussion here. Additionally, the paper identifies salient methodological and substantive issues culled from the review for future consideration and potential development of a research agenda on the issue.

For the immediate purposes of this review, we used an operational definition of private foundations based on Marten and Witte's (2008) conceptualisation as foundations fulfilling the following minimal conditions: not profit oriented; not part of the public sector; use their own financial resources (unlike NGOs); led by an independent Board of Trustees or CEO; aim to face issues for the common good (e.g. development, environment) (p. 5). Additionally, according to Marten and Witte (2008):

The operational setup of foundations is extremely diverse. Broadly speaking though, foundations can be classified into two groups:

Foundations as grant-makers finance projects and programs which are implemented by other actors (typically NGOs);

Foundations as operational actors finance and implement their own projects and programs, either alone or in cooperation with other actors (p. 5).

The paper begins by briefly outlining the macro-policy and ideological backdrops framing the general discussion and analysis. Following this, we present the methods used to conduct the review

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Table 1

ODA as a percentage of GNI (in \$USD)—total disbursements, 2000–2008.

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
DAC countries	0.23	0.25	0.26	0.33	0.31	0.28	0.30

Source: OECD (2009, Query Wizard for International Development Statistics (QWIDS) <http://stats.oecd.org/qwids/>).**Table 2**

Share of education and basic education in aid commitments, 2000–2006.

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Education as a share of total ODA (%)	9	9	10	9	10	7	9
Basic education as a share of total aid to education (%)	42	43	36	43	48	44	45
Basic education as a share of total ODA (%)	4	4	3	4	5	3	4

Source: Reproduced from UNESCO (2008, p. 209).

and the resulting analytical themes. The paper concludes with a discussion of the issues arising for the development of a research agenda.

2. Macro-policy backdrop

The role of private funding in international development relative to official development assistance (ODA) has been gaining prominence in policy and academic circles in recent years (Adelman, 2003; Bhattacharya, 2008; Marten and Witte, 2008). The policy backdrop is a general realization that most DAC donors have failed to meet the generally accepted ODA target of 0.7% of gross national income (GNI). Our review unearthed three main claims in the recent literature. In fact, ODA as a percentage of GNI has not risen above 0.33% over a six-year period from 2002 to 2008. According to current OECD statistics, ODA levels rested at just 0.3% in 2008, a slight increase from 0.28% in 2007 (see Table 1).

While the figures above are indicative of trends on total aid disbursements, ODA to education has also reportedly been stagnating over the last few years (UNESCO, 2008, p. 208). Based on OECD-DAC data, the 2009 *Education for All Global Monitoring Report* shows not only stagnating levels of aid to education as a share of total ODA, but also a similar trend in basic education (see Table 2). The stagnating levels are further compounded by an ongoing concern that there are inadequately disproportionate allocations to countries most in need, i.e. lower income countries and fragile states broadly construed.

The stagnating proportion of ODA to education has spurred a number of discussions in international policy circles on increasing the role of non-state actors through 'partnerships', public-private partnerships (PPPs) more specifically, for delivery. This can be seen by the number of relatively recent publications by key international actors on 'mobilising the private sector' for education (Patrinos and Sosale, 2007; Patrinos et al., 2009; UNESCO, undated), which strongly resonates in international policy circles in recent times owing to the global recession and a general uncertainty about official aid flows. Within this context, the independent resources of large private foundations seem particularly attractive to supplement falling or stagnating aid levels to finance education.

3. Ideological backdrop

Endemic to the analysis of private foundations in education development is the construction of a particular 'logic of neutrality' by fusing two concepts—that of partnership and philanthropy. However, as much literature on education and development has argued, neither education nor development are neutral. Both are quintessentially value-driven. Anthropologists and sociologists

have long argued that such value-driven fields are ripe for the construction of totalising meta-narratives (or in the post-modern world, multiple meta-narratives¹) that ultimately serve to depoliticise contested fields by homogenising contestation and neutralising it through the presentation and affirmation of inane generalities.

In much the same way, in her analysis of current development discourse, Cornwall (2007) contends that concepts including '*partnership* are as ubiquitous as community, evoking much the same warm mutuality' (emphasis in original, p. 475), when in fact, they disguise uneven power relations that continue to shape the development agenda. Standing (2007) argues that such inherently warm and fuzzy words are 'intended to invite automatic approval', leading Cornwall (2007) to conclude that their popularity has 'as much to do with their feel-good factor as with what they promised to deliver' (p. 475). The same, we argue, can be said of an uncritical acceptance of 'philanthropy', which in the West, is helped by its sustained historical relationship to 'goodness' and 'benevolence' traced to 17th century Baconian concepts, and further to Aristotle's conception of 'virtue' (Sulek, 2010).

Perhaps because of this long-standing idealistic association, the discourse on philanthropy has come under relatively less criticism in the development literature than that on partnership. More recently, alerts have been made on the latter's ability to disguise complex and changing power relationships between what was long construed as a North (more powerful)–South (less powerful) relationship (Cornwall, 2007), its ability to 'capture the mind' of public sector reformers without substantive understanding of the changes to state-market relations in models proposed (Wettenhall, 2003), and the sidelining of contestation in favour of alternative models of education delivery and finance in view of its apparent neutrality (Burgos, 2004).

Burgos' concern is particularly worrying as the gamut of actors open to forming suggested partnerships include private corporations, NGOs, foundations and others, each with their unique operating mechanisms, guiding logics, and motives for delivery and financing. Furthermore, the institutional frameworks governing education delivery in different national contexts may inhibit some of these actors from operating. For example, it was officially unconstitutional for profit-oriented actors to operate in education in certain countries (e.g. India). Other countries may have had other experiences of education expansion. For example, NGO providers have been a primary force for education expansion in some countries (e.g. BRAC in Bangladesh), and in still others, wide-

¹ This is not to ignore the wider debate in the anthropological literature which was led by Lyotard about the ability of multiple meta-narratives to throw light on multiple experiences.

scale government provision proved to be most effective in expanding access (e.g. Malaysia). More specifically, and in line with Burgos' (2004) assessment, Srivastava (2010) argues elsewhere that employing PPPs in education in particular contexts is undertaken uncritically without a clear conceptualisation of the partnership models under consideration, and through a logic that is presented as neutral but is inherently contested within and between national contexts. This apparent neutrality is helped by conflating the term 'private or non-state actor' to include all types of non-state actors (for-profit and non-profit), and stressing the role of more socially palatable non-profit and, increasingly, philanthropic organisations for education delivery.

Within this discourse, though under-researched in the current context, philanthropy and the role of private foundations in particular is fast becoming a topic of debate. This is because of the estimated increase in the numbers of new private foundations internationally, and the emergence of 'mega-donors' such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the David and Lucille Packard Foundation, and the UN Foundation (Adelman, 2003, p. 11) known for the sheer scale of their development initiatives internationally. Thus, the term, 'philanthropy', is unpacked and considered in greater detail here.

Sulek's (2010) historical analysis finds that: 'the classically influenced meaning of philanthropy became almost entirely eclipsed by popular usage: either to describe a sociopolitical movement, or to describe donating money to charitable institutions' (p. 198) during the second half of the 19th century. This shift on donating money is important in shedding light on the current usage of the term. In the broadest most contemporary common understanding, 'philanthropy' is defined as 'the desire to help others, especially through donation of money to good causes' (OED, 2008), placing the emphasis on donating money through organised structures rather than performing benevolent acts of virtue as in the classical notion, while still retaining that association.

Analytically, philanthropy has been characterised as 'private initiatives' (Gardner, 1961) and 'voluntary action' (Payton, 1988) for public good and for improving the quality of human life. This distinguishes philanthropy from an ideal type conceptualisation of actions by government (public initiatives for public good) or corporate (private initiatives for private good) actors. In the Northern construction, large-scale and organised philanthropic actions are often associated with the type of work that the three oldest American private foundations (Carnegie Corporation, Rockefeller Foundation, and Ford Foundation) or 'the big three' (Arnové, 1980) have conducted, often in the form of financial contributions to social causes, research, and public works. However, there is a myriad of other actors involved in philanthropic initiatives, such as faith-based organisations, non-profit organisations, corporations, and nongovernmental organisations. Additionally, private contributions include cash and other non-monetary resources, such as voluntary work which can be geared towards development both domestically and internationally.

Furthermore, with the rise in the success of social enterprise, different models of giving involving a business or entrepreneurial orientation have emerged in the contemporary context. These have been termed in various ways in the literature such as 'venture philanthropy' and 'philanthrocapitalism', the latter which has garnered much attention. 'Philanthrocapitalism', as defined by Edwards (2009), is 'the use of business and the market to transform philanthropy and foreign aid' (p. 35). Bishop and Green (2008) define it as a new mode of philanthropy which uses the same business models that profit-oriented enterprises employ, claiming that at the wider societal and ideological level, philanthrocapitalism describes the ways in which capitalism works for the good of humanity. There is an emphasis on intervention and control by the donor as a key factor in successful programmes stemming from a

belief that the market model has the best chances of succeeding. In fact, Bishop (2008) takes the idea of donor intervention one step further. Philanthropic donors, according to him, 'now have an opportunity to seek change by becoming like "activist shareholders" pushing for a greater focus on results, and on restructuring the non-profit world to create institutions capable of delivering it' (p. 39). However, Edwards (2009) maintains that while a market-based model using business acumen and management may extend access to socially and environmentally useful goods and services, its application is questionable in addressing more difficult systemic issues of inadequate infrastructure, unequal distribution of resources, political instability, and social inequality.

A conflation of actors and modes of philanthropy (e.g. social enterprise, corporate social responsibility, philanthrocapitalism) and their relative merits is evident in the literature. A discussion of all these models of philanthropy remains outside the scope of this paper. Instead, taking Marten and Witte's (2008) conceptualisation of private foundations, we focus specifically on them as a distinct set of actors and critically examine the assertions of neutrality, efficiency and effectiveness in the literature as associated with philanthropy and applied to private foundations.

Firstly, much like the discourse on partnership, that on philanthropy and private foundations rests on stressing the positive ideals of social service and giving without a broader understanding of potential changes to the responsibilities of the state in sectors such as education, which are typically entrusted to it because of their association with the fulfilment of fundamental human rights. This uncritical acceptance of an expanded role for private foundations is helped by an ideological meta-narrative fusing partnership and philanthropy.

Two further claims are made stressing the apparent advantages of philanthropy over ODA stemming from neo-liberal claims of the efficiency and effectiveness of private actors. The first is an efficiency claim. It is asserted that private giving for international development will soon outstrip ODA (Adelman, 2009), and that large private foundations will have a significant role to play. In the case of private foundations, this is tied to a belief that they are quicker to respond, can mobilise significant resources, and unlike ODA, are more likely to focus on contentious or neglected areas and marginalised groups because of their relative independence from government negotiation. Though outside the scope of this paper, the efficiency claim is most starkly exhibited in the case of philanthrocapitalism, resting on 'the use of business and the market to transform philanthropy and foreign aid' (Edwards, 2009, p. 35).

The second is an effectiveness claim resting on a romanticised view of the processes and outcomes of philanthropy resulting from disenchantment with ODA processes. It is stressed that private philanthropy uses an approach engendering local ownership, transparency, accountability, and sustainability (Adelman, 2009). Owing to the financial independence that large private foundations have enjoyed, they have been particularly highlighted in this regard. These assertions form the ideological backdrop to the discourse on philanthropy and private foundations. The findings from our review will address each claim in turn.

4. Methods

This paper reports on a literature review that was conducted on the role of private foundations in education and development as a specific point of focus. The research process involved three main steps: (1) searching, (2) screening, and (3) reviewing.

4.1. Searching

The process began with framing the topic into concepts and questions that could be managed and dissected for database

Table 3
Keyword groups used in the literature search.

Keyword Group 1	Keyword Group 2	Keyword Group 3
Education	Private foundations Philanthropy Private donors Public–private partnerships Non-state provision Grant-making	International development Developing countries

research. Preliminary research provided a working definition for private foundations taking Marten and Witte's (2008) conceptualisation. Associative keywords were determined that could be used in the database. These were then divided into three main groups in order to conduct the searches (see Table 3). Multiple searches were systematically conducted by using the Keyword Group 1 in combination with all of the keywords in Groups 2 and 3 (e.g. 'education' AND 'private foundations' AND 'international development').

A list of databases were generated by systematically assessing a master list of databases available at the University of Ottawa library and making decisions based on database descriptions and experience of prior use. Databases were selected if they were deemed relevant in the areas of social sciences, international development, anthropology, sociology, political science, economics, education, and international relations. These database sources were also supplemented by relevant websites, personal research contacts, and prior knowledge.

In total, 68 electronic databases were included for the search. Furthermore, the University of Ottawa's library, electronic library, and a number of relevant websites were consulted in the research process. The list of umbrella databases included in the review is presented in Table 4.

Boolean logic was applied for more efficient searching in databases lacking separate search boxes or that did not have the ability to apply key phrases. Allotting keywords into a table and a specific column number allowed for a clear and simple way to track strategic searches and preserve consistency. Keyword 1 was paired once with a keyword 2 and a keyword 3 (except with the case of the IDS database, which was already refined to search development articles). If keywords 1 + 2 + 3 resulted in 0 hits, keyword 3 was removed to broaden the search.

4.2. Screening

When screening documents, the titles and descriptors were used to grasp the basic idea of what the resource material could provide. If the document seemed relevant to the role of private foundations in education in international development, the citation was marked, and in the case of electronic documents, the document was downloaded. The table of contents and executive summaries were skimmed for a sense of how the document was divided and for a brief description of what was

Table 4
List of umbrella databases in review.

IDS ^a
World Bank
UNESCO
OECD
Scholars Portal-Social Sciences ^b
Academic Search Complete
Columbia International Affairs Online (CIAO)

^a Included 9 databases.

^b Included 54 databases.

Table 5
Screening criteria for review.

Criteria for inclusion	Criteria for exclusion
Are written in English	Are not written in English
Are published in 1990 or later	Are published before 1990
Focus on private foundations, public–private partnerships, philanthropic and non-state provision in education in developing countries	Focused solely on nongovernment provision of education in the United States or other 'Northern' countries

discussed. If the abstract was ambiguous, the researcher applied the 'quick find' tool on the PDF reader for electronic documents. For example, to determine if a document was speaking about the 'foundations of education' or about 'private foundations in education', the researcher performed a quick search 'foundation' and read the context of the highlighted results to determine relevance.

If a document was deemed relevant it was uploaded to the bibliographic manager, RefWorks, where a database was created, along with its bibliographic information to be read more thoroughly later on. Furthermore, the keyword search chart was also added to count the 'relevant hits'. Table 5 presents the criteria for inclusion and exclusion of documents in the review. The screening yielded a total of 79 works.

In line with Marten and Witte's conceptualisation of private foundations, resources that dealt with 'philanthropic capitalism' and 'social corporate responsibility' in the main were avoided. The researchers also excluded articles that focused primarily on the role of private foundations in the development of education programmes in the US or other 'developed countries'. However, due to the scarcity of literature on private foundations in education and development, some indirect resources were used. This included references that focused more broadly on philanthropy and non-state providers. Although these did not specifically address private foundations, they were deemed relevant due to the broader understanding of private foundations as philanthropic organisations and non-state providers.

4.3. Reviewing

This involved the substantive reading of the documents deemed relevant for the review. The documents that were screened in for the review were organised into eight sub-folders in RefWorks: aid, EFA, foundations, NGOs, non-state providers, philanthropic capitalism², philanthropy, and PPPs.

The following questions were used as a guide when reviewing the documents:

1. What data are available about the extent of private foundation involvement in education and development?
2. How are private foundations in education and development positioned within the literature? (i.e. definitions, mechanisms, areas of operation, historically)
3. What are the claims supporting the role of private foundations in education and development? What is the basis of justification?
4. What are the arguments against the role of private foundations in education and development? What is the basis of justification?
5. What are the areas of consensus?
6. What gaps remain for further research and analysis?

² The sub-folders represented categories that emerged as a way to organise the references for the literature search, hence, the folder for philanthropic capitalism. Resources on philanthropic capitalism were consulted for contextual understanding only.

Each document was read and summaries were made recording the main arguments of relevance in line with our research objectives. These were posted on the database and shared. Documents and main themes were discussed between the researchers before writing, and revised as appropriate.

5. Analytical themes emerging from the review

This section presents the substantive analytical themes that emerged from the review addressing in particular the claims of neutrality, efficiency and effectiveness of private philanthropy and the role of private foundations in particular. The review found significant contestation regarding each of these three claims.

5.1. Contestation regarding neutrality

5.1.1. Private foundations are not neutral

There is little systematic examination of the motivations and aims of private foundations, particularly those that have been more recently established. Building on [Arnové's \(1980\)](#) well known analysis of the 'big three' US foundations, [Arnové and Pinede \(2007\)](#) stress that the apparent neutrality of philanthropic giving by large foundations was challenged as early as 1915 in the US by the Commission on Industrial Relations which questioned their accountability to the public, status as tax exempt, and the danger of concentrating substantial power in so few hands. These questions, particularly with the estimated growth in numbers of foundations worldwide, are still relevant in the current context. For example, some researchers have highlighted that private foundations are not solely driven by altruistic concerns but with a certain level of calculated self-interest. For example, [Berman \(1983\)](#) argued that the big three's decision to concentrate funding on a limited number of universities in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, was not necessarily to help the most needy but calculated so that 'we [the foundations] might get more for our money in the long run if we pick one or two or three places that look pretty strong compared to the others' (p. 69). In the current context, some analysts argue that engaging in philanthropic work can help to inculcate a positive brand image for their benefactors' corporate activities, a particular concern for philanthrocapitalists ([Arnové and Pinede, 2007](#); [Micklewright and Wright, 2004](#)). For example, Ted Turner is reported as saying, 'the more good I do, the more the money has come in' (quoted in [Micklewright and Wright, 2004](#), p. 11).

Despite assertions by private foundations that their expedience and wide-spread reach is due to their politically neutral stance, [Arnové and Pinede \(2007\)](#) maintain that they are not apolitical and, in the case of their international work in education, may also be vested with spreading a new form of imperialism by 'supporting changes that help to maintain and make more efficient an international system of power and privilege. Although these foundations claim to attack the root causes of the ills of humanity, they essentially engage in ameliorative practise to maintain social and economic systems that generate the very inequalities and injustices they wish to correct' (p. 393). Reflecting on previous research, it can be argued that the motivations of private foundations and their benefactors have had a tendency to be framed within vested political interests in response to perceived threats in the international order at specific points in time.

[King's \(1971\)](#) research on the Phelps-Stokes Fund's active philanthropic interest in African education in the early part of the 20th century posits a strong interest in maintaining colonial structures and control: '...it was a task of the [Phelps-Stokes] commission to show the various sections of the European community that interests of African and European were not necessarily opposed' (p. 101). Thus, colonial policies such as

segregated schooling and an 'adapted' curriculum of basic skills were propagated by key individuals in the Fund as a way of garnering larger funding from other philanthropic partners and tacit support for its initiatives from the colonial community in response to the fear that an educated African population would lead to liberation struggles. [Davis \(1976\)](#) saw the Phelps-Stokes Fund's and the Carnegie Corporation's education activities in Africa as influenced by American education practice and rooted in South African and British colonial thought and practice (p. 90), and framed in a distorted sense of 'goodness': 'Doing good on behalf of Africans...meant opposing the repression they experienced but not the system that imposed the repression' (p. 88).

The end of World War II was also seen as a key turning point for larger scale private investment in education by foundations in covertly concretising American foreign policy in a new emerging world order through the then new model of technical assistance, focusing on creating and developing universities ([Berman, 1983](#); [Coleman and Court, 1993](#)). [Berman's \(1983\)](#) Gramscian analysis of the big three further positioned their work as a way to achieving cultural hegemony and strengthening America's position during the Cold War by replicating American cultural capital through the expansion of a specific American-centric model of higher education abroad.

Much like earlier times, in the current context, similar questions about the motivations behind the rising influence of 'new Southern donors' in parts of the 'South', most notably China and India in Africa, are being raised coinciding with a reported rise in the numbers of private foundations in the BRIC countries, South Africa, and the Middle East. Citing examples of scholarships, exchange programmes, and skills training programmes among other forms of investment, analysts are trying to understand whether these are instances of friendly South–South cooperation, some new form of colonial exchange, or economic self-interest ([McCormick, 2008](#); [Six, 2009](#)). It remains to be seen if, like their Northern counterparts, Southern foundations, particularly from BRIC countries quickly gaining prominence in a changing international order, will aid in the establishment of a changed world polity through the influence of their soft power, and if so, in what ways.

In any case, as previous research has shown, given the strength of political impulses that steer the activities of private foundations and the influence of personal background that drives their establishment by influential individual benefactors, it would be simplistic to assume that foundations are ideologically and politically neutral entities, or indeed those with entirely benevolent intentions. The [OECD \(2003\)](#) report on philanthropic foundations and development cooperation, through generally positive about private foundations highlights that: 'At birth foundations reflect the ideas of their founders...especially in America from a Protestant Christian background' (p. 17). This Protestant work ethic is traced by many analysts as undergirding the emphasis in many American foundations on establishing programmes that emphasise creating conditions to help individuals help themselves. In education and development, this can be seen in an emphasis on fellowship and scholarship programmes for emerging or established scholars from developing countries, as exemplified by those of the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, rather than on the kind of wide-scale structural educational change that was envisioned (idealistically, in any case) at Jomtien and Dakar.

Of course, not all prominent foundations position themselves as politically neutral. The Open Society Institute (OSI) and Soros Foundations Network is an example of a network of foundations that are explicitly political. The goal of the OSI Education Support Program is to 'support education reform in countries in transition, combining best practice and policy to strengthen open society values. ESP works to facilitate change in education and national

policy development' (see <http://www.soros.org/initiatives/esp/about>). This follows from the general vision of OSI to support democratic and open societies. In fact, the Soros foundations are often treated with suspicion by government actors precisely because of their mandate to promote open society (Oh and Srivastava, 2009). Thus, the point of analytic importance in the study of private foundations is what their values and motivations are, and whether they are explicitly or implicitly expressed in their aims and work.

5.1.2. A move from global responsibility for development to individual giving

The review traced a move in the literature away from notions of international development couched in ideals of global responsibility between countries towards a preference for individual and private giving. This belief stems from a view that ODA channels are lengthy, unresponsive, and complicated, leading some analysts to conclude that organised and individual private giving is a positive and more direct response. Furthermore, and despite the fact that organised giving through private foundations or corporations, for example, have different modalities and are further different from individual remittances they are becoming increasingly conflated in the literature under the broader term of 'philanthropy'. The addition of 'remittances' to the title of the annual *Global Index of Philanthropy* in 2009, now the *Global Index of Philanthropy and Remittances*, starkly highlights this viewpoint and, while outside the main scope of the review, deserves some mention here.

The argument in the literature is that while the majority of remittances go towards supporting the basic needs of migrants' families, some is leveraged to maximise development impact by directly funding community-based projects. According to Adelman (2009), in order to have a more accurate picture of total private philanthropy, individual remittances and foreign direct investment should be added to funding estimates, adding that 'the World Bank and other studies are clear that the funds sent back by migrants to their families and to community development projects are one of the strongest poverty reduction forces in poor countries' (p. 23). Critics argue that while remittances and foreign direct investment may have a substantial impact on development these are 'complicated, contested and in some cases harmful to social and environmental goals' (Edwards, 2009, p. 37). For example, there is evidence to suggest that the distribution of remittances in communities and families is gendered, 'challenge[ing] the mainstream perception of remittances as a neutral sum of money or a largely positive force' (Kunz, 2008, p. 1400). Though premature to assess, if the distribution of remittances is gendered, in the case of education they may further aggravate existing gender-based decisions about schooling access within households particularly as levels of education increase.

In any case, the inclusion of remittances into the discussion on philanthropy is, in our view, controversial. It takes us to deeper issues about what 'development' and 'philanthropy' are, and the different meanings, values, and practices that individual societies attach to them. Are remittances a philanthropic type of giving? Do remittances help to significantly address persistent inequities in education and other broad development goals? A more nuanced consideration and further research is required to accurately assess their impacts. Nonetheless, regardless of whether the focus is on organised philanthropy through private foundations and corporations or on individuals through remittances, the emphasis on private giving puts the onus on individuals and private benefactors without questioning the persistent underfunding of internationally agreed targets by donors and, within developing countries, by national governments to sectors of priority. Ultimately, transferring government and collective accountability (e.g. the target of 0.7% GNI) to private actors is a step away from the principles of the

Paris Declaration. This is a fundamental issue given the lack of public accountability that private actors have to existing international frameworks.

5.2. Contestation regarding the efficiency claim

Proponents of the role of private foundations in development rest their arguments on the generally accepted neo-liberal discourse frequently associated with the participation of the private sector, such as: relative efficiency of assistance delivered through private channels; moving relationships from a traditional donor-client relationship to a partnership at country level; and greater flexibility in responding to local needs (CGP, 2008; OECD, 2003). These arguments are mirrored in the discussion on PPPs in education more broadly (Patrinos and Sosale, 2007; Patrinos et al., 2009). A nuanced view of private foundations is missing. This is exemplified in the OECD (2003) report, which characterised them as being altruistic, astutely aware of development cooperation policy, and being owed 'the respect due to an elder' (p. 11) because of their relatively long history in international activities. These overly positive views were surprising given concerns raised about and by private foundations such as fragmented activities, a concern for expedience over efficiency, and short-term funding priorities (Coleman and Court, 1993; Oh and Srivastava, 2009).

5.2.1. Private foundation contributions are not necessarily outstripping ODA

There is an increasingly accepted view that global philanthropy and private foundations can increase overall aid efficiency by filling in ODA gaps in neglected sectors and regions, stemming from the low levels of ODA generally and a fear that official assistance may further decline due to the global financial crisis. This has caused some analysts to consider whether assistance is higher if funding from private donors, encompassing a wide range of profit and not-for-profit actors, is included³ rather than questioning the persistent underfunding itself:

Global philanthropy and remittances will play the most important roles in helping developing countries weather the financial crisis that began in 2008. Official Development Assistance (ODA), though important for the less than 25 percent of countries whose official aid exceeds 10 percent of their gross national income (GNI), represents only 17 percent of total financial flows from developed to developing countries. Taking a closer look at the forecast for international philanthropy and remittances in 2009, we find that the prospects may be less dismal than expected (CGP, 2009, p. 5).

Taking the USA as an example, based on OECD, World Bank, and Hudson Institute data, the *2009 Index of Global Philanthropy and Remittances* estimated that American ODA accounted for just 9% of total American economic engagement with developing countries in 2007, a decrease from 12% in 2006, while private philanthropy, through a variety of different organisations, accounted for 16% (Table 6).

It is interesting to note that according to the data above, the total amount of engagement by US private foundations in developing countries decreased from \$USD 4 billion in 2006 to \$USD 3.3 billion in 2007. However, despite the decrease, at 9% it claimed a much greater share of US engagement with developing countries in 2007 than the previous year. In fact, all areas of private philanthropy claimed a greater share of US engagement in

³ At the time of writing, the global financial crisis is calling into question aid commitments, particularly in countries where aid is a discretionary expenditure. Of course, it is likely that private organisations and private foundations will not remain untouched from the crisis, the effects of which remain to be seen on assistance provided to developing countries through private mechanisms.

Table 6

American economic engagement with developing countries, 2006 and 2007.

	\$USD (billions) 2006	\$USD (billions) 2007	Percent 2006	Percent 2007
US official development assistance	23.5	21.8	12	9
US private philanthropy	34.8	36.9	18	16
• Foundations	4	3.3	2	9
• Corporations	5.5	6.8	3	18
• Private and voluntary organisations	12.8	10.8	7	29
• Universities and colleges	3.7	3.9	2	11
• Religious organisations	8.8	8.6	5	23
US remittances	71.5	79	37	34
US private capital flows	62.3	97.5	32	41
US total economic engagement	192.1	235.2	99	100

Source: CGP (2008, p. 17), CGP (2009, p. 16).

developing countries despite their absolute numbers. This may indicate a decreased commitment in outlay to developing countries regarding American ODA during that time. However, with the change in the American administration and the much publicised commitments to international development (Rodham Clinton, 2010) it may be that ODA contributions will rise.

Nonetheless, accurate global figures on the volume of private resources contributing to international development efforts are unavailable (Edwards, 2009; Micklewright and Wright, 2004) and less transparent than ODA data. Edwards (2009) is critical of optimists who expect that contributions from private foundations will increase over time and that development-related investments of 'newer' (e.g. Gates, Google) or 'newly large' foundations (Foundation Center, 2008, p. 2) (e.g. Gordon and Betty Moore) will create an estimated total expenditure of at least \$100 billion during the lifetime of their founders. He argues that even if these assumptions turn out to be true, there are no data to support the claim that private resources will outrank ODA in the next 10 years, except in a small number of cases where private actors already play an influential role (e.g. Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's role in establishing the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria), and unless funds from private remittances and foreign direct investments are included in the total.

In fact, 42.7% of respondents in a recent survey of public and private foundations in the US felt that despite the overall growth in international grants between 2002 and 2007, American foundations are likely to shift their attention to domestic rather than international issues given the constrained economic climate (Foundation Center, 2008, p. 3). Furthermore, since relatively few foundations fund initiatives outside their country of domicile, a particular concern when considering 'Northern' foundations, aid from these foundations tends to be heavily skewed towards the priorities of a small number that tend to work internationally (e.g. Bill and Melinda Gates, Rockefeller, William and Flora Hewlett) (Foundation Center, 2008) which may not contribute to the efficiency of the aid system overall. For example, the Foundation Center (2008) estimates that while 46% of the amount of American international grants supported the MDGs, coverage was uneven (p. 10). Goal 1 (extreme poverty and hunger) and Goal 6 (HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases) accounted for the largest share of funding (Foundation Center, 2008), the latter which is closely aligned to the Gates' priorities. The same report estimates that health garnered by far the largest amount of funding (more than 40% of total amount) and education came in sixth out of 11 funding areas at less than 10% (Foundation Center, 2008, p. 11). In the case of education, it seems that the effect of large players may have an adverse impact on the amount of additional funding that the education sector can secure given the limited resources that foundations have in the current economic climate and the priorities of mega-donors favouring other sectors ahead of education.

5.2.2. Funding not getting to the poorest

Despite the belief that direct funding from philanthropic actors will address some of the ODA shortfall (Desai and Kharas, 2008), and the efficiency claim in the literature that private foundations are most likely to reach the poorest areas and most marginalised groups because they are relatively free of government restrictions and are more innovative, it is not apparent from available data that the countries most in need of additional funding are in fact receiving it from private foundations. Data from the Foundation Center reveal a discrepancy in this belief when we examine the composition of direct recipients of international grants from American foundations (see Table 7).

We see that eight of the top 20 country recipients (Switzerland, England, Canada, Germany, Australia, Netherlands, Italy, and France) of grants from American foundations are clearly 'Northern' countries and DAC donors themselves. It is unclear whether or what proportion of the grants disbursed to these eight countries in particular are in turn disbursed to developing country beneficiaries. A further five are the BRIC countries and South Africa, which while they undoubtedly have persistent inequities, are not the most in need globally. Out of the remaining seven countries, Uganda is the only one to be classified on the United Nations list of least developed countries (see <http://www.unohrls.org/en/ldc/related/62/>). Furthermore, it is unclear what programming objectives the disbursed grants are intended to achieve and whether the grants address the needs of the most marginalised.

Edwards (2009) cites World Bank estimates showing that 45% of international grant-making by American foundations goes to a

Table 7

Top 20 non-US country recipients of direct grants from American grant-makers.

Location	Amount	Recipient count	Grant count
Switzerland	\$1,513,735,980	140	585
England	\$926,540,015	669	2,367
Kenya	\$594,273,978	312	758
Canada	\$394,943,570	724	2,410
South Africa	\$393,226,255	546	1,911
India	\$325,334,104	848	1,707
China	\$293,238,283	510	1,799
Israel	\$283,845,805	613	1,914
Mexico	\$255,151,016	536	1,520
Brazil	\$223,743,833	489	1,225
Germany	\$160,688,667	229	440
Russia	\$160,590,966	266	642
Australia	\$145,744,192	213	466
Nigeria	\$115,147,005	228	476
Philippines	\$98,287,013	255	422
Netherlands	\$91,505,615	144	288
Italy	\$83,838,054	168	384
France	\$80,412,831	272	578
Indonesia	\$78,069,944	229	457
Uganda	\$69,222,538	203	448

Source: The Foundation Center (2008, <http://fconline.foundationcenter.org/maps/IntlNumber.php?map=&unit=&y0=All>).

Table 8

Potential of and concerns about private foundations.

Potential of private foundations	Concerns about private foundations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitivity and flexibility • May enable capacity building of civil society • Not fixed to volatile political cycles or public budgeting rules • Innovative and risk-taking due to independence • Longer financial commitments than traditional donors • Opportunity to work with local actors for more contextually appropriate solutions • High profile personalities attract media attention and public support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structural inability to expand the scope and outreach of programmes and little replicability • Depends on the legitimacy of civil society within country • Accountability and transparency • Poor or little evaluation of results; little adoption of best practices in this area • May take a technocratic or isolated approach to development without sustainable results • ‘Flexibility’ and ‘innovation’ may be a preference to follow development fads • Unclear or complicated organisational structures • Uneven balances of power in decision-making and target setting between headquarters and field offices/operations

Source: CGP (2008), Marten and Witte (2008), Schaefer (1995), Scott et al. (2003).

handful of emerging economies such as China, India, Brazil and South Africa, while only 23% of the countries to which European foundations made grants in 2005 were classified as ‘least developed nations’. Marten and Witte (2008) found similar patterns based on data from the World Bank and from interviews which suggested that only about 20–25% of spending from American foundations went directly to developing country partners (p. 9). Estimates by the International Finance Team Development Prospects Group of the World Bank (DECPG) show that only 10% of US foundation grant-giving in 2004 went to international development, and that only 3% of recipients were International Development Association countries⁴ (DECPG, 2006, p. 3). This is in line with assertions in the literature that most foundations prefer to work within their borders, and towards a small number of developing countries which are not the poorest (Edwards, 2009), threatening the claim that overall aid efficiency will be increased by private foundations focusing on neglected countries and areas. Furthermore, similar to the trend noted in the analysis of the Foundation Center data above, DECPG (2006) also noted that much of that funding was channelled through international institutions like the WHO or NGOs in Europe, rather than directly to the developing countries themselves (pp. 3–4). This pattern of indirect funding is likely to create more complicated structures of disbursement not less, and likely increase transaction costs, thereby decreasing efficiency.

5.3. Contestation regarding the effectiveness claim

5.3.1. Lack of systematic evaluation on potential effectiveness

Adelman (2009) claims that ‘[i]n all its forms, private philanthropy tends to focus more on local ownership of projects, transparency, accountability, sustainable outcomes, and efficient delivery of services’ (p. 24). While it is true that philanthropic organisations such as private foundations have different modalities than that of traditional ODA agencies and institutions such as the World Bank and regional development banks, there is little systematic evaluation of whether they follow a process that encourages local ownership, transparency, accountability, and sustainable outcomes. Coleman and Court’s (1993) analysis of the Rockefeller Foundation’s University Development Program⁵ sheds doubt on uncritically accepting claims of private foundations favouring a process that engenders local ownership. In this case, effectiveness was attributed in no small measure to charismatic individual leadership stemming from a long tradition of ‘the utilization of its [Rockefeller Foundation’s] own permanent field

staff as key actors in the institution-building process’ (Coleman and Court, 1993, p. 216). In fact, effectiveness seemed to be maximised by using selection criteria for the 15 universities in the programme that favoured expediency and that would most likely garner programme success, making it difficult to assess the Foundation’s true value added. Among these selection criteria were: familiarity ‘the most determinative criterion... a pre-existing or currently operative program at the institution’ (Coleman and Court, 1993, p. 213), strong existing leadership, potential for change, receptivity of assistance, prospective for external and local finance, regional and national exemplarity, and geopolitical considerations. Similarly, the estimated \$350 million in grant disbursements by 2010 through the Partnership for Higher Education in Africa by the ‘big six’ (Carnegie, Ford, Hewlett, MacArthur, Mellon, and Rockefeller) and Kresge⁶ to strengthen higher education in Africa, favoured the selection of countries (Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa, and Tanzania, and Uganda) with relatively better developed systems on the continent (see Manuh et al., 2007; Mário et al., 2003).

Table 8 provides a summary of the potential of and concerns about the effectiveness of private foundations as culled from the review. The review found that considering claims about the effectiveness of private foundations regarding their flexibility, roles in capacity building, innovation, and independence must be carefully balanced and evaluated against associated concerns. Most importantly, in order to substantiate the effectiveness claim evidence based on systematic evaluation is required. However, the literature indicated that this is a foremost concern regarding private foundations, even by their proponents. The 2008 *Index of Global Philanthropy* notes: ‘Private donors still lack rigorous assessment of their results. Too often evaluation consists of looking at what was delivered to a grantee, not what finally happened with the goods and services’ (CGP, 2008, p. 12).

5.3.2. A preference for technical over structural programming

The majority of the literature on private foundations focuses on their interventions in the agriculture and health sectors. There remains a significant gap on the role of private foundations in education despite the long-standing work of actors such as the MacArthur Foundation, contemporary influential players such as the Hewlett Foundation and the OSI and Soros Foundation Network, and the emergence of new players in education such as the Putera Sampoerna Foundation in Indonesia, established in 2001, the Lemann Foundation in Brazil, established in 2002, and the Azim Premji Foundation in India, established in 2001 by the chairman of Wipro Corporation.

The current focus on private foundations in international development stems largely from the integral role that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has played in coalescing efforts in global

⁴ International Development Association or IDA countries have been identified by the Bank as among the poorest, and are eligible for interest-free credits and grants.

⁵ This programme was implemented in 15 universities in 12 developing countries, and was renamed the Education for Development Program (Coleman and Court, 1993, p. xv).

⁶ See: http://www.kresge.org/index.php/what/south_africa_initiative/.

health initiatives. However, analysts argue that the effectiveness of private foundations in development initiatives more generally is questioned. Critics contend that the preference and sheer scale of global giving in health stems from a preference for relatively tangible, technical solutions over longer-term, fuzzy, structural work—the kind that is required for meaningful change in education. As Micklewright and Wright (2004) astutely note:

The funds...include the Vaccine Fund/Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI), the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI) and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. But as the names indicate, these funds are exclusively in the area of health—there is *no Global Fund to fight illiteracy for example. Health seems especially attractive to a large donor looking for a problem that can be solved by funding a “technical” solution* (emphasis added) (p. 18).

Despite the estimated annual USD 16 billion funding gap for education (UNESCO, 2010), the creation of a Global Fund for Education supported by President Obama in 2008 during his election campaign, or serious engagement with the Education for All Fast-Track Initiative funding process has as of yet failed to capture the attention of and coalesce action by private foundations in a way similar to that of the global health initiatives.⁷ This may be because the more recently established large foundations from technological giants such as Gates and Google, and organised philanthropic giving by what has been dubbed the ‘California consensus’ (i.e. philanthropic ventures from Silicon Valley corporations) (Desai and Kharas, 2008) rests on an approach that is ‘problem-oriented’ (Marten and Witte, 2008) and focused on “‘results’ usually defined in terms of short-term, measurable, material outcomes’ (Edwards, 2009, p. 36). This mindset is in line with practice in the parent industries of these foundations, and favours a preference for a model based on giving for scientific research and discovery in technical areas.

However, this model predates the California consensus and newer mega-donors. The OECD report (2003) traces the history of a number of key development initiatives by private foundations and shows that a scientific and technical focus was favoured to provide a particular ‘niche’ in development efforts. The result was the Green Revolution with substantial outlay from the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, a number of initiatives in biotechnology, and the development of contraceptives for family planning. It may be that the relative lack of focus on education is due to the long association of foundations with health and agriculture initiatives in the past, and the media attention garnered by large foundations such as Gates currently. Within the education sector, the most common examples of foundation-led initiatives in the literature are scholarship programmes for students and research fellowships for developing country scholars to attend ‘Northern’ universities, relatively short-term adult literacy programmes, and a focus on school construction instead of investments in soft skills for quality improvement. The predominance of technical programming by private foundations in education in the literature suggests that the full potential of their effectiveness is yet to be captured.

6. Towards a research agenda

It is generally accepted that the role of private foundations in development, and specifically in education, is under-researched.

⁷ This was a cause of major concern voiced by Global Monitoring Report Director, Kevin Watkins, and Chair of the Education for All Fast-Track Initiative Board, Carol Bellamy, at the Canadian launch of the 2010 Global Monitoring Report in Ottawa, 25 March 2010. Engagement with private foundations was also the main focus at the invited World Bank research seminar on ‘Leveraging the Private Sector for Results in Education’, Washington, DC, 30–31 March 2010.

This paper aimed to provide a necessary first step towards building a larger research agenda in this area. Below, we highlight the complications unearthed in conducting the review serving to indicate the potential pitfalls and gaps that exist in conducting research in this area. We found that a comparative analysis on the role of private foundations in education and development is hampered by a lack of systematic comparative data, definitional inconsistencies, and a gap in the literature on private foundations involved in education internationally.

6.1. Lack of literature on private foundations in education internationally

We found a real lack of literature on private foundations on three fronts. The first was a lack of literature on private foundations outside of the US. The results and discussion in this paper reflect that lack, though the guiding intention of the review was to construct a more comparative knowledge base on the issue. Unfortunately, due to the limited literature and data, we were unable to delve in sufficient depth on this point.

We also found a preponderance of grey literature in the form of organisational reports or working papers, many times sponsored by particular foundations or written by foundations themselves with very little peer-reviewed academic literature on the topic. This lack is magnified in the case of private foundations in education and development. In our review, out of 79 works, only 28 were academic pieces. The lack of available literature may be due to the data collection problems noted above and below and the lack of organised hubs in the form of think tanks or research centres on the issue outside of the US. There is a need for systematic and independent research on the role that private foundations, particularly ‘Southern’ foundations, are playing in education and development.

Thirdly, most of the published literature on private foundations is on initiatives in the health or agriculture sectors. As previously mentioned, this may be a reflection of the overwhelming role that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in particular played in the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria in recent years, and in earlier years the roles that the established Ford and Rockefeller Foundations played in family planning and health initiatives, and the latter’s role in the agricultural Green Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s (Arnové and Pinede, 2007). Nonetheless, given the substantial funding gap in education and the potential that private foundations are assumed to have, it is surprising that there is little substantive or cohesive information about their role in education internationally.

6.2. Lack of systematic comparative data

There is no central global data collection system that accounts for the amount of total disbursement by foundations or disbursement by foundations according to development sector at the source of allocation internationally. Thus, not only is it difficult to gauge a global estimate on total disbursements for development by private foundations, getting a precise amount for the education sector is next to impossible.

Data on American foundations are compiled by the US Council on Foundations and the US Foundation Center, in addition to reports by various organisations such as the Center for Global Prosperity’s annual review (Marten and Witte, 2008). Data on European foundations are compiled by the European Foundation Centre, though Marten and Witte (2008) point out that European data are much less complete given the different legal requirements of reporting in European countries. Despite the existence of the Asia Pacific Philanthropy Consortium, there are limited data on Asian foundations. There is a similar lack in foundations from the Middle East. There is little literature on private foundations in

Africa, though a World Bank report on 'community development foundations' (Malombe, 2000) highlights the continent as one where there are potentially significant contributors to local development initiatives including in education. This constitutes a major lack in our understanding given the changing global context, the emergence of China and India as donors, and the reported rise of private foundations in the 'South'.

Furthermore, despite overly optimistic claims that private resources are likely to eclipse or compensate for insufficient ODA (CGP, 2009), the exact contribution of private foundations to education and development is difficult to track since data by specific type of non-state actor are not usually collected or disaggregated at the national level in recipient countries. This is further complicated where the private foundation may not be international but local. This brings us to the need to reconceptualise the type of giving by private foundations, traditionally characterised as 'international giving', if we are to account more seriously for allocations geared towards international development activities. Given the reported increase of private foundations in 'Southern' countries and that they, like the majority of 'Northern' foundations, may prefer to work within their borders to address pressing development concerns, the category of 'international giving' is unlikely to capture actual activity towards development initiatives closely matching MDG or EFA goals.

Furthermore, tracking outflow by international giving does not necessarily capture development efforts for or in developing countries even for private foundations in 'Northern' contexts. For example, according to Foundation Center data, while the total amount of international giving by American private foundations was \$USD 7.85 billion between 2003 and 2009, Switzerland was the largest recipient of grants over this time receiving approximately \$USD 1.5 billion. Given the high number of UN and other international organisations based in Switzerland, it may be that the majority of this money was channelled to development initiatives in developing countries. However, it is clear that tracking disbursements by international giving does not provide an accurate picture of allocations disbursed directly to recipients in developing countries and for development initiatives.

6.3. Varying legal status, definitions, and modes of operation

A related problem for data collection and comparison are the extremely varied legal requirements and definitions of what constitutes a private foundation in particular countries. These are tied to various legal and tax implications of an entity that is or wishes to be considered a 'foundation', and which are determined by the home country of the organisation. For the immediate purposes of this review, we used an operational definition of the term based on Marten and Witte's (2008) conceptualisation. We found the definition useful as it highlights the sources of funding, type of management, and modes of operation. Additionally, it can be used to operationalise analyses in research and bypass legal definitions of foundations across different contexts which may inhibit comparative analyses. However, it was also limiting in that it presupposed a model of private foundations that is inherently entrenched in Western notions of organised philanthropy. There is a need for further conceptualisation of 'private foundations' as a distinct set of actors, incorporating understandings from Southern contexts.

6.4. More literature on big foundations than on little ones

Much of the literature addresses the role and impact of large private foundations, rendering the efforts of smaller foundations invisible. For example, in education, work on the 'big three' US foundations (Arnove, 1980; Arnove and Pinede, 2007; Berman,

1983; Coleman and Court, 1993), and now with the addition of the Hewlett, Mellon, and MacArthur Foundations, the 'big six' (Manuh et al., 2007; Mário et al., 2003), was prominent.⁸ Many local foundations in the Soros Foundation Network have concerted programmes in education. The local country foundations have the autonomy to set programme foci, and employ local staff to address local education issues. Given the collective strength of the Soros Network and the visibility of the benefactor, Soros foundations manage to garner some attention in the literature (e.g. Oh and Srivastava, 2009; Silova and Steiner-Khamsi, 2008). More fundamentally, however, while the literature acknowledges the growing number of local foundations in BRIC countries in particular, we could not find any published academic studies on education efforts of local private foundations in these and other developing country contexts. There is some cursory mention of the Escuela Nueva Foundation in Colombia and the Punjab Education Foundation in Pakistan as case studies in the literature, but these would be closer to Malombe's (2000) construction of community foundations in Africa or Asia rather than private foundations as discussed here.

As previously stated, the limited literature on foundations in education and development focuses mainly on the experience of American foundations and does not address the issues, modes of operation, or impact of local private foundations in developing countries. Given the integral role that cultural specificity and politics play in the implementation of education initiatives, this constitutes a major lack resulting in an incomplete and disconnected understanding of the true impact of private foundations as a collective on the education sector.

6.5. Foundations: new, old, North, South

Some of the more recent literature presents private foundations as new actors in international development. However, private foundations and philanthropy are not a new phenomenon. Arnove's (1980) now seminal work on the big three—Carnegie Corporation (established in 1911), Rockefeller Foundation (founded in 1913), and Ford Foundation (founded in 1936)—traces their history regarding international efforts since the early part of the 20th century. This is not to say that organised philanthropy and private foundations did not exist in other contexts at the time. A notable example is the Sir Ratan Tata Trust established in 1919 in India, predating the Ford Foundation. Similar to the Carnegie Corporation and the Rockefeller Foundation, it was set up by a wealthy local industrialist. However, its philosophical orientation was different and tied to strengthening the collective public interest, closer to Indian social thinking of the time, rather than values of individualism inherent to the Protestant work ethic. The Trust established schools, research institutes, and hospitals, and supported the arts and cultural and archaeological conservation, activities which continue today (http://www.srta.org/about_us/overview.htm).

What may be new is the growing numbers of local private foundations in 'Southern' countries, particularly in countries that have experienced technological booms. In such contexts, many of these newer private foundations seem to be linked to the fortunes of the global reach of the Silicon Valley, and may be said to occupy a place in a global California consensus. As a result, in the BRIC countries and in South Africa, there is anecdotal evidence of increasing numbers of private foundations established by founders from technology (e.g. Shuttleworth Foundation in South Africa, Azim Premji Foundation in India). However, there is a dearth of systematic research on them. While anecdotal reports suggest that

⁸ These publications are part of a series of books on the big six's higher education initiatives in Africa published in association with the Partnership for Higher Education in Africa.

there is a tendency to focus on local needs, and on education in particular, the exact nature of their activities are not clear. In addition, there is little known about the scale of 'South–South' philanthropy and how this compares to 'North–South' philanthropy. Anecdotal reports indicate that with the emergence of 'Southern' foundations, there may be greater instances of South–South cooperation than was possible before.

Besides the unknown scale of philanthropy emerging from the 'South', it would be salient to consider some epistemological questions: does the definition and practice of philanthropy in a Northern context hold in a developing one? Are the models of philanthropy in the 'North' being used in the 'South'? What implications are there for assertions of 'imperialism' when 'Southern' foundations are the 'givers'? What are the power dynamics between Northern-based and Southern-based foundations? These questions are not apparent in the literature but they are important because they consider the underlying philosophy and ideology of private giving within 'Southern' countries.

7. Conclusion

A recurring theme in the literature on philanthropy and international development is a burgeoning hope that private foundations will be significant actors in plugging the holes left by the chronic underfunding of ODA, and that they will apply a model of development for social change particularly in sectors securing basic human rights such as education. These are worthy goals to aspire towards. However, in order to accurately assess these goals, we need a more nuanced understanding of and systematic approach to conceptualising, collecting data on, and analysing private foundations from and operating in education in the global 'South'. This review was intended as a necessary first step in this process and it did so by framing the issues around the three central claims of neutrality, efficiency, and effectiveness surrounding philanthropy and private foundations. The analysis showed significant contestation in relation to the three claims. However, given the exploratory nature of the review, the paper has thrown up many more questions, indicating a real need for systematic research to shed light on the many gaps that exist in our understanding.

First, due to a lack of data and serious contemporary research on the topic we do not know enough about the contributions and activities of the range of private foundations (e.g. smaller foundations; 'Southern' foundations) to education internationally to be able to make an accurate assessment of their role. In the wider context of ODA, the literature has shown that there is an emerging trend to include philanthropic giving from all sources, including individual remittances, in an overall measure of international assistance for development. While this may provide a more comprehensive picture of financial flows from private sources, it cannot be used as a substitute for actual ODA. This is because ODA is a structured system of aid, supported by international agreements and legal frameworks. Despite its faults, it is meant to be a concerted, coordinated effort that holds countries internationally accountable. Private contributions to development undoubtedly have their strengths. However, we do not yet have enough evidence to judge their effectiveness and efficiency in providing good quality services (including education) which are part of a concerted effort to enhance the quality of life in countries in the global 'South'.

Second, the review challenges the supposed neutrality of philanthropy and private foundations. Given the general consensus in the literature that establishing a foundation is highly personally driven, it follows that individual private foundations will have diverse intentions and motivations. This must be taken into account in any discussion about their role in education, and

their commitment to internationally agreed goals and targets. As Edwards (2009) rightly points out, '[p]hilanthropy has always been an expression of individual desires and passions, and it is assumed that those desires draw from and support more-broadly shared visions of development and social change. If they do not, societies may be in trouble as philanthropy continues to expand' (p. 41).

Third, given their relative independence as a set of actors, the type of assistance provided by private foundations is not coordinated, seems to favour certain types of projects over others, and does not necessarily reach the poorest. These three points bring to focus the fact that, in the private foundation sector as a whole, little progress has been made towards the key principles of ownership by countries, alignment with countries' strategies, systems and procedures, harmonisation of donors' actions, managing for results and mutual accountability enumerated by the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. By their very definition, private foundations are privately funded, and in the case of the larger Northern foundations, are largely self-supporting. Thus, they are not, in the strictest sense accountable to the countries in which they operate or to other key bodies involved in the architecture of international education policy or aid. In this case, moral accountability to their beneficiaries must assume primary precedence.

Finally, the systematic gaps we encountered during the review point to what may be construed as action points for a future research agenda on the topic. This agenda highlights areas of methodological weakness—lack of systematic comparative data, varying legal status, definitions and modes of operation—and knowledge gaps—small foundations, 'Southern' foundations, and private foundations in education internationally. It is hoped that this will serve to pinpoint areas for further enquiry, so as to inform and add to the body of work on philanthropy in education and international development.

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