

To what extent do philanthrocapitalist approaches to racial justice either perpetuate or dismantle structures of racial inequality?

Name: Hadi Shaikh | 741089

Due Date: 22/6/2025

Supervisor: prof.dr. Agni Kalfagianni

Word Count: 9999

Second Reader: Dr. Bonnie French

MSc Social Inequalities

Erasmus School of
Social and
Behavioural Sciences



**Erasmus
University
Rotterdam**



Abstract:

This thesis interrogates the power and limitations of philanthrocapitalism in the pursuit of racial justice. Contemporary philanthropy often prioritises impact-oriented solutions whilst subordinating racial equity. As a result, this study employs a Critical Discourse Analysis that is grounded in Critical Race Theory to examine the publications and grantmaking documents from three US-based foundations: Bill & Melinda Gates, Ford and W.K. Kellogg. The results reflect how language, engagement with Critical Race Theory, and community collaboration influence the advancement, or neglect, of racial equity.

The findings reveal that the Ford and Kellogg Foundations, who centre racial injustice in both research and practice, are able to create structural reform through the mobilisation of community voices. Meanwhile, the Gates Foundation reframes racial inequity through distortive prisms, such as diversity, rarely converting internal critique into substantive reform.

By mapping the discourse and operationalisation of racial equity agendas, this thesis finds that only foundations willing to foreground race, empower communities and engage in critical self-reflection are able to achieve catalytic change. This paper offers a framework for reimagining philanthropy's role in advancing transformative racial justice, arguing that discourse must be substantiated with a recalibration of power, practice and purpose.

Acknowledgments:

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my supervisors, prof.dr Agni Kalfagianni and dr. Bonnie French, who generously dedicated so much time to my project and showed unlimited patience to guide me through the process and have the wonderful ability to turn the most complex and confusing challenges into the simplest of solutions.

I would also like to thank my classmates for their constant presence, motivation and advice that supported me throughout.

Table of Contents

Abstract:	1
Acknowledgments:	2
1. Introduction	4
2. Theoretical Framework:	7
2.1 Critical Race Theory:	7
2.2 Philanthrocapitalism:	11
2.3. Cultural Capital	12
3. Methodology:	14
3.1 Case Selection:	14
3.2 Data Analysis:	17
3.3 Researcher Ethics	20
4. Results and Analysis	21
4.1. Foundations Background	21
4.2 (In)Direct Approaches to Racial Justice	23
4.3 How is Racial Inequality Framed Across All Foundations?	28
4.4 Alignment with Critical Race Theory:	33
4.5. Cultural Capital and Centring Community Voices	40
5. Conclusion	47
5.1. Limitations and Further Research:	48
Bibliography:	49
Appendix:	55

1. Introduction

The year 2020 marked a watershed moment for racial reckoning in the United States, but philanthropic support for black communities remains strikingly inadequate. Their funding peaked at just 1.9% of overall giving that year, before sharply declining to 1.3% in 2021 (Ponce, 2025). This underscores a broader pattern of chronic exclusion; although an estimated 42.2% of the US population identifies as non-White, foundation funding for people of colour has never exceeded 8.5% of total spending (US Census Bureau, 2024; Villanueva, 2018). Richard Foxworth describes these gaping chasms in racial justice funding as “the empirical facts of our [philanthropic] sector”, but in reality these voids are carved and exacerbated by dominant economic and political stakeholders (Foxworth, 2022).

This persistent underfunding occurs within the context of a mounting tendency to prioritise market-based solutions and instant impact over long-term reformation (Amarante, 2018). This phenomenon, known as philanthrocapitalism, describes the strategic application of resources and business acumen onto philanthropic activity with the promise of maximising investment return (Bishop & Green, 2008). However, philanthrocapitalism’s increasing influence over social and political agendas magnifies the problematic nature of racial disparities within resource allocation as U.S. private foundations only allocate less than 5% of philanthropic funding to communities of colour (Bishop & Green, 2015; Powell, 2023). These organisations contribute to the cyclical distribution of capital that potentially entrenches inequalities in a white-dominated field (Sullivan, 2020; Blackwell & Naylor, 2024). For instance, Echoing Green – a social impact fundraising organisation dedicated to racial justice – reported a \$20 million racial funding gap between black-led and white-led early-stage social enterprises (Dorsey et al., 2020).

The consequences of these funding patterns are profound. They illustrate how unconscious bias, paternalistic practices and the monopolisation of resources perpetuate white supremacy within philanthropic ecosystems. This manifests itself in philanthropic discourse as White highlights a “determining silence” that simultaneously masks and marks race’s central role in social development (White, 2002). This omission enables covert discrimination to hide behind a façade of racial justice mandates and sociological scholars call for “intentional and sustained attention” to vocalise the iterative schema of marginalisation within philanthropic literature (Logan & Feit, 2024). This thesis responds by performing the role of philanthropy’s “critical alter ego” and hopes to bridge the gap between research and practice to stimulate further introspection within philanthropic processes (van Gendt, 2022).

This study will critically analyse how these foundations construct and operationalize racial equity agendas. Drawing on Critical Race Theory (CRT) to centre intersectionality and lived experiences whilst employing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to uncover latent and overt narratives, this research seeks to spotlight race and challenge dominant ideologies. Through the analysis of three U.S.-based foundations, this thesis aims to bridge the gap between critical scholarship and philanthropic practice, offering insights that can foster genuine transformation toward racial justice. Following a clarification of the theoretical framework and methodology that this study employs, it will conduct a thorough and reflective analysis that is based on the following research question and its subsequent sub-questions:

"To what extent do philanthrocapitalist approaches to racial justice either perpetuate or dismantle structures of racial inequality?"

How do philanthrocapitalists discuss race and how explicitly do they approach racial equity?

How do their initiatives align with the core principles of Critical Race Theory?

To what extent do foundations prioritise the input of community or Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) voices in the design and implementation of their racial equity programs?

2. Theoretical Framework:

This thesis is grounded in Critical Race Theory (CRT) as it's the most salient form of analysis for understanding how racism and power structures intertwine. This is followed with an overview of philanthrocapitalism and also explores how ostensibly philanthropic initiatives can serve as vehicles for building cultural capital. The aim of this theoretical framework is to centre race at the heart of the research in order to explore philanthrocapitalist discourse on race and illuminate racial injustice.

2.1 Critical Race Theory:

Critical Race Theory offers the most incisive perspective for understanding the functionality of racial oppression as it foregrounds race and racism within the dominant cultural modes of expression (Bell, 1995). Critical Race Theory serves as the lodestar of this thesis, directing its critique and challenging embedded structural inequalities. Originating in U.S. academic fields in the 1980s, it “challenges the construction of race and racial power in American legal culture and society” (Crenshaw et al, 1995). The theory came to the fore through Derrick Bell’s work as he critiqued the omission of race from Critical Legal Studies which investigated how law functioned as a medium of hierarchical oppression (Bell, 1980). Critical Race Theory penetrates further than mere critique as it embodies a “desire not merely to understand the vexed bond between law and racial power but to *change* it” (Crenshaw et al, 1995, p.xii). CRT’s critical reflexivity provides an ideal touchstone for testing the veracity of racial equity initiatives by philanthropic foundations as it uncovers the ongoing dynamics of racialised power and its “embeddedness in practices and values which have been shorn of any explicit, formal manifestations of racism” (Crenshaw et al, 1995, p.xxix). In the context of this thesis, this theory performs the crucial function

of holding philanthropy to account as philanthropic organisations are largely able to exist “unbossed, unbothered by, and untethered to government, corporate shareholders, or regulatory entities” (Thomason, 2023). They tend to operate in the interstices between policy and institutions as their “political role derives primarily by filling a gap in resource provision” (Kalfagianni, 2022). CRT can elucidate the latent forms of racial oppression that run within these fault lines and this theory will penetrate façades of equity by proposing narrative change that can subvert white-dominated social practices. This thesis employs Critical Race Theory as it is a “gasp of emancipatory hope that law can serve liberation rather than domination” and hopes to utilise this to reflect on putative power dynamics. (West, 1995, p.xii).

Key Tenets of Critical Race Theory:

After examining a collection of influential works on Critical Race Theory, (Crenshaw et al., 1995), this study distilled its insights into four core concepts that reflect its multifaceted and interdisciplinary nature. These are: Racism as Normalised, Racism as Institutional, Race as Socially Constructed and Interest Convergence. These four tenets anchor the study but as CRT encompasses a broad range of principles, this thesis will also incorporate the allied notions of community activism and challenging systemic power structures.

Racism as Normalised

CRT calls attention to the normalisation of racism as an ordinary and conventional feature of society, invisibilising the phenomenon and making it much more difficult to address (Delgado & Stefancic, 2007). Philanthropic organisations often fail to acknowledge the endemic nature of racism or only undertake performative equity efforts that do not disrupt existing power hierarchies. For

example, a systematic review of foundations' communication following the Black Lives Matter movement revealed that many foundations conveyed subtly racist message and reinforced stereotypes despite publicly advocating for racial equity (Jung et al., 2022). This complicates philanthropy's transformative potential and highlights the need for persistent self-reflexivity that actively seeks to counter hegemonic whiteness (Crenshaw et al., 2019).

Racism as Institutional

Institutional racism refers to the ways in which racial inequality is sustained through entrenched systems and structure, rather than individual bias alone (Delgado & Stefancic, 2007). Philanthropic organisations must recognise how disparities in education, health and employment are not random but in fact predictable outcomes of putative power and privilege. These discriminatory practices often manifest in manifold ways within the organisations as funding priorities, decision-making groups and organisational cultures can all systematically disadvantage communities of colour (Scott & Leach, 2024). This structural bias can lead to exclusion and subordination of marginalised voices, creating long-term power imbalances that can only be corrected through commitment to transformational structural reform.

Race as Socially Constructed

CRT states that race is not a biological phenomenon but a social construct shaped by historical, colonial and economic forces designed to reinforce racial hierarchies (Omi & Winant, 2014). Within Western philanthropy, whiteness operates as a structural norm, enabling leadership groups to define other racial categories and resulting in the disproportionate distribution of power and resources (Scott & Leach, 2024). The reproduction of dominant narratives is particularly pernicious to public

perceptions of race as it can turn insidious ideology into lived experiences. CRT counters this through critical analysis and heightened focus on narrative and discourse, especially in relation to power structures.

Interest Convergence

The theory of interest convergence posits that racial justice only advances when it aligns with the interests of the dominant groups (Bell, 1980). This concept is particularly pertinent to philanthrocapitalist organisations, where progress is often contingent on corporate or elite desires rather than the needs of local communities (Scott & Leach, 2024). Interest convergence is often criticised for essentialising racial groups by assuming they possess monolithic interests; although it is important to recognise that it is also a “real and consequential political dynamic” that can be leveraged to advance equity or lay bare the reality of social justice movements (Pierson-Brown, 2022). Interest convergence reveals the conditional and ephemeral nature of social reform, encouraging philanthropists to be strategic and vigilant especially in relation to activism and advocacy. By understanding the dynamics between dominant stakeholders, CRT can anticipate patterns in racial justice movements and leverage this knowledge to create structured impact.

This overview of CRT simply demonstrates the necessity of a race-conscious theoretical approach that can engage with and subvert oppressive frameworks through a holistic understanding of race and power. CRT is central to this thesis’s understanding of how philanthrocapitalist processes engage with racial power dynamics. As Pierson-Brown notes, “the tenets of critical race theory offer additional entry points for evaluating and catalyzing progress toward equity” (Pierson-Brown, 2022). This thesis aligns with her vision by employing CRT to fully expound the interconnection between philanthrocapitalist foundations and racial justice.

2.2 Philanthrocapitalism:

Philanthrocapitalism is based on the premise of performing philanthropy in a manner that mirrors the for-profit world by leveraging market forces in an attempt to “harness the profit motive to achieve social good” (Bishop & Green, 2008, p.6). With traditional philanthropy being increasingly criticised for its inefficiency and ineffectiveness (Goldberg, 2009; MacAskill, 2015), philanthrocapitalism is built upon neoliberal models designed to circumvent the barriers faced by governmental and non-profit organisations but also focuses on concrete objectives and tangible results (Morvaridi, 2012a; McGoey, 2012).

However, these neoliberal ideals have also been critiqued for promoting systems of economic exploitation and entrenching inequalities (Amarante, 2018; Haydon et al., 2021). Rob Reich states that “Growing inequality might be a foe to civic comity, but it is a friend to private philanthropy” demonstrating the paradoxical truth of benefitting from exacerbating hegemonic and economic hierarchies (Reich, 2018). Philanthrocapitalism views justice as a by-product of profitable business operations and often overlooks the root causes of injustice, failing to critically analyse or acknowledge the giving foundation’s role in exploitative wealth accumulation and colonial injustice (Kalfagianni, 2022).

The significant power and influence that is wielded by philanthrocapitalist organisations necessitates an understanding of how they can shape racial justice agendas and exclude marginalised voices (Jung et al., 2022). Philanthrocapitalism is not a neutral process as it is embedded within the very systems of racial stratification it seeks to ameliorate. Philanthrocapitalist actors can appoint themselves in positions of epistemic authority and act as arbiters of best practice, meaning racial justice solutions are inextricable from Western knowledge systems.

The injurious combination of self-legitimation and a lack of regulation results in what Shiva describes as “forced recolonisation in modern garb” and Villanueva terms “colonialism in the empire’s new clothes” (Shiva, 2020; Villanueva, 2018). Under the guise of development and technological advancement, philanthrocapitalism can redirect racial justice movements to align with their own agendas. Therefore, philanthrocapitalism’s wealth of resources make it a critical site for theorising how its practices can either entrench or dismantle racial inequalities.

2.3. Cultural Capital

The idea of cultural capital, first articulated by Pierre Bourdieu, refers to aspects of cultural knowledge that convey social status and facilitate the accumulation of power and prestige (Bourdieu, 1977). The recent growth of philanthrocapitalist organisations has increasingly shifted philanthropic discourse from debates over altruism to questions of hegemony and cultural influence (Morvaridi, 2012b; Mediavilla & Garcia-Arias, 2019). These organisations seek social and political legitimacy in exchange for their funding and “the implications of such an approach are that the wealthy are able to maintain the status quo within the neoliberal context” (Kalfagianni, 2022). Whilst espousing libertarian values and universalism in order to justify their wealth accumulation (Dehlsen et al., 2025), such actors frequently overlook how philanthropy serves as an instrument of hegemony rooted in economic and cultural capital (Morvaridi, 2012b; Bourdieu, 1998).

The foundations selected for this study indicate their own cultural capital describing themselves as, “one of the world’s largest private philanthropic organizations”, committed to “investing in frontline institutions advancing human dignity around the world” and “fighting the greatest inequities in the world” (W.K. Kellogg, 2024a; Ford Foundation, 2024a; Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2025b). Such

self-descriptions serve to legitimise and reinforce their authority within the global hierarchy of influence.

Philanthropic funding is rarely neutral or unconditional. It typically entails numerous latent conditions making anything beyond the act of giving an exercise of power. (Kalfagianni, 2022, Partzsch & Fuchs, 2012). Bourdieu builds on this as he believes that the “gratuitous gift does not exist”, explaining how philanthropic giving is invariably infused with ulterior motives of accumulating cultural and symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1998). This thesis will focus on the intersection of the foundations’ cultural capital and their relationship with their grantees. The gradual accretion of economic and hegemonic power enables philanthrocapitalist organisations to mould political agendas and giving trends to personal priorities, resulting in the persistent exclusion of marginalised groups (Scott & Leach, 2024). Self-reflexivity and community empowerment are crucial practices that can offset the imbalanced distribution of power. Understanding how foundations leverage their cultural capital to pursue their own self-interest at the expense of local or community needs is essential to analysing their relationship with racial injustice.

The combination of Critical Race Theory, philanthrocapitalism and cultural capital elucidate separate but interwoven strands of philanthropic engagement with racial injustice. Critical Race Theory ensures race is centred within a white-dominated field whilst philanthrocapitalism and cultural capital heighten awareness of how economic and personal motives can discreetly influence racial justice agendas. All three theories are necessary in order to build a comprehensive understanding of how racial discourse is altered within the context of market-based philanthropy.

3. Methodology:

3.1 Case Selection:

The multiple case study approach is adopted as it allows for in-depth investigations of the stated motivations and initiatives of various foundations, enabling a cross-examination of how they might contribute to or attenuate racial injustice. Multiple cases increase generalisability but also demonstrate how systemic inequality is reinforced across a wider cultural context (Adams et al.,2022).

The foundations were selected from the Action Research for Co-Development (ARCO) database (ARCO, 2024). ARCO is a university centre based in Tuscany, Italy that provides specialised research, training and consultancy services focused on inclusive development, social economy and impact evaluation. They have worked on 280 projects with 130 clients in 33 countries around the world. Other databases such as candid.org were considered but ARCO's international network, grounding in academia and research foci made it a credible and valid source for case selection. In order to minimise researcher bias, the following parameters were applied:

I. Highest Funding

The three foundations were selected from the top 20 of ARCO's list of World's 100 largest philanthropic foundations (ARCO, 2024). Philanthrocapitalist entities with the largest endowments often exert outsized influence on racial justice agendas and sociocultural trends, making them pivotal focal points for analysis.

II. Focus on Racial Justice

The foundations had to express a clear aim to tackle racial injustice in order to effectively analyse how they discuss race. Without a specific focus on racial equality, it would not be possible to critically evaluate how/if their approach perpetuates racial injustice.

III. Availability of Public Data

Each foundation had to have sufficient public data that could be utilised for discourse analysis. This includes grant documents, annual reports, mission statements, project summaries and all pertinent information accessible from their website or other online sources.

After combing through the list to ensure all the foundations met the above criteria, the following three foundations were chosen (see [Figure 1](#)). They offer the richest amount of publicly available data, span varied focus areas and have been operational for different periods of time, meaning that any patterns spotted would not be part of an isolated trend but demonstrative of a broader systemic framework of philanthropic approaches.

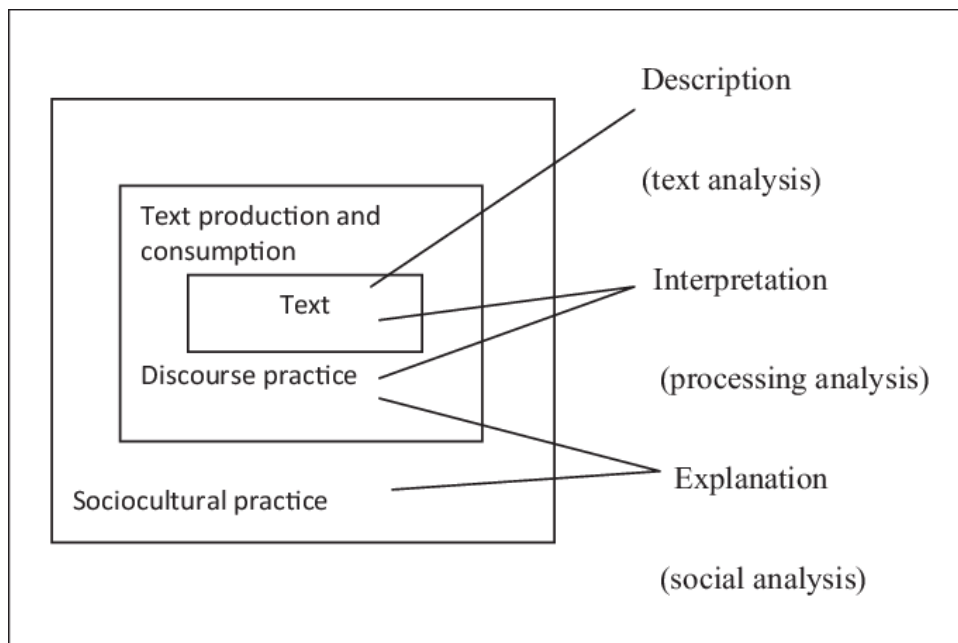
Figure 1. Foundations Overview:

Foundation Name	Founding Year	Estimated Annual Endowment (\$US)	Home location	Main focuses
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	2000	75.2 billion	Seattle, USA	Healthcare, education, poverty reduction
Ford Foundation	1936	16 billion	New York, USA	Fight poverty and injustice, strengthen democratic values and promote international cooperation
W.K. Kellogg Foundation	1930	8.8 billion	Michigan, USA	Child development and education

3.2 Data Analysis:

This study was conducted via Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of reports, websites, published proposals and documents that pertain to racial justice programs from the specified foundations. More details on the quantity and form of these documents are provided later in this section. CDA enables the researcher to move beyond hermeneutic understanding by uncovering how discourse both reflects and shapes the implicit relationships between language, power, and ideology (Wodak, 2014). Discourse analysis relies upon the fundamental assumption that language is a medium oriented towards action and function and is intentionally used to construct social realities (Elliott, 1996). This dynamic aligns with Fairclough's 3-dimensional model (see [Figure 2](#)) which I used to explore the connection between textual analysis and sociocultural processes.

Figure 2. Fairclough's 3-Dimensional Model of Critical Discourse Analysis:



Citation - (Dahl et al., 2013)

This diagram demonstrates how discourse analysis contributes to cultural production as cultural models connect words to broader storylines which are “distributed across the different sorts of ‘expertise’ and viewpoints found in the group” (Gee, 1999,p.81). Fairclough also argues for CDA’s broader relevance, noting its commitment “to take the part of those who suffer from linguistic-discursive forms of domination and exploitation” (Fairclough, 2010,p.186). Therefore, Critical Discourse Analysis isn’t just limited to conventional academic analysis but also constitutes ideologies and circulates societal power as it “involves patterns of belief and habitual action as well as patterns of language” (Johnstone 2003,p.3).

Whilst the multifaceted and malleable nature of discourse means it does not contain a “unitary theoretical framework”, it does explore the interrelated structures in the reproduction of social dominance (Van Dijk, 2001,p.353). It is this aspect of CDA which is most relevant to this study as I explored how discourse is used to both resist and reinforce societal inequalities.

The study primarily relied upon inductive coding but given its grounding in Critical Race Theory, some of the codes were predefined in order to assess if these foundations centre race and racism in the same way. These deductive codes were based on the main tenets of CRT and identified any mention of race or racism as institutional, normalised or socially constructed or any discussion of interest convergence (Crenshaw et al., 1995). All remaining codes emerged through a close reading of subtle motifs and iterative patterns to decipher each foundation’s commitment to racial justice. The full codebook and their operational definitions are provided in the [appendix](#). In order to minimise researcher bias with selection, all documents relevant to racial justice programs, including annual reports of foundations and progress updates, were carefully examined. In total, 224 documents

were analysed across the 3 foundations including annual reports, blog posts, news articles and public statements. The earliest dated back to 2014 from the Ford Foundation and each foundation's blog ran up to 2025. Each document met Flick's framework for document testing, fulfilling the 4 necessary criteria of authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning (Flick, 2018). Document analysis enabled the study to capitalise on the plethora of publicly available information and utilised triangulation and historically situated data to enhance the validity and representativeness of its conclusion. The documents were studied to investigate how these foundations discuss race, define racial equality and frame proposed solutions. For example, one hypothesis was that the foundations would measure the outcome of their projects through Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) metrics, such as fulfilling diversity quotas, over acknowledging the institutionalised nature of racism.

Data was reviewed in multiple readings to identify patterns within their approach to tackling racial injustice and develop a coding framework that systematically identified the frequencies at which these approaches are employed. Eventually, this process revealed intertextual relationships, enabling the comparison of the actions of stakeholders in order to reflect patterns of shared sociocultural meanings (Morgan, 2022; Braun et al., 2019). By adopting an abductive coding framework that was flexible enough to adapt to emerging themes, the study utilised reflexivity to prioritise the discovery of mutual discursive interpretations over artificial objectivity. I endeavoured to maintain an openness throughout the data analysis in order to mitigate the inevitability of researcher bias, maintaining transparency throughout theoretical choices, coding decisions and application of knowledge.

3.3 Researcher Ethics

This thesis upholds the required ethical considerations by respecting the anonymity and confidentiality of participants involved in this data, in line with best practices for discourse analysis (Gorup, 2019). All of the analysed documents are publicly accessible and I try to display cultural sensitivity and respectful engagement at all times in order to avoid misrepresentation. I embrace the inherent subjectivity within this research as “scholarship about race in America can never be written from a distance of detachment or with an attitude of objectivity” and therefore articulating my positionality increases the validity of my study. (Crenshaw et al,1995, p.xiii). I acknowledge the importance of open and interpretive reflexivity especially as CDA engages with power dynamics and ideological constructions. Whilst intersectionality did not consistently emerge in the data, it remains central to Critical Race Theory. Accordingly, I seek to identify myself intersectionally.

As a British-Pakistani male and educationally privileged person of colour, I approach this research with an awareness of both my own personal experiences and the societal structures that shape the discourse around race and philanthropy. My background has also enabled me to access a wealth of academic resources which influence my interpretation and prioritisation of narratives. This privilege has afforded me certain analytical tools but also necessitates ongoing reflexivity to ensure I am attentive to marginalised voices or experiences which may be overlooked. By explicitly acknowledging my own positionality, I clarify which aspects of the data I find salient or worthy of critique. For example, my own experience has quickened my awareness to sensitising language such as “diversity” or “inclusion” that might present social progress without engaging with structural issues. Whether I project my own expectations or identify subtle forms of racial bias and prejudice, my ultimate aim is to uncover how philanthrocapitalist discourse both reproduces and challenges

racial inequalities, with a keen awareness of how my identity shapes the critical lens of this analysis.

4. Results and Analysis

4.1. Foundations Background

4.1.a. Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation:

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (Gates Foundation) emerged in 2000, subsuming the William H. Gates Foundation that was established 6 years earlier (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation 2025b). Initially focused on advancing scientific research and global health, the foundation also addresses systemic inequities, particularly poverty. Its work in racial justice only gained prominence in the 2020s following criticism for its “blind spots” and lacklustre approach to addressing structural racism in favour of other priorities (Schwab, 2021). In 2021, it formalised its Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) strategy, officially stating its intent to embed “DEI as fundamental principles” across all operations and pursue a future where health and educational outcomes are “unimpeded by race, gender and other human differences” (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2025). The foundation has undergone significant leadership transformation recently with Melinda Gates resigning as co-chairman in 2024 and the addition of four new trustees in 2022 (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2025b). Whilst this did increase the board’s racial and geographic diversity, the decision-making power remains largely concentrated with Bill Gates and the CEO Mark Suzman and the leadership group of the foundation has been criticised for its rigidity (Beasley, 2022).

4.1.b Ford Foundation:

The Ford Foundation began in 1936 with an initial gift of \$25,000 from Edsel Ford and evolved from a Michigan-based organisation to a global entity dedicated to “the advancement of human welfare” through peacebuilding, democratic efforts and education (Ford Foundation, 2024a). Their focus on racial justice dates back to the Civil Rights Movement but they reaffirmed their commitment in 2020 with a \$180 million investment into racial justice efforts prioritising grassroots movements, advocacy and litigation (Ford Foundation, 2024). The foundation is publicly acknowledged to have one of the most racially and ethnically diverse boards in major philanthropy and has been led by Darren Walker, the organisation’s 2nd African-American president, since 2013 (Lindsay & Koenig, 2017). By its own admission, the foundation’s board remains largely urban-based, but they have been a leader in tackling racial justice around the world (Wimpee, 2022).

4.1.c W.K. Kellogg Foundation:

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation (Kellogg Foundation) was founded in 1936 by cereal magnate Will Keith Kellogg, initially focusing on the needs of children before expanding to cover health, education and rural development (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2017). By the 1980s, the foundation was one of the world’s largest and conducted work on 4 continents but in 2007 it underwent a radical transformation as it identified racism as an overlooked obstacle in the philanthropic world and committed to “being the most effective anti-racist organization in the U.S” (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2024). In 2015, the Board of Trustees, in collaboration with 144 national partners launched their Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation program to combat the “seemingly intractable reach and impacts of racism in America” (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2023). Since 2014, CEO La June Montgomery Tabron – both the

foundation's first woman and African-American to hold the role – has presided over a board that, as of 2023, contained 52% women and 30% of people from underrepresented backgrounds. (Light, 2023).

4.2 (In)Direct Approaches to Racial Justice

The analysis section of this thesis is guided by the [sub-questions](#) stated earlier and will first assess how explicitly each foundation engages with racial equity. These sub-questions reflect the Theoretical Framework's emphasis on centring race through the lens of CRT, the influence of philanthrocapitalism, and how the deployment of cultural capital affects the empowerment of community voices. Before investigating CRT alignment and community engagement, it is necessary to examine how each foundation addresses race in practice. Whilst the Ford and W.K. Kellogg Foundations launched comprehensive programs designed to engender racial equality, the Gates Foundation seems more hesitant to place explicit focus on countering racial injustice.

4.2.a Gates and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

In 2022, as part of Black History Month, the Gates Foundation declared its ambition to become “a global leader in promoting and demonstrating racial equity and justice in the areas that we work” stating that this could be achieved “only through greater diversity, equity, and inclusion” (Grays et al., 2022). Paulin Basinga, the Director of Global Policy at the foundation, expressed his concerns over the veracity of this claim, stating that whilst “The foundation has clearly shown an ability to prioritize DEI significantly”, he doesn't believe the “organization's culture is changing or adapting enough to allow those different views to express themselves and

to support them” (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation,2021). This scepticism is substantiated by the foundation’s limited integration of race as a central focus.

A review of the Gates Foundation’s Ideas blog, currently containing 326 articles dating back to 2018, reveals that while 169 articles address Covid-19, only 13 even mention the concept of race or racism (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2025a). Similarly, despite announcing 3235 grants focused on gender inequality and 617 for Covid-19, only 52 are specifically dedicated to racial equity. Although the foundation’s global health and gender equality commitments partially explain this disparity, this data does not align with their professed aim that racial inequity is one of its priorities. Mark Suzman, on his 1-year anniversary of being CEO, was pressed on how the Gates Foundation was responding to the “time of racial reckoning” that was highlighted by the pandemic and he responded with the assurance that:

Both in the United States and globally as part of our internal diversity, equity, and inclusion agenda, it’s [racial equity] something I’ve made a priority since becoming CEO. (Suzman, 2021)

However, these words stand in direct opposition to Bill Gates’s perspective who recently voiced his concern that “DEI has gone too far at times”, imploring the United States to be a land that should be “more equal opportunity than equal outcomes” (Bratz, 2025). The conflicting perspectives of the Gates Foundation’s chairman, CEO, and a director reveal internal disorder within the senior section of the organisation and this tension is evident in their publications.

Despite releasing their inaugural DEI report in 2021 in an attempt to elucidate the importance of racial equity, race was only referenced on four occasions in the document. It was mentioned in relation to the murder of George Floyd in 2020, describing racial and ethnic minorities in employee censuses and when mentioning

the work of other foundations in the acknowledgements (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2021). This demonstrates that whilst race is nominally a priority for the Gates Foundation, it remains peripheral to their objectives. Until 2020, references to race were mostly vague and abstract, with little substantive clarity. Hari Menon, the director of the Indian office, stated that the “the foundation’s jargon and processes can create an unnecessary barrier for local organizations” and this indirect and complex approach has “very significant implications for the impact that we can have” (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2021,p.39). This is evidenced by the foundation’s contentious decision to focus on diversity instead of race. Wade identifies this reframing as one example of “rhetorical devices used by corporate spokespersons that ignore persisting problems with discrimination and racism by focusing solely on diversity efforts (Wade, 2004). The Gates Foundation’s approach to embracing a mosaic of identities through diverse perspectives substitutes genuine engagement with racial justice for superficial inclusion. As Gotanda argues, “Diversity in its narrow sense does not truly challenge existing racial practice” but instead “accommodates present racial divisions by casting them in a positive light” (Gotanda, 1995, p.271). This rhetorical manoeuvre homogenises the distinct challenges of profound and historically rooted oppression, collapsing the particularity of racial violence and inequity into a nebulous array of interchangeable narratives. In this process, the severity of racial discrimination is obscured beneath a veneer of generalised diversity that ultimately serves to soften and subordinate the urgent realities of racial harm. In order to combat this indirect perpetuation of racial injustice, programs must proactively confront these issues with clarity and purpose.

4.2.b. Ford and Kellogg's Racial Justice Programs:

Ford and Kellogg's racial justice work severely juxtaposes the nebulous and indecisive approach adopted by the Gates foundation.. In fact, Capri St Vil, a grantee of the Kellogg foundation spoke about the necessity of directness in their racial equity training:

St Vil remembered that a deciding factor was their explicitness in naming race and racism. She shared, "They said the word racism. When the words are not said, we cannot really address it." (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2023a,pp.30-31).

The Kellogg foundation discusses the pervasive nature of racism labelling it as "one of the biggest obstacles to solving the challenges we face in our communities" and advocates for racial healing as a universal process "that can benefit all people because we are all living in and affected by the same racialized world" (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2023). The foundation also defines a clear goal as it states:

Achieving racial equity means that a person's racial identity doesn't determine their experiences or the life outcomes for them and their family, and instead creates an environment where all families and children thrive (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2024).

This clarity confirms racial equity as a primary intention of the foundation and stands in marked contrast to the Gates Foundation who seems reticent to provide any clear definitions or objectives. The Kellogg Foundation pronounces racial healing as an open process which acknowledges "the legacy of past wrongs and the systemic impacts of racism", building upon "trust and authentic relationships within communities", covering both the interpersonal and institutional aspects of structural racism (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2023a).

Similarly, the Ford Foundation has institutionalised its commitment to this philosophy of direct confrontation through a dedicated branch for Gender, Racial and Ethnic Justice. It is unflinching in its acknowledgement of racial wealth inequality as it amplifies the voice of leading authors and activists such as Steve Phillips and Michelle Alexander who state the importance of “accepting and acknowledging the painful answers” and “investing time and resources” whilst “shifting our understanding to a broader reality” of interconnected issues (Phillips, 2025; Alexander, 2024). These statements are not merely rhetorical; they are substantiated through significant funding and structured programs. The Kellogg Foundation has committed over \$32 million to date to support Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation (TRHT) programs around the country, each one supported by individual growth funds designed to ensure its long-term stability in each locality (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2023). The Ford Foundation has an equally robust legacy of movement building, committing over 40% of its domestic funding towards racial justice programs in the 1960s and have continually funded grassroots movements ever since (Wimpee, 2022). These targeted programs enable both the Kellogg and Ford foundations to address race more deeply, raising awareness through advocacy but also maintaining a strong emphasis on community activation.

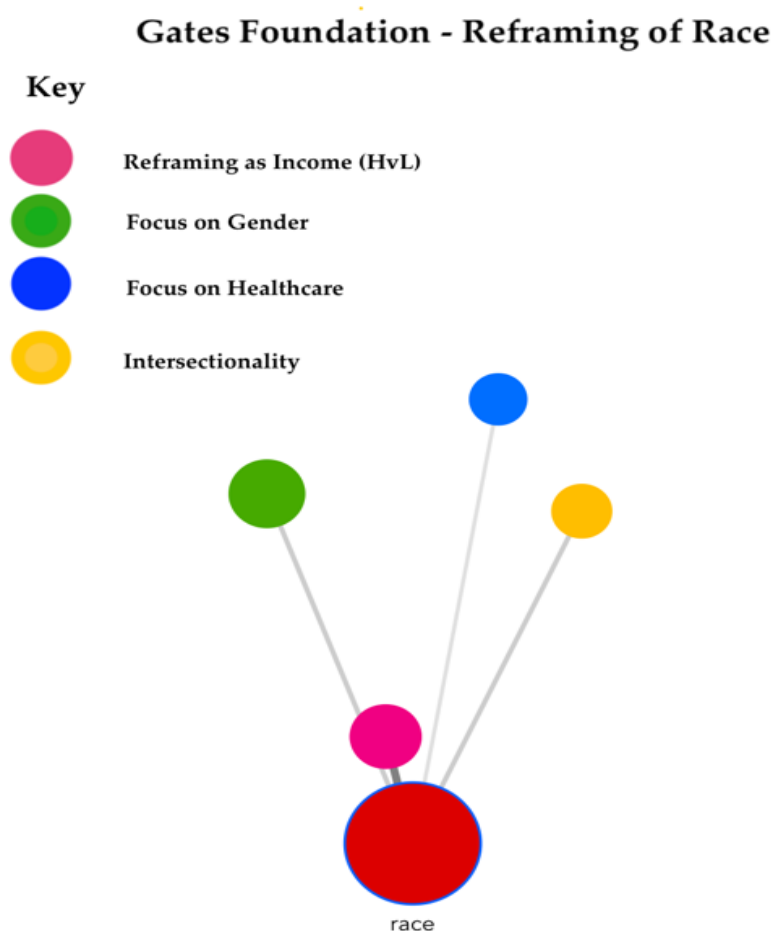
4.3 How is Racial Inequality Framed Across All Foundations?

All three foundations possess the shared goal of racial equity but their strategies differ markedly. Understanding their definition of equity is a vital prerequisite to analysing their initiatives themselves. Whilst the Gates Foundation primarily focuses on health outcomes, Ford seeks racial justice through activism and economic development and Kellogg's primary focus is on child development. Evidently, these are not disparate domains and often overlap but the extent to which race is explicitly centred within their work reveals their true parameters for racial justice. Within the Gates foundation, there appears to be a significant disconnect between stated intention and tangible action, a lacuna that is highlighted by their own research. In their own DEI report, 85% of their employee respondents said their leaders had taken steps to embed DEI into the culture and practice of their team and 68% of these team leaders agreed that these goals were "documented, meaningful and challenging" (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2021). Furthermore, 91% of respondents said they were familiar with the foundation's values and their specific behaviours implying a transparent internal dialogue that seeks to inform and educate (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2021). In spite of this reformist attitude, their funding portfolio remains incongruent with these espoused values. Only 30% of employee respondents stated that their "team's portfolio of philanthropic investments was in appropriate balance with regard to diversity" and the actual proportion of grants that were written for organisations outside the United States or Western Europe sat below 20% (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2021). This reveals both an internal disillusionment within the teams and also unveils a deeper hypocrisy within their strategy. Bill Gates recently expressed his beliefs that DEI should be reframed as he stated, "These [diversity] things [can] be reborn in a better way [with] low income as

a key thing, not just race” (Bratz, 2025). Despite persistent efforts to conflate racial inequalities with income inequalities, the Gates foundation does not structurally address either axis as nearly 82% of the foundation’s global programs funding went to high-income countries in 2021 (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2021). Meanwhile, the Ford Foundation doesn’t just proclaim its “commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion” but its claims are evidenced by its funding practices as “More than 80 percent of all grantees report that their Ford grant benefits historically disadvantaged groups, and 84 percent of our US grantees focus primarily on BIPOC beneficiaries” (Center for Effective Philanthropy, 2021). The Kellogg Foundation also warns against the dangers of non-targeted support stating that “colorblind” approaches is a “disservice to how we learn to coexist” and makes racial healing impossible (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2024).

Through Atlas.ti’s co-occurrence analysis, I created diagrams to demonstrate how foundations discuss race in relation to other focus areas. [Figure 3](#) illuminates the Gates Foundation’s association of racial and income inequality yet their funding approach fails to reflect this discursive pattern. Whilst discussing race, they failed to address intersectionality, treating gender equality and healthcare as disparate issues, but there was a strong co-occurrence with income. Especially within discussions of educational attainment, mentions of race were almost always accompanied by the term ‘low-income’ students, suggesting that race alone is not a sufficient reason for diverging educational outcomes. Despite essentially fusing race and low income into one category, the foundation does not undertake the “revolutionary” systemic reform that Kellogg and Ford advocate for and instead seems to circulate wealth amongst larger organisations and institutions, thereby maintaining a clear power dynamic over its grantees (Phillips, 2025).

Figure 3. Force Diagram of Gates Foundation's Discussion of Race:

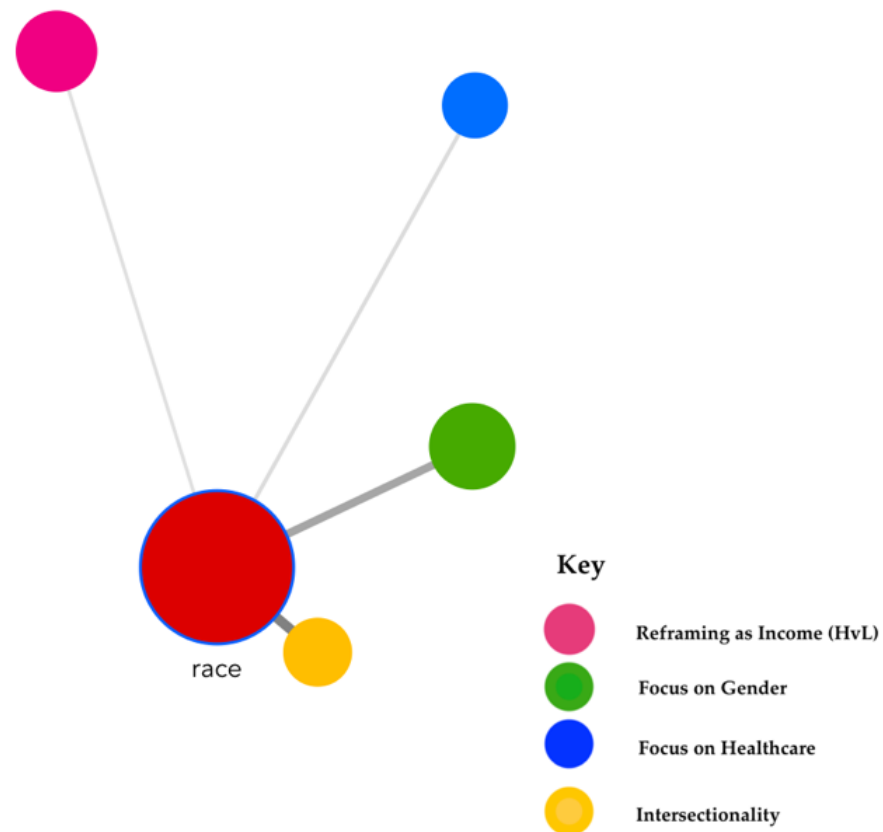


This diagram was made using Atlas.ti's co-occurrence analysis and shows the overlap of coding categories within Gates Foundation documents. The shorter the distance between the nodes (circles), the greater the co-occurrence. Thus, the Gates Foundation often equated race with income inequality but did not take a very intersectional approach.

[Figure 4](#) illustrates the Ford Foundation's distinctly more intersectional outlook on race as they distinguish between racial and wealth inequalities, addressing each as a product of structural injustice. The Ford Foundation consistently demonstrate a nuanced understanding of how systemic racial inequality produces diverging outcomes across healthcare, property ownership, employment and all aspects of society. They speak about "deep structural inequalities in access to healthcare in the United States, resulting in a disparate impact on pregnant and birthing people of color" as well as drawing attention to chronic underfunding in global giving patterns stating that "In 2018, out of nearly \$70 billion in foundation giving globally, less than half of one percent went to Black feminist social movements" (Ford Foundation, 2020; 2021). The Ford Foundation also discusses race in relation to wealth inequalities stating that "In the United States, black families hold one tenth the wealth of a typical white family, but black people with disabilities are even worse off with 60 percent more likely to live in poverty than their white counterparts" (Walker, 2020). Crucially, they always contextualise these inequalities within a larger framework of systemic injustice aligning with CRT's insistence on interrogating the social dimensions of race and power.

Figure 4. Force Diagram of Ford Foundation's Discussion of Race:

Ford Foundation Reframing of Race



This diagram was also made using Atlas.ti's co-occurrence analysis and shows the overlap of coding categories within Ford Foundation documents. The shorter the distance between the nodes (circles), the greater the co-occurrence. This chart demonstrates the Ford Foundation's increased focus on intersectionality and gender within the context of race as opposed to reframing racial issues as financial inequity.

Both the Kellogg and Ford Foundations consistently foreground the history and ongoing reality of racial inequality in the United States, whilst the Gates Foundation remains hesitant to be as explicit in its critique. Whilst centring racial injustice and explicitly recognizing its pervasive influence within societal institutions is a foundational aspect of CRT - and therefore this study—this merely represents the starting point (Bell, 1995). CRT moves further to interrogate the complex social dimensions of race, and this thesis critically examines the extent to which these foundations embody and operationalize the principles of this framework.

4.4 Alignment with Critical Race Theory:

The study operationalised four core CRT concepts as deductive codes to assess whether foundations were discussing race in a manner that acknowledged historical injustices and maintained a clear focus on social activism. These codes were: Discusses Interest Convergence, Race is Socially Constructed, Racism as Institutional and Racism as Normalised. These codes were applied for both the problems described by the foundations and their proposed solutions, to provide a holistic insight into whether race was genuinely centred in their work.

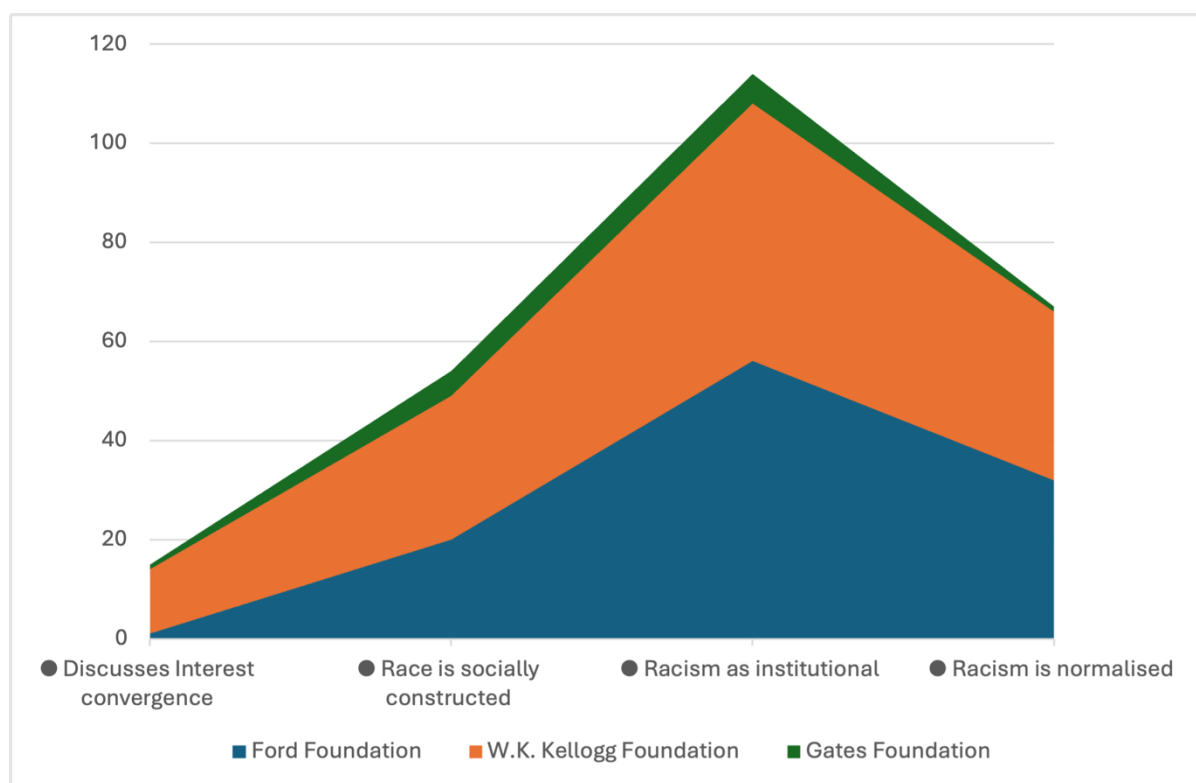
[Figures 5](#) and [6](#), generated using Atlas.ti's code-document analysis, demonstrate the varying significance that these foundations place on the critical tenets of CRT. Ford and Kellogg demonstrate far more awareness of racism as a pervasive, socialised phenomenon that disrupts institutions and daily lives. The most frequent references pertained to institutional or systemic racism, acknowledging that racism is not an aberrational phenomenon but a concept that is woven into the fabric of social structures and cultural practices. The Kellogg Foundation proved to be the most explicit in their discourse surrounding race, persistently drawing attention to the

structural nature of racism. By contrast, the Gates Foundation is less forthcoming, often relegating discussions of race to subtext or conflating them with other axes of inequality, thus perpetuating a discourse that permits racial injustice to persist unchallenged in the background. The [graph below](#) is a visual representation of the same data, demonstrating how each foundation follows the same pattern, discussing institutional frameworks of racism above all other forms. As philanthrocapitalist organisations, they predominantly work on the macro scale, explaining the prioritisation of larger structures but Ford and Gates’ reluctance to discuss interest convergence could imply a lack of self-reflexivity as it is a key concept for any profit-driven and impact-oriented organisation.

Figure 5. Critical Race Theory Comparison across Foundations Table:

	 Ford Foundation  84  238	 Gates Foundation  104  355	 W.K. Kellogg Foundation  36  191
  Discusses Interest convergence  15	1	1	13
  Race is socially constructed  54	20	5	29
  Racism as institutional  114	56	6	52
  Racism is normalised  67	32	1	34
Totals	109	13	128

Figure 6. Critical Race Theory Comparison across Foundations Graph:



This graph represents how often each CRT code was referred to by each foundation, effectively serving as a microcosm for the whole thesis as it denotes the extent to which foundations prioritise CRT in their approach.

The Ford Foundation, alongside Kellogg, persistently highlights how racism functions within, between and through institutions (Bell, 1995). They both demonstrate how the confluence of legal systems, social services and public policies can create an intransigent framework which stubbornly refuses efforts towards equity and justice. They recognise the scale of this task as they endorse structural change and are leading proponents of advocacy, with the Ford Foundation especially outspoken over political injustice. It critiques the rigidity of US immigration policies which “deny public benefits and services”, meaning “undocumented immigrants and their family

members face innumerable hurdles when it comes to their health, education, and economic security” (Ford Foundation, 2020). They also draw attention to the matrix of oppression that exists within the incarceration system suggesting the \$180 billion spent annually to combat recidivism would be “better spent on critical services, transformative programs, and infrastructure that make communities safe, healthy, and vibrant” (Ford Foundation 2020). The foundation leverages its cultural capital to propose socio-political change by combining targeted funding and grants with a desire to shift public and political discourse. They demonstrated this combination with a nationwide Just Cities and Regions (JCR) that focused on addressing inequitable housing in the United States. The program began in 2015 at “a time of growing racial and income inequality” and began with “an analysis that to date, the operation of the American economy is deeply connected to race and enduring racial inequality” as well as “a recognition that local change is constrained by state policy” (Hester Street, 2022). This contextual grounding in racial inequality allowed the program to address the “centrality of place to people’s lived experience”, evolving their model from traditional place-based philanthropy to a “strategy conscious of place” (Hester Street, 2022). This comprehensive and contextualised approach led them to the following realisation:

The lessons shared here reveal the core challenges of winning structural, systemic change at scale: the most effective near-term and long-term strategies for scaled change and the balance between the immediate and long-term; the interplay between power, narrative, systems, and place; the centrality of race; and the complexity of working towards change in a shifting context (Hester Street, 2022).

This showcases a clearly defined long-term vision and an understanding of the various determinants of social change and how to navigate them. The program

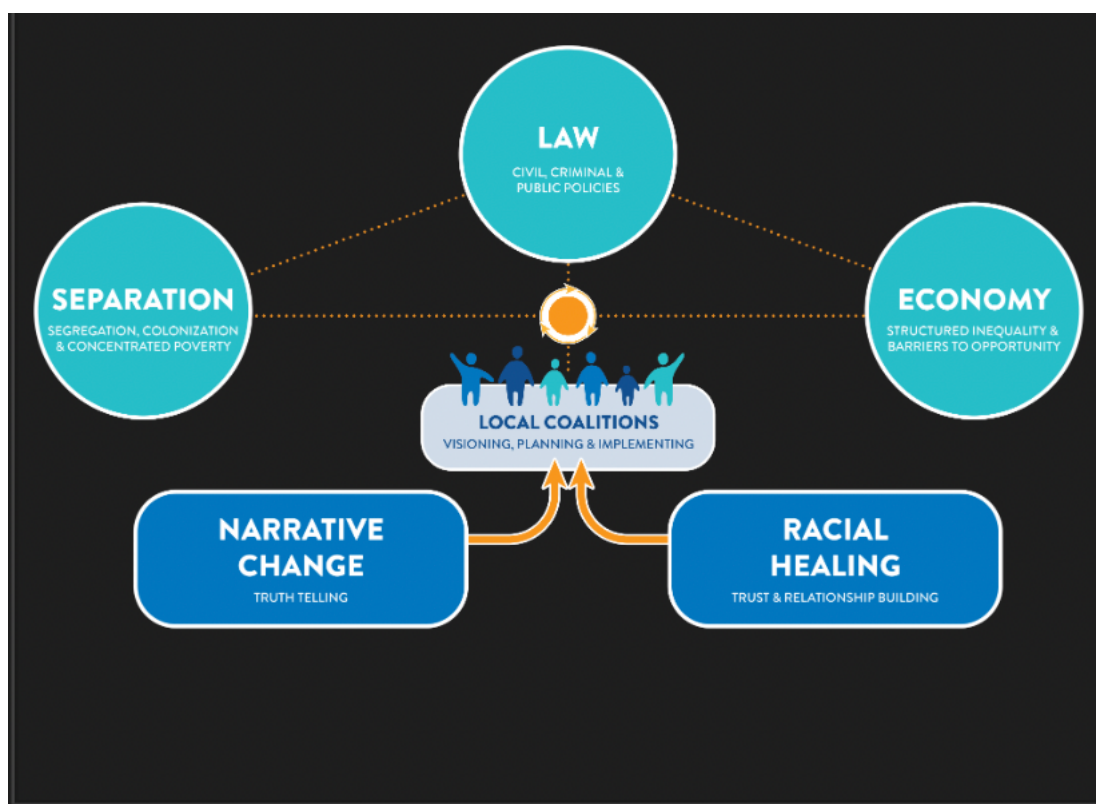
“elevated the often implicit/embedded notions of power”, ranging from “civic power to narrative power” and therefore actualising an understanding of CRT with the potency of discourse analysis (Hester Street,2022). Most importantly, the program “renewed racial justice as a central focus”, and the Ford Foundation did not just highlight their own work but amplified the voices of multiple grassroots and global organisations collectively striving for systemic change.

4.4.a Engaging with Community Voices

Whilst this was not classified as a key tenet of CRT as it is a broader concept, it constitutes a vital component of the framework’s commitment to impact-oriented activism and collective empowerment. The Ford and Kellogg foundations are once again spearheading efforts to catalyse collective action. Michelle Alexander spoke through the Ford Foundation about the necessity of pushing beyond “civil disobedience” to force widespread debate and “create culture change” (Alexander, 2024). The foundation also collaborated with Deepa Iyer who spoke about the marginalisation of issues faced by people of colour within political debates. She stressed the importance of investing in and cultivating movements that “push the political parties to actually respond to us rather than curry their favour” (Penttila, 2016). The foundation’s JCR initiative exemplifies this philosophy by centring racial justice and BIPOC communities in its approach to housing equity. Rather than limiting engagement to consultation, JCR prioritised “resident control, power, and co-governance,” building local leadership and fostering durable, community-anchored infrastructure for systemic change (Hester Street,2022). Ford’s work in post-Katrina New Orleans, for example, shifted the philanthropic paradigm from short-term crisis intervention to long-term investment in community resilience and power-building, demonstrating the efficacy of centring race, place, and power in philanthropic strategy (Hester Street, 2022). The Kellogg Foundation’s TRHT framework also integrates

community-driven narrative and discourse change as catalysts for social progress. This process, outlined in [Figure 7](#), aligns legal reforms with grassroots activism, advancing a holistic model of racial healing. This collaboration is harmonious with the Ford Foundation’s JCR program and CRT principles, demonstrating how Critical Race Theory can create a universal foundation for implementing racial justice programs.

Figure 7. W.K. Kellogg Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation Framework (W.K. Kellogg, 2023)



4.4.b Interest Convergence: The Business Case for Racial Equity:

Of the three foundations, only Kellogg explicitly leverages the CRT concept of interest convergence, utilising economic incentives to promote the cause for racial equity (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2018). They do not directly advocate for interest convergence but they emphasise how closing the racial wealth gap can “align with the

interests of those in power”, projecting an \$8 trillion gain in GDP by eliminating racial wealth inequity (Pierson-Brown,2022; W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2018). They also outline how \$50 billion can be saved in annual prison costs if incarceration rates for Black and Hispanic Americans matched those of Whites as well as projecting a gargantuan \$230 billion economic gain per annum if racial health disparities are eliminated by 2050 (W.K. Kellogg Foundation,2018). The foundation aims for racial equity in all sectors, asking for more investment in black-owned business and local economies, again appealing to interest convergence by stating that racially diverse companies can return 30% more capital to investors (W.K. Kellogg Foundation,2023a). This reframing does not diminish the importance of racial equity or dilute the sincerity of their ambition to achieve it but it does harness the logic of interest convergence to generate emotional and economic investment from dominant stakeholders. This approach adds a pragmatic dimension to Kellogg’s CRT-informed strategy, creating new avenues towards racial equity.

This section demonstrates how aligning foundation values with the main tenets of CRT enables philanthropy to transcend superficial acknowledgements of race and meaningfully shift narratives, policies and practices at scale. Ford’s commitment to advocacy and narrative change, coupled with Kellogg’s strategic use of economic arguments, exemplifies a sophisticated application of CRT principles and underscores the necessity of centring race in the pursuit of transformative justice.

4.5. Cultural Capital and Centring Community Voices

4.5.a Self-Reflection

The first step towards transforming hegemonic cultural capital into collaborative efforts is an introspective self-reflection. This process is vital within philanthropic endeavours not only for fostering strategic clarity and continuous improvement but, crucially, for holding organisations accountable and preventing mission drift.. The section examines each organisation's awareness of their own deficiencies and which areas they highlight for improvement.

Whilst all three foundations solicit their feedback in different ways, the Gates Foundation is notably transparent in sharing its internal assessments. An extensive employee survey revealed that only 43% of respondents believed that decisions made by the foundation's leaders aligned with the foundation's DEI commitments (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2021). This represents a staggering disconnect between the foundation's external activity and the employees' internal perception as over half of the organisation believe that the leadership team's efforts are incongruent with the foundation's values. Furthermore, only 27% of their respondents felt that the foundation's system for performance assessment was fair, transparent, and consistent, compounding this perception of inner turmoil (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2021). Despite public commitments to diversity and inclusion, the foundation struggles to realise these principles internally. Wade asserts that "diversity efforts, without antidiscrimination efforts, increase the likelihood that the company will be engaged in litigating and mediating disputes about discrimination" (Wade, 2004). This is borne out by workplace experience: 24% of Gates Foundation employees reported experiencing microaggressions in the workplace, comparable to the national

average of 26%, and 73% of those incidents were not addressed to the reportee's satisfaction (McGirt, 2019; Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2021). This lack of accountability underscores the gap between aspiration and practice, highlighting the necessity for deeper institutional change.

The Ford Foundation placed more emphasis on its global philanthropic practices as it adopted a nationwide analysis of “500 of the United States’ largest private and community foundations (by total assets)” in order to “systematically characterize how large foundations engage those they aim to serve” (Ford Foundation, 2024b). Whilst this is not a direct measure of self-reflection, they applied their learnings to examine the perceived benefits of “participatory approaches to governance and grantmaking”, drawing lessons from peer organisations to inform its own strategies (Ford Foundation, 2024b). The Kellogg Foundation also identified areas for growth and commissioned market research from FSG to “re-examine all aspects of business operations from a racial equity perspective”, drawing on lessons from international organisations (FSG, 2017; W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2018). These efforts signify an intent to improve and develop but lack the critical and quantified self-analysis of the Gates Foundation. Notably, Darren Walker, CEO of the Ford Foundation, does acknowledge the “unfortunate irony” that exists within their efforts to “dismantle inequality in all of its forms”:

All too often the very partnerships we’ve established in our efforts to eliminate inequality end up being unequal themselves. Foundations currently hold an inordinate amount of leverage in any grantmaker-grantee relationship. This imbalance forces many organizations we fund to focus on short-term projects, to spend valuable resources accounting for how they use our support, and to hold our priorities above their own... we have [occasionally] weakened organizations

and treated our partners like contract workers rather than collaborators” (Walker, 2023).

This admission reinforces the necessity of sustained, critical reflection to avoid the pitfalls of treacherous power dynamics as cultural capital can unintentionally destabilise partner organisations and undermine their long-term security. Whilst this admission is problematic, it demonstrates the introspection that is necessary to achieve long-term success through collaborative development.

Meanwhile, the Kellogg foundation provides no quantifiable feedback and the Gates Foundation continues to frame their progress primarily through the lens of diversity. Only 50% of Gates staff involved in grantmaking felt their partner teams and locations were sufficiently diverse and just 38% believed there was appropriate diversity amongst their project leaders (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2021). These statistics offer dual reasons for concern as the number of staff who seem aligned with the foundation’s DEI efforts is troublingly low and the medium of diversity obfuscates the opportunity for critical analysis. Diversity is a multifarious concept that is too nebulous to isolate single strands from and the foundation makes no attempt to clarify whether the diversity is based on, race, geography, gender, age or any one of manifold potential constructs. This complicates the process of self-reflection and fails to critically engage with cultural capital as hegemonic practices are permitted to proceed. Given these limitations, this study conducted its own analysis of how these foundations’ approaches collaborate with local partners or align with CRT principles as this is a more definitive framework than diversity. The results are presented in the following section.

4.5.b Centring Community Voices

Community collaboration and encouraging participatory grantmaking are critical for offsetting the consequences of imposing power dynamics and hegemonic practices (Nationswell, 2022). Centring local voices refines strategies to ensure they are tailored to local needs ensures alignment with regional sociocultural practices (Rehse, 2021). [Figure 8](#) provides an overview of how all of the foundations' initiatives engage with both CRT principles and community engagement, highlighting whether they reflect on or acknowledge their inherent power imbalances. Using Atlas.ti's co-occurrence tools, this table reflects the discourse used to describe either grassroots movements or initiatives which involved community collaboration or intentions of equity.

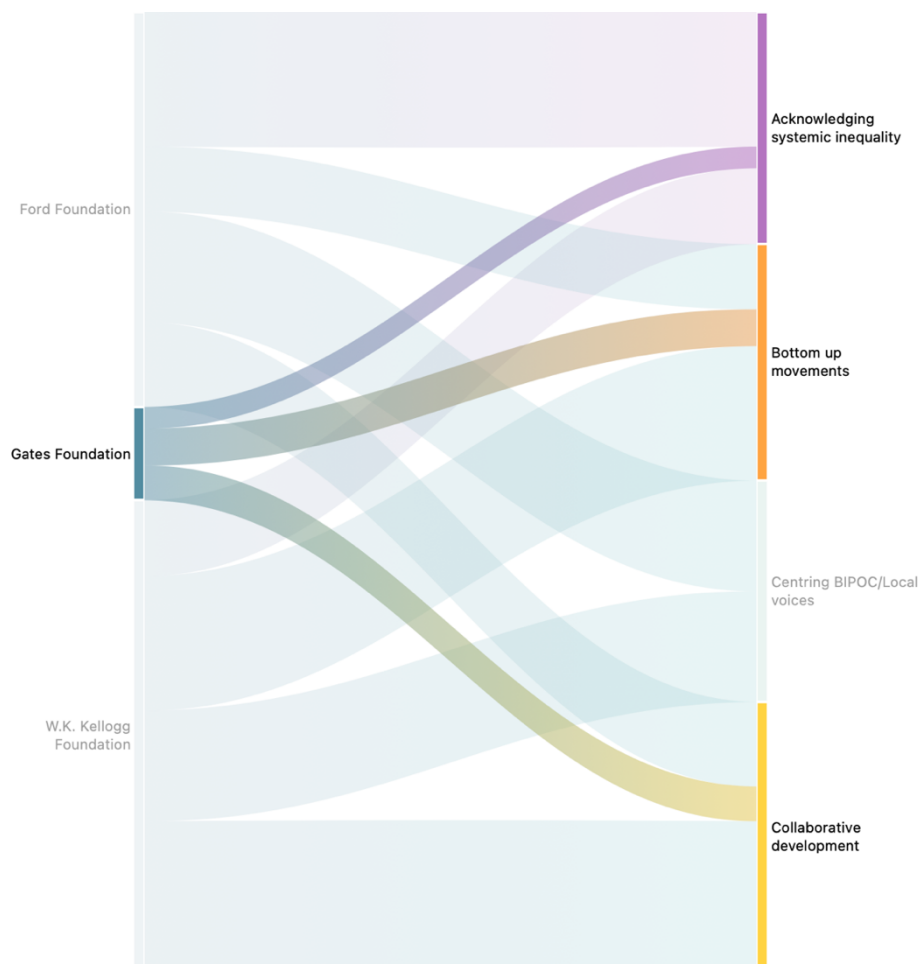
Figure 8. Comparison of Movements across all 3 Foundations:

	 Bottom up movements  109	 Collaborative development  124	 Equalising efforts  145
 Acknowledging systemic inequality  107	0.05	0.03	0.08
 Centring BIPOC/Local voices  102	0.34	0.41	0.15
 Clear definition of intention  50	0.10	0.09	0.09
 Educational intent  119	0.38	0.36	0.14
 Race is socially constructed  54	0.04	0.03	0.03
 Racism as institutional  114	0.04	0.04	0.09
 Racism is normalised  67	0.04	0.04	0.04

This table demonstrates that only a minority of philanthropic movements discussed the critical tenets of CRT or acknowledged historical inequality. Whilst some grassroots efforts attempted to centre BIPOC voices or prioritise skill-building over service provision, these codes were present in less than half of all programs. Notably, education and empowerment of community voices were more common in local

initiatives than in those specifically targeting racial equity, suggesting that foundations primarily reserve participatory approaches for smaller-scale projects. This pattern implies a persistent paternalism as foundations remain reluctant to cede meaningful influence to communities, especially in the context of race injustice. [Figure 9](#) further disaggregates these findings, illustrating significant disparities amongst the foundations .

Figure 9. Comparison of Community Engagement Between Foundations:



This Sankey diagram was made using Atlas.ti's co-occurrence analysis. The wider the breadth of the pathways connecting two codes, the greater the co-occurrence.

The graph was made using Atlas.ti's code-document analysis and highlights the Gates Foundation's significant shortcomings in centring community voices or acknowledging historical injustice. In 2021, only 53% of team leaders said their team had discussed partner feedback in the last year and a meagre 36% said they had created an action plan in response (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation,2021). The foundation fails to confront the power imbalance created by its economic and cultural capital and its attempts at collaboration are negligible in the face of its counterparts. The Kellogg Foundation is shown to be the most collaborative whilst the Ford Foundation demonstrates the greatest reckoning with past injustices.

The Ford Foundation works to ensure community perspectives previously omitted from reproductive justice movements are "incorporated into advocacy efforts" and 63% of their Arts and Culture grants had BIPOC project leads (Ford Foundation, 2023). Their JCR program exemplifies this ethos as they emphasise "the urgency of supporting BIPOC leadership and organizations within work to advance equity" and Darren Walker states that "At the Ford Foundation, we believe that the people closest to a problem are also closest to its solution (Hester Street, 2022; Walker, 2024). This commitment on community collaboration and empowerment is echoed by the Kellogg Foundation who state that whilst racial equity is an "aspirational pursuit", it can "only be achieved through robust community power and engagement" (W.K. Kellogg,2025).

In stark contrast, the Gates Foundation's rhetoric and practice reveal a philanthrocapitalist approach that blindly pursues profit and results over creating structural change or collective progress. They state that, "We prioritize impact, which means we focus on the organization and its capabilities more than its location" (Gates Foundation,2021). This decision to prioritise organisational capacity over local

engagement relying on “large intermediary organisations based in high-income countries” in order to “build the capacity of subgrantees in low-income countries” further entrenches cumbersome bureaucratic processes and centralises control. (Gates Foundation, 2021). They exhibit their reluctance to relinquish power as the circulation of capital is entirely controlled by dominant stakeholders, simply reinforcing structural inequalities. As outlined by Bourdieu in the theoretical framework, economic capital is inextricably interwoven with cultural capital meaning funding patterns which do not challenge or disrupt hierarchies are perpetuating hegemonic practices (Bourdieu, 1998). As long as decision-making remains amongst elite stakeholders, they will monopolise philanthropic resources to advance their own self-interest at the expense of collective progress.

5. Conclusion

This thesis answered the question "To what extent do philanthrocapitalist approaches to racial justice either perpetuate or dismantle structures of racial inequality?". Through Critical Race Theory, this study reveals that foundations explicitly addressing race, such as Ford and Kellogg, are more effective in illuminating and confronting systemic injustice. These foundations prioritised movement building, community collaboration and reflective healing processes, thereby fostering the necessary conditions for transformative change. In contrast, the Gates Foundation circumvents direct engagement with race, instead framing it through refractive lenses such as diversity and income inequality. Ford and Kellogg's colour-conscious strategies elucidate institutional racism and actively foster its dismantling through collaborative community movements. Whilst the Gates Foundation published reports depicting the inequitable dynamics between them and their partners, their reflections seldom translated into tangible action, permitting entrenched economic and political dominance to persist.

The divergent approaches of the three foundations can be partly attributed to analogous patterns in governance and institutional history. Ford and Kellogg, governed by significantly more diverse boards than Gates, consistently invoke their founders' commitments to social justice. They draw upon this history and founding values, transitioning to explicit racial equity agendas in the 1960s and 2000s sustaining this engagement throughout their existence. In contrast, the Gates Foundation's lack of such historic grounding may underlie its reticence to confront contemporary manifestations of past injustice. These findings underscore the critical importance of centring race, recognising injustice and prioritising equity over profit by empowering community voices and recalibrating hegemonic practices. This model, which is rooted in these principles and steeped in Critical Race Theory can provide a promising

framework for philanthrocapitalist foundations to adopt and customise in order to achieve palpable progress towards racial equity.

5.1. Limitations and Further Research:

This study's scope was limited by time constraints, restricting the number of foundations examined and could have been expanded to enhance the generalisability of its findings. A broader inclusion of non-US based philanthropic organisations would have enabled valuable cross-cultural comparison, illuminating how discourses concerning race differs internationally. The research could also have explored the perspectives of partner organisations of the foundations but this is a significant challenge given the limited availability of data. While discourse analysis is inherently qualitative and subjective, and this study openly acknowledges this, incorporating alternative researcher perspectives and positionalities could rigorously test the robustness and validity of these findings. Future research could encompass multinational perspectives and a wider array of foundations to enhance our understanding of the global congruence of racial equity movements.

Bibliography:

- Adams, C. R., Barrio Minton, C. A., Hightower, J., & Blount, A. J. (2022). A systematic approach to multiple case study design in professional counseling and counselor education. *Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision*, 15(2), Article 24. <https://research.library.kutztown.edu/jcps/vol15/iss2/24>
- Alexander, M. (2024). *Michelle Alexander on racial justice, mass incarceration and Black Lives Matter*. <https://www.fordfoundation.org/news-and-stories/stories/michelle-alexander-on-racial-justice-mass-incarceration-and-black-lives-matter/>
- Amarante, E. F. (2018). The perils of philanthrocapitalism. *Maryland Law Review*, 78(1), 1-72.
- Arco. (2024). *World's 100 largest philanthropic foundations list* | ARCO. ARCO. <https://www.arcolab.org/en/worlds-100-largest-philanthropic-foundations-list/>
- Beasley, S. (2022). Gates Foundation announces new and relatively small board of trustees. *Devex*. <https://www.devex.com/news/gates-foundation-announces-new-and-relatively-small-board-of-trustees-102509>
- Bell, D. A. (1980). Brown v. Board of Education and the Interest-Convergence Dilemma. *Harvard Law Review*, 93(3), 518. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1340546>
- Bell, D. A. (1995). Who's afraid of critical race theory. *University of Illinois Law Review*, 1995(4), 893-910
- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. (2021). *2021 DEI progress report*. https://media.licdn.com/dms/document/media/v2/C561FAQGeoPQxepyOew/feedshare-document-pdf-analyzed/feedshare-document-pdf-analyzed/0/1650384177604?e=1750291200&v=beta&t=mRu7zDYSkPeL_LZCPqQmrc0WTfzPMKBoLnAegrtMO5k
- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. (2025). *Diversity, equity & inclusion*. <https://www.gatesfoundation.org/about/diversity-equity-inclusion>
- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. (2025a). *Ideas*. Retrieved June 8, 2025, from <https://www.gatesfoundation.org/ideas>
- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. (2025b). *Our story*. <https://www.gatesfoundation.org/about/our-story>
- Bishop, M., & Green, M. (2008). Philanthrocapitalism: How the Rich can Save the World. A & C Black.
- Bishop, M. & Green, M. (2015). Philanthrocapitalism rising. *Society*, 52, 541-548.
- Blackwell, N., & Naylor, N. (2024). The supremacy of whiteness in international philanthropy. In J. Ravulo, K. Olcoń, T. Dune, A. Workman, & P. Liamputtong (Eds.), *Handbook of critical whiteness*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-97-5085-6_84
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). Cultural reproduction and social reproduction. In J. Karabel & A. H. Halsey (Eds.), *Power and ideology in education* (pp. 487-511). Oxford University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1998). *Practical reason: On the theory of action*. Stanford University Press. https://monoskop.org/images/a/aa/Bourdieu_Pierre_Practical_Reason_On_the_Theory_1998.pdf

Bratz, I. (2025, February 6). Bill Gates says DEI has 'gone too far at times' in Colonial Theater book talk. *The Berkeley Beacon*. <https://berkeleybeacon.com/bill-gates-says-dei-has-gone-too-far-at-times-in-colonial-theater-book-talk/>

Braun, V., Clarke, V., Hayfield, N., & Terry, G. (2019). Thematic analysis. In P. Liamputtong

Center for Effective Philanthropy. (2021). *Ford Foundation 2020 grantee perception report* (Public report). Ford Foundation. <https://www.fordfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/ford-foundation-2020-grantee-perception-report-public.pdf>

Crenshaw, K., Gotanda, N., Peller, G., & Thomas, K. (Eds.). (1995). *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings that Formed the Movement*. The New Press.

Crenshaw, K., Harris, L. C., HoSang, D. M., & Lipsitz, G. (Eds.). (2019). *Seeing Race Again: Countering Colorblindness across the Disciplines* (1st ed.). University of California Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvcwp0hd>

Dahl, B. M., Andrews, T., & Clancy, A. (2013). Contradictory discourses of health promotion and disease prevention in the educational curriculum of Norwegian public health nursing: A critical discourse analysis. *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*, 42(1), 32–37. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1403494813502585>

Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2007). Critical race theory and criminal justice. *Humanity & Society*, 31(3), 133–145.

Dorsey, C., Kim, P., Daniels, C., Sakaue, L., & Savage, B. (2020). Overcoming the Racial Bias in Philanthropic Funding. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. <https://doi.org/10.48558/7WB9-K440>

Elliott, R. (1996). Discourse analysis: exploring action, function and conflict in social texts. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 14(6), 65–68. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02634509610131171>

Fairclough, N. (2010). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language* (2nd ed.). Routledge. <https://www.felsemiotica.com/descargas/Fairclough-Norman-Critical-Discourse-Analysis.-The-Critical-Study-of-Language.pdf>

Flick, U. (2018). *An introduction to qualitative research*. Sage.

Ford Foundation. (2020). U.S. Strategy. <https://www.fordfoundation.org/work/challenging-inequality/gender-racial-and-ethnic-justice/u-s-strategy/>

Ford Foundation. (2021). Meet the Black Feminist Fund founders out to transform philanthropy. <https://www.fordfoundation.org/news-and-stories/stories/meet-the-black-feminist-fund-founders-out-to-transform-philanthropy/>

Ford Foundation. (2023). *Evaluation of Ford's creativity and free Expression JustFilms Strategy - Ford Foundation*. <https://www.fordfoundation.org/work/learning/program-evaluations/evaluation-of-fords-creativity-and-free-expression-justfilms-strategy/>

Ford Foundation. (2024). *Ford Foundation announces \$180 million in new funding for U.S. racial justice Efforts - Ford Foundation*. <https://www.fordfoundation.org/news-and-stories/news-and-press/news/ford-foundation-announces-180-million-in-new-funding-for-u-s-racial-justice-efforts/>

Ford Foundation. (2024a). *Our origins - Ford Foundation*. <https://www.fordfoundation.org/about/about-the-ford-foundation/our-origins/>

- Ford Foundation. (2024b). *Participatory grantmaking matters now more than ever - Ford Foundation*. <https://www.fordfoundation.org/work/learning/learning-reflections/participatory-grantmaking-matters-now-more-than-ever/>
- Foxworth, R. (2022, February 1). *Philanthropy's role in reinforcing settler colonialism*. The Center for Effective Philanthropy. <https://cep.org/blog/philanthropys-role-in-reinforcing-settler-colonialism/>
- FSG, & PolicyLink. (2017). *The competitive advantage of racial equity*. <https://www.fsg.org/>
- Gee, J. P. (1999). *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method*. In Routledge eBooks. Routledge.
- Goldberg, S. H. (2009). *Billions of drops in millions of buckets: Why philanthropy doesn't advance social progress*. Wiley.
- Gorup, M. (2019). *Ethics of Discourse Analysis*. In Springer eBooks (pp. 1–22). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-76040-7_22-1
- Gotanda, N. (1995). A Critique of “Our Constitution is Color-Blind.” In K. Crenshaw, N. Gotanda, G. Peller, & K. Thomas (Eds.), *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings that Formed the Movement*. The New Press.
- Grays, L., Allen, D., & Simpson, N. (2022, February 4). *Black History Month is our time to highlight racial justice and equity programs and black organizations that are doing great work globally*. <https://www.gatesfoundation.org/ideas/articles/black-history-month-2022>
- Haydon, S., Jung, T., & Russell, S. (2021). ‘You’ve Been Framed’: A critical review of academic discourse on philanthrocapitalism. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 23(3), 353–375. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijmr.12255>
- Hester Street. (2022). *Race, place, and power: Learnings from the Ford Foundation's Just Cities and Regions program*. Ford Foundation. <https://www.fordfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/jcr-program-evaluation-april-2022.pdf>
- Johnstone, B. (2003). *Discourse Analysis*. Blackwell Publishers.
- Jung, S., Eikenberry, A., Farley, K. W., & Brainard, L. (2022). How do foundations support (anti-)racism? A critical race theory perspective on philanthropy and racial equity. *Journal of Philanthropy and Marketing*, 28(4). <https://doi.org/10.1002/nvsm.1744>
- Kalfagianni, Agni. (2022). Philanthropic Foundations as Agents of Justice in Global Sustainability Governance. *Global Studies Quarterly*. 2(3),[ksac033]. <https://doi.org/10.1093/isagsq/ksac033>
- Light, L. (2023, May 15). *Kellogg Foundation offers a How-To on DEI for finance Employers | Chief Investment Officer*. Chief Investment Officer. <https://www.aicio.com/news/kellogg-foundation-offers-a-how-to-on-dei-for-finance-employers/>
- Lindsay, D., & Koenig, R. (2017). *Who's at the board table? 'Coastal elites' dominate trustee rosters at most of America's largest foundations, according to a Chronicle analysis*. *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*. <https://www.philanthropy.com/article/whos-at-the-board-table/>
- Logan, A. R., & Feit, M. E. (2024). The racialization of philanthropic and nonprofit organizations: a critical analysis of white supremacy and economic injustice in the sector. In *Edward Elgar Publishing eBooks* (pp. 103–117). <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781800371811.00013>

MacAskill, W. (2015). *Doing good better: How effective altruism can help you make a difference*. Faber & Faber.

McGirt, E. (2019, May 1). *Are you a microaggressor?* Fortune. <https://fortune.com/2019/05/01/are-you-a-microaggressor/>

McGoey, L. (2012). Philanthrocapitalism and its critics. *Poetics*, 40(2), 185-199. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2012.02.006>

Mediavilla, J., & Garcia-Arias, J. (2019). Philanthrocapitalism as a neoliberal artefact for development financing: legitimating the neoliberal development agenda. *Development Policy Review*, 37(3), 341-355. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2018.1560187>

Morgan, H. (2022). Conducting a qualitative document analysis. *The Qualitative Report*, 27(1), 64-77. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2022.5044>

Morvaridi, B. (2012a). Capitalist philanthropy and the new green revolution for food security. *International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture and Food*, 19(2), 243-256. <https://www.ijisaf.org/index.php/ijisaf/article/view/228>

Morvaridi, B. (2012b). Capitalist philanthropy and hegemonic partnerships. *Third World Quarterly*, 33(7), 1191-1210. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2012.691827>

NationSwell. (2022). *Four imperatives for centering communities in philanthropy* [Executive briefing]. National Center for Family Philanthropy. <https://www.ncfp.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Four-imperatives-for-Centering-Community-NationSwell-2022.pdf>

Omi, M., & Winant, H. (2014). *Racial formation in the United States* (3rd ed.). Routledge.

Partzsch, L., & Fuchs, D. (2012). Philanthropy: Power within international relations. *Journal of Political Power*, 5(3), 359-376. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2158379X.2012.735118>

Penttila, M. (2016). *Is brown the new white? A conversation about race, politics, and elections in America*. Ford Foundation. <https://www.fordfoundation.org/news-and-stories/stories/is-brown-the-new-white-a-conversation-about-race-politics-and-elections-in-america/>

Phillips, S. (2025). *Tackling racial wealth inequality in America*. Ford Foundation. <https://www.fordfoundation.org/news-and-stories/stories/tackling-racial-wealth-inequality-in-america/>

Pierson-Brown T. (2022). It's Not Irony, it's Interest Convergence: A CRT Perspective on Racism as Public Health Crisis Statements. *The Journal of law, medicine & ethics : a journal of the American Society of Law, Medicine & Ethics*, 50(4), 693-702. <https://doi.org/10.1017/jme.2023.10>

Ponce, K. (2025, February 26). Philanthropy is onto the next: how themes from Black Funding Denied are coming up today - NCRP. NCRP -. <https://ncrp.org/2025/02/philanthropy-is-onto-the-next-how-themes-from-black-funding-denied-are-coming-up-today/>

Powell, J. (2023, July 30). *Implicit bias and its role in Philanthropy and Grantmaking* - NCRP. NCRP. <https://ncrp.org/resources/implicit-bias-and-its-role-in-philanthropy-and-grantmaking/>

Rehse, E. (2021). *Community-led change and the importance of measuring what matters* - Alliance magazine. Alliance Magazine. <https://www.alliancemagazine.org/blog/community-led-change-and-the-importance-of-measuring-what-matters/>

- Reich, R. (2018). *Just giving: Why Philanthropy is Failing Democracy and How It Can Do Better*. Princeton University Press.
- Schwab, T. (2021, October 6). *The Gates Foundation avoids a reckoning on race and power* | *The nation*. The Nation. <https://www.thenation.com/article/society/gates-foundation-colonialism/>
- Scott, C.P. and Leach, N. (2024), "Philanthropy as whiteness: toward racially just philanthropic practices", *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion*, Vol. 43 No. 3, pp. 516-530. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-06-2023-0202>
- Shiva, V. (Ed.). (2020). *Philanthrocapitalism and the erosion of democracy: A global citizens' report on the corporate control of technology, health, and agriculture*. Synergetic Press.
- Sullivan, P. (2020). In philanthropy, race is still a factor in who gets what, study shows. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/01/your-money/philanthropy-race.html>
- Suzman, M. (2021, February 11). *Mark Suzman - Reflections on one year as CEO*. <https://www.gatesfoundation.org/ideas/articles/mark-suzman-one-year-reflections>
- Thomason, Q. (2023, May 17). *Philanthropy is at a crossroads for accountability*. The Center for Effective Philanthropy. <https://cep.org/blog/philanthropy-is-at-a-crossroads-for-accountability/>
- US Census Bureau. (2024). *Racial and ethnic diversity in the United States: 2010 census and 2020 census*. [Census.gov. https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/racial-and-ethnic-diversity-in-the-united-states-2010-and-2020-census.html](https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/racial-and-ethnic-diversity-in-the-united-states-2010-and-2020-census.html)
- Van Dijk, T. (2001). Critical Discourse Analysis. In D. Schiffrin, D. Tannen, & H. Hamilton (Eds.), *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*. Blackwell Publishing.
- van Gendt, R. (2022). *Imagining the Future of Philanthropy Research in Europe*. Compagnia di San Paolo. <https://www.rienvangendt.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Framing-Paper-Compagnia-Rien-van-Gendt.pdf>
- Villanueva, E. (2018). *Decolonizing wealth: Indigenous wisdom to heal divides and restore balance*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Wade, C. L. (2004). "We are an equal opportunity employer": *Diversity doublespeak*. *Washington and Lee Law Review*, 61(4), 1541–1580. <https://scholarlycommons.law.wlu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1416&context=wluhr>
- Walker, D. (2020). *No Equality without Everyone*. Ford Foundation. <https://www.fordfoundation.org/news-and-stories/stories/no-equality-without-everyone/>
- Walker, D. (2023). *Listening for change: Why foundations need to pay attention to what grantees are saying*. Ford Foundation. <https://www.fordfoundation.org/news-and-stories/stories/listening-for-change-why-foundations-need-to-pay-attention-to-what-grantees-are-saying/>
- Walker, D. (2024). *Weaving resilience for a stronger civil society in the Global South*. Ford Foundation. <https://www.fordfoundation.org/news-and-stories/stories/weaving-resilience-for-a-stronger-civil-society-in-the-global-south/>
- West, C. (1995). *Critical race theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement* (K. Crenshaw, N. Gotanda, G. Peller, & K. Thomas, Eds.). The New Press.

- White, S. C. (2002). Thinking race, thinking development. *Third World Quarterly*, 23(3), 407–419. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3993533>
- Wimpee, R. (2022). *Funding a Social Movement: The Ford Foundation and Civil Rights, 1965-1970* - REsource. REsource. <https://resource.rockarch.org/story/philanthropy-social-movements-ford-foundation-civil-rights-1965-1970/>
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation | *Learning to Give*. (2017). <https://www.learningtogive.org/resources/wk-kellogg-foundation>
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation. (2018). *The business case for racial equity: A strategy for growth* [Report]. <https://wkkf.issuelab.org/resource/business-case-for-racial-equity.html>
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation. (2023). *Home | Heal our communities*. Heal Our Communities. <https://healourcommunities.org/>
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation. (2023a). *Industry actions for racial equity – Investment management: Workplace transformation guide* (May 2023). <https://wkkf.issuelab.org/resources/41885/41885.pdf>
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation. (2023b). *Organizational Journeys in Centering Racial Equity*: <https://wkkf.issuelab.org/resource/organizational-journeys-in-centering-racial-equity-part-one.html>
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation. (2024). *A fireside chat on racial equity at CGI*. <https://www.wkkf.org/news-and-media/article/2024/10/a-fireside-chat-on-racial-equity-at-cgi/>
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation. (2024a). *Who We Are* - W.K. Kellogg Foundation. <https://www.wkkf.org/who-we-are/>
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation. (2025). *Racial Equity* - W.K. Kellogg Foundation. <https://www.wkkf.org/racial-equity/>
- Wodak, R. (2014). Critical discourse analysis. In C. Leung & B. Street (Eds.), *The Routledge companion to English studies* (pp. 302–316). Routledge.

Appendix:

Code	Operational Definition
Acknowledging systemic inequality	Displaying recognition of structural or systemic causes of inequality
Bottom up movements	Grassroots movement that involve local partners or organisations
Centring BIPOC/Local voices	Attempts to empower and spotlight local or community voices - and listen and respond to them
Clear definition of intention	Projects which have a clear aim or objective
Collaborative development	Initiatives that involve co-operation with local partners or organisations
DEI as surface level	Superficial acknowledgements of DEI without any substantial change
DEI w genuine action	Substantiating DEI claims with actual programs or quantifiable stats
Discusses Interest convergence	Includes references to the theory of interest convergence
Educational intent	Seeking to encourage new dialogue or teach a skill rather than mere resource provision
Ensuring demographic balance	Matching employees to reflect the areas in which projects take place - mirroring demographics rather than looking to add value
Equalising efforts	Attempts to fight or restore past injustices or any project/initiative that recognises systemic injustice and seeks to rectify it - acknowledging underrepresentation for example
Exclusion from services	Either describes a problem or a project that involves improving access to services
Focus on gender	Programs combatting gender inequality
Focus on healthcare	Programs improving healthcare outcomes
Intersectionality	Acknowledging or utilising the concept of intersectionality
Lack of "cultural competency"	Based on Gates Foundation's definition - ability to examine and shift their own attitude and beliefs while acquiring the appropriately adaptive behaviors in cross-cultural situations.
Lack of "Manager accountability"	Managers or Project leaders being blamed for the failure of a program
Questioning philanthropy methods	Displayal of self-reflection or acknowledging need for improvement in approach
race	Any mention of racial injustice
Race brought up by someone else	Racial injustice acknowledged by an external partner
Race is socially constructed	Either mentions of race as a social construct or the discussion of outcomes of racial injustice that are a result of socialised biases over race - e.g. disproportionate incarceration
Racial injustice creating urgency	Response or grants given in response to current racial injustice - are these places looking for quick fix or are they acknowledging a wider issue?
Racism as institutional	Acknowledging racism as an institutional process in accordance with CRT principles
Racism is normalised	Acknowledging pervasive and interpersonal incidents of racism - mostly on individual level
Reframing as diverse perspectives	Viewing diversity in terms of broadening ideas or adding new viewpoints but without explicitly mentioning race
Reframing as income (HVL)	Reframing racial inequality issues in terms of income inequality
Reframing as US/non US	Reframing racial inequality issues in terms of USA and other
Response to Covid	Racial equality programs only arising as a result of Covid-19 pandemic
Vague definition of impact	Projects which fail to clarify or provide clear intentions of goals