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Mashianoke, Lerato

2024

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An African feminist perspective of grant making by selected social justice philanthropies in South Africa

by

Lerato Mashianoke

Student Number: 788334

Research report submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Master of Management in African Philanthropy

BUSA7509A: Research Report

Supervisor: Prof Jacob Mwathi Mati

December 31, 2024

DECLARATION

I, Lerato Mashianoke, affirm that this research report represents my original work, except for duly cited references and acknowledgements. This submission is made in partial fulfilment of the prerequisites for obtaining a Master of Management in African Philanthropy at the University of the Witwatersrand's Business School. I confirm that this work has not been previously submitted for any academic degree or examination at this or any other institution.

DEDICATION

“We are writing for our mothers’ mothers and their mothers. We are writing for our daughters and the daughters of our daughters. We are writing for our ancestors and generations to come” – Ijeoma Umebinyuo

This research is dedicated to my mother, Tebogo Selamolela, whose boundless love, support, and sacrifices have been my guiding light. This research is also dedicated to my grandmothers, Nkhesane Shiluvane and Matsie Malapane; along with the tribe of black women who have collectively nurtured, inspired, and mentored me. I am because you are. I am because you were. Your resilience and love have been my foundation, and I dedicate this work to you with the deepest gratitude.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

"To all the little girls who are watching this, never doubt that you are valuable, powerful, and deserving of every opportunity in the world" – Hillary Clinton

I grew up in a world characterised by various forms of inequality. My lived experiences and observations of issues such as patriarchy, oppression, inequality, and injustice shape a big part of who I am, how I think, and how I see and experience the world I live in. Raised by bold African feminists, I have inherited a legacy of breaking barriers and challenging social norms. Due to these powerful women, my community, and my experience of navigating the world as a black woman, I have dedicated and committed my life's work to addressing women's inequality. This research is an extension of me, my ancestry, my legacy, and my desire to disrupt and challenge inequality and injustice. Through this research, I seek to contribute to African feminist knowledge and seek to inform the development of more inclusive and equitable grant making practices that disrupt structural and institutionalised systems of oppression.

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to my research participants, without whom this work would not have been possible. Thank you for journeying with me and for sharing parts of yourself with me. Thank you for being brave and for continuing to speak up and show up in a world that continues to silence, invisibilise, and erase your humanity. May you never forget that you matter. Our stories matter. Our stories deserve to be told. Our stories will be told because this world is ours too!

To my grandfathers, Sello Selamolela and Mongane Mashianoke, your firm belief, guidance, and teachings have been instrumental in shaping my journey. I didn't know it then but I know now that all that you said and did was to prepare me to navigate this world as a black woman. Although you are both no longer here, your legacy, stories, and truth live on. To my mother, Tebogo Selamolela, you are my hero! I aspire to embody even a fraction of the strength and resilience you exhibit. May my life continue to be a reflection of your hard work, sacrifices, and prayers. Thank you for all that you've been and all that you are to me. To my father, Titele Mashianoke, Bra Zakes, you are my greatest supporter. Thank you for inspiring me to do and be better. I hope one day I am able to believe in myself the way that you believe in me. Thank you for constantly pushing me and for teaching me to go for my dreams. Your prayers, motivational talks, and humour have carried me through this journey. To my siblings, Sello, Katlego, Thabang, and Koketso, thank you! God knew I needed you in my life. You inspire me to show up and fight through each day. Thank you for loving me, supporting me, believing in me, and encouraging me to keep on keeping on. You make me want to be better, thank you!

To my best friend, Ngwako Motsai, my love for you knows no bounds. Expressing my gratitude with a simple "thank you" feels inadequate. Thank you for being my rock and for showing up for me when I couldn't show up for myself. I wouldn't have been brave enough to pursue this journey without you, so thank you! To my tribe and chosen family, I wouldn't have made it through this journey without you. You constantly checked up on me, encouraged me, prayed for me, and held my hand through this journey. A special thank you to Ayanda Mashaphu, Bongiwe Mahlangu, Thulebona Mhlanga, Dankie Mokwena, Leletu Ekunnimo, Kholofelo Chauke, Ntsetso Mbhalati, Iris Nxumalo-De Smidt, Acquila Shipalane, Luthando Dube, and Lerato Mahlo. I love you all and I am so grateful that we get to do life together.

To my colleagues, Nicolette Naylor, Vuyiswa Sidzumo, Martha Shilubane, Lulama Mafanya, Justin Sylvester, Nicky Le Roux, Lusako Munyenyembe, Otto Saki, Olwethu Sizani, Ayanda Madyibi, Rutendo Chandiwana, Babalwa Mtwesi, and Zuziwe Khuzwayo, your support has been invaluable. Working with you and experiencing your brilliance and passion for the work that you do constantly leaves me inspired to do and be better. Thank you for being brave enough to fight in a world that was never meant for us.

To the Centre for African Philanthropy and Social Investment (CAPSI) thank you for being my academic home. Prof. Bhekinkosi Moyo, your mentorship has been invaluable to me. A special thank you to my supervisor Prof. Jacob Mati who has led me through this journey with so much grace and patience. Your humility and encouragement have pushed me to show up even when I thought I couldn't. I am eternally grateful for your support, wisdom, and guidance. To my peers, Daphney Nemakhavhani, Lelentle Motaung, and Zanele Makombe, I wouldn't have made it through this past year without your encouragement and support. Thank you for being my academic community. To the Ford Foundation and the University of the Witwatersrand, thank you for providing the financial resources for me to pursue this journey. This degree would not have been possible without the tuition support and Postgraduate Merit Award provided to me.

To my heavenly father, Jehovah, what a journey! Thank you for providing me with the courage, wisdom, and strength needed to embark on and complete this journey. My life is evidence that I serve an unlimited God and that truly, with God, all things are possible. Last but not least, to me, Lerato Mashianoke, you did it, girl! We did it! I'm so proud of you Kikita. You pushed through and you got it done even if it meant crawling past the finish line. Thank you for not giving up. May this journey constantly be a reminder that you can do anything you put your mind to. You can do hard things. May you continue to dream, disrupt and walk in love as you pursue justice for women and girls around the world. You are loved dearly!

ABSTRACT

Using an African feminist lens, this research examines how an American and European Foundation approach and practice grant making in South Africa. Using a qualitative comparative case study methodology, the study analyses the extent to which these foundations incorporate African feminist principles including intersectionality, decolonisation, power redistribution, and cultural sensitivity in their strategies. Key findings reveal that while both foundations have made strides in promoting social justice, their grant making efforts often remain constrained by Eurocentric frameworks, hierarchical decision making processes, and a lack of intersectional approaches. These limitations hinder their ability to fully address the systemic challenges faced by marginalised communities, particularly South African women. The research proposes best practices for adopting a more inclusive, equitable, and context-responsive approach to philanthropy, including decentralising decision making, fostering participatory grant making, and engaging with local African feminist leaders. By aligning their practices with African feminist principles, these foundations can more effectively promote gender equity, social justice, and long-term sustainable change in South Africa.

Keywords: African feminism; social justice philanthropy; grant making; American Foundation; European Foundation

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

Over the years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of social justice philanthropy as a means to address systemic inequalities and promote positive social change. By social justice philanthropy, we refer to the practice of using philanthropic resources, such as money, time, and influence, to address and rectify systemic injustices and promote social change (Giving Compass, 2023). Social justice philanthropy goes beyond traditional charitable giving by aiming to dismantle the root causes of economic, social and political inequalities, rather than merely providing temporary relief or support to individuals or communities in need (Dale & Azizi, 2013; Hanzl & Hunsaker, 2003; Mahomed, 2008; Naylor, 2018).

These developments are reflected, for example, in notable shift towards adopting more inclusive and feminist approaches to grant making globally and in South Africa (Enaifoghe, 2019; Houston, Norwood, Pierce & Wolsak, 2021; Community Foundations of Canada, 2020). On the African continent, this is seen in the rise of funders like the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF), Doria Feminist Fund and FRIDA Young Feminist Fund (FRIDA), which prioritise funding movements, feminist organising and intersectional issues affecting women and girls. Globally, this is also seen in the emergence of feminist funders, such as the Global Fund for Women, ASTREA Lesbian Foundation for Justice (ASTREA), and the Black Feminist Fund (BFF), which recognise the importance of considering the intersectional nature of oppression and marginalisation[1] in their grant making (Ackerly, 2009; Community Foundations of Canada, 2020). In South Africa particularly, in addition to the emergence of feminist funders, the trend toward more inclusive and feminist approaches to grant making is exemplified by the new grant making approaches and practices of prominent international foundations such as the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (Gates Foundation), Luminate, Open Society Foundation (OSF), the German Development Cooperation (GIZ), Ford Foundation (FF), Heinrich Böll Foundation (HBF), ELMA Philanthropies (ELMA), European Union (EU), and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation (Mott) (Anheier & Toepler, 2009; Zaidi, 2022).

The shift toward inclusive and feminist philanthropy has been driven by a growing awareness of the importance of addressing the root causes of systemic inequality and oppression. In South Africa, this includes recognising how patriarchal, colonial, and apartheid structures have

[1] This means that they are looking at how different forms of identity-based discrimination (e.g. race, class, sexuality, ability) intersect with gender and providing funding to organisations that address these multiple forms of oppression.

shaped society and the need to promote gender equity and diversity in all areas of social and economic life (Bofu-Tawamba & Bosch, 2019; Gqola, 2001; Msimang, 2002). In South Africa, there has been a particular emphasis by sections of civil society, especially feminist movements, on the need for social justice philanthropy to prioritise the needs and perspectives of marginalised communities, including black women, queer folk, and people living with disabilities (Burnham, 2008; Naylor, 2018). This advocacy by groups such as the Coalition of Feminists for Social Change (COFEM), Sonke Gender Justice (Sonke), as well as the Other Foundation has included calls for social justice philanthropy to fund initiatives that aim to create social and systemic change by focusing on supporting marginalised communities, grassroots organisations, and the social movements that work directly with these communities (Burnham, 2008; Peacock, 2013).

Even with these shifts, an emergent movement of African philanthropic organisations including AWDF, UHAI East African Sexual Health and Rights Initiative (UHAI EASHRI), Urgent Action Fund (UAF), TrustAfrica, and Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMwA) who are championing the inclusion of African feminist approaches and practises in social justice philanthropy have highlighted the exclusion of African feminist perspectives, particularly by international donors in their grant making practices (Burnham, 2008; Lever, Miller, & Staszewska, 2020; Ba, 2023). This exclusion has been driven by a range of factors, including power and privilege, a lack of understanding of the nuances of African feminist thought, a bias towards Western models of gender equality, and a tendency to prioritise organisations that fit within narrow north-based frameworks of development and progress (Saeed, 2021; African Feminist Forum, 2006). In highlighting these issues, the aforementioned African philanthropic organisations have also helped in increasing awareness of the diverse and complex ways in which gender intersects with other forms of oppression in Africa, as well as supporting communities, grassroots organisations, and social movements that are working to address the social and systemic challenges that marginalised communities and individuals face on the continent (Saeed, 2021). This practice is labelled as African feminist approaches[2] in grant making (Saeed, 2021; African Feminist Forum, 2006).

The critical question of relevance to the current study is, to what extent do the majority of large international donors acknowledge and incorporate African feminist approaches in their grant making approaches and practices? This research aimed to contribute to knowledge on this

[2] African feminism recognises that African women face unique and complex challenges resulting from the intersections of race, age, gender, class, ethnicity, culture, and other identities (Gqola, 2001). It seeks to address not only gender inequality but also the broader systems of oppression, power, colonialism, imperialism, patriarchy, and cultural norms that contribute to the marginalisation and subordination of women in Africa (Gqola, 2001; Lewis, 2001; Goredema, 2010; Msimang, 2002).

issue by using an African feminist lens to assess grant making approaches and practices of an American Foundation and a European Foundation[3]. The study examined the relevance of African feminist principles in framing the two foundations' grant making approaches and practices. This included investigating how funding priorities are established, funding decisions are made, and the structuring and maintenance of funding relationships.

1.2. Background

The history of South Africa is complex and has been shaped by several factors, including colonisation, apartheid, and the struggle for democracy and social justice. Social justice philanthropy has played a key role in this history, particularly in the post-apartheid era, as it has been a means of addressing systemic inequalities and promoting positive social change (Mahomed, 2008; Moloantoa, 2020). The American and European Foundations selected for this study have significantly contributed to promoting social justice and advancing progressive causes in South Africa and other parts of the globe (Hearn, 2000; Moyo, 2006).

The American Foundation was established in the mid-20th century with the aim to use philanthropy as a tool to promote human welfare and catalyse social change. In its early years, the American Foundation concentrated on educational and cultural initiatives within the United States (Moyo, 2006; Macdonald, 2017). Recognising the interconnectedness of global issues, the organisation broadened its mission in the 1950s to include international development, poverty reduction, human well-being, and strengthening democratic governance structures around the world (Magat, 1979; Moyo, 2006). The American Foundation’s presence in South Africa dates back to the mid-20th century. In its early years in South Africa, the Foundation focused on providing financial support to educational institutions committed to non-racial education (Lancaster, 1999). As the anti-apartheid movement gained momentum, it expanded its efforts by supporting grassroots organisations advocating for human rights, democracy, and social justice (Golub, 2000). Since then, the American Foundation's long-standing involvement in South Africa has been instrumental in supporting transformative change (Johnson, 1998). By providing financial resources, strategic guidance, and fostering partnerships with local organisations, the American Foundation has played a significant role in shaping South Africa's journey toward democracy and inclusive development (Micinski, 2017). In recent years, the American Foundation has focused on addressing inequality more broadly, including gender and racial disparities (Macdonald, 2017; Moyo, 2006; Aksartova & Stacey, 2001).

[3] The decision to anonymise the case study foundations was made to respect the conditions under which they agreed to participate in the research.

The European Foundation, on the other hand, is a political foundation that works globally to promote democracy, social justice and human rights (Anheier & Toepler, 2009). The history of the European Foundation in South Africa is closely intertwined with the broader history of South Africa itself, particularly during and after apartheid. The foundation's involvement in South Africa can be traced back to the mid-20th century, during a period of profound democratic transformation (SaferSpaces, 2023; European Country of Origin Information Network, 2019). Back then, the organisation supported activists and organisations working to dismantle apartheid and other systems of racial segregation. Since then, the European Foundation's work in South Africa has been actively engaged in several key areas, including social justice and inequality, environmental sustainability, gender equality, as well as political participation (Babugura, Mtshali & Mtshali, 2010; SaferSpaces, 2023; European Country of Origin Information Network, 2019).

Both foundations have made significant contributions to promoting progressive causes in South Africa, primarily through support to civil society, which has helped to empower marginalised communities and encourage democratic participation (Moloantoa, 2020; Aksartova & Stacey, 2001; Anheier & Toepler, 2009). However, it is crucial to analyse these progressive efforts through an African feminist lens to understand their full impact and inclusivity. An African feminist perspective emphasises the intersectionality of race, gender, and class and seeks to address the unique challenges faced by African women, which are often overlooked in mainstream feminist discourses (Lewis, 2001; Nnaemeka, 2004).

The application of African feminist perspectives in examining grant making practices of social justice philanthropy in this study is essential for several reasons. First, it helps surface exclusionary tendencies in these organisations and offers proposals to remedy them. When diverse perspectives, including those of African feminists, are not included, social justice philanthropy risks perpetuating inequalities and upholding existing power imbalances in society (Naylor, 2018; Mikell, 1995). These exclusionary approaches can be seen as a form of neo-colonialism, which reinforces Western dominance and continues to undermine the autonomy and agency of marginalised communities and groups in Africa. Secondly, exclusive philanthropic practices result in exclusive social agendas and philanthropic responses that prioritise specific issues and groups over others. Due to this, social justice philanthropy responses and practices often do not reflect the needs and realities of the communities that social justice philanthropy institutions aim to serve (Naylor, 2018; Moyo & Imafidon, 2021; Mahomed, 2023).

Through the integration of African feminist approaches to grant making, international donors can ensure that their interventions are more responsive to the specific needs of South African women, girls, and queer folk. African feminist perspectives are critical because they offer unique insights and solutions to addressing the challenges faced by women, girls, queer folk, and other marginalised groups on the continent (Goredema, 2010; Msimang, 2002; Mikell, 1995). These perspectives consider the social, cultural, economic, and political contexts that shape the experiences of these groups and highlight the interconnectedness of issues such as gender, race, class, and sexuality (Naylor, 2018). When viewed through this lens, several key questions arise: How inclusive are the initiatives supported by these foundations in addressing the specific needs of South African women and marginalised communities? Have these organisations embraced a genuinely inclusive approach that goes beyond surface-level gender equality to tackle deeper systemic issues such as power, privilege, patriarchy and socio-economic inequality? Additionally, to what extent do these foundations involve South African women and marginalised communities in decision making processes and leadership roles within the funded projects?

The American Foundation, while historically focusing on broad issues of civil rights and democracy, is scrutinised for its current efforts in addressing gender inequality with a view to answering the question: are its strategies and programmes sufficiently tailored to confront the unique forms of oppression faced by South African women and marginalised communities? Similarly, the European Foundation’s support for social, gender, and environmental justice initiatives is evaluated on how effectively these initiatives incorporate and prioritise the voices and experiences of South African women and marginalised communities. An African feminist critique also questions whether these foundations perpetuate neo-colonialism by imposing external values and solutions without adequate input from local communities. Do projects funded by these social justice philanthropies reflect the priorities and aspirations of South African women and marginalised communities, or do they mirror donor agendas?

The effectiveness of these philanthropic efforts can only be truly measured by their ability to foster genuine empowerment and systemic change that resonates with the lived realities of South African women and the communities they seek to serve (Mama, 2008; Mohanty, 2003). By incorporating African feminist perspectives into social justice philanthropy, donors not only demonstrate a strong commitment to equity and justice but also actively support the empowerment of marginalised groups, enabling them to drive their own development (Saeed, 2021; Mahomed, 2023). This approach recognises the importance of centring marginalised communities' experiences, voices, and agency in philanthropic efforts, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and impactful approach to social justice work (African Feminist Forum, 2006).

While these foundations' contributions to social justice in South Africa are significant, their efforts are critically examined through an African feminist lens to gauge how inclusive and effective they are in addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by African women. This perspective provides a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of these philanthropic initiatives and highlights the importance of centring African women's voices in the pursuit of social justice.

1.3. Problem statement

Philanthropy has been crucial in funding social justice causes in South Africa, especially after apartheid (Aksartova & Stacey, 2001). However, international social justice philanthropies have faced criticism for their grant making practices, which are often seen as lacking inclusivity and sensitivity to local contexts (Burnham, 2008; Moyo & Imafidon, 2021; Mahomed, 2023). Despite efforts to promote gender equity and inclusivity in grant making, the experiences and insights of African feminist scholars and activists continue to be marginalised in social justice philanthropy discourse and practice (Enaifoghe, Brown, Maramura, & Ajede, 2021). This raises concerns about the true responsiveness of social justice philanthropy institutions to the needs and priorities of the communities they aim to serve (Mahomed, 2023). To effectively combat inequality and injustice, social justice philanthropy organisations must grasp how gender discrimination, as well as other forms of structured discrimination, such as disability and race, operate (Burnham, 2008; Naylor, 2018). Therefore, it is crucial to critically examine how social justice philanthropies are incorporating African feminist perspectives into their grant making practices.

Despite the increasing recognition of the importance of gender equity and social justice in Africa, academic literature on African feminist approaches to grant making is still in its infancy. Notably, feminist funders like the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice (ASTREA) and the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF) have been at the forefront of studying African feminism and social justice philanthropy (Saeed, 2021). ASTREA's study on *Feminist Funding Principles* draws insights from four decades of supporting feminist movements and activists (ASTREA, 2021). Similarly, COFEM's study on *Applying a Feminist Lens to Grant Making for Addressing Violence Against Women and Girls* encourages donors to incorporate feminist perspectives into their grant making practices concerning gender-based violence (Saeed, 2021; ASTREA, 2021). However, existing literature primarily focuses on establishing feminist funding principles and falls short in critically examining how social justice philanthropy effectively integrates feminist perspectives into grant making. Earlier scholarly research by Ackerly (2009), Kalsem and Williams (2010), and Gillespie (2020) predominantly centred around Western feminism, neglecting the unique context of African women and international

social justice philanthropy in Africa. On the other hand, studies conducted by Jones, Kanyoro, and Nundy (2017), and Glass (2019), as well as institutions like Philanthropy New York (2016) emphasise the application of gender lenses. While this aspect is crucial in adopting a feminist approach to grant making, it fails to consider the roles played by patriarchy, power, capitalism, privilege, white supremacy, gender, and neo-liberal and imperialistic agendas in today's development challenges (Community Foundations of Canada, 2020; Bofu-Tawamba & Bosch, 2019).

The research gaps highlighted above surface the need for a comprehensive study of African feminism's influence on social justice philanthropy, especially on grant making's critical role in advancing women's rights and promoting gender equity in South Africa. Without a deeper understanding of African feminist approaches to grant making, there is a risk that interventions to advance gender equity may not be effective or sustainable (Burnham, 2008). Additionally, the lack of academic literature on this topic hinders the development of policies and practices informed by African feminist perspectives and experiences.

To bridge existing gaps, this study examines and documents emerging practices and experiences of African feminist funders and grant makers, as well as the challenges and opportunities they face. Specifically, applying an African feminist lens, it examined grant making approaches and practices of an American and European Foundation in South Africa to determine how these organisations prioritise women and marginalised communities in their grant making. Embedded in the study is the analysis of grant making principles, approaches, strategies, processes, and practices of these foundations, to surface the role of power, privilege, and gender in grant making practices.

1.4. Research objectives

The primary objective of this study was to assess, using an African feminist lens, how select international social justice philanthropies approach and practice grant making in South Africa. The specific objectives were to apply an African feminist lens to:

1. Examine grant making approaches and practices of an American and European Foundation operating in South Africa.
2. Assess the application of African feminist principles in the grant making approaches and practices of the American and European Foundation in South Africa.
3. Identify the challenges and opportunities that the American and European Foundations encounter when adopting an African feminist approach to grant making in South Africa.

4. Offer recommendations, based on the experiences of the American and European Foundation, to promote the effective implementation of an African feminist approach to grant making in South Africa.

1.5. Research questions

The primary research question that this study sought to answer is: How have select international social justice philanthropies applied an African feminist lens in their grant making approaches and practices in South Africa? The specific sub-questions for this research were:

1. What approaches and practices do the American and European Foundations employ in their grant making in South Africa?
2. To what extent do African feminist principles contribute to shaping grant making approaches and practices of the American and European Foundation in South Africa?
3. What challenges and opportunities do these foundations face in incorporating an African feminist approach into their grant making efforts in South Africa?
4. Based on the experiences of the American and European Foundation in South Africa, what are the recommended best practices for implementing an African feminist approach to grant making?

1.6. Contributions of the study

This research aimed to contribute to the nascent body of knowledge on African feminist approaches to grant making by international donors operating in South Africa. Applying an African feminist lens, the study analysed an American and European Foundation as case studies to provide a comprehensive understanding of their grant making approaches and practices to shed light on their operations, grant making decisions, and how their practices contribute to addressing systemic inequalities in South Africa. Sitting at the intersection of philanthropy and African feminist theory and practice, the study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on African feminist thought and its relevance in addressing social justice issues, primarily through centring African feminist perspectives in grant making and philanthropic practices. In so doing, it helps to challenge dominant Western-centric practices on social justice philanthropy.

Furthermore, this research provides practical recommendations for how international social justice philanthropies operating in South Africa can enhance their grant making practices from an African feminist perspective. By identifying best practices and areas for improvement, this research helps to inform the development of more effective grant making strategies that are not only rooted in African feminist principles but can also contribute to advancing social justice and gender equality in South Africa. In so doing, they help inform the development of more

inclusive and equitable grant making approaches and practices that disrupt systems of oppression and marginalisation and prioritise the needs and perspectives of women and marginalised communities in South Africa. The findings are therefore relevant not only for international social justice philanthropies in South Africa, but also for other philanthropic institutions broadly desirous of engaging with diverse perspectives and voices, particularly those of marginalised groups, in promoting a more inclusive and socially just society.

1.7. Report outline

The primary objective of this study was to assess, using an African feminist lens, how select social justice philanthropies approach and practice grant making in South Africa. This introductory chapter has laid the groundwork for this research report by providing essential background context and a clearly defined problem statement. By presenting the research objectives and questions, the chapter has also established a clear direction for the study.

The next chapter, theoretical framework and literature review offers an overview of African feminist theory and highlights several important themes and concepts. Additionally, it reviews relevant literature on African feminism, social justice philanthropy, and African feminist grant making.

Chapter three presents the research methodology, outlining the qualitative case study approach used to examine the American and European foundations. This chapter also covers the population of interest, sampling process, data collection, and analysis methods and concludes with a discussion of ethical considerations and the researcher’s positionality.

Chapter four analyses the grant making approaches of the selected foundations, focusing on their guiding values and philosophies. This analysis aims to determine the congruence or divergence of these foundations' grant making priorities and practices with African feminist values and principles.

Chapter five further analyses grant making practices of the American and European Foundations by examining who and how these international social justice philanthropies fund. This chapter provides an overview of the beneficiaries, including the sectors and issues that receive funding, the types of organisations funded, grant sizes, and strategies employed to support grantees. In addition, chapter five assesses the extent to which these foundations implement the strategies outlined in chapter four.

The concluding chapter summarises key findings, presents recommendations derived from the research, and suggests potential areas for future research.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the study delves into the theoretical foundations that guide the research. To begin, the chapter provides an overview of African feminist theory, which is the overarching theory guiding the study. This overview allows for the exploration of important themes and concepts within African feminist theory, such as intersectionality, decolonisation, power, agency and voice, cultural relativism and reclamation, as well as social justice and transformative politics. In addition to establishing the theoretical framework, this chapter also summarises relevant literature relating to African feminism and social justice philanthropy. By surveying existing scholarship, the chapter offers insights into the current state of knowledge, identifies gaps and debates, and builds upon the existing body of research.

2.2. African feminist theory

African feminist theory is a distinct subset of critical theory[4]. To fully grasp the essence of African feminism and African feminist theory, it is essential to first understand the fundamental concepts of feminism and feminist theory. Derived from the French word *féministe* meaning feminist, feminism and feminist theory see the world through the social positioning and lived realities of women. Drawing from its critical theory roots, feminism seeks to destabilise, disrupt and eradicate systems of power, privilege, patriarchy, and oppression (Arinder, 2019). According to Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley (2000) feminist theory begins its investigations by centring on women and conducting research in a manner that is not only based on the experiences of women but also produces critical knowledge that aims to create "a better world for women". Feminist theory examines the world, concepts, and practices by identifying, critically engaging, and critiquing the elements that are causing inequality, injustice, oppression, and the *unfreedom* of women (Van Gundy, 2014; Madsen, 2000; How, 2003; Hooks, 2000).

African feminism, on the other hand, is centred on the lived experiences of African women and their struggles for justice and equality in all aspects of their lives (Msimang, 2002; Branchesi, 2023). African feminism emerged as a response to the unique social, cultural, and political

[4] Critical theory focuses on emancipatory politics, disrupting, challenging the status quo, and understanding or bringing into question the elements that obstruct society from being completely free or equal (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011; Devetak, 2005). According to Horkheimer (1972), the primary aim of critical theory is to abolish and dismantle injustice to improve human existence. Critical theory examines the world, concepts, and practices by identifying, critically engaging, and critiquing the elements that are causing inequality, injustice, human oppression, and what How (2003, p.1) refers to as '*unfreedom*'. Applying critical theory to this research offered the necessary framework needed to analyse, diagnose and theorise the relationship between African feminism and social justice philanthropy.

context of Africa. It builds upon the broader feminist movement while considering the specific experiences and challenges African women face (Lewis, 2001). African feminism focuses on the interplay between the experiences and realities of African women, the various dimensions of life and society, and the multiple forms of oppression experienced by African women (Goredema, 2010; Lewis, 2001). African feminist theory acknowledges the unique historical and contemporary challenges African women face and seeks to challenge and transform existing power structures and systems of inequality (Msimang, 2002). African feminist theory challenges and critiques multiple forms of oppression, including gender inequality, patriarchy, racism, colonialism, and economic exploitation.

African feminist scholars deny the universality of women's experiences and have shifted discourse towards 'African feminisms' (see for example, Gqola, 2001; Lewis, 2001; Mangena, 2003; Oyekan, 2014) to capture the unique histories, cultures, and social contexts, which shape the specific manifestations of African feminism within different African countries, regions and contexts. Despite the acknowledged contextual differences across the continent, there are consistent overarching themes within '*African feminisms'* and African feminist theory. The interconnected foregrounding themes within African feminist theory include intersectionality, decolonisation, power and privilege, agency and voice, cultural relativism and reclamation, and social justice and transformative politics (Atewologun, 2018; Arinder, 2019; Crenshaw, 1989; Naylor, 2018; Parry, 2020; Gillespie, 2020; Hooks, 2000; Hamad, 2020; Kendall, 2001). These are explored in greater detail below.

2.2.1. Intersectionality

Intersectionality, as demonstrated in Figure 1 below, is a critical analytical framework for understanding the relationship between various social identities, sociodemographic categories, social processes, and social systems (Atewologun, 2018; Patil, 2013). Intersectionality does not look at oppression and inequality in silos but rather as a juxtaposition of an ecosystem that simultaneously interlocks oppressions and inequalities (Carastathis, 2014; Pattynama & Phoenix, 2006; Crenshaw, 1989). Intersectionality is grounded on the idea that all systems of oppression overlap and, therefore, should not be addressed separately. For this research, intersectionality is illustrated in the following model:

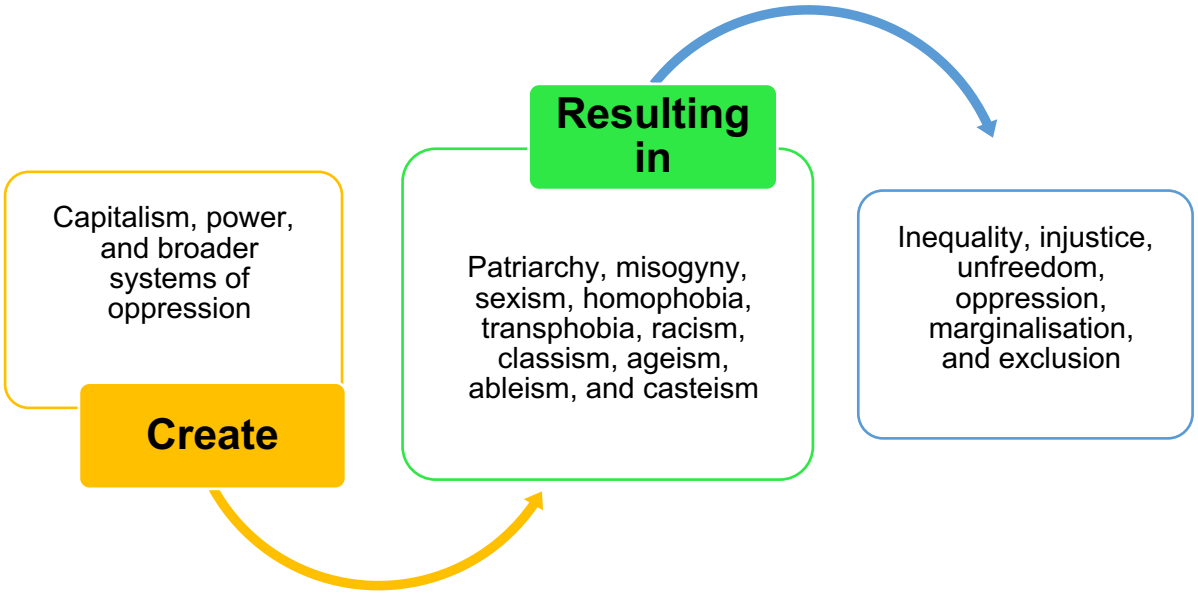


Figure 1: A model of intersectionality model (created by the researcher from Crenshaw (1989), Carastathis (2014), and Pattynama & Phoenix (2006).

African feminist theory emphasises the interconnectedness of various social identities and experiences, recognising that gender oppression intersects with other forms of oppression, including colonialism, racism, and economic exploitation (Pattynama & Phoenix, 2006; Gqola, 2001; Lewis, 2001; Mangena, 2003; Oyekan, 2014; Patil, 2013). For this research, intersectionality helped evaluate how the American and European Foundation engage with broader systems of oppression by examining how existing layers of inequalities and oppressions intersect and influence the grant making approaches and practices of the American and European Foundation. Specifically, it helped to analyse how inequality and broader systems of oppression shape the funding priorities, strategies, and outcomes of international social justice philanthropies in South Africa.

2.2.2. Decolonisation

Decolonisation acknowledges the complex legacies of colonialism and colonial domination and its impacts on colonised societies. These legacies include the suppression of indigenous cultures, economic exploitation, social inequalities, and the imposition of Western norms and values (Hamadi, 2014; Villanueva, 2021; Jamieson, 2020). Decolonisation approaches seek to explore and address how these legacies persist and shape post-colonial societies (Villanueva, 2021). African feminist theory critically engages with the legacies of colonialism and its impact on African women's lives (Goredema, 2010; Arndt, 2002; Mikell, 1995). It seeks to decolonise knowledge production and challenge Eurocentric frameworks that have historically marginalised African women (Goredema, 2010; Mikell, 1995). This research used

African feminist theory's decolonisation perspective to assess whether, and how, the American and European Foundation apply decolonial practices that confront colonial legacies, promote African cultural heritage and empower marginalised communities in ways that are sensitive to their specific contexts and needs in their grant making in South Africa. By utilising an African feminist approach, the study aimed to uncover whether these foundations actively challenge existing power structures and support the self-determination of African women and other marginalised groups.

2.2.3. Power and privilege

Power[5] and privilege[6] are used to analyse and understand society's unequal distribution of power, advantages, and opportunities. Power and privilege recognise that certain social groups, based on either race, gender, class, sexual orientation, or ability, hold more power and privilege than others because of benefit from systems and structures that uphold their interests and maintain their power (Lenski, 1966; Carastathis, 2014). This concentration of power leads to the marginalisation and oppression of less privileged groups (Pease, 2021; Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017; Brauer & Bourhis, 2006).

African feminist theory provides a framework for understanding and challenging power and privilege by examining how these are structured and distributed along race, class, gender, and other social categories (Avramenko & Wolf, 2021). For this study, African feminist theory was useful in multiple ways. The first is conducting a power analysis of the American and European Foundation to understand the foundations' structures, hierarchies, and decision-making processes. Secondly, identifying who holds positions of power, who influences grant making decisions, and how power dynamics shape the funding priorities and strategies of the two foundations. Thirdly, it involved investigating the extent to which philanthropic initiatives of the two foundations align with or challenge the priorities and needs of women, communities, movements, and marginalised groups in South Africa.

Fourth, it entailed analysing the influence of donor-driven agendas, including how funding criteria and reporting requirements reinforce power imbalances or limit the agency of grantee organisations. Fifth, it assessed whether the influence of the two funders perpetuates neo-colonial dynamics or supports the autonomy and self-determination of grantees. Sixth, it involved analysing the power dynamics between philanthropic organisations and their grantee partners, especially paying close attention to issues of accountability and sustainability.

[5] Power refers to the ability to influence or control others and shape social structures and institutions (Lenski, 1966; Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017).
[6] Privilege refers to the unearned advantages and benefits that individuals or groups have by virtue of their social identities (Lenski, 1966; Pease, 2021).

Seventh, it evaluated whether grant making practices foster genuine partnerships, inclusivity, and mutual learning, or if they reinforce paternalistic or extractive relationships. Eighth, it investigated how power and privilege influence capacity strengthening initiatives and efforts to ensure the long-term sustainability of grantees. Lastly, it examined whether the American and European Foundation prioritise building local leadership, strengthening organisational structures, and addressing power imbalances in their support strategies.

2.2.4. Agency and voice

Agency[7] and voice[8] relate to individuals' ability to act, make choices, and express their opinions and perspectives. Agency implies a sense of autonomy, where individuals have control over their choices and actions rather than being completely determined by external forces or structures (Pereira, 2017; Bandura, 2006). Voice, on the other hand, involves being heard, acknowledged, and valued within social, political, and cultural contexts. African feminist theory highlights African women's agency, resilience, and activism (Collins, 1996; Pereira, 2017). It centres on African women's experiences, knowledge, and perspectives, challenging dominant narratives that have often rendered them invisible or portrayed them solely as victims (Pereira, 2017).

African feminism seeks to amplify women's voices, experiences, and leadership and promote their active participation in social, political, and economic spheres (Bádéjọ, 1998). African feminist theory enabled this research to assess how agency and voice are promoted and suppressed by existing grant making approaches and practices of the American and European Foundation. While critically acknowledging that mere presence does not equate to empowerment, African feminist theory helped the research investigate African women's representation and participation within the social justice philanthropies' leadership, decision making bodies, staff, and grantees. An African feminist approach also enabled the research to assess the extent to which the American and European Foundation's grant making approaches and practices enable and disable grantees autonomy to make funding choices and express their opinions.

2.2.5. Cultural relativism and reclamation

Cultural relativism and reclamation are two concepts that relate to understanding and valuing diverse cultural practices, beliefs, and identities. While distinct, they often intersect in

[7] Agency refers to the capacity of individuals or groups to act and exert influence over their own lives and the world around them (Bandura, 2006). It encompasses the ability to make decisions, take actions, and shape one's own trajectory (Pereira, 2017; Bádéjọ, 1998).

[8] Voice refers to the ability of individuals or groups to express their thoughts, opinions, and perspectives. Having a voice means that individuals' ideas and experiences are considered valid and are given space and visibility (Pereira, 2017; Bádéjọ, 1998; Collins, 1996).

discussions about cultural heritage and identity. Cultural relativism[9] emphasises that different cultures have unique values, norms, and traditions, which should be respected and appreciated without imposing one's own cultural framework (Tilley, 2000). Cultural relativism recognises the importance of avoiding ethnocentrism, which is the tendency to view one's own culture as superior to others (Brown, 2008). Cultural reclamation[10], on the other hand, involves reclaiming cultural practices, traditions, languages, and identities that have been eroded or devalued. Cultural reclamation arises in contexts where cultural groups have experienced historical injustices, colonisation, or assimilation pressures that have resulted in the loss or dilution of their cultural identity (Hadjioannou, 2005).

African feminist theory recognises the importance of cultural diversity and challenges the imposition of Western values and norms on African women. It seeks to reclaim and redefine traditional African cultural practices in ways that promote gender equality and justice (Brems, 1997). Using cultural relativism, African feminist theory enabled this research to approach the topic with sensitivity to the specific cultural, historical, and social dynamics in South Africa. The specific cultural and contextual approach applied in this research was important because it framed the analysis of the work of the selected social justice philanthropy institutions and how those institutions present and position themselves in the world.

2.2.6. Social justice and transformative politics

Social justice has a long history, dating back to ancient Greek civilisations, especially through the works of early philosophers like Aristotle and Plato, who grappled with ideas of fairness, equity, and the common good (Arneson, 2007). However, the modern understanding of social justice truly blossomed during the 18th century when thinkers like John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Immanuel Kant placed a renewed emphasis on principles like justice, equality, and human rights (Barnhurs, Ikeda, Maia, Mazzoleni, & Wessler, 2015; Lötter, 1999). The 20th century also witnessed significant contributions to social justice theory with John Rawls' (1971) influential *Theory of Justice* which proposed a framework for a just distribution of primary goods within society. Iris Marion Young (1990) challenged this view, arguing for a broader conception of social justice encompassing various dimensions of social equality (Mahomed, 2008; Young, 1990). In his *Entitlement Theory,* Robert Nozick (1974) presented a contrasting

[9] Cultural relativism is a perspective that suggests that cultural practices and beliefs should be understood and evaluated within their own cultural context rather than being judged against the standards of another culture (Tilley, 2000; Brown, 2008).

[10] Cultural reclamation, also known as cultural revitalisation or cultural resurgence, refers to efforts made by individuals or communities to reconnect with and revive aspects of their cultural heritage that have been marginalised, suppressed, or threatened by external influences (Hadjioannou, 2005; Brems, 1997).

perspective, arguing for the redistribution of goods and resources to individuals based on their entitlement.

Meanwhile, Ronald Dworkin (1977) offered an alternative interpretation of Rawls' theory, which views social justice as a matter of equal respect and concern for all individuals. Dworkin (1977) contends that a just society must ensure everyone is treated equally, not merely by distributing resources equitably but by respecting individual rights and acknowledging personal responsibilities (Vujadinovic, 2012). Building on Young's work, Elizabeth Anderson (1999) further explored concepts of social power and domination in pursuing social justice.

The current research aligns with Young's school of thought, which views social justice as pursuing equality and dismantling oppressive systems (Young, 1990). This perspective emphasises the fair distribution of resources, freedoms, rights, and power across society (Naylor, 2018; Madonsela, 2018). In this context, social justice is both a concept and a practice that aims to promote equal opportunities, fairness, and the equitable allocation of resources, privileges, and opportunities in society. It advocates for the notion that all people, regardless of their race, gender, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, disability, or other characteristics, should have equal rights and access to resources and opportunities (Naylor, 2018; Young, 1990; Madonsela, 2018).

Social justice and transformative politics[11] are intertwined because transformative politics is often seen as a means to achieve social justice. Transformative politics challenges the status quo and seeks to disrupt entrenched power structures that perpetuate inequality and marginalisation (Stokke & Törnquist, 2013). By addressing systemic issues and pursuing transformative change, it aims to create the conditions necessary for social justice to be realised (Stokke & Törnquist, 2013). Together, social justice and transformative politics form a dynamic and holistic approach to addressing systemic inequalities and fostering inclusive societies. They promote the idea that meaningful and lasting change requires challenging existing power structures and advocating for policies and practices prioritising equity, justice, and human rights (Young, 1990; Stokke & Törnquist, 2013). By paying attention to the

[11] Transformative politics refers to approaches that go beyond incremental change and seek to fundamentally transform the social, political, and economic structures that perpetuate inequality and oppression (Dill & Kohlman, 2012). It involves challenging and reimagining existing power relations and institutions to create more democratic and participatory systems. Transformative politics aims to address the root causes of social injustice and build alternative models that prioritise social, economic, and environmental sustainability (Stokke & Törnquist, 2013).

material, social, and political conditions of African women, African feminist theory is by its very nature located in social justice and transformative politics.

Building on the foundation of social justice, African feminism, as articulated by scholars like Gqola (2001) offers a distinct perspective that centres on the experiences and challenges of African women. Both social justice and African feminism share a common dedication to human rights, dismantling patriarchal systems, and advocating for women's rights (Mikell, 1997; Oyekan, 2014; Msimang, 2002). Moreover, it places a strong emphasis on the experiences and concerns of marginalised women, including those in rural areas, living in poverty, identifying as LGBTQ+, or having disabilities (Lewis, 2001). By recognising the intersecting oppressions faced by these women, African feminism strives to amplify their voices and fight for their rights within the broader framework of social justice (Msimang, 2002).

Applying an African feminist lens to this research allowed for an assessment of how the two foundations' grant making strategies align with the principles of social justice and transformative politics, particularly in addressing gender inequality and promoting the empowerment of African women. This focus enabled a critical examination of whether grants provided by the American and European Foundation adequately addressed the diverse needs and aspirations of South African women and other marginalised groups. In the following section, the chapter delves into the significance of social justice feminism, exploring its role in the lives of African women and its contribution to advancing the African feminist agenda.

2.3. Literature review

This section seeks to develop a comprehensive literature review that allows for a nuanced understanding of the relationships between social justice feminism, philanthropy, social justice philanthropy, and feminist grant making.

2.3.1. Social justice feminism

In their work, Kalsem and Williams (2010) coined *social justice feminism* to describe a feminist perspective on social justice. This approach goes beyond addressing inequality and injustice; it aims to dismantle the oppressive structures that perpetuate patriarchy, misogyny, racism, white privilege, classism, heterosexism, ableism, and other forms of oppression (Kalsem & Williams, 2010, p. 157; Wildman, 2014). In the book, *Women's activism, feminism, and social justice*, McLaren (2019) argues that applying a feminist framework to social justice serves two important purposes. First, it empowers women to pursue social justice on their own terms, recognising that they experience distinct forms of oppression within society. Second, it offers society a more comprehensive and inclusive framework for achieving social justice.

For McLaren (2019), although social justice advocates for equality and justice, it often tends to overlook the social location of different women, which leads to further oppression and disenfranchisement. Furthermore, McLaren (2019, p.2) emphasises the importance of not assuming that all women share the same social location in society because doing so tends to lead social justice towards addressing the issues that are important to the “dominant group” of women who are usually white, middle-classed, abled-bodied, heterosexual women (McLaren, 2019; Kalsem & Williams, 2010). Therefore, to achieve social justice effectively, it is important to acknowledge the varying social locations of women within society. By doing so, society can address the social, political, economic, cultural, technological, and legal marginalisation experienced by different groups of women (McLaren, 2019; Kalsem & Williams, 2010; Wildman, 2014). This approach ensures that social justice efforts encompass a more comprehensive range of perspectives and actively work towards rectifying social injustice.

The social justice feminist agenda plays a crucial role today in addressing and challenging inequality, with a focus on prioritising women, girls and queer folk. It centres on those most affected by oppression and considers the impact of patriarchy, power dynamics, capitalism, privilege, white supremacy, gender, and neo-liberal and imperialistic agendas on development issues (Community Foundations of Canada, 2020; Bofu-Tawamba & Bosch, 2019). The African feminist social justice agenda seeks to ensure that inequality is addressed in a decolonised manner and that social change and social justice are achieved in a manner that does not only centre on the homogenous perspectives of Western feminism but rather on the issues, needs, and challenges specific to African women (Parry, 2020). This research adopted this perspective to aid in exploring social justice from the standpoint of African women. Specifically, it sought to understand how the two foundations have addressed inequality and injustice from African women’s perspective. This meant analysing the effectiveness of existing grant making approaches in addressing all forms of inequality and oppressive systems that hinder African women from accessing resources, freedoms, and rights. Moreover, it also meant examining how these approaches contribute to the equitable distribution of resources, wealth, and power to ensure that African women benefit equally.

2.3.2. Philanthropy

The word ‘*philanthropy*’ originates from the Greek term *‘philanthropia’,* which means "love of mankind" or "love of humanity" (National Philanthropic Trust, 2016; African Grant Makers Network, 2015, p.10; Murisa, 2018). For this research, philanthropy is understood as the selfless, altruistic, and voluntary act of demonstrating goodwill, caring for, and advancing the well-being of others (Cheek, Kramarek & Rooney, 2015; Murisa, 2018; Moody & Payton,

2008). This research understands philanthropy as not merely an act of giving but a profound expression of one's commitment to the welfare of humanity. It encompasses a wide range of activities, from financial donations to volunteering time and expertise, all aimed at fostering social good and addressing the needs of others (Aina, 2014; Moyo, 2010; Fowler & Mati, 2019; Mati, 2016; Fowler, 2022).

Philanthropy is practised in different spheres. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that this research focused solely on the vertical sphere of philanthropy, which encompasses formal, registered organisations and institutions (Fowler, 2017; Moyo, 2011; Mati, 2016). This approach enabled the research to delve into how structured philanthropic efforts, such as those by the American and European Foundation, contribute to addressing social justice agendas in South Africa. Using an African feminist lens, this research examined how institutionalised philanthropy by international donors takes place in South Africa. The research specifically focused on understanding the dynamics of grant making and its implications for advancing gender equality and empowering women and marginalised groups in South Africa. African feminist perspectives offer a critical lens through which to analyse these dynamics, emphasising the importance of intersectionality and local agency in philanthropic initiatives. By centring the experiences and priorities of South African women and marginalised communities, this research explored the opportunities and challenges posed by international institutional forms of philanthropy in South Africa. Thus, by critically examining the grant making practices of selected social justice philanthropies, this research contributes to the larger discourse on enhancing the effectiveness of international philanthropy in advancing social justice and gender equity within South Africa.

2.3.3. Social justice philanthropy

Social justice philanthropy seeks to address systemic, social, economic, and political inequalities by supporting initiatives and organisations that aim to promote justice, equality, and human rights (Burnham, 2008). It is a response to the recognition that traditional philanthropy[12], which often focuses on charity and short-term solutions, may not be sufficient to address the root causes of social injustice (Hanzl & Hunsaker, 2003). Giridharadas (2018) critiques much of traditional philanthropy for maintaining existing power structures under the guise of doing good, highlighting how elite-driven giving can unintentionally reinforce inequality by prioritising donor agendas over systemic change. Similarly, Reich (2018) problematises the moral authority and influence of wealthy donors in democratic societies, arguing that social

[12] Traditional philanthropy can be seen as a comprehensive form of giving toward the public good. Hanzl and Hunsaker (2003) believe that traditional philanthropy is charitable and responds to human needs or human suffering. Hanzl and Hunsaker (2003, p.6) define traditional philanthropy as “giving people enough to alleviate their immediate suffering without considering the structural implications”.

justice philanthropy must carefully balance the provision of resources with accountability to the communities it seeks to serve.

For this research, social justice philanthropy is understood as a critical avenue through which selected philanthropies in South Africa allocate resources to advance justice, equality, and women's rights. It encompasses deliberate efforts to challenge and transform systemic inequalities faced by South African women and marginalised groups, aiming not only to alleviate immediate hardships but also to address the root causes of their marginalisation (Mahomed, 2008; Moyo, 2006; Hanzl & Hunsaker, 2003; Mottiar & Ngcoya, 2016; Naylor, 2018). This perspective emphasises the importance of fostering equitable power dynamics and promoting sustainable change within the social, economic, and political landscapes of South Africa.

African feminism provides a crucial lens to examine social justice philanthropy in South Africa. African feminism asserts that gender justice cannot be achieved without addressing the broader spectrum of social injustices that marginalise women and other marginalised groups. In the specific context of South Africa, African feminism interrogates how social justice philanthropy can contribute to dismantling historical injustices and advancing women's rights (Naylor, 2018). It calls for philanthropic practices that are not only responsive to immediate needs but are also committed to systemic change and the redistribution of power (Naylor, 2018; Mahomed, 2008; Mahomed, 2023). By prioritising the perspectives and priorities of marginalised groups, including women from diverse backgrounds, African feminism challenges philanthropies to adopt inclusive and participatory approaches in line with Reich's (2018) call for democratic accountability in philanthropic decision-making (Mahomed, 2023). Given this, this research sought to examine how the American and European Foundation utilise principles of social justice philanthropy to promote equality and justice for women and marginalised communities in South Africa. Giridharadas's (2018) critique further emphasises the need for philanthropies to interrogate their own positionality and influence, ensuring that their interventions genuinely empower local actors rather than simply imposing externally derived solutions.

Given this, this research sought to examine how the American and European Foundation utilise principles of social justice philanthropy to promote equality and justice for women and marginalised communities in South Africa. Understanding the strategies, priorities, and impact of these Foundations was crucial for assessing their effectiveness in addressing systemic inequalities and advancing the rights of marginalised groups. By exploring their grant making processes, funding priorities, and partnerships with local organisations, this study aimed to uncover the mechanisms through which international philanthropies contribute to social

change in South Africa. Central to this investigation was exploring how these Foundations integrate African feminist principles and perspectives into their philanthropic strategies. This includes their approaches to gender mainstreaming, empowerment initiatives for women, and support for grassroots movements. Moreover, the research examined how these Foundations navigate the complexities of cross-cultural philanthropy, ensuring that their interventions are contextually relevant and responsive to the needs and aspirations of South African communities. By critically analysing the practices and outcomes of these Foundations, this research contributes to broader discussions on the role of international philanthropy in promoting social justice and equitable development. It seeks to generate insights that can inform philanthropic practices, advancing a vision of philanthropy that is inclusive, equitable, and grounded in African feminist principles of justice and human rights.

2.3.4. Traditional versus social justice philanthropy

Drawing on scholarship grounded in African feminist theory and social justice principles, this research explores six key parameters, as outlined by Reich (2018), Mahomed (2008), Moyo (2006), Hanzl and Hunsaker (2003), Giridharadas (2018), Mottiar and Ngcoya (2016), and Naylor (2018) that distinguish traditional and social justice philanthropies. These parameters, as shown in Table 1 below, focus on (1) what each form of philanthropy seeks to address; (2) what needs they respond to and what they advocate for; (3) how they approach grant making and who their grant making targets are; (4) what they seek to challenge and what motives how and why; (5) what strategies they use to achieve their desired change; and (6) how they practice grant making and engage with their constituents.

Table 1: Comparison of traditional philanthropy, generic social justice philanthropy, and contextual social justice philanthropy in South Africa

Criteria	Traditional philanthropy	Social justice philanthropy	Social justice philanthropy in South Africa
Philanthropic focus	Aims to address the symptoms and impacts of injustice and inequality (Mahomed, 2008)	Seeks to tackle the root causes of injustice and inequality (Mahomed, 2008)	Targets the historical and contemporary inequalities stemming from apartheid and other systemic injustices (Mahomed, 2008)
Areas of need	Focuses on addressing charity, basic needs, poverty prevention, and basic welfare (Hanzl & Hunsaker, 2003). It aims to meet immediate human needs and alleviate	Aims for holistic welfare, social justice, equity, and equality (Mahomed, 2008). Advocates for equal opportunities and the equitable	Focuses on social transformation, systems change, human rights, equality, and dignity (Mottiar & Ngcoya, 2016; Mahomed,

	human suffering (Hanzl & Hunsaker, 2003).	distribution of resources. Targets oppression, 'unfreedom', inequality, and injustice (Moyo, 2006; How, 2003).	2008). Addresses issues of inequality, injustice, and exclusion (Mahomed, 2008; Mottiar & Ngcoya, 2016; Moyo, 2009).
Grant making approach and target	Adopts a reactive stance / approach which often seeks to alleviate suffering or support initiatives that have already demonstrated effectiveness (Mintz, 2016; Mahomed, 2008). Responds to immediate needs or crises as they arise. Philanthropic efforts cast a wide net, aiming to benefit a broad spectrum of recipients without specific demographic or situational targeting.	Takes a proactive approach, driven by a commitment to addressing root causes of inequality and oppression. Prioritises individuals and communities most affected by systemic injustices. Rather than merely responding to symptoms, it seeks to empower marginalised groups, promote equity, and catalyse structural change in society (Mintz, 2016; Mahomed, 2008).	Philanthropic efforts are deeply attuned to the complex contextual dynamics of social issues before initiating interventions. There is attention to understanding contextual crescendos that perpetuate inequality and oppression (Mottiar & Ngcoya, 2016; Mahomed, 2008; Naylor, 2018; Saeed, 2021).
Motives for giving	Motives for traditional philanthropy include altruism, empathy, displaying wealth, and making social investments (Hanzl & Hunsaker, 2003).	Driven by the promotion of societal advancement, social impact, and fostering social development. (Mahomed, 2008).	Guided by human rights-based principles such as equality, accountability, dignity, inclusion, justice, indivisibility, participation, equity, and non-discrimination (Broberg & Sano, 2018; United Nations, 2006).
Strategies for change	Characterised by short to medium-term goals. It employs a narrow strategy focusing on isolated issues aiming to bring about broader change (Mahomed, 2008; Hanzl & Hunsaker, 2003).	Operates with a long-term perspective, utilising a broad strategy that addresses interconnected issues (Hanzl & Hunsaker, 2003). It aims for social, systemic, and structural change (Mahomed, 2008; Moyo, 2006).	Adopts an intersectional approach to comprehend and tackle various forms of oppression and discrimination (Mahomed, 2008; Naylor, 2018). It prioritises empowerment and active participation

			of marginalised communities.
Grant making practice and constituent engagement	Operates within short to medium-term frameworks and imposes restrictions on funding (Hanzl & Hunsaker, 2003). It adopts an exclusive approach, often excluding constituents from the grant making and decision-making processes (Hanzl & Hunsaker, 2003).	Takes a long-term perspective with general and unrestricted funding (Hanzl & Hunsaker, 2003). It employs a participatory approach, aiming to involve constituents in both grant making and decision-making processes (Murisa, 2018; Hanzl & Hunsaker, 2003).	Blends short, medium, and long-term strategies (Mahomed, 2008; Moyo, 2006). It combines both restricted and unrestricted support, emphasising inclusivity by ensuring that those most affected by the issues are involved in shaping grant making and funding decisions (Mahomed, 2008; Naylor, 2018; Saeed, 2021).

The key factors mentioned above provided a framework to analyse the grant making practices of the American and European Foundation. The analysis explored whether grant making approaches for the two foundations align with South African principles of social justice philanthropy. By evaluating grant making practices against these characteristics, this research was able to, first, examine the grant making approaches and practices of the two foundations in South Africa; secondly, assess the application of African feminist principles in shaping the grant making approaches and practices of the two foundations in South Africa; thirdly, identify the challenges and opportunities that the two foundations encounter when adopting an African feminist approach to their grant making in South Africa; and lastly, develop recommendations, based on the experiences of the two foundations, to promote effective implementation of an African feminist approach to grant making in South Africa.

2.3.5. African feminist charter

Traditionally, philanthropy in Africa often overlooked the specific needs and priorities of African women's organisations (AWOs), limiting their access to funding due to factors like capacity, location, and marginalisation (AWDF, 2023). This funding gap led to the rise of feminist philanthropy in Africa, emphasising support for AWOs striving for gender justice and social transformation. Notably, the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF) has played a pivotal role in this shift, evolving African feminist grant making from a response to limited opportunities to a strategic tool for social justice. The *African Feminist Charter*, created in 2006, further solidified this movement by outlining a vision for a just Africa where women's rights are fully realised (African Feminist Forum, 2006).

The Charter, a product of collaboration among over 300 women from 30 African countries, serves as both a declaration of principles and a roadmap for the future (African Feminist Forum, 2006). It emphasises core values such as self-determination, agency, economic justice, and the celebration of African women's histories and cultures (AWDF, 2023). This document is not static but continuously evolves through dialogue and action, inspiring numerous organisations to integrate *African feminist principles*[13] into their operations. These principles guide both individual and institutional ethics, promoting responsible leadership, power-sharing, and the creation of supportive spaces for women (African Feminist Forum, 2006). This framework has significantly influenced the grant making practices of Pan-African feminist foundations committed to advancing gender and social justice on the continent. This framework encourages organisations to consciously integrate feminist practices into their operations. Supporting the rights of African women, utilising power and authority responsibly, establishing spaces to uplift and empower women, sustaining feminism in the workplace, fostering power sharing, exercising responsible leadership and creating and sustaining feminist organisations to promote women's leadership are just a few examples of institutional ethics (African Feminist Forum, 2006).

By examining how these foundations incorporate concepts such as self-determination, economic justice, and responsible leadership, the research assessed the extent to which they align with the transformative goals outlined in the African Feminist Charter. A critical aspect of this analysis involved looking at how these foundations support initiatives that empower South African women and promote gender equality. This includes evaluating their funding priorities, the grantee selection process, and the sustainability of the projects they support. Moreover, the study explored how these foundations integrate feminist practices into their internal operations. This includes their commitment to power-sharing, transparency, and accountability within their organisational structures.

2.3.6. Feminist grant making principles

Over the years, various organisations such as the ASTREA, Equality Fund, ActionAid and COFEM have established various principles for feminist grant making. Some of these principles can be summarised as follows:

- **Accountable collaboration:** Transparency and accountability are crucial for trust in feminist grant making. Clear expectations for both grant makers and grantees are essential. This includes providing feedback mechanisms to ensure open communication and support grantees' success (ActionAid, 2023).

[13] These include but are not limited to intersectionality, autonomy, inclusivity, agency, accountability, transformative leadership, solidarity, collaboration, respect and care (African Feminist Forum, 2006).

- **Dismantling bias:** Unconscious biases can unintentionally disadvantage certain groups. Feminist grant makers must actively identify and dismantle these biases within themselves and the grant making process. This could involve unconscious bias training and creating diverse selection committees (African Feminist Forum, 2006).
- **Giving up power:** According to Lever, Miller, and Stanton (2012), grant makers must not only be aware of the power they possess as donors but also be willing to forfeit some of that power. Power should be given to those who are closest to the problem being solved since they are better equipped to handle the challenges they encounter.
- **Inclusion:** A core feminist value is inclusivity. The grant making process, from application design to selection committees, should be designed to ensure diverse voices from marginalised communities are heard and represented. This fosters a more equitable distribution of resources (Black Feminist Fund, 2023).
- **Listening:** Philanthropic institutions must pay attention to the needs and lived experiences of the women and girls they wish to serve to offer effective philanthropic responses to the issues that women encounter (Lever, Miller & Stanton, 2012). This means actively listening to those voices and developing initiatives that will empower and elevate the voices of the marginalised (Saeed, 2021).
- **Providing additional resources outside of grant making:** It is important to provide additional resources outside of grants to ensure sustainability and foster the resilience of the communities and organisations addressing the social oppression faced by women (Saeed, 2021; ASTREA, 2021). Supporting activities for institutional strengthening, capacity strengthening, and learning are a few examples of such resources (Lever, Miller & Stanton, 2012).
- **Providing enough resources to foster social and cultural change:** Social and cultural change is difficult and expensive to change (ASTREA, 2021). Investments made to promote social and cultural transformation must be unrestrictive and given over a long period due to the duration it takes to transform oppressive practices (Saeed, 2021).
- **Putting women and girls first:** This will guarantee that grant making procedures and strategies are guided by feminist principles and that philanthropic organisations give priority to women and girls when they decide who grant making is directed toward (Saeed, 2021). Social justice philanthropy institutions must provide funding to persons most affected by gender injustice to foster gender equality. Non-binary individuals and LGBTIQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer) women are included in this (ASTREA, 2021).

- **Respectful feedback:** Feedback is a powerful tool for growth. Feminist grant makers should offer constructive and respectful feedback to grantees. This feedback should be focused on supporting the grantee's work and empowering them to achieve their goals (ActionAid, 2023).
- **Self-awareness:** Feminist grant makers need to be introspective, understanding their own biases and limitations. This self-awareness will enable them to make funding decisions free from personal prejudices (ActionAid, 2023).
- **Sharing power:** Historically, grant making has been a top-down process. African feminist grant making challenges this by involving grantees in decision making processes. This sharing power approach fosters collaborative partnerships and empowers those closest to the issues being addressed (ActionAid, 2023; Lever, Miller, & Staszewska, 2020).
- **Utilising intersectional approaches to funding:** Due to the interconnected nature of the challenges facing women, there is a need to shift away from siloed responses that frequently treat LGBTIQ+ issues, gender issues, and women's rights issues separately (ASTREA, 2021). Donors can support individuals and organisations working to address all problems that restrict women's rights by using intersectional approaches to funding (Saeed, 2021). Using intersectional approaches also ensures that philanthropic responses respond to the diverse needs of the individuals and institutions being supported (Community Foundations of Canada, Canadian Women's Foundation & Equality Fund, 2020)

Drawing on these feminist grant making principles, the current study investigated grant making practices of the American and European Foundation by specifically assessing their grant making strategies, approaches, and their underlying influences.

2.4. Conceptual framework

Figure 2 below outlines the study's theoretical basis and illustrates the relationships among key concepts such as philanthropy, social justice philanthropy, African feminism, and African feminist grant making.

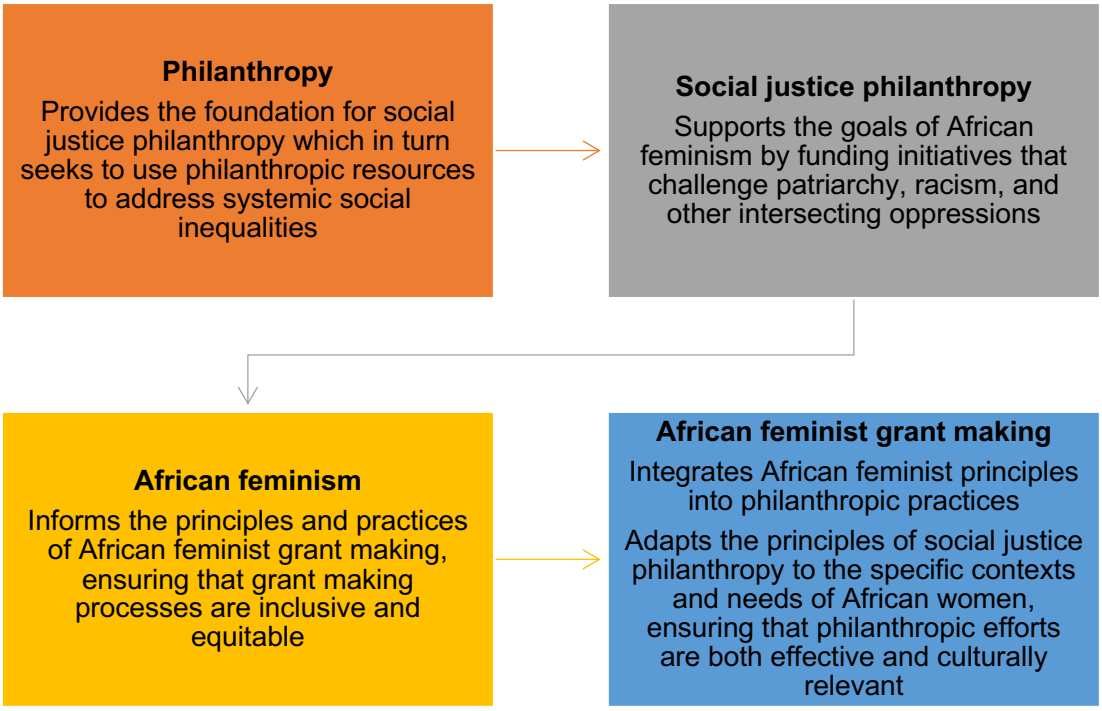


Figure 2: Conceptual framework model (created by the researcher from Hanzl & Hunsaker, 2003; Burnham, 2008; African Feminist Forum, 2006; Saeed, 2021)

2.5. Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed relevant literature as well as outlined the theoretical framework used for this research. The theoretical framework provided an overview of African feminist theory, the overarching theory guiding this research. In addition to outlining some of the relevant existing literature by authors such as Msimang (2002) and Gqola (2001) on African feminism, as well as Mahomed (2008) on social justice philanthropy, the chapter also provided an outline of the key concepts used for this research, namely, social justice, social justice feminism, philanthropy, and social justice philanthropy. The next chapter will provide the research methodology that was used to meet the research objectives and answer the research questions. The following chapter will also present the data collection and data analysis approaches that aided this research to examine the relevance of African feminist principles in framing the grant making practices of the American and European Foundation.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the research paradigm, approach, sampling, data collection methods, participants, and analysis techniques employed for the study. It also discusses the rationale behind the chosen research methodology, including its appropriateness for addressing the research questions and achieving the research objectives.

3.2. Research approach

The research approach employed in this study was qualitative, as it aimed to conduct an in-depth investigation of the research problem using African feminist theory. Qualitative research methodologies are suitable for unquantifiable, exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory studies such as this research (Terrell, 2016). Using a qualitative approach allowed for an in-depth exploration and understanding of the complex social, cultural, economic, and historical contexts that shape grant making approaches and practices of the two case studies. In addition, a qualitative approach allowed for flexibility and adaptability in the research design and data collection process (Terrell, 2016). This approach further enabled the researcher to capture nuanced and contextualised data that may not be easily quantifiable (Terrell, 2016).

The research used a comparative case study approach. This approach offered the necessary tools to aid the study in answering research questions based on the context of each foundation and the people involved in them as grant makers or recipients (Yin, 2013). Specifically, the study used a comparative case study design to allow for what Kaarbo and Beasley (1999, p.372) identify as a “systematic comparison of two or more data points” - in this case, the two foundations. A case study approach allowed for an in-depth examination of two cases, which provided a rich and comprehensive understanding of the research phenomenon. By examining the two foundations, the research was able to identify patterns, trends, and unique features that may not be apparent in a single case while also surfacing the nuances, commonalities, differences, convergencies, and divergencies of how their grant making approaches and practices.

Using a case study approach enhanced the validity and reliability of the research findings by triangulating data from multiple cases. Specifically, data convergence strengthens the validity of findings and conclusions (Kaarbo & Beasley, 1999; Yin, 2013). By reflecting on the two cases, the researcher strengthened the robustness of the research findings and drew more generalisable recommendations and conclusions (Kaarbo & Beasley, 1999; Yin, 2013).

3.3. Study population and sampling

This research made use of multiple separate populations. The first population of interest comprised of international philanthropy institutions operating in South Africa. A purposive sampling method was employed from the population of over 100 such institutions to identify two prominent international social justice philanthropies: the American Foundation and the European Foundation (Murisa, 2018b; Murat-Prater & Murisa, 2020). The second population of interest included the employees, grantees, and partners associated with these two selected foundations. A stratified sampling approach was used within this second population to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the foundations' operations and impacts. This approach included various stakeholder perspectives by categorising participants into different strata based on their roles (employees, grantees, and partners) and selecting a representative sample from each stratum.

3.3.1. Sample selection

The selection of the two foundations was based on several reasons. First, was the comparative analysis potential of the two cases. The similarities in organisational structures, approaches, and commitments of the American and European Foundation made them suitable for conducting a comparative analysis. Comparing their strategies, impacts, and lessons learned generated valuable insights for improving international social justice philanthropy practices in South Africa and other contexts.

Second was the focus on women, gender, and transformation by the two foundations. Specifically, both the American and European Foundation have a history of supporting work on women, gender, and transformation in South Africa. Their commitment to grant making on these areas in South Africa provided a solid foundation for conducting a comparative analysis of their approaches and impacts on social justice philanthropy by investigating their approaches to promoting gender equality, women's empowerment, and transformative change.

Third is their track record of funding civil society organisations in South Africa. The American and European Foundations have been known to support numerous civil society organisations in South Africa (Moyo, 2006; Aksartova & Stacey, 2001). Both organisations are well-established and renowned foundations with a strong presence in South Africa. The American Foundation has operated in South Africa since the 1950s, while the European Foundation began its work in South Africa in the 1990s (SaferSpaces, 2023; European Country of Origin Information Network, 2019; Moyo, 2006; Aksartova & Stacey, 2001). As key international donors in South Africa, the American and European Foundation have played a significant role in shaping the landscape of civil society and social justice initiatives in the country. Studying

their funding practices, strategies, and impact allowed the research to examine the relevance of African feminist principles in their philanthropic support to women and marginalised communities in South Africa.

The fourth reason was the two foundations' willingness to participate in the study. While the researcher approached a few other international social justice philanthropies to participate, some were hesitant. Both foundations were open to participating and sharing valuable data and perspectives, enabling a more comprehensive understanding of their grant making approaches and practices.

Non-probability sampling methods involving purposive and snowballing techniques were used to select specific participants. Purposive sampling allowed the research to be intentional about who was selected to participate (Terrell, 2016). Snowball sampling occurred when identified participants recommended other potential participants. Recommended participants were only considered because the researcher thought their input would be beneficial for the study.

The specific sampling criteria for individual participants were determined by considering several factors. First was the expertise and experience of participants. This was to ensure the sample had participants with different levels of experience working in or with the selected social justice philanthropies in South Africa. This included grant makers, other social justice philanthropic organisations, and the organisations and individuals these foundations support. Second was to ensure diversity, including racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds of participants. This was done to capture a wide range of voices and experiences within social justice philanthropy in South Africa. The third was to ensure the geographical spread of participants. Participants were selected from different regions and locations within South Africa to ensure geographic diversity and capture different local contexts. This was done because grant making practices and social justice issues vary across different regions in the country.

Fourth was to ensure intergenerational representation in the sample. This included seasoned feminists who have been involved in social justice movements for many years and younger activists who are emerging voices in the movement. Intergenerational representation provided insights into the evolution of African feminist perspectives and grant making practices over time and shed light on the dynamics between different generations in the movement. The fifth was to ensure the sample had representations from different levels of access to power. This provided a nuanced understanding of how power dynamics operate at various levels and how power influences grant making practices. This also shed light on the opportunities and challenges different stakeholders face in pursuing social justice goals.

The final sample consisted of 17 participants. Table 2 below provides a summary of the research sample used for this research.

Table 2: Summary of research sample composition

Number of Participants	Sample
3	American Foundation employees
2	European Foundation employees
3	American Foundation grantees
3	European Foundation grantees
3	International donors in South Africa
3	Independent consultant and feminist researcher

The Foundations' employees were integral to understanding the inner workings of the American and European Foundation. While it's true that programmatic grant making practices can often be overseen by a single individual, understanding the nuances of these practices within two distinct foundations with different philosophies and approaches required a broader perspective. Employees from both foundations provided invaluable insider perspectives on how their respective organisations approach and execute grant making. Their insights helped to illuminate the decision-making processes, internal structures, and potential variations in programmatic strategies between the two institutions. Foundation employees were chosen strategically to represent a range of programmes and positions within the organisations. These included staff members leading specific grant making initiatives, those responsible for due diligence and proposal evaluation, and individuals with broader oversight and leadership roles. By including staff with varying levels of power and programme focus, the research gained a more comprehensive understanding of both foundations' grant making approaches and processes. This multi-layered approach captured the perspectives of those directly managing programmes, those shaping the selection criteria, and those with the authority to make funding decisions.

To effectively assess the engagement of the American and European Foundation with power, privilege, and gender, it was essential to solicit perspectives from organisations and individuals who typically interact with or observe the actions of these organisations. Grantee partners consisted of organisations and individuals who have received grants from both foundations. The foundations' grantee partners helped in evaluating how the two foundations provide support to organisations and the principles guiding their grant making. The grantee partners

were purposefully selected from the grantee lists of both the American and European Foundation. To ensure a comprehensive understanding, grantee partners were chosen with diversity in mind. These included organisations working on a spectrum of gender and feminist issues, encompassing those with a specific focus and those integrating these issues into broader work. Grantees also represent a range of experiences with the foundations, including variations in grant duration and the total amount of support received. In addition, to capture perspectives across power dynamics within the organisations, participants included both senior staff members who may hold significant influence and junior staff who may have different experiences interacting with the foundations.

Including employees of other international donors in the research expanded its scope, offering broader contextual insights into the diverse grant making approaches and practices of various international philanthropic organisations in the South African philanthropic landscape. The selection of international donors was based on known close collaboration with the American and European Foundation. This allowed for a focused comparison of practices. The research also benefited from the expertise of feminist researchers and independent consultants[14] in the social justice philanthropy space. These individuals were strategically chosen based on their experience researching the two foundations, as well as their history of providing philanthropy, research, and strategy advisory services for similar organisations. Their involvement offered a valuable outsider's perspective while still grounded in specialised knowledge of African feminist theory and social justice issues. This combination ensured that evidence-based gender perspectives and practical lived experiences and examples were integrated into the study, enhancing both depth and inclusivity.

3.3.2. Sample description

Understanding the characteristics of the sample population is crucial for contextualising the findings and drawing meaningful conclusions. Table 3 below provides a comprehensive overview of the sample description used in this study.

[14] The consultants who participated in this research have also been anonymised. This decision was made to ensure confidentiality and protect the professional privacy of the individuals involved, as well as to safeguard their job security with the foundations. By anonymising their identities, the study ensures that their contributions are evaluated solely within the context of the research, rather than being attributed to specific individuals. This approach mitigates the risk of personal biases influencing the interpretation of their views and protects the consultants from any potential professional repercussions within the foundations.

Table 3: Summary of sample description

	Pseudo name	Category	Description	Interview Date
1	Amogelang	American Foundation grantee	Senior executive of a non-profit organisation	9 February 2023
2	Boitumelo	Independent consultant and feminist researcher	Activist, junior researcher and rapporteur	2 February 2023
3	Ntombi	Independent consultant and feminist researcher	Systems change researcher, junior strategy advisor and learning facilitator	6 February 2023
4	Nthabiseng	American Foundation employee	Senior programme lead	13 February 2023
5	Kgotso	American Foundation employee	Senior executive	15 March 2023
6	Bonolo	International donor in South Africa	Former international grant maker	14 February 2023
7	Karabo	Member of a civil society organisation	Grants facilitator at a South African social justice philanthropy organisation	16 February 2023
8	Kgomotso	European Foundation grantee	Senior executive of a non-profit organisation	24 March 2023
9	Andile	European Foundation grantee	Junior programme lead at a non-profit organisation	28 February 2023
10	Mpumelelo	International donor in South Africa	Regional programme lead	22 March 2023
11	Yinhla	American Foundation grantees	Senior executive of a non-profit organisation	17 March 2023
12	Tebogo	Various international donors	Senior philanthropy advisor	23 March 2023
13	Mokgadi	American Foundation grantee	Junior programme lead at philanthropy collective	13 March 2023
14	Liyaphila	American Foundation employee	Junior programme lead and grants facilitator	23 March 2023
15	Nare	European Foundation grantee	Junior manager at an intermediary organisation	13 March 2023
16	Dankie	European Foundation employee	Senior programme lead	24 May 2023
17	Khumo	European Foundation employee	Junior programme lead	3 July 2023

3.4. Methods of data collection

The study employed two methods of data collection, namely semi-structured in-depth interviews and document analysis. This triangulation enhanced the validity of the findings. In-depth interviews were chosen due to the exploratory nature of the study (Adams, 2015). Specifically, it allowed for discussions and asking precise questions while still allowing participants to express their opinions (Adams, 2015). Semi-structured in-depth interviews

allowed for open-ended questions and encouraged participants to share their experiences, perspectives, and insights in their own words. This resulted in rich and nuanced data that captured the complexity and diversity of African feminist perspectives on social justice philanthropies' grant making practices in South Africa.

Semi-structured interviews also provided flexibility and adaptability in the research process. This enabled the researcher to modify the interview questions and probe based on the participants' responses, therefore allowing for the exploration of emerging themes and issues as needed. This research made use of online interviews to gather qualitative data from participants. The interviews were conducted via video conferencing platforms, allowing for real-time interaction and in-depth discussions. Three different but related interview schedules were used to guide the interviews (see Appendix C, D and E). The interviews lasted 60 to 90 minutes, giving the researcher sufficient time for in-depth discussions with the research participants. Each interview was recorded with the consent of the participants to ensure accuracy in capturing their responses. The recordings were transcribed verbatim and subsequently anonymised to maintain confidentiality. Transcription software aided the transcription process, followed by a manual review to correct any errors and ensure the transcripts accurately reflected the participants' words.

For document analysis, African feminist theory guided the choice of documents to be analysed. The theory was specifically used to guide the extraction of data, as well as gain meanings and insights to answer the research questions. The specific documents collected and analysed included a purposive sample of annual reports, grant making strategy notes and memos, and newsletters produced by the two foundations between 2019 and 2023. This timeframe coincides with the adoption of their current grant making strategies, allowing for a focused analysis of their approach during this period. The research also made use of previous research, reports, and memos produced by South African feminist researchers, as well as other international philanthropies and civil society organisations engaged in feminist work. Documents accessed are on online archives, academic databases, government and organisational websites, and conference proceedings. In some cases, requests for physical documents were made. For documents produced by the two foundations, their consent to utilise these materials is documented in Appendix G and H. This combined approach to data collection allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the foundations' practices and grant making strategies, along with the broader context of African feminist philanthropy in South Africa.

3.5. Data analysis

The application of African feminist theory guided the thematic analysis of data collected through both interviews and document analysis. In executing a thematic analysis, the researcher followed a structured process comprising six key steps, as outlined by Bruan and Clarke (2006) in Figure 3.



Figure 3: Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis methodology.

3.5.1. Familiarity with the data

This initial step involved immersing oneself in the dataset to gain a comprehensive understanding of its contents. This entailed reading and re-reading transcripts, notes, or other data sources collected. This process allowed one to become acquainted with the breadth and depth of the data and identify potential patterns or emergent themes.

3.5.2. Generating initial codes

Once familiar with the data, the researcher began the process of coding by systematically labelling and categorising segments of the data that represent meaningful concepts or ideas. Initial coding involved identifying specific words, phrases, and passages that captured key themes and concepts related to the research question.

3.5.3. Searching for themes

In this step, the researcher systematically searched for patterns, similarities, and connections among the initial codes to identify overarching themes within the data.

3.5.4. Reviewing of themes

The initial concepts and themes that emerged in stage three above were reviewed, modified, and developed throughout this phase. This iterative process involved revisiting the data to confirm each theme's relevance and coherence and assess whether existing themes need to be modified or any additional themes need to be incorporated.

3.5.5. Defining themes

This step involved establishing clear definitions and boundaries for each theme, as well as identifying illustrative examples or excerpts from the data to support its existence and significance. The foregrounding themes under African feminism, including intersectionality, decolonisation, power and privilege, agency and voice, cultural relativism and reclamation,

and social justice and transformative politics, were used to analyse, first, the grant making approach. Here, specific issues of interest were values and principles defining the grant making approach, the process of deciding what to fund, and the grant making strategy. Second, the grant making practice. The specific issues of interest here were the mechanics of grant making, the grant making portfolio of the foundations, including type of grant making support, grant allocations, grant recipients, the nature of non-monetary support, donor-grantee relationship, and monitoring, evaluation, and learning. These issues are thematically discussed in chapter four of this report. To conclude this step, the researcher completed a data analysis report responding to the four research questions in chapter one.

3.5.6. Writing up the report

The final step of the thematic analysis involved synthesising the identified themes and findings into a coherent narrative within the research report.

3.6. Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations were paramount to ensuring the integrity and fairness of the study. Before commencement, ethical approval was obtained from the university's Ethics Committee (see Appendix F). In addition, the following key ethical principles were adhered to during the research process.

3.6.1. Anonymity and confidentiality

The study ensured the anonymity and confidentiality of the organisations and the research participants throughout the research process. Therefore, all identifying information, such as names, contact details, and other personal identifiers, were removed from the collected data. Instead, pseudonyms are used for both the organisations studied and the individual participants. These pseudonyms are used consistently throughout the research report to maintain anonymity while allowing for clear referencing. Furthermore, data was captured and stored using secure methods to prevent unauthorised access. All electronic files containing research data were encrypted and password-protected to safeguard against breaches of confidentiality. Access to these files is restricted to the researcher only. Additionally, any physical documents or materials related to the research were scanned and saved securely with the other electronic files. These measures were implemented in accordance with best practices for data security and confidentiality to uphold the trust and confidentiality of research participants throughout the study.

3.6.2. Cultural sensitivity

Researching African feminist perspectives to grant making in South Africa requires a deep understanding and respect for the cultural context in which the study is taking place. The

researcher was aware of and respected local cultural norms, practices, and values and ensured that the research was conducted in a culturally sensitive manner. This included using appropriate language and terminology and being mindful of cultural sensitivities.

3.6.3. Minimising the risk of harm

Several measures were implemented to minimise potential harm or discomfort to participants. First, prior to interviews, clear and comprehensive information about the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks was provided to prospective participants. This allowed individuals to make informed decisions about their participation and to withdraw at any time, should they choose, without any adverse consequences. Second, in the data collection phase, participants were allowed to decline answering any questions they found uncomfortable. Confidentiality measures were rigorously upheld to mitigate harm further. This included anonymising participant identities through pseudonyms to ensure that any information that might be construed as negative is not attributed to individual participants or organisations.

3.6.4. Permission and informed consent

Permission was sought and obtained from both the American and European Foundation (see Appendix G and H). Informed consent was sought from all participants. This included informing all potential participants of the purpose of the study, the nature of their requested involvement, and their rights. The researcher provided an information sheet (see Appendix A) providing the details of the research as well as a consent form (see Appendix B) to request informed consent from the participants prior to conducting the research. After reviewing the written information, participants were asked to sign the consent form, indicating their agreement to partake in the study and their understanding of what it entailed. This written consent ensured that all participants had formally acknowledged their voluntary participation and comprehension of the research objectives and procedures. At the interview stage, prior to the commencement of the interview, the contents of the information sheet, as well as the consent form, were discussed with the research participants to ensure that there weren’t any concerns or areas that needed further clarification. The researcher also obtained verbal consent at the beginning of each interview session to reinforce this understanding and ensure ongoing informed consent. The researcher reiterated the key points from the information sheet and consent form, addressing any questions or concerns the participants might have had. This verbal consent process provided an additional layer of reassurance that participants were comfortable with proceeding and fully understood their rights, including their ability to withdraw from the study at any point without penalty.

3.6.5. Respect for participants

The principles of honesty, transparency, and respect for participants' autonomy were upheld at all stages of the study, underscoring the researcher's commitment to ethical research practices. The researcher acknowledged each participant as an autonomous, unique, and free entity, with rights and capacity to make own decisions, including choosing to participate or withdraw from the research at any point. Respecting the research participants also ensured that their dignity and opinions were respected.

3.7. Power, positionality and reflexivity

The researcher's identities in this study are diverse, encompassing multiple roles and perspectives. These include serving as a grant maker within an American Foundation, being a black South African woman, and identifying as a young African feminist. The researcher recognised that these identities intersect with multiple effects on the research process.

Being an employee of an American Foundation studied carriers certain power dispositions both in relation to her colleagues and grantees of the organisation. Aware of this, the researcher ensured that she constantly reflected on her position and its potential influence or bias this could bring, with a view to mitigate any perceived power differentials and foster an environment of trust and collaboration. The researcher, therefore, strove to conduct the research in an unbiased and transparent manner. The researcher provided a clear explanation of their role and affiliations to participants at the outset. Additionally, the researcher remained vigilant in recognising and addressing any potential biases that could influence the research process or interpretation of findings. This reflexivity extended to the study's design, data collection, and analysis stages, where the researcher continuously reflected on their own perspectives and experiences to minimise the impact of personal experiential biases.

Additionally, as an employee of an American Foundation, the researcher had unique access to some of the research participants and insider knowledge of the workings of these institutions. This provided advantages in terms of understanding donor-grantee relationships and accessing information that may not necessarily be in the public domain. However, the researcher was mindful of the need to maintain independence and transparency in the research process. Despite having insider access and knowledge due to their position at an American Foundation, the researcher was careful not to rely on any information not directly obtained through the established research methods. While their access could have provided additional insights beyond what was publicly available, the researcher maintained their independence and transparency by refraining from incorporating any such unauthorised information into their study. This approach ensured the integrity and credibility of the research

findings, as they were based solely on data gathered through legitimate channels during the research process.

To ensure that the researcher's position did not compromise the integrity of the research, the researcher adhered to the permission terms of the two foundations (see Appendix G and H). Only data and documents that have been authorised and permitted by these institutions were used in the research. Additionally, the researcher employed data triangulation, as recommended by Patton (1990), to enhance the reliability and validity of the findings. Triangulation involved using multiple methods, sources, and investigators to mitigate the potential influence of a single method or bias in the research findings. It was also important to acknowledge the positionality and reflexivity of the researcher. The nature of qualitative data makes it difficult, if not impossible, for the person analysing to separate themself from the data. However, to limit any preconceptions and biases, the researcher reviewed and verified the data findings with other data sources and had participants review the results to ensure accuracy.

3.8. Limitations of the study

This research was only limited to the context and realities of the two foundations and, therefore, does not account for the context and realities of other social justice philanthropies operating in South Africa. Despite this, lessons drawn from this research are relevant for all international social justice philanthropies seeking to implement African feminist practices into their grant making in South Africa. The availability and quality of data on grant making practices and perspectives of social justice philanthropies in South Africa posed significant limitations because research on the subject matter is still in its infancy.

3.9. Conclusion

This chapter has explained the research paradigm that this research used to investigate the research problem and answer the research questions. The chapter has highlighted how qualitative research methods guided how the research was conducted and how purposive and snowballing sampling techniques were used to select the research participants. Semi-structured in-depth interviews and document analysis were discussed as the two data collection methods. In addition to highlighting the data collection methods, this chapter has also presented how collected data was analysed, as well as the ethical considerations that guided the study. A discussion on the limitations of the study was also presented. Chapter four which follows, draws on the analysis of the data in presenting the findings of this research. These findings are presented under the themes arising from the data analysis.

CHAPTER 4: GRANT MAKING APPROACHES OF THE AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN FOUNDATIONS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter explores the two case studies chosen for this research, focusing on the initial aspects of the first two research questions. It begins by examining the distinct approaches used by the two foundations in their grant making activities in South Africa. The grant making approaches of the American and European Foundation provide key insights into how these organisations conceptualise and execute their philanthropic missions. By examining their grant making approaches, this research sought to understand better the underlying values, priorities, and frameworks that guide their support for social justice and gender-related initiatives. Applying an African feminist perspective enabled a critical evaluation of whether and how these foundations incorporate African feminist principles into their practices, challenging or reinforcing existing power dynamics within the grant making framework.

4.2. Background

A grant making approach is a strategic blueprint employed by foundations and philanthropic organisations to distribute their funds effectively. It encapsulates the principles, criteria, and procedures used to identify, select, and support organisations or projects aligned with the funder's mission and objectives (Scherer, 2017; Frumkin, 2008; Magat, 2012). To fully comprehend a grant making approach, it is imperative to examine three key elements, namely, the organisation's structure, which influences decision making; the strategy design process, which reveals the foundation's ideology; and the strategic framework, which guides resource allocation and sets priorities for grant making (Bergh & Geldenhuys, 2013; Dosi, Marengo, & Virgillito, 2021, Magat, 2012). Table 4 provides a summary of the grant making approaches used by the American and European Foundation. By thoroughly analysing the interconnected components of these approaches, the research gained a deeper insight into the grant making philosophies of these foundations. Such an analysis revealed underlying motivations, decision making biases, and potential areas for improvement.

Table 4: A comparative summary of grant making approaches of the American and European Foundation

	African Feminism	**American Foundation**	**European Foundation**
Organisational structure	Decentralised flat structure	Hierarchical	Hierarchical
Strategy design approach	1. Participatory 2. Bottom-up	To-down	Top-down
Giving motives	Equality	Justice	Human rights
Area(s) of focus	Intersectional issues contributing to the oppression of women, girls and other marginalised communities	1. Gender, racial and ethnic justice 2. Natural resources and climate change	1. Democracy and social justice 2. Ecological justice 3. Human rights and gender justice 4. International dialogue and African perspectives
Geographic focus	Local	National and Regional	National and Regional

4.3. Organisational framework

African feminist grant making diverges significantly from traditional philanthropic models by emphasising a flat or decentralised organisational structure that empowers grassroots women (African Feminist Forum, 2006). This approach often features collective leadership, where power is shared among diverse women leaders, fostering collaboration, knowledge sharing, and accountability. This decentralised model seeks to ensure equitable power distribution and encourages a variety of perspectives in addressing the challenges faced by African women (Irefin, Ifah, & Bwala, 2012; Scheepers & Lakhani, 2020; Syed & Murray, 2008). The research findings indicate that, unlike the structures of African feminist organisations, both the American and European Foundations utilise hierarchical models that emphasise a top-down approach and centralised decision making. This is evident in the organisations' organograms (see Figure 4 below), which display a vertical line of authority, directing the flow of information and instructions from the top down.

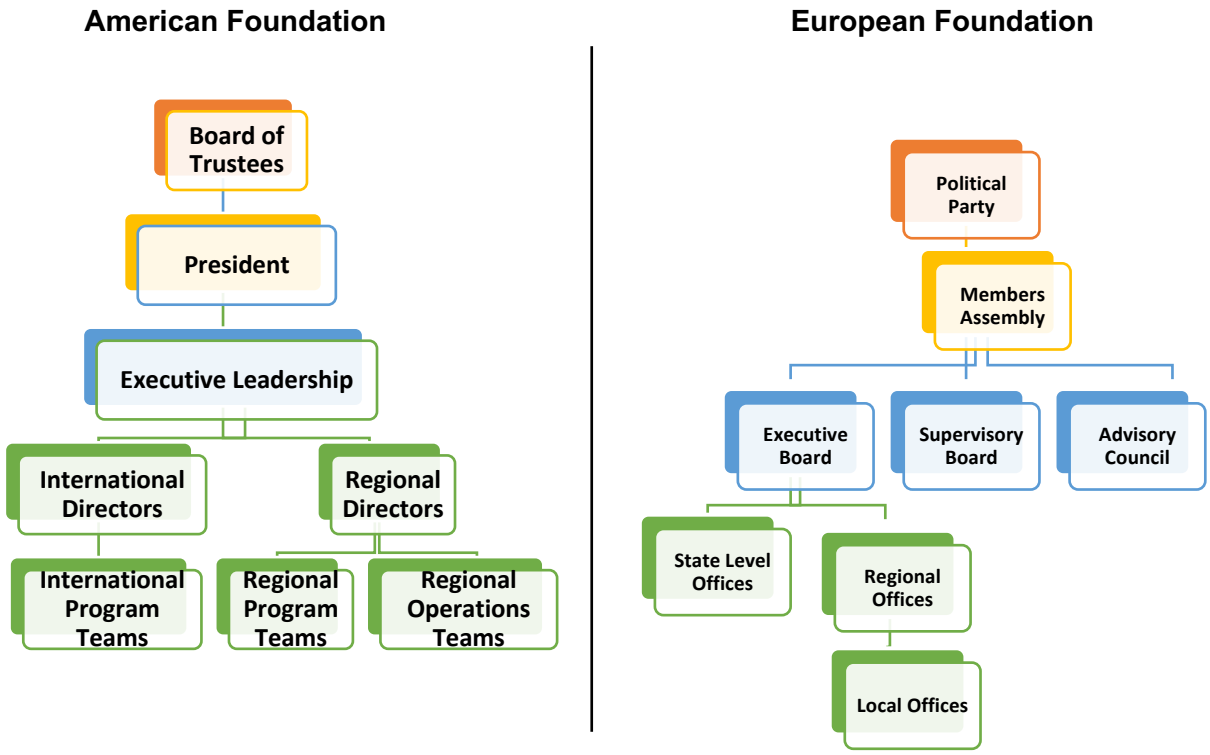


Figure 4: The American and European Foundation's organisational structure (Source: American Foundation, 2022; European Foundation, 2023a)

4.3.1. Hierarchical structure

Hierarchical organisations, characterised by a pyramid-like structure with clear lines of authority and responsibility, have been the predominant model of business management for centuries (Bergh & Geldenhuys, 2013; Dosi, Marengo, & Virgillito, 2021). This structure often likened to a chain of command, establishes distinct levels of management, from the top executive to the frontline employees. While it has been subjected to increasing scrutiny in the era of flat organisations and agile methodologies, the hierarchical model continues to be a preferred framework for many organisations, including the American and European Foundation (Potochnik & McGill, 2012).

At the apex of this structure is top management, which usually comprises the CEO, president or other senior executives. This echelon is entrusted with charting the organisation's vision and making strategic decisions that impact the entire institution (Bergh & Geldenhuys, 2013; Dosi, Marengo, & Virgillito, 2021). Their role also extends to resource allocation and overseeing the organisation's performance. In the American Foundation, the Board of Trustees and the President are responsible for setting the overall vision and high-level objectives of the Foundation (American Foundation, 2023a; Asana, 2021; Kgotso, author interview, 15 March 2023). In the European Foundation, the political party is responsible for establishing the objectives and overall mission of the Foundation, as well as providing regular

updates to BMZ[15] regarding its activities (German Federal Ministry of Justice, 1967). The Members Assembly, consisting of 49 members, convenes for the General Meeting, which serves as the Foundation's highest decision-making body. Meeting twice a year, the Members Assembly determines the Foundation's overall vision, high-level objectives, and major decisions (European Foundation, 2023a).

Bridging the gap between top management and frontline employees is the middle management, usually composed of departmental heads and managers. This level translates the strategic objectives into actionable plans, supervises teams, and makes operational decisions. Effective communication is paramount for middle management, as they facilitate upward and downward information flow within the organisation (Bergh & Geldenhuys, 2013; Dosi, Marengo, & Virgillito, 2021). In the American Foundation, the middle management is made up of the executive leadership team. Once the vision and high-level objectives have been set by senior management, these are communicated to the executive leadership team and the rest of the foundation for input, further design, and implementation (American Foundation, 2023a; Asana, 2021; Kgotso, author interview, 15 March 2023). For the European Foundation, middle management is made up of its various boards and councils. The Supervisory Board oversees the Executive Board of Directors, while the Advisory Board guides on implementing statutory tasks and resolutions from the general meeting (European Foundation, 2023a).

Supervisory management occupies the next tier, overseeing specific work groups or departments. Their focus lies in ensuring employees adhere to company policies, meet performance benchmarks, and contribute to the team and organisation's goals (Bergh & Geldenhuys, 2013; Dosi, Marengo, & Virgillito, 2021). In the American Foundation, supervisory management is made up of international and regional directors. They are responsible for implementing the strategic objectives set by higher management within their respective regions or areas of oversight (American Foundation, 2023a; Asana, 2021; Kgotso, author interview, 15 March 2023). Like the American Foundation, in the European Foundation, once the vision and high-level objectives have been set, these are communicated to the Regional Directors and the rest of the foundation for input, further design, and implementation (author interviews: Khumo, 3 July 2023; Dankie, 24 May 2023).

[15] BMZ refers to the *Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung* (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development) in Germany. It is the government body responsible for planning and implementing Germany's development policy (German Federal Ministry of Justice, 1967).

At the foundation of the hierarchy are frontline employees directly involved in customer interactions or the production of goods and services. Their roles vary widely based on the organisation's industry and specific functions (Bergh & Geldenhuys, 2013; Dosi, Marengo, & Virgillito, 2021). For both the American and European Foundation, the frontline employees are local staff members such as the programme officers and programme managers responsible for implementing the Foundation's work in South Africa. These frontline employees play a critical role in the execution of the Foundation's initiatives, as they are the ones who engage directly with the local communities, stakeholders, and beneficiaries. Their responsibilities often include coordinating on-the-ground activities, managing relationships and grants with local partners, and ensuring that the Foundation's programmes are adapted to meet the specific needs of the South African context (author interviews: Khumo, 3 July 2023; Dankie, 24 May 2023; Kgotso, 15 March 2023; Nthabiseng, 13 February 2023).

An African feminist analysis of the American and European Foundation's hierarchical structure exposes its inherent limitations and negative effects, particularly on staff and the women and marginalised groups that these organisations aim to support. African feminism offers a unique perspective on power dynamics, gender roles, and social structures (Ibokessien, 2020). When applied to the analysis of hierarchical organisations, this lens exposes the ways in which these structures perpetuate and reinforce existing inequalities (Irefin, Ifah, & Bwala, 2012; Scheepers & Lakhani, 2020). Firstly, hierarchical organisations such as the American and European Foundation reflect and reproduce colonial power structures. The top-down approach to decision making and management mirrors the colonial administration, with a small elite from the North or Europe controlling the resources and destinies of the majority (Fukuda-Parr & Muchala, 2020; Moyo & Imafidon, 2021).

According to Andile, a grantee of the European Foundation, this arrangement also reinforces the white saviour complex[16], often found in philanthropic institutions (author interview, 28 February 2023). Andile (author interview, 28 February 2023) exemplified this by saying the American Foundation's global office "will want to rescue me because they see me as the poor African that they need to save", but the American Foundation's local office "views me as one of the people who are going to contribute towards change". Mokgadi, a grantee of the American Foundation (author interview, 13 March 2023) illustrated this by referring to a grant that the American Foundation made to her organisation a few years ago. The programme

[16] The white saviour complex is a term used to describe a phenomenon where a white person, often from a Western or more privileged background, feels compelled to save or rescue people of colour, particularly from the Global South, in ways that are often self-serving or misguided. This behaviour is typically characterised by a paternalistic attitude, where the saviour assumes they know what is best for the people they are trying to help, often without fully understanding the local culture, context, or desires of the people themselves (Sheehan, 2012)

being funded was framed as a philanthropic intervention aimed at "saving" women from violence, rather than empowering them to lead their own healing and advocacy efforts. According to Mokgadi (author interview, 13 March 2023) the American Foundation's global office promoted the initiative as a success story, proudly reporting that their funding had "helped hundreds of women escape violence and rebuild their lives". Although the programme was given a significant grant from the American Foundation, "they were not on the ground doing the work" (Mokgadi, author interview, 13 March 2023). The foundation's focus on framing the initiative as an external success story highlights the "saviour complex" in which philanthropic organisations position themselves as the ones who are making transformative changes, while overlooking the critical contributions of local activists and organisations.

The white saviour complex that Andile (author interview, 28 February 2023) and Mokgadi (author interview, 13 March 2023) mention is also emblematic of a broader issue in international development and philanthropy, where interventions are often driven by external perceptions of need rather than by the lived realities and voices of the communities involved. This complex often leads to initiatives that, while well-intentioned, fail to address the root causes of issues or overlook sustainable, locally driven solutions. Nare (author interview, 13 March 2023) illustrated this by saying "we often tell donors what we want and need, only for them to come back with pre-determined solutions that don't actually respond to what we've asked for in the manner in which we've asked for it… it's as if our voices only matter if they are validated by their own frameworks". This dichotomy also highlights the problematic dynamics within these hierarchical organisations, where global offices unintentionally perpetuate paternalistic attitudes towards communities in the Global South. According to Karabo (author interview, 16 February 2023), a member of a civil society organisation, these attitudes stem from a deep-seated belief in "the superiority of Western knowledge and solutions which undermine local agency and expertise". As a result, the hierarchical arrangement reinforces the marginalisation of women and other oppressed groups as their voices are often silenced, and their needs are overlooked.

It is also evident from the research findings that for both organisations, while input and participation from different groups are allowed, local offices such as those in South Africa have limited power to shape strategy once decisions are made by those at the top of the hierarchy (author interviews: Khumo, 3 July 2023; Dankie, 24 May 2023). Both Foundation's staff indicated how they must navigate various channels to have their voices, as well as the voices of their partners, heard at a senior executive level. Dankie, an employee of the European Foundation, illustrated this by explaining that in the European Foundation, for issues to be tabled at a senior executive level, local offices "must first convince the Regional Director and

senior leaders of the Africa programme" before reaching BMZ or the General Assembly's agenda (author interview, 24 May 2023).

The requirement for ideas to pass through regional and senior leadership channels before reaching the decision making bodies further marginalises the agency of local offices, limiting their ability to shape strategies and make decisions that directly impact their communities (Bádéjọ, 1998). Tebogo (author interview, 23 March 2023), who works for various international donors in South Africa, exemplified this by reflecting on their time as a programme officer: "my grant making was informed by what my director and the team wanted versus what grantees wanted". While it is essential to acknowledge that foundations are accountable to their boards and that senior management is tasked with aligning grants with the foundation's long-term strategic vision, this hierarchical decision-making process often creates a disconnect between the priorities of higher-level leadership and the lived realities of local communities. Senior management's role in directing grants, though crucial for ensuring organisational coherence and consistency, can limit the ability of local offices to make decisions that fully reflect the needs of the grassroots. However, it is also important to recognise that local programme managers and directors, while constrained by overarching organisational directives, do possess some agency in modifying grant approaches to better align with local contexts. These adjustments, though often small, offer a degree of flexibility within the broader framework set by senior leadership. The extent to which such changes can be made is often shaped by the organisation's strategic priorities and the broader governance structures in place.

While participants observed that final grant decisions were ultimately made by the foundation director rather than grantees, this finding must be situated within the broader governance logics and accountability structures that shape philanthropic practice. Foundations are embedded in institutional frameworks that require staff to administer grants in line with board expectations, donor preferences, and long-term organisational visions (Bergh & Geldenhuys, 2013). As Moyo and Imafidon (2021) and Mahomed (2023) highlight, donor–recipient relationships are rarely characterised by equal footing; rather, they are marked by asymmetrical power dynamics in which local actors have limited authority over final decisions, even when their participation is formally solicited. This dynamic resonates with Giridharadas' (2018) critique of elite-driven philanthropy, which often sustains existing hierarchies while deploying the rhetoric of justice, empowerment, and partnership. Yet, to dismiss the centralisation of authority as a mere limitation risks overlooking the more nuanced ways in which power is mediated and contested in practice. Evidence from the case studies shows that local programme managers and their directors frequently took cognisance of grantee perspectives, making small but significant adjustments to proposals, funding allocations, or

framing choices that reflected local realities. African feminist scholars underscore the importance of such small openings emphasising that they represent everyday sites where power is simultaneously reinforced and unsettled (Moyo, 2009; Mama, 2015). These openings reveal that while grantee agency is structurally constrained, it is neither absent nor insignificant. Through strategic framing, negotiation, and alignment with institutional language, local actors are able to exercise partial influence, subtly reshaping donor agendas to reflect their priorities.

From this perspective, the tension between centralised decision-making and local responsiveness offers an analytic window into how international philanthropy operates as a field of uneven but dynamic power relations. Rather than conceptualising grantees as entirely disempowered, it is more accurate to frame their agency as situated, contingent, and negotiated within the narrow margins of philanthropic governance. Tracking these micro-spaces of manoeuvre not only illuminates the interplay between institutional authority and local voice but also advances a more complex understanding of justice in philanthropy. As Fraser (2009) reminds us, the principle of participatory parity requires that all actors be able to interact as peers in decision-making processes; examining these case studies through this lens highlights both the persistent structural barriers to parity and the creative ways in which local actors navigate them.

Secondly, African feminist thought also emphasises the importance of collective well-being and community-based approaches to problem-solving (Msimang, 2002). Hierarchical organisations, with their individualistic focus on competition and personal advancement, are at odds with these values (Bergh & Geldenhuys, 2013). The emphasis on individual achievement undermines solidarity and cooperation, creating divisions among employees and hindering collective action. Andile (author interview, 28 February 2023) highlighted this by saying “the social justice philanthropy space is dominated by personalities, what determines the work is what the person wants to work on”. In addition, “depending on the clout of the person, they are able to sway a particular agenda” (Andile, author interview, 28 February 2023). According to Kgotso (author interview, 15 March 2023), an employee of the American Foundation, and Tebogo (author interview, 23 March 2023) the individualistic focus often creates ideological tensions within their institution due to differing values, perspectives and cultures globally and regionally. As per Tebogo (author interview, 23 March 2023) “we are so fragmented, everyone wants to do their own thing”. As a result, the current organisational structure inadvertently prioritises the values, perspectives and ideological frameworks of the leadership team, leading to disparities in how projects are conceptualised and implemented (author interviews: Khumo, 3 July 2023; Dankie, 24 May 2023; Kgotso, 15 March 2023;

Tebogo, 23 March 2023). The imposition of a singular set of values, even with the intention of creating cohesion, results in overlooking the unique contextual nuances and needs of local offices such as the one in South Africa (Moyo & Imafidon, 2021).

This challenge raises questions about the extent to which these international social justice philanthropy institutions are willing and able to incorporate a multiplicity of voices and perspectives in their decision-making processes. The top-down approach creates a sense among regional staff that their agency and expertise are superficial and tokenistic[17], as their input is often side-lined in strategy development (Bádéjọ, 1998; Pereira, 2017). According to Tebogo (author interview, 23 March) these Foundations "want people with local expertise, and when they come, they don't want to hear their local expertise", which means that these institutions "are looking for implementers of a strategy and not activists and experts with a rich understanding of local context". Liyaphila, an employee of the American Foundation, further highlighted this frustration by asking, "why ask for my opinion and expertise if you are not going to take it?" (author interview, 23 March 2023). Another employee of the American Foundation, Nthabiseng (author interview, 13 February 2023), as well as Tebogo (author interview, 23 March 2023) echoes this sentiment, noting that despite their local expertise, their opinions are disregarded because the Foundation will still make a series of assumptions based on what it thinks is best for different groups and communities. As per Tebogo (author interview, 23 March 2023) "that's the problem with power, there's a series of assumptions around who knows what's best for different groups".

The power of local teams to influence, shape or shift the vision and objectives of the Foundation is very limited. Nthabiseng suggests that the apparent autonomy granted to local offices is merely a façade to foster a sense of collaboration; it's as though the Foundation says, "yes we hear you, but we are still choosing to go in our own direction" (author interview, 13 February 2023). According to Andile (author interview, 28 February 2023), the top management in these institutions will give programme officers and programme managers "a seat at the table but they must behave". Similarly, Tebogo (author interview, 23 March 2023), further adds that although individuals may be given a seat at the table, the institution "rewards those who duplicate its thinking" and "ignores those who disagree". As a result, having a seat at the table creates the illusion that all staff members and local offices can contribute to formulating strategies and action plans for the objectives set by the board of trustees, the president, and the executive leadership team. While including local expertise can be seen as a positive step toward more inclusive and responsive programming, the lack of genuine

[17] Tokenism, in this context, refers to the superficial inclusion of local expertise for the sake of optics, without a substantive shift in the organisational power dynamics or decision-making processes.

integration of this expertise into the core processes of grantmaking reveals a deeper issue within philanthropic structures. It suggests that local voices are often relegated to symbolic roles rather than being recognised as key contributors to shaping strategic decisions. This approach can be viewed as a form of "optics" where the appearance of inclusivity is prioritised over real institutional change. This dynamic is particularly problematic in the African context, where philanthropy is often framed as a means of external intervention, and where local knowledge is undervalued in favour of Western-driven solutions. The failure to meaningfully incorporate local expertise into grantmaking decisions reinforces the hierarchical, donor-driven model that is prevalent in international philanthropy. By tokenizing local experts or involving them in superficial roles, these foundations perpetuate a cycle where local agency is undermined, and the power dynamics between the Global North and Global South remain entrenched (Moyo & Imafidon, 2021).

One of the most salient critiques levelled against hierarchical organisations is their patriarchal nature. Traditionally, these structures have been dominated by men, with women occupying subordinate positions (Irefin, Ifah, & Bwala, 2012; Scheepers & Lakhani, 2020). The concentration of power at the top, typically held by male leaders, reinforces gender stereotypes and limits women's opportunities for advancement. This gendered power imbalance is exacerbated by cultural norms and biases that undervalue women's contributions and leadership abilities (Irefin, Ifah, & Bwala, 2012; Scheepers & Lakhani, 2020). Furthermore, within global institutions, local staff from the Global South are underrepresented in leadership roles. This lack of representation perpetuates a colonial dynamic, where decision making power remains concentrated in the hands of individuals from the Global North (Nkomo & Ngambi, 2009). The exclusion of local staff from leadership positions not only diminishes their ability to influence outcomes that directly affect their regions but also reinforces the perception that expertise and authority are inherently linked to Western identities and experiences (Scheepers & Lakhani, 2020).

In the American Foundation, the current composition of the Foundation's leadership team is predominantly made up of individuals who reside and come from the Global North, with only a few international and regional directors from the South (American Foundation, 2023b; author interview: Nthabiseng, 13 February 2023; Tebogo, 23 March 2023). While strides have been made to promote diversity by including women, queer individuals, and people from black and brown communities in senior positions, it is essential to recognise that achieving true representation goes beyond numerical quotas. This is because although these groups may have a higher numerical quota, their agendas may be the same and their level of influence in decision making may remain low while white men have the "strongest and loudest voice in the

room" (author interviews: Kgotso, 15 March 2023; Nthabiseng, 13 February 2023; Tebogo, 23 March 2023). This becomes evident, particularly when issues of race, gender, and decentralisation are discussed (Nthabiseng, author interview, 13 February 2023; Tebogo, author interview, 23 March 2023). According to Nthabiseng (author interview, 13 February 2023) to be convinced that such issues are important, most of the men in the room "want to see numbers and statistics which show how the foundation is reducing gender-based violence". As a result, the discussions and decisions often revolve around measurable outcomes rather than qualitative insights that are crucial for meaningful change. The insistence on data-driven approaches, while valuable, sidelines the lived experiences and nuanced perspectives of marginalised groups different individuals are trying to represent (Oxfam International, 2017; Wyatt, Podems, Durieux, & Evans, 2021).

Similarly, in the European Foundation, the current composition of the Foundation's leadership team is made up of a large majority of individuals who reside and come from Europe. According to two employees of the European Foundation (Dankie, author interview, 24 May 2023 and Khumo, author interview, 3 July 2023) local offices such as the one in South Africa lack senior leadership representation because "all Directors must be German" which excludes diverse voices from leadership positions (Dankie, author interview, 24 May 2023). According to Dankie (author interview, 24 May 2023) while strides have been made to promote diversity by including women and queer folk in leadership positions, there is no regional or local representation (European Foundation, 2023a). As a result, black and brown communities, intersectional identities, as well as Global South communities are not represented at the leadership level (Nkomo & Ngambi, 2009) as individuals with such local expertise are seldom appointed to executive leadership positions within the foundation, raising questions about who is deemed worthy to hold power within the organisation (Tebogo, author interview, 23 March 2023).

Even when they are appointed, the influence that they have is minimal. According to Andile (author interview, 28 February 2023) "even though those people look like us and come from where we come from, they are embedded in a system that does not want them and value them". Grantees of both foundations, such as Amogelang (author interview, 9 February 2023) and Nare (author interview, 13 March 2023) as well as members of civil society, such as Karabo (author interview, 16 February 2023) particularly agree to this, highlighting how sometimes, local people are put in leadership positions as a "tick-box exercise" or tokenistic diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) act. According to Karabo (author interview, 16 February 2023) "from an outside perspective, the organisation might appear transformative because a black leader is now in charge, however, many women in these positions face internal systemic

racism and operate within grant making systems and structures that severely limit their agency and voice". This tokenistic approach not only undermines the potential contributions of these leaders but also perpetuates the status quo, where decision making remains firmly in the hands of a dominant group—often those from Europe or other privileged backgrounds.

Both case studies highlight the need for transformative change within philanthropic organisations to address systemic inequalities in governance and decision making. Achieving social justice requires challenging hierarchical structures, dismantling colonial power dynamics, and centring the voices of marginalised communities (Moyo & Imafidon, 2021). A more decentralised and participatory approach to organisational management, which engages diverse stakeholders, including staff from local offices and grantee organisations, is crucial for ensuring that initiatives are culturally sensitive, contextually relevant, and effectively address the complex challenges faced by communities worldwide (Black Feminist Fund, 2023). Furthermore, both foundations must prioritise diversifying leadership to truly reflect the communities they serve. This entails increasing numerical representation and ensuring that individuals from diverse backgrounds have meaningful influence and decision-making power (ActionAid, 2023). By embracing diversity in leadership and adopting inclusive decision-making processes, philanthropic organisations such as the American and European Foundation can better fulfil their missions and contribute to meaningful social change. Moreover, these institutions must be willing to critically assess their practices, recognising where they perpetuate inequalities and taking concrete steps to rectify these issues. Having gained insight into the organisational structure within the two organisations, the subsequent section delves into the grant making strategies shaping the activities of both foundations.

4.4. Strategic framework

Organisational structure and strategic frameworks are two fundamental components of any organisation, intricately linked and mutually influencing each other. The structure, which outlines the hierarchical arrangement of roles, responsibilities, and communication channels, directly reflects and reinforces an organisation's underlying values (Bergh & Geldenhuys, 2013; Dosi, Marengo, & Virgillito, 2021). Conversely, the shared beliefs and principles that constitute a strategic framework shape the design and effectiveness of the organisational structure. A strategy framework serves as a compass guiding an organisation towards its desired destination (Bergh & Geldenhuys, 2013; Dosi, Marengo, & Virgillito, 2021). It is a structured approach to defining and measuring the value an institution creates, providing a shared language for understanding success. In the realm of philanthropy and grant making, strategic frameworks have greater significance as they dictate not only the allocation of

resources but also create a framework that shapes how philanthropic organisations conduct their work (Mahomed, 2023).

The strategy design process within African feminist grant making is fundamentally decentralised, participatory and inclusive. It involves a broad spectrum of African women from diverse backgrounds, ensuring that their perspectives are integrated into the organisation's goals and strategies (African Feminist Forum, 2006). This approach aligns with feminist methodologies, such as action research and participatory evaluation, which prioritise the voices of marginalised women and communities (MacKenzie, 2021). As noted by Kiguwa (2019) these methods are essential for understanding the lived experiences of women and informing effective interventions. In contrast to African feminism's decentralised framework, for hierarchical institutions such as the American and European Foundation, the strategy design process tends to be more centralised and top-down (Bergh & Geldenhuys, 2013). These institutions rely on a smaller, more homogeneous group of decision-makers (Bergh & Geldenhuys, 2013; Dosi, Marengo, & Virgillito, 2021). This approach sometimes results in strategies that are less responsive to the specific needs and contexts of marginalised groups, particularly women of colour and those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds leaders (Syed & Murray, 2008).

Understanding the contrasts in strategic frameworks between African feminist grant making organisations and those of the American and European Foundation provides critical insights into how underlying values influence philanthropic practices. While the decentralised and participatory approach of African feminist organisations is deeply rooted in principles of inclusivity and empowerment, the more centralised models of American and European foundations reflect different sets of values and priorities rooted in traditional, sometimes paternalistic, notions of charity and social responsibility (Bergh & Geldenhuys, 2013; Dosi, Marengo, & Virgillito, 2021; ActionAid, 2023; ASTREA, 2021).

To fully grasp the extent to which African feminist principles have influenced the American and European Foundation, in the next section, we examine the motivations, motives and values that drive their giving practices, as well as assess how values such as equity, justice, and empowerment shape their strategies and funding decisions. By analysing the similarities and differences in the giving motives of these foundations, the research aims to determine the degree to which African feminist principles have influenced the American and European Foundation's philanthropic approaches in South Africa.

4.4.1. Giving motives

Philanthropic institutions are the lifeblood of countless communities, providing essential support and resources that sustain social, cultural, and economic well-being (Moyo & Imafidon, 2021). However, the motivations driving these acts of generosity are complex and multifaceted, often intertwining genuine altruism with a myriad of other influences (Aina, 2014). The American Foundation's key giving motive is justice. Justice defines how it sees the world and approaches and practices its grant making (American Foundation, 2022). According to Nthabiseng (author interview, 13 February 2023) "every time you read a document from the organisation there is always a sense or an allusion to a particular system of oppression or injustice". The American Foundation's theory of change recognises that certain groups face historical oppression and discrimination, and aims to rectify these disparities by supporting ideas, institutions, and individuals who are doing work to ensure equality and justice for marginalised groups across the globe (American Foundation, 2022; author interviews: Kgotso, 15 March 2023; Liyaphila, 23 March 2023). Within its justice framework, the American Foundation operates with several key values that guide and inform its grant making strategies. Among these values are accountability, collaboration, diversity, equity, inclusion, and urgency, each playing a critical role in shaping the foundation's practices (American Foundation, 2022; Liyaphila, author interview, 23 March 2023).

In contrast, the European Foundation's grant making philosophy is deeply influenced by libertarian values and principles (author interviews: Dankie, 24 May 2023; Khumo, 3 July 2023). At the heart of the European Foundation's mission is a steadfast commitment to human rights, which underpins its efforts to foster democracy and protect these fundamental freedoms (European Foundation, 2023b). Guided by this value system, the European Foundation recognises the need to actively engage in preventing environmental degradation, advancing gender equality, promoting peace through conflict prevention in crisis zones, and defending individual freedoms against overreach by the state and economic forces (European Foundation, 2023a). Within the human rights framework, the European Foundation upholds several key values that serve as the cornerstones guiding its grant making approach and practices. These values and principles, include but are not limited to democracy, freedom, justice, peace, reform, and sustainability (European Foundation, 2023b; Author interviews: Dankie, 24 May 2023; Khumo, 3 July 2023).

At the institutional level, the values and principles underscored above seek to be the cornerstone for the operations and grant making strategies of the American and European Foundation. Nevertheless, insights gained from interviews indicate that beyond these foundational ideals, individuals working in the local offices uphold supplementary values and

principles that significantly influence their approach to grant making, suggesting a complex interplay of influences shaping grant making decisions. In addition to the values listed above, Nthabiseng (author interview, 13 February 2023) Kgotso (author interview, 15 March 2023) and Liyaphila (author interview, 23 March 2023) indicated that the American Foundation's work in South Africa is also shaped by principles and values such as activism, intersectionality, participatory democracy, respect, solidarity, transparency and ubuntu. When comparing the values and principles of the American Foundation with those of African feminist grant making, several key similarities and differences stand out. Both the American Foundation and African feminist grant making seek to prioritise collaboration, inclusion, and accountability. They both seek to emphasise the importance of working closely with various stakeholders, including grassroots organisations and communities, to achieve their objectives. Additionally, in principle, both entities are committed to inclusivity, ensuring that diverse voices and perspectives are represented in decision making processes. Accountability is also a shared value, as they seek to hold themselves and their partners responsible for the outcomes of their actions and decisions.

However, some significant differences between the two approaches also emerge. While the American Foundation emphasises justice, African feminist grant making principles place a strong emphasis on dismantling bias, giving up power, and using intersectional approaches in challenging systemic inequalities and power imbalances, particularly those based on gender, race, and other intersecting identities (Gillespie, 2020). Furthermore, while both entities value diversity and equity, the American Foundation's values appear to be more generalised, whereas African feminist grant making principles emphasise power sharing, inclusion, participatory democracy, and solidarity (ActionAid, 2023). These principles reflect an explicit commitment to grassroots activism, democratic decision making, solidarity with marginalised groups, and community-centred approaches (Eyakuze, 2023).

European Foundation share common values and principles with African feminism, particularly in their commitment to equality, justice, and collaboration. Both emphasise dismantling bias and promoting inclusion, recognising the intersections of various forms of oppression, and advocating for the empowerment of marginalised groups (Msimang, 2002). However, their approaches and priorities differ significantly. A key distinction is African feminism's emphasis on decolonisation. African feminists focus on challenging and dismantling colonial legacies that continue to shape African societies, including patriarchal structures and Eurocentric norms (African Feminist Forum, 2006; Hamadi, 2014; Villanueva, 2021). This focus on decolonisation reflects a deeper commitment to addressing historical injustices and centring African voices and perspectives in feminist discourse and activism. In contrast, the European

Foundation's values are primarily framed within a human rights framework that emphasises universal principles such as democracy, freedom, and justice (European Foundation, 2023b). While these values are crucial for promoting social change and advocating for the rights of all individuals, they may not fully address the specific historical and systemic challenges faced by African women and marginalised communities.

Findings of the current study reveal that both foundations encounter significant obstacles that hinder their ability to operate effectively in their respective regions, though these obstacles stem from different sources and manifest in distinct ways. For example, the American Foundation's predicament centres around the disconnect between its Global North-originating ideological framework and the socio-cultural realities of South Africa (Author interviews: Nthabiseng, 13 February 2023; Kgotso, 15 March 2023). While the foundation implements grant making strategies locally, its values, principles, and strategies are rooted in an ideological perspective that does not align with or fully comprehend the local context. This incongruence between values and principles imply a variety and, sometimes, tensions in the perspectives and priorities in grant making. This is because, as Nthabiseng (author interview, 13 February 2023), Kgotso (author interview, 15 March 2023) and Liyaphila (author interview, 23 March 2023) note, the internal disparities in comprehension and context significantly influence both the understanding and implementation of their work in different parts of the globe. Liyaphila (author interview, 23 March 2023) adds that this "misalignment in values" creates challenges for the regional office, which must "navigate the differences in how values and norms are understood and applied" locally versus globally. As a result, to navigate these disparities, the staff at the American Foundation's regional office in South Africa finds itself having to constantly "justify its framework and understanding of certain values and principles" and how they manifest themselves in their work (Author interviews: Liyaphila, 23 March 2023; Nthabiseng, 13 February 2023). Nthabiseng (author interview, 13 February 2023) further exemplified this by emphasising divergent understandings of accountability: "how I understand accountability and how Americans understand accountability is totally different".

When conceptual differences arise, local programme staff must present their perspectives in a manner acceptable or "palatable" to the head office (Author interviews: Nthabiseng, 13 February 2023; Liyaphila, 23 March 2023; Kgotso, 15 March 2023). This, according to Nthabiseng (author interview, 13 February 2023), is achieved by tempering language to bridge the divergences in the understanding of terms like "anti-blackness" versus "white supremacy" to maintain palatability to the decision-makers in the American office. To illustrate this, Nthabiseng (author interview, 13 February 2023) indicated that when the South Africa office discusses intersectionality, they "might say anti-blackness, and that's okay, that's palatable"

to the American office, but the office won't say "white supremacy" because then they "sound too radical". Similarly, Kgotso (author interview, 15 March 2023) described how conversations around decolonisation had to be "repackaged" as discussions on "diversity and inclusion" to avoid resistance from headquarters. Liyaphila (author interview, 23 March 2023) echoed this sentiment, noting that staff were "careful not to use movement language that is too political" since terms like "reparations" could be dismissed outright as "too activist". This need for "tempering language" reflects a broader challenge of balancing the local realities with the expectations of a distant headquarters, ultimately influencing how the foundation's work is conceptualised and communicated.

The cumulative effect of these linguistic choices is that local staff operate within an imposed register of acceptability, constantly calculating which words, framings, and concepts will resonate with headquarters and which may jeopardise funding or legitimacy. In practice, this produces a form of self-censorship that narrows the scope of what can be said and, therefore what can be imagined as possible. As Nthabiseng (author interview, 13 February 2023) observed, "we always end up editing ourselves before they even say no because we know what won't pass". This sentiment reflects the internalisation of Global North power where local staff anticipate what the dominant office is likely to resist and pre-emptively adjust their language and proposals accordingly.

The need to present certain perspectives as "palatable" to the dominant Global North ideology and perspectives illustrates the power dynamics at play, where the South African office must navigate the American office's "comfort zone" to secure resources or implement their work (Andile, author interview, 28 February 2023). As a result, certain voices and narratives are privileged over others. The imposition of a Global North standpoint on principles and values also reflects a colonial mindset that disregards local contexts and perpetuates epistemic violence (Tilley, 2000; Moyo & Imafidon, 2021). This linguistic standardisation also contributes to a homogenised approach that fails to capture the intricacies of local contexts and experiences, limiting the effectiveness of the Foundation's initiatives in South Africa (Mahomed, 2023). African feminist approaches require relinquishing power and embracing local leadership (ActionAid, 2023). The South African office's constant justification further points to a lack of trust and agency. Empowering the regional office with decision making authority and the ability to adapt their local perspective would be a step towards decolonisation (Moyo & Imafidon, 2021).

Furthermore, the pressure to conform to the dominant narrative limits their ability to authentically represent the needs and realities of their local context. The emphasis on

palatability acts as a disciplining mechanism that keeps certain narratives such as those that are disruptive, structural, or radical out of formal philanthropic discourse. This raises the question of whose stories are being told, and whose truths are being erased. Embracing cultural relativism would require the American Foundation to acknowledge the validity of different perspectives and prioritise localised approaches to social change (Brown, 2008). The tensions within the American Foundation underscore the need for a transformative approach that challenges existing power structures and interrogates what narratives are deemed acceptable. True justice requires not only addressing surface-level disparities but also questioning the underlying assumptions and biases that inform institutional practices (Mahomed, 2023; Naylor, 2018). Unless these epistemic hierarchies are dismantled, the foundation risks reproducing the very inequalities it seeks to redress.

In contrast, in addition to its European roots, the European Foundation's challenges are rooted in its direct linkage to the government and political party, which profoundly shapes its ideological framework. As a political foundation, the European foundation's actions must align with the broader ideological landscape dictated by these key stakeholders, creating a situation where the foundation's autonomy is significantly constrained (Saalfeld, 2000; Anheier & Romo, 1999; Author interviews: Dankie, 24 May 2023; Khumo, 3 July 2023). This means that local foundation staff must navigate the intricate relationship between the foundation, government and political party. In this context, the perspectives and interests of the government and the political party are privileged and dominant, while the voices of other actors are marginal. In this regard, Dankie (author interview, 24 May 2023) highlighted how staff at the European Foundation’s head office “have their own priorities and objectives which makes implementation difficult, and impacts how funding is distributed”, underscoring how power dynamics influence decision making processes and resource distribution. The political entanglement of the European Foundation complicates its ability to support initiatives that may challenge or deviate from prevailing political narratives (Author interviews: Dankie, 24 May 2023; Khumo, 3 July 2023).

From an African feminist perspective, the European Foundation's framework can be criticised for its Eurocentric framing, which perpetuates colonial legacies and overlooks indigenous knowledge and perspectives (African Feminist Forum, 2006). According to Dankie (author interview, 24 May 2023) and Khumo (author interview, 3 July 2023) this Eurocentric orientation undermines the Foundation's effectiveness, as its values do not always align with the lived experiences and needs of local communities. Khumo (author interview, 3 July 2023) emphasised this by saying that this approach “alienates the partners they want to support”. Additionally, the complex relationship with political parties creates internal tensions within the

Foundation. Staff members often feel conflicted between upholding their personal values and meeting the expectations of the Foundation, government, or political party stakeholders. Dankie (author interview, 24 May 2023) alluded to this by saying “sometimes I may want to go into a particular direction or support a particular agenda I feel strongly about, however, because there are other players in the field, this is not always possible”. This tension highlights the power dynamics within organisations and constrains individual agency within hierarchical structures (Scheepers & Lakhani, 2020). As a result, staff members often feel disempowered to advocate for change or challenge institutional norms, which further perpetuates the status quo (Ogbor, 2001).

In navigating these challenges, both the American and European Foundation can learn from African feminist grant making approaches, which prioritise decolonisation, solidarity, and grassroots activism (Eyakuze, 2023). A critical step towards alignment is the adoption of African feminist grant making approaches, which prioritise decolonisation, solidarity, and grassroots activism (ASTREA, 2021). By empowering local offices and fostering a culturally relativistic approach, the American Foundation can better understand and respond to the unique needs and contexts of African communities. This involves delegating decision-making authority, allowing for more localised strategies, and ensuring that initiatives resonate deeply with the target population (African Feminist Forum, 2006). Similarly, the European Foundation must challenge hierarchical collaboration models in favour of partnerships built on mutual respect and shared power. Embracing African feminist principles of solidarity can foster more equitable relationships with local organisations and communities (Saeed, 2021; Gillespie, 2020). However, this requires a conscious effort to challenge Eurocentric norms and value indigenous knowledge and practices. Having gained insight into the core values and principles guiding the grant making approach of both foundations, the next section evaluates the extent to which these principles manifest in their strategic focus areas.

4.4.2. Focus areas

Since its inception, the American Foundation has committed itself to challenging global poverty and addressing social injustices (Lewis, 2001). Central to the Foundation’s mission is the promotion of democratic principles, fostering international collaboration, and enhancing human well-being. In 2019, following the appointment of new leadership, the Foundation underwent a significant strategic shift by embracing a global approach to its grant allocation (Tebogo, author interview, 23 March 2023). Prior to this transition, each regional office operated independently, formulating its own strategies. To streamline operations and promote cohesion, the American Foundation introduced overarching global thematic areas to ensure consistency within the Foundation “whether in South Africa, China or New York” (author

interviews: Kgotso, 15 March 2023; Tebogo, 23 March 2023). The nine thematic areas illustrated in Figure 5 below, are aimed at addressing the root causes of inequality identified by the Foundation.

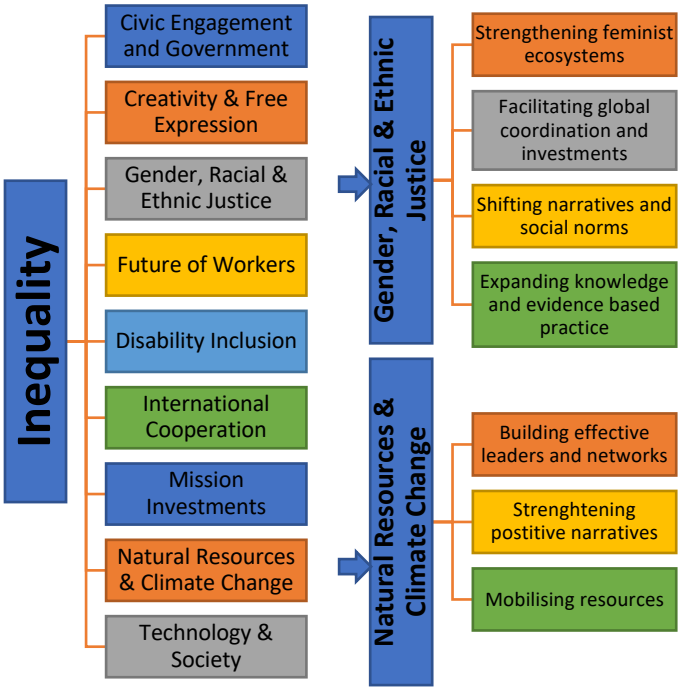


Figure 5: Summary of the American Foundation's thematic areas and outcomes

The American Foundation has adopted a five-year mission-driven[18] and goal-oriented strategy, set to be implemented until 2025 (author interviews: Kgotso, 15 March 2023; Tebogo, 23 March 2023). The American Foundation's office in South Africa works on two thematic areas: - Natural Resources and Climate Change (NRCC), as well as Gender, Racial and Ethnic Justice (GREJ) (American Foundation, 2023c). How these outcomes and goals are achieved is unique to the context in which the region operates. This involves considering local culture, economic conditions, regulations, and other unique social factors that have the potential to influence how the global strategy is implemented locally (Nthabiseng, author interview, 15 March 2023).

In the Office for Southern Africa, the NRCC strategy focuses on prioritising public interest and meeting the needs of rural, low-income, and indigenous communities who hold customary rights or secure land rights. In South Africa, this entails ensuring that communities have a say in extractive projects affecting their land and that communities can advocate for their fair share

[18] This is the most common type of grant making strategy. In this approach, the funder identifies a specific issue or cause that they want to support, and they award grants to organisations that are working to address that issue.

of benefits from these projects (American Foundation, 2023c). The NRCC strategy also entails holding both corporations and the South African government accountable for establishing and implementing natural resource policies that combat illicit financial flows, corruption, tax evasion, and environmental crimes (American Foundation, 2023c). The GREJ strategy, on the other hand, aims to reduce violence by supporting women and girl-led organisations in South Africa. The strategy focuses on encouraging the government to invest financially in addressing gender-based violence; promoting collaboration among different sectors to prevent and respond to gender-based violence; involving survivors in shaping prevention and response programmes and urging regional institutions to commit to addressing gender-based violence and investing in GBV related programmes (American Foundation, 2023c; Nthabiseng, author interview, 15 March 2023).

The European Foundation's strategy is multifaceted. It aims to foster sustainable development, promote gender equality, and strengthen democratic structures globally. Since 2020, the European Foundation has worked on various thematic areas as illustrated in Figure 6 below.

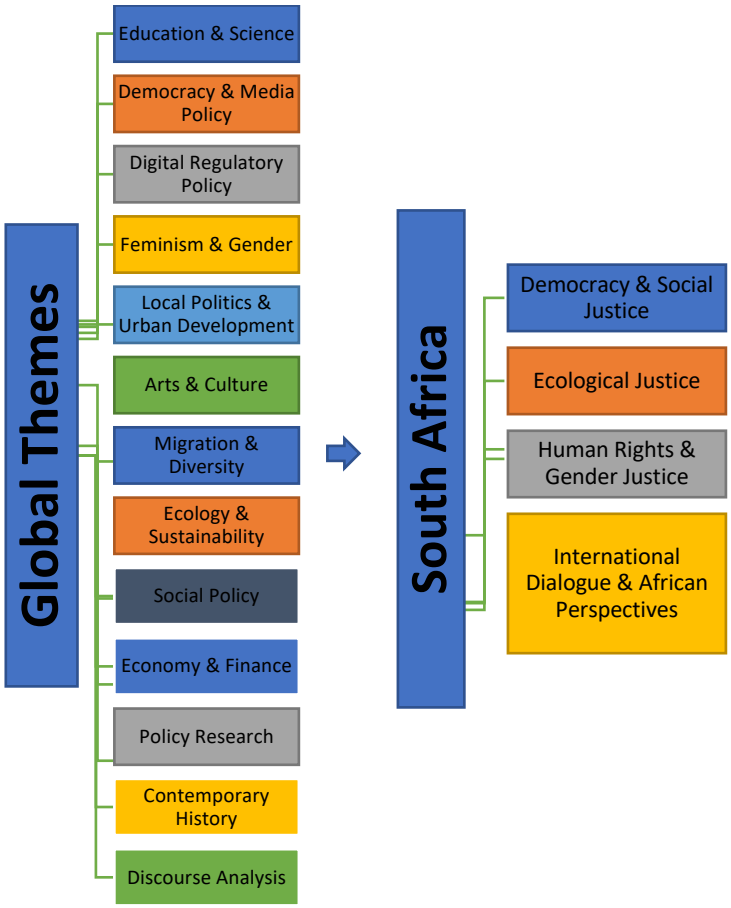


Figure 6: Summary of the European Foundation's thematic areas (European Foundation, 2023b)

The European Foundation is driven by a three-year mission-driven and goal-oriented strategy aimed at advancing human rights, scheduled for implementation until early 2024 (Khumo, author interview, 3 July 2023). The thematic areas outlined encompass crucial aspects the European Foundation believes are essential for advancing human rights. These themes are categorised into global themes and local themes. Global themes represent the organisation's focus areas more broadly (European Foundation, 2023b). In South Africa, the European Foundation's office concentrates on democracy and social justice, ecological justice, human rights and gender justice, and international dialogue with African perspectives (Khumo, author interview, 3 July 2023). While the global themes provide a framework for global programmes, each regional office tailors specific goals and outcomes according to the international framework. Achieving these outcomes and goals varies based on regional context, considering factors such as local culture, economic conditions, regulations, and unique social factors that influence local implementation of the global strategy.

The democracy and social justice programme of the European Foundation addresses the rising socio-economic inequality and poverty in the region. It aims to promote and protect the political representation of marginalised communities, advocating for their civil liberties, socio-economic rights, and fair distribution of state resources to combat injustice locally (European Foundation, 2023b). The ecological justice programme promotes development models that ensure fair allocation of economic and natural resources while preserving ecological balance and protecting the environment. The European Foundation focuses on environmental justice, using research and advocacy to support communities affected by industries such as mining and air pollution (European Foundation, 2023b). The human rights and gender justice strategy aims to tackle sexual and gender-based violence experienced by queer individuals, women, and other marginalised groups in the region through awareness-raising partnerships (European Foundation, 2023a). Lastly, the international dialogue and African perspectives work seeks to amplify the voices of marginalised groups globally through dialogue, enabling them to contribute to decision making processes (European Foundation, 2023b).

As earlier indicated, African feminism is deeply informed by the principle of intersectionality, which recognises that gender inequality cannot be understood in isolation from other social identities and oppressions, such as race, class, and ethnicity (Gqola, 2001; ActionAid, 2023). African feminists are motivated by the need to address these intersecting forms of discrimination and to build solidarity among women of diverse backgrounds. This

intersectional approach ensures that the voices of marginalised groups, including rural women, women with disabilities, and those from various ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, are included in feminist discourse and activism (African Feminist Forum, 2006). The current research revealed that in contrast to African feminist principles, the strategies of both the American and European Foundation remain exclusive and struggle to fully incorporate multiple perspectives. Despite their progressive intentions, these foundations operate within frameworks that do not adequately recognise or address the diverse and intersecting identities of African women and girls. This exclusivity is manifested in several ways (Author interviews: Dankie, 24 May 2023; Khumo, 3 July 2023; Nthabiseng, 13 February 2023; Kgotso, 15 March 2023).

Firstly, the strategies employed by these foundations reflect a top-down approach where decisions are made without sufficient input from the communities they intend to serve. In both foundations, there is limited constituent engagement as communities and beneficiaries are only consulted for information-sharing or feedback-gathering purposes (Bergh & Geldenhuys, 2013). This is evidenced in the strategy development process for both organisations. While the strategy is being developed, local programme officers and programme managers engage experts as well as potential partners to receive feedback on the proposed strategy. According to Kgotso (author interview, 15 March 2023) and Nthabiseng (author interview, 13 February 2023) the American Foundation does this because it believes that such insights and perspectives will be “invaluable in shaping the localised strategy” and aligning their work with that of the sector. According to Nthabiseng (author interview, 13 February 2023) “there is at least an intention to listen, sometimes very superficially but sometimes deeply”. Although the programme teams from both foundations indicate these conversations are useful, most grantees felt as though the process was one-sided, extractive and disempowering. This is reflected in the words of Karabo (author interview, 16 February 2023) who argued that this is an extractive “process that mines the brains and knowledge” of grantees for their own purposes. Nare (author interview, 13 March 2023) echoed this by stating “they fly you out, book you into nice hotels, extract your skills and knowledge, and then send you back home once they have what they need to build their strategies and tick their boxes”.

Due to the hierarchical nature of these institutions, the decision making power and influence of grantees are constrained by the power imbalances and structural inequalities that exist within foundations. Therefore, as observed elsewhere, the constituency engagement process does not deepen the autonomy and agency of grantees to influence the strategy decisions of these foundations (Breeze, 2021; Lee, 2020; McNamara, Cumming & Pulis, 2018). Tebogo (author interview, 23 March 2023) confirms this by saying “with our methods of consultation

with grantees, we feel very proud of ourselves, we consult feminist movements, knowing that they do not have the decision making power". Nthabiseng (author interview, 13 February 2023) echoes this by stating that "partners know what they need and want. However, there's a sense of philanthropy not listening". Nthabiseng (author interview, 13 February 2023) referred to this as "philanthropic arrogance" where philanthropic institutions harvest knowledge of what their beneficiaries need but choose to do things differently because they think their "strategies are still relevant to them; therefore, they will continue to implement them". This assertion highlights the incongruence between the Foundation's professed commitment to consultation and the actual distribution of decision-making power. The acknowledgement that feminist movements and other civil society groups, despite being consulted, lack the authority to shape grant making decisions, underscores the superficial nature of these engagements. This often makes grantees and those that they consult feel disempowered and frustrated, as their inputs and perspectives are seemingly considered but lack substantial impact on the Foundation's decision-making processes (Black Feminist Fund, 2023).

Secondly, the strategic framing of these foundations is predominantly North and Eurocentric, meaning that it is shaped by perspectives, values, and priorities rooted in Western contexts. This framing tends to impose a one-size-fits-all model that does not align with the cultural, social, and economic realities of African women and girls. In the American Foundation, although Kgotso (author interview, 15 March 2023) agreed that the strategy must be inclusive and reflect and address local realities and nuances, Nthabiseng (author interview, 13 February 2023) highlighted the Foundation's challenges in doing so. According to Nthabiseng (author interview, 13 February 2023) "programme officers are trying to address things in a meaningful way, but they are constrained by the lack of flexibility". Tebogo (author interview, 23 March 2023) further added that grant making responses are often "disconnected from local issues" because foundation staff are required to "implement grant making strategies in an environment where there are rigid strategies and theory of changes that are designed to make certain people comfortable".

While the issues the American and European Foundations tackle are global, their local manifestations differ. To navigate this, the local offices are forced to either overly justify themselves or align their work with global goals, thereby limiting their ability to support organisations working outside those parameters (Nthabiseng, author interview, 13 February 2023). Within these philanthropic institutions, according to Nthabiseng (author interview, 13 February 2023) doing things differently "comes at a cost, as you constantly have to make the case for why you are choosing the alternative way of working". As Nthabiseng pointed out, the pressure to justify alternative approaches forces local offices into a position where they must

continually defend their strategies, even when these strategies are better suited to local contexts. This defensive posture not only drains resources but also diminishes the capacity to respond effectively to emerging issues on the ground.

This dynamic becomes even more complex when we consider that local offices, even when led by black women, are often operating within power structures that leave little room for meaningful change. The presence of black women in leadership positions does not inherently dismantle these systems; instead, it often highlights the tension between representation and systemic transformation (Smith & Nkomo, 2021; Gaines, 2012). As Corbett and Liki (2015) observe, in the context of women politicians navigating patriarchal systems, the ability to challenge or reform these entrenched structures is often curtailed by the very frameworks that sustain them. These intersecting identities, being both black and women in spaces dominated by Western-centric paradigms, create unique challenges. While their positions may symbolise progress, the reality is that their influence is often constrained by the need to align with institutional priorities and global objectives (Smith & Nkomo, 2021; Gaines, 2012; Corbett & Liki, 2015). This alignment can leave little room for approaches that are rooted in local realities or that deviate from the norm.

From a beneficiary perspective, Andile (author interview, 28 February 2023) exemplified this by saying “philanthropy and rigid institutions do not want to take risks by stepping outside of their comfort zones” as a result “I will not get funding because I am seen as a risk because I’m doing things differently”. Andile's experience underscores a broader critique: that the structures of institutional philanthropy are not only resistant to change but actively discourage it by framing deviation as a liability rather than an opportunity. Similarly, Liyaphila (author interview, 23 March 2023) observed: “[internally] fighting for your politics is exhausting because you constantly have to prove yourself”. As a result, according to Karabo (author interview, 16 February 2023), programme officers “get frustrated” and end up “giving up their faux agency by giving these institutions what they want because not doing so comes at a very high personal cost”.

It is evident from the interview conversations that staff within the American Foundation strive to address issues uniquely, but they are constrained by rigid systems and frameworks inflexible to local context adaptations. This need for continual justification creates a draining cycle of advocacy within the very institutions meant to support innovative change. The psychological burden of "fighting for your politics" within these rigid structures leads to burnout, disillusionment, and, as Karabo notes, a surrender of agency. Programme officers, caught between their commitment to local relevance and the demands of global conformity, eventually

capitulate to the pressures, delivering what institutions expect rather than what the context demands.

Similar to the American Foundation, Dankie (author interview, 24 May 2023) emphasised the importance of tailoring strategies to local contexts for the European Foundation. However, both Dankie (author interview, 24 May 2023) and Khumo (author interview, 3 July 2023) highlighted the difficulties in doing so. For example, within the European Foundation's human rights and gender justice strategy, the South Africa office had identified the need to "engage with men and boys as both perpetrators and victims of gender based and sexual violence" (Dankie author interview, 24 May 2023). While this approach is crucial in their local context, it is not "perceived as necessary" at the global or regional level of the Foundation. Khumo (author interview, 3 July 2023) echoed similar sentiments, emphasising the complexity of adapting strategies to local nuances while aligning with broader organisational goals. According to Khumo (author interview, 3 July 2023) it is difficult being "the middleman who is pulled into two opposing directions, unfortunately, you can't be Switzerland, you have to pick a side".

Khumo's (author interview, 3 July 2023) metaphor of being "the middleman" who is "pulled into two opposing directions" captures the friction that often arises when local offices attempt to balance the specificity of their context with the expectations set by their international counterparts. The pressure to align with global objectives can sometimes lead to compromises that dilute the effectiveness of local initiatives. This is particularly problematic in fields like human rights and gender justice, where the success of interventions often hinges on their cultural and contextual sensitivity. The difficulty in tailoring strategies to local contexts, suggests a top-down approach that may not adequately address the needs and priorities of marginalised communities (Author interviews: Dankie, 24 May 2023; Khumo, 3 July 2023). To redress these shortcomings, the Foundation must critically examine its own positionality and work towards redistributing power and resources to those most affected by injustice.

Thirdly, the strategies of these foundations are siloed and lack an intersectional approach. Nthabiseng (author interview, 13 February 2023) confirmed this by saying "we address some issues and some systems of oppression but not all". Nthabiseng (author interview, 13 February 2023) notes that the American Foundation has the potential to adopt an intersectional approach. However, there is some hesitancy due to what it may require from the organisation. As per Nthabiseng (author interview, 13 February 2023) "the analysis and approach to working is sometimes very superficial because if you dig deeper there are concessions and changes that the organisation will have to make; as a result, the organisation is not willing to go there

because it means having to look in the mirror". Due to their introspective fears, this means that they opt to address selected issues in isolation, rather than recognising and responding to the interconnected nature of these challenges.

The American Foundation's strategy in South Africa, while addressing multiple thematic areas in silos, appears to recognise the interconnectedness of various social issues through its GREJ strategy which acknowledges the intersectional nature of violence by targeting women and girl-led organisations. However, there is still room for deeper exploration of how intersecting identities such as race, gender, and socioeconomic status shape experiences of injustice and privilege (Crenshaw, 1989). The NRCC strategy also acknowledges the importance of prioritising marginalised communities, particularly rural, low-income, and indigenous groups. However, taking an intersectional lens would ensure a deeper analysis of how these communities may face compounded forms of discrimination and marginalisation, necessitating targeted interventions that address intersecting oppressions (Eyakuze, 2023).

The European Foundation's approach, on the other hand, seems to operate on a universal understanding of human rights (Khumo, author interview, 3 July 2023). While their goals of gender equality, combating poverty, and environmental justice are crucial, the strategy does not explicitly acknowledge how these issues intersect and disproportionately affect marginalised groups, including women.

Lastly, the African feminist framework is characterised by a commitment to flexibility and adaptability. Within this framework, strategies are not fixed but evolve in response to the changing realities and feedback from the communities they serve (African Feminist Forum, 2006). This dynamic approach is informed by the belief that those most affected by social issues are best positioned to propose viable solutions. As ActionAid (2023) and the African Feminist Forum (2006) point out, this adaptability ensures that interventions remain relevant and effective over time, as they are continually shaped by the lived experiences and insights of African women. In contrast, the more rigid structures of the American and European Foundation struggle with adaptability as they adhere to pre-determined strategies and funding cycles that do not easily accommodate change (Scheepers & Lakhani, 2020). The American Foundation applies a five-year strategy, providing a longer-term outlook, while the European Foundation opts for a shorter three-year strategy (author interviews, Nthabiseng, 13 February 2023; Dankie, 24 May 2023). Although their timeframes differ, both frameworks significantly influence the agility and responsiveness (or lack thereof) of these foundations in addressing emerging issues and adapting to rapidly changing contexts. This rigidity can be particularly problematic in dynamic environments like those in South Africa, where socio-political,

economic, and environmental factors can shift quickly, requiring immediate and flexible responses. The pre-determined strategies of these foundations often lock them into specific funding priorities and approaches, limiting their ability to pivot when new challenges arise or when existing issues evolve in unforeseen ways.

Nthabiseng (author interview, 13 February 2023) from the American Foundation underscored this issue, pointing out the challenge of outdated strategies. As per Nthabiseng (author interview, 13 February 2023), the American Foundation “talks about amplifying voices, being survivor-centred, and community-led, but in truth, the fact is these strategies are three to four years behind the sector”. Nthabiseng exemplified this by sharing how in some of the GREJ discussions the American Foundation has engaged in, the strategy's timeframe often renders the American Foundation’s responses outdated as it is “three to four years behind the sector because the context is changing so fast”. In addition to the above, Dankie (author interview, 24 May 2023) and Khumo (author interview, 3 July 2023) from the European Foundation also emphasised how their timeframes make it “difficult to bring on new partners who require long-term support”. As a result, the relatively brief timeframe pressures foundation staff to “achieve quick, tangible outcomes”, often favouring projects with immediate results over those requiring longer-term investment (Khumo, author interview, 3 July 2023).

4.5. Conclusion

The findings of this research reveal similarities in grant making approaches employed by both the American and European Foundation. These organisations are structured hierarchically, utilising top-down strategy design processes with minimal involvement from their local staff and the communities they aim to serve. This hierarchical framework, coupled with the Eurocentric and North-centric values that shape these institutions, poses significant challenges for integrating African feminist approaches to grant making. While there are overlapping values between these organisations and African feminist ideals, the methods through which these values are enacted often undermine the very principles they seek to support. This misalignment is particularly evident in how decisions are made, and strategies are designed. The lack of meaningful engagement with local communities and stakeholders means that the nuances of African feminist perspectives are often overlooked or inadequately addressed. Instead, the dominant frameworks and priorities of the North continue to influence the grant making process, reinforcing existing power imbalances and limiting the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at promoting gender equity in the South African context.

Furthermore, the funding priorities of these foundations compartmentalise women's issues rather than adopting an intersectional lens. This siloed approach overlooks the complex

interplay of factors which significantly shape women's experiences and needs. While there is a growing emphasis on gender equality, the focus remains predominantly on isolated issues like women's economic empowerment or gender-based violence. Consequently, the persistence of these narrow programmatic areas within the American and European Foundation not only limits the scope of their interventions but also perpetuates a fragmented understanding of gender issues in South Africa. This reductionist approach fails to capture the full spectrum of challenges that African women face, including those related to socioeconomic status, race, and cultural contexts. As a result, the interventions funded by these foundations often fall short of addressing the structural and systemic factors that sustain gender inequality. Moreover, the emphasis on short-term, measurable outcomes further exacerbates the problem. This focus on short-term gains undermines the potential for deep, systemic shifts that are necessary to dismantle entrenched patriarchal structures and advance the broader goals of African feminism.

For African feminist approaches to be genuinely integrated into the grant making approach, there is a need for a paradigm shift in how these foundations operate. This includes rethinking the hierarchical decision-making processes, fostering meaningful partnerships with local communities, and adopting an intersectional lens that goes beyond compartmentalised issues. Only by embracing these changes can the American and European Foundation effectively contribute to the advancement of gender equity in South Africa in a way that aligns with and supports the holistic, intersectional perspectives championed by African feminists. Without such a shift, the risk remains that these foundations will continue to reinforce the very power dynamics they aim to dismantle, ultimately limiting the impact of their efforts to promote gender equality in the region.

CHAPTER 5: GRANT MAKING PRACTICES OF THE AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN FOUNDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter employed an African feminist perspective to analyse the grant making practices of the American and European Foundations' grant making in South Africa. Through this lens, this research explored how these organisations translate their values into practice and implement their funding strategies. By examining the nine stages of their grant making processes—from the allocation of the grant making budget to the final stage of monitoring, evaluation, and learning—this chapter aims to uncover deeper insights into whom they choose to fund and the methods they employ to make these critical decisions.

5.2. Grant making process

The grant making process plays a pivotal role in how international social justice philanthropies execute their missions and distribute resources. As outlined in Figure 7 below, this section of the research explores the methodologies utilised by the American and European Foundation to identify, support, and engage with their grantees in South Africa. In what follows, these steps are explained in greater detail.

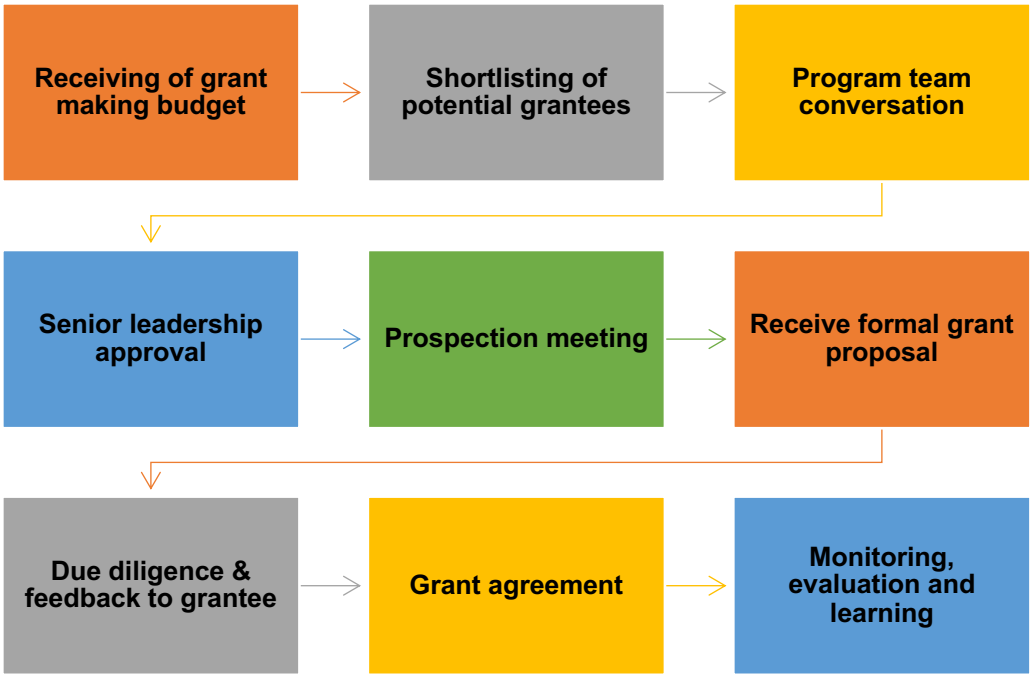


Figure 7: Summary of the American and European Foundations' grant making process (American Foundation, 2023a; author interviews: Khumo, 3 July 2023; Dankie, 24 May 2023; Nthabiseng, 13 February 2023)

5.2.1 Receiving of grant making budget allocation

According to Muchilwa (2013) social justice philanthropy is a powerful tool for addressing social issues, but its effectiveness relies on having sufficient resources[19]. The initial stage of the grant making process involves the South African offices of the two foundations receiving their grant making budget, which determines the amount of funds each foundation can distribute annually to grantees (author interviews: Nthabiseng, 13 February 2023; Khumo, 3 July 2023; Kgotso, 15 March 2023). Due to the hierarchical nature of the American and European Foundation, both organisations make use of a centralised process to making budget allocations.

In the American Foundation, budget control is solely managed by the U.S. head office, leaving local offices with no financial autonomy (American Foundation, 2023a). As Kgotso (author interview, 15 March 2023) explained, grant making budgets are given to each office at the end of the year. According to Kgotso (author interview, 15 March 2023) “we are told how much the office and each line of work will have for grant making each year; although we may have a rough idea of how much to expect, the amount allocated sometimes fluctuates”. This centralisation often limits the decision-making power of local staff when it comes to budget management. Kgotso (author interview, 15 March 2023) indicated that these budget decisions are often made by the Vice President of Programmes or the International Directors in charge of the different lines of work. As a result, local staff have limited autonomy and influence. As per Nthabiseng (author interview, 13 February 2023), “once budget decisions have been made, there isn’t much we can do to shift things around”. Nthabiseng (author interview, 13 February 2023) further added “you are expected to make magic out of it whether that amount is enough or not”.

Similarly, the European Foundation, assigns budgetary control to the Foundation’s *Mitgliederversammlung*[20] (General Assembly) which distributes funds across regions in a top-down manner, also limiting local offices' influence (Saalfeld, 2000; Kgotso, author interview, 15 March 2023). According to Dankie (author interview, 24 May 2023), grant making allocations are influenced by political factors: “it depends on how well the political party does—the more seats they have, the bigger the budget.” Khumo (author interview, 3 July 2023) elaborated, stating, once the political party has their budget “our head office will inform us that

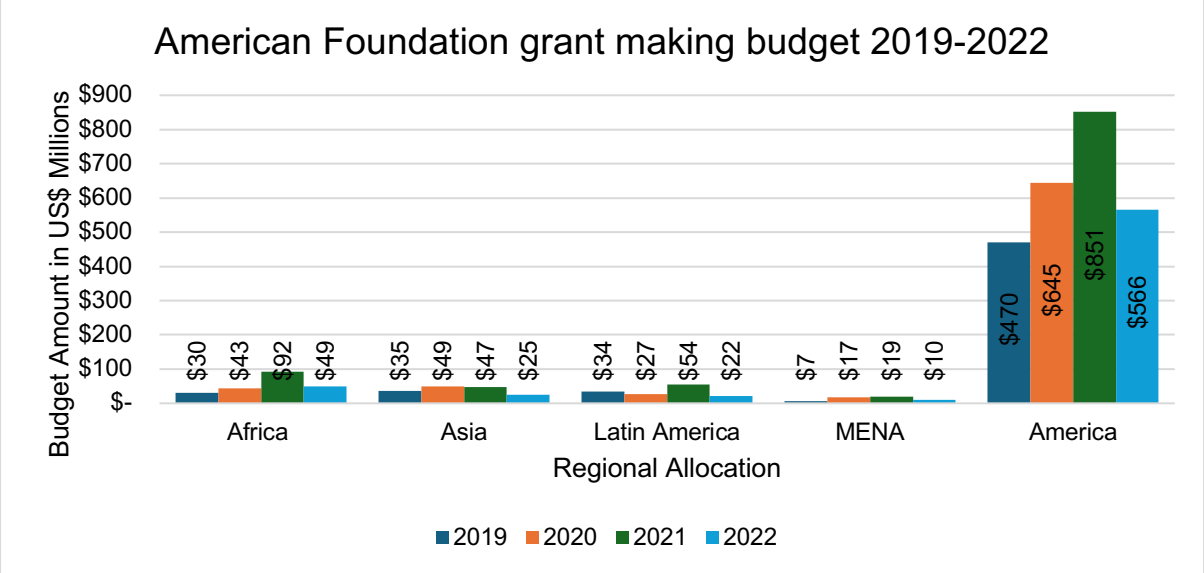
[19] Resources are essential elements that enable philanthropy to function. In the context of philanthropy, resources are defined as anything tangible or intangible that can be used to support a cause or achieve a goal (Cagney & Ross, 2013; Muchilwa, 2013). Resources are essential elements of philanthropy because without them giving and gifting are impossible (Harness, 2018).

[20] The *Mitgliederversammlung* (General Assembly), consisting of 49 members, serves as the Foundation's supreme decision-making authority. It holds the responsibility for all budgetary decisions, in consultation with the Foundation's Supervisory Board (European Foundation, 2023).

we have x amount of money for grant making over the next three years". The budgetary practices of the American and European Foundations, while differing in structural details, share a centralised and top-down approach that limits local offices' financial autonomy.

5.2.1.1. Regional budget allocation

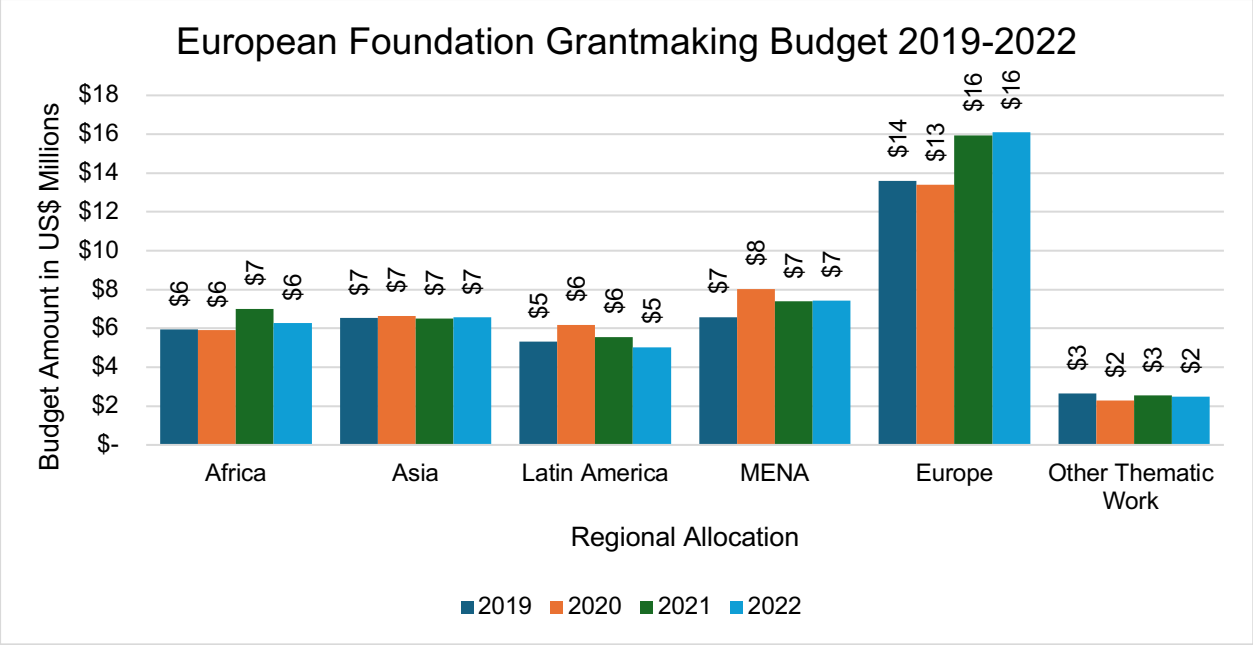
An analysis of the 2019 to 2022 financial activities of both the American and European Foundation reveals notable fluctuations in their operating budget, prompting inquiries into their grant making budget allocation practices[21]. Graph 1 below illustrates such fluctuations in the American Foundation's grant making budget distribution across various regions from 2019 to 2022.



Graph 1: *The American Foundation's grant making allocation (in US$) between 2019 and 2022 (American Foundation, 2023d)*

Graph 2 illustrates the European Foundation's grant making budget distribution across various regions from 2019 to 2022.

[21] The 2023 audited financial report was not released at the time of the fieldwork for this study.



Graph 2: The European Foundation's grant making budget (in US$) between 2019 and 2022 (European Foundation, 2019; European Foundation, 2020; European Foundation, 2021; European Foundation, 2022).

Budget allocation patterns of both the American and European foundations reveal a concerning imbalance, with a disproportionate share of funds being directed towards their head office regions. In the case of the American Foundation, the U.S. receives significantly more funding compared to regions such as Africa and Asia, which arguably have greater development needs. This raises critical questions about the foundation's decision-making processes and the underlying priorities guiding these allocations. It suggests that funding distribution may be more reflective of institutional biases or geopolitical interests than an objective assessment of the most pressing issues in each region (Black Feminist Fund, 2023). For instance, while Africa's allocation appears sizable at first glance, it is disproportionately small when contextualised against the region's gender-based challenges. From an African feminist perspective, such disparities highlight the failure to align funding with the urgent needs of women in the region, calling into question the foundation's commitment to equity and justice (ASTREA, 2021; African Feminist Forum, 2006; Black Feminist Fund, 2023).

This pattern is not unique to the American Foundation as the European Foundation follows a similar trend, concentrating a large portion of its grants in Europe and the Middle East while significantly underfunding regions like Africa and Latin America. This allocation strategy perpetuates existing inequalities by reinforcing a geography of power that marginalises less privileged regions. Moreover, these funding disparities reflect the intersecting axes of privilege

(geographical, economic, and racial) that shape access to resources within the philanthropic sector. The funding patterns observed call for a re-examination of how foundations prioritise and distribute resources, challenging them to move towards and engage in a more equitable redistribution of funds that addresses systemic inequalities and responds to the actual needs of marginalised communities (Black Feminist Fund, 2023).

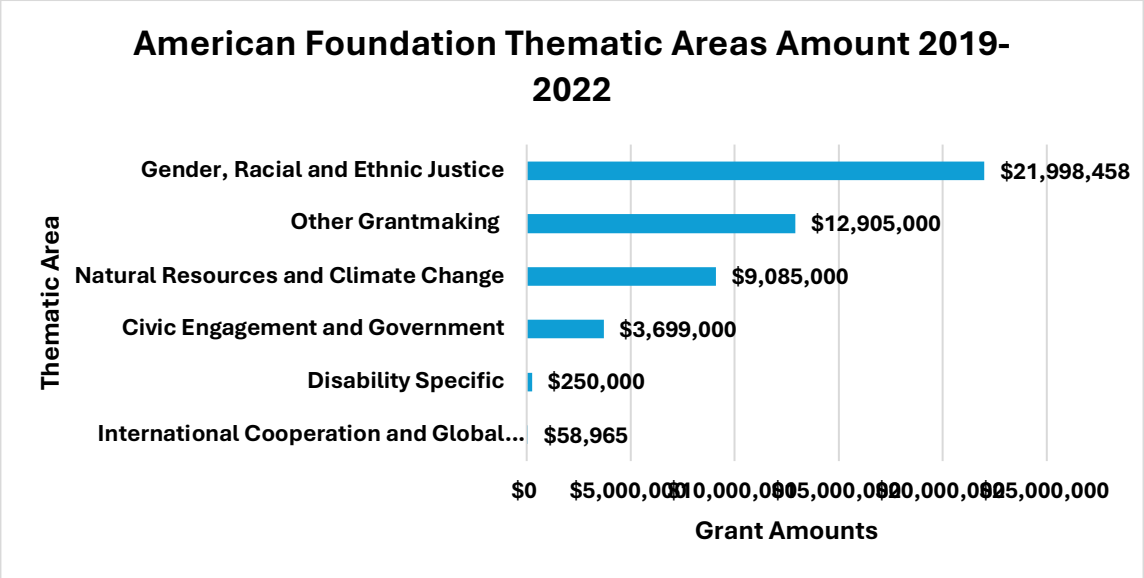
From an African feminist perspective, the analysis of budgetary decisions holds paramount importance as it serves as a lens through which to scrutinise the distribution of resources and the perpetuation of existing inequalities (Eyakuze, 2023). The emphasis on participatory budgeting aligns with principles of inclusivity and accountability, particularly in contexts where marginalised voices are often side-lined (Shah, 2007). However, when juxtaposed with the centralised model employed by the American and European Foundation, significant shortcomings become apparent. Firstly, the centralised approach lacks inclusivity. By maintaining a top-down structure, these foundations frequently overlook the input of local offices, which are more attuned to local issues and needs. This approach undermines efforts to ensure equitable resource distribution and fails to incorporate the perspectives of those most affected by the funding decisions (Eyakuze, 2023; Black Feminist Fund, 2023).

Secondly, the existing model reinforces power imbalances. The hierarchical nature of the centralised system, as it has been observed, perpetuates existing power structures, contrary to the African feminist principle of dismantling such imbalances (Eyakuze, 2023). This centralisation of control disempowers Global South communities by excluding their voices and experiences from the decision-making process, thus maintaining a status quo that benefits those in the North (Black Feminist Fund, 2023). Thirdly, there is a notable neglect of local expertise. The failure to involve local offices in budget discussions or to consider their needs assessments results in a disconnect between the funding decisions made by the foundations and the specific needs and priorities of local communities (Allegretti & Falanga, 2016). This oversight, as observed elsewhere, ignores the valuable situated knowledge[22] and lived experiences of those directly impacted by the issues being addressed (Gillespie, 2020). To address these issues, a shift towards a more collaborative and inclusive approach is necessary. This would involve engaging local offices in budgetary discussions and incorporating their assessments to ensure a more equitable distribution of resources (Pape, 2017; Allegretti & Falanga, 2016).

[22] Situated knowledge refers to knowledge gained through lived experience

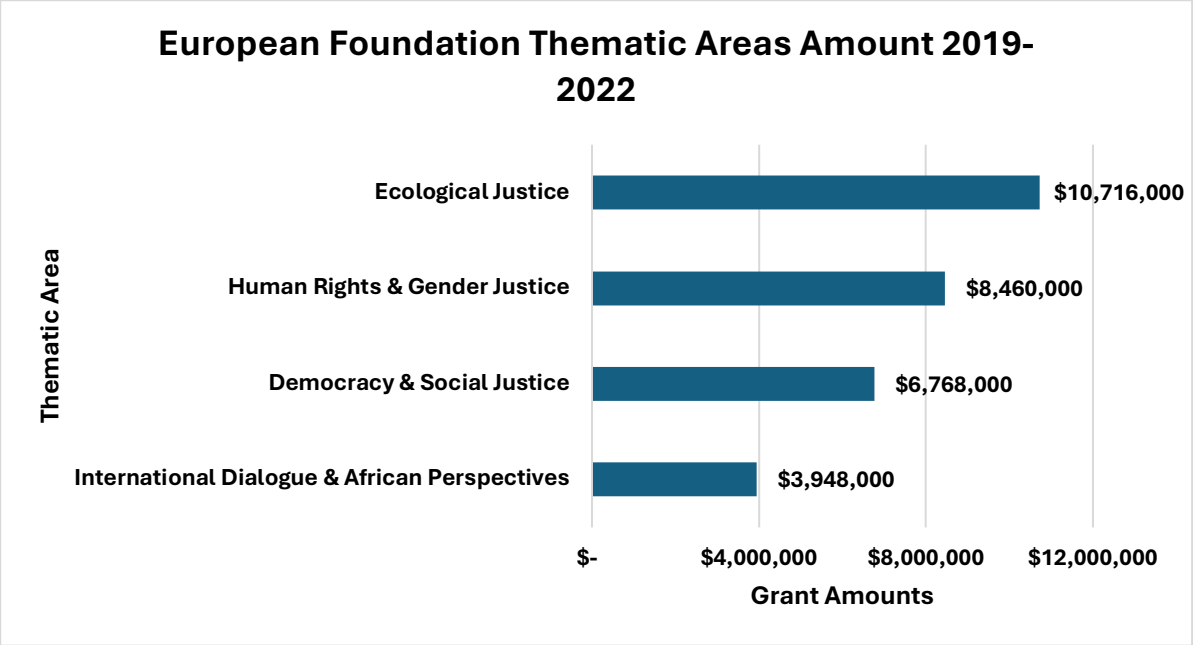
5.2.1.2. Thematic budget allocation

A thematic analysis of the areas of support provides valuable insights into the strategic priorities of both foundations. According to the American and European Foundation's grant database, the following was allocated to their work in South Africa between 2019 and 2022.



Graph 3: A summary of the amounts allocated to thematic areas in the American Foundation (American Foundation, 2023d).

It can be concluded from Graph 3 above, that the American Foundation has a strong commitment to justice and equity, with a predominant focus on gender, racial, and ethnic justice. From an African feminist perspective, the allocation of 44.9% of the total grant expenditure towards gender, racial, and ethnic justice by the American Foundation reflects a significant investment in addressing systemic inequalities. However, while the Foundation's commitment to justice and equity is notable, from an intersectional perspective, it is crucial to examine whether the Foundation's focus on gender and racial justice sufficiently addresses the compounded forms of oppression experienced by individuals at the intersections of multiple marginalised identities.



Graph 4: A summary of the European Foundation's thematic areas of support (Dankie, author interview, 24 May 2023; Khumo, author interview, 3 July 2023; European Foundation, 2023c)[23].

In the case of the European Foundation, funding for Ecological Justice has the highest allocation, while International Dialogue & African Perspectives received the lowest proportion (Author interviews: Dankie, 24 May 2023; Khumo, 3 July 2023). Both Dankie (author interview, 24 May 2023) and Khumo (author interview, 3 July 2023) attribute these allocations to the priority areas set by the political party. As Dankie (author interview, 24 May 2023). explained, "the Foundation's strategic guidance comes from the political party". Khumo (author interview, 3 July 2023) further emphasised, "the political party and foundation have key thematic areas which we have to align to". Although environmental issues are critical and deserving of support, an African feminist perspective encourages the research to question why other programmes, particularly those focused on gender justice, received comparatively less funding. African feminism underscores intersectionality, asserting that gender justice is intrinsically linked with other forms of injustice, such as environmental degradation, colonial legacies, and economic inequality (African Feminist Forum, 2006). Therefore, there is a need

[23] Information on the European Foundation's grant allocations is quite limited, so assumptions are made based on data provided by the programme teams. Khumo (author interview, 3 July 2023) and Dankie (author interview, 24 May 2023) suggest that their grantee partners receive between US$11,328 (R200,000) and US$16,992 (R300,000) per year. Assuming an average grant relationship of four years, this means each grantee is awarded between US$45,313 (R800,000) and USS$67,970 (R1,200,000) over the four-year period. Calculations were made using a grant average of US$14,160 (R250,000) per grantee per year

for the European Foundation to adopt a more holistic approach to grant making; one that acknowledges and supports these interconnected issues.

Both foundations demonstrate commendable efforts in their philanthropic endeavours, yet they reflect differing priorities and approaches. The American Foundation's substantial investment in gender, racial, and ethnic justice aligns with African feminist principles but requires further examination of intersectionality in its funding strategy. Meanwhile, the European Foundation's emphasis on Ecological Justice, though important, suggests a need for greater integration of gender justice and other interconnected issues to promote a more holistic and equitable approach.

5.2.2 Shortlisting of potential grantees

Within African feminist grant making, it is critical to evaluate both the areas receiving funding and the recipients of that funding. Once the grants have been allocated, the next phase of the grant making process involves shortlisting potential grantees (Author interviews: Khumo, 3 July 2023; Dankie, 24 May 2023; Nthabiseng, 13 February 2023*)*. African feminist grant making advocates for prioritising local communities and grassroots movements, ensuring that the voices and needs of those most affected by systemic inequalities are central to the funding decisions (African Feminist Forum, 2006; Black Feminist Fund, 2023; Gqola, 2001). It involves engaging directly with local organisations and leaders who have a deep understanding of the community's needs and dynamics (ASTREA, 2021). However, due to the hierarchical structure of the American and European Foundation, external engagement is primarily restricted to information sharing and data collection. Consequently, local communities have minimal influence over the grant making decisions of both the American and European Foundations. Instead, funding decisions are primarily driven by mission alignment, risk aversion, and anticipated impact and outcomes.

As a result of these criteria, a significant portion of funding is directed towards established, larger NGOs or intermediary organisations who are mission aligned, risk-averse and can demonstrate their impact. This is exemplified by looking at the organisations that both the American and European Foundation have supported since 2019.



Graph 5: A summary of the American Foundation's top-funded institutions (American Foundation, 2023d).

Since 2019, the American Foundation has directed substantial financial support to a select group of organisations, with the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits)[24] receiving the largest share. Other prominent beneficiaries include intermediaries such as Southern Africa Trust and public interest litigation groups like the Legal Resources Trust, and the Centre for Environmental Rights. In contrast, the European Foundation is less transparent about the financial support provided to its 53 grantees. Although specific financial details are not disclosed, the types of organisations funded by both the American and European Foundations appear similar.

Some of the European Foundation's partners include the Women's Legal Centre, Triangle Project, Social Change Assistance Trust, Benchmarks Foundation, and the Alternative Information Development Centre. A key distinction is that while the majority of the European Foundation's grantees are large, established NGOs, it also supports a few formal movements and alliances such as the National Shelter Movement of South Africa and Mining Affected Communities United in Action. The data provided above indicates that while the European

[24] The Southern Centre for Inequality Studies and the Gender Equity Office were among the top recipients

Foundation may provide some support to movements and alliances, there is still an omission of grassroots social movements and community-based organisations from major funding opportunities. These grassroots entities, which are often pivotal in addressing gender inequality and other social issues at a local level, are notably underfunded compared to larger, more established organisations.

5.2.3 Programme team conversations

Both the American and European Foundation seek to operate collaboratively. While individual Programme Officers and Programme Managers lead specific thematic areas, they often consult each other when thinking through grants or making grant making decisions (Author interviews: Nthabiseng,13 February 2023; Dankie, 24 May 2023). It is worth noting that this approach is adopted by the local South Africa offices, rather than being practiced across both institutions. After Programme Officers or Managers identify preferred grants, final funding decisions are made in consultation with senior leadership.

While both the American and European Foundations emphasise collaboration, the findings reveal that programme team conversations are not neutral or egalitarian spaces but are shaped by institutional hierarchies and the unequal distribution of authority. Programme Officers and Programme Managers, particularly within the South African offices, described how they frequently consult colleagues when considering prospective grants and attempt to incorporate “local voice” and contextual knowledge into their recommendations (Author interviews: Nthabiseng, 13 February 2023; Dankie, 24 May 2023). These discussions, however, rarely grant staff the autonomy to act decisively. Instead, they function as spaces of internal negotiation where staff test ideas, align proposals with institutional strategies, and pre-empt the preferences of senior leadership. This demonstrates how power circulates within programme teams because while mid-level staff can shape the framing of grants and push for recognition of local priorities, their influence is ultimately circumscribed by the formal decision-making authority of directors and executive leadership.

The evidence suggests that these conversations operate as a form of “soft power” within the foundations, allowing local staff to advocate for issues they view as urgent, while simultaneously reproducing the institutional logics of their parent foundations. In practice, this means that South African programme staff are able to make small adjustments in grant framing or partner selection to better reflect local realities, but the final decision-making power remains centralised in global headquarters. Such dynamics highlight the tension between collaboration and hierarchy. Collaboration is valued in principle, but hierarchy sets the limits of what collaboration can achieve. The findings therefore point to the narrow manoeuvring space that

grantees and local programme staff occupy, where influence is exercised through informal conversations and subtle persuasion rather than through formal authority. This dynamic also reflects a broader critique of philanthropy as an institution, where foundations may adopt the language of participation and localisation, but the structural power to decide ultimately rests with a small group of senior leaders.

5.2.4 Senior leadership approval

As previously discussed, due to the hierarchical nature of the American and European Foundation, within both institutions, the senior leadership has to sign off on the selected grant applications, giving the green light for the grant making process to proceed. The involvement of the senior leadership team adds additional layers of power, as their perspectives and insights have the potential to shape the final outcome, potentially favouring projects aligned with broader regional and international strategies (Author interviews: Tebogo, 23 March 2023; Nthabiseng, 13 February 2023). This introduces a hierarchical dynamic where decisions are made at progressively higher levels, consolidating power and limiting the influence of grassroots or local initiatives that may not be responding to local issues using global frameworks. This concentration of power can lead to decisions that may not fully reflect the diverse perspectives and needs of the communities the foundation serves. It also raises questions about transparency and accountability in the decision-making process, as there is limited mention of mechanisms for feedback or involvement from stakeholders outside the senior leadership teams.

5.2.5 Prospection meeting

As part of the grant making process, programme officers converse with grantees. These discussions allow programme officers and programme managers to “gain deeper insights into the proposed projects”, clarify any questions they may have, and better understand how the initiatives align with the Foundation's objectives (Author interviews: Khumo, 3 July 2023; Nthabiseng, 13 February 2023). During these conversations, programme teams frequently request additional information, research reports, or contextual data, sometimes on very short timelines, to support the grant application and due diligence process. The office justifies these requests on the grounds that such insights will be “invaluable in shaping” the localised strategy and “aligning their work” with their strategies (Author interviews: Kgotso, 15 March 2023; Nthabiseng, 13 February 2023). However, grantees highlighted that these demands often far exceeded what was required for their own organisational purposes, leaving them with the sense that their expertise and labour were being harvested primarily to strengthen the foundations’ internal strategies rather than to advance their own work. Karabo (author interview, 16 February 2023) described it as an extractive and disempowering “process that

mines the brains and knowledge of grantees" without offering meaningful reciprocity or any influence over final decisions. Karabo (author interview, 16 February 2023) also emphasised that organisations are often compelled to provide detailed political, social, and cultural analyses that the foundations themselves do not have the contextual knowledge to generate. These analyses, Boitumelo (author interview, 2 February 2023) argued, are not requested in the spirit of collaboration or co-creation but rather as a means of filling gaps in the foundations' internal strategies, often without credit, acknowledgment, or tangible benefit to the organisations producing them. "They take what they need, and we are left with nothing; no resources, no influence, and not even feedback about how our insights shaped their decisions", Boitumelo (author interview, 2 February 2023) reflected.

This experience was echoed by other participants, who noted that the time and labour invested in these processes diverted already limited organisational capacity away from programme implementation. For smaller organisations in particular, responding to repeated requests for information created significant administrative burdens and opportunity costs, with little assurance of reciprocal support. As a result, these engagements reinforced existing asymmetries of power between international funders and local actors. The extractive nature of the process not only perpetuated a sense of disempowerment among grantees but also eroded trust and collaboration within the field. Crucially, the failure of these foundations to meaningfully integrate the perspectives and recommendations of local actors into decision-making processes undermines the very principles of inclusivity and partnership that they claim to uphold, while also risking the relevance and effectiveness of their interventions in local contexts.

5.2.6 Receiving of formal grant proposal

Upon receiving grant applications from potential grantees, the American and European Foundation initiates their grant making process. The applications are carefully reviewed and assessed to ensure that the proposed project aligns with the Foundation's mission and funding priorities (American Foundation, 2023a; author interviews: Khumo, 3 July 2023; Dankie, 24 May 2023). While this ensures that funded projects contribute to the Foundation's intended goals, Breeze (2021) has observed that such practices can also limit innovation and diversity within the philanthropic sector. Projects that do not fit neatly into the Foundation's predefined categories may be overlooked, even if they address pressing social issues or offer unique solutions. Additionally, the discretionary power wielded by the Foundation allows it to shape the philanthropic landscape and influence social initiatives. While this can be positive in terms of directing resources to where they are most needed, it also consolidates power within a few individuals and organisations, potentially stifling grassroots efforts and community-driven

initiatives (Mahomed, 2023). This top-down approach to philanthropy overlooks the nuanced needs and perspectives of local communities, leading to solutions that are imposed rather than co-created. To ensure fairness, accountability, and effectiveness, there is a need for greater transparency, diversity, and inclusivity in grant making processes (McNamara, Cumming & Pulis, 2018). This involves not only re-evaluating the criteria for funding decisions but also actively engaging with communities and stakeholders to co-create solutions that address their unique needs and challenges.

5.2.7 Due diligence and feedback to grantee

Before making final funding decisions, both foundations engage in an extensive due diligence process. The objective of this due diligence process is to ensure that the potential grantee is a “reliable and suitable organisation or individual” that can effectively and responsibly utilise the funds provided for the intended purposes (American Foundation, 2023e; author interviews: Khumo, 3 July 2023; Dankie, 24 May 2023). The due diligence process involves a comprehensive assessment of several key factors, including financial sustainability, capacity and track record, transparency and accountability, legal and regulatory compliance, and risk assessment.

Both foundations require grantees to demonstrate significant financial stability and long-term viability to secure funding. According to Khumo (author interview, 3 July 2023) the European Foundation does this by “assessing financial records such as audited statements and budgets” (Kabonga, 2016; American Foundation, 2023a; author interviews: Khumo, 3 July 2023; Dankie, 24 May 2023). While this scrutiny aims to ensure responsible fund use, Nare (author interview, 13 March 2023) highlighted how it disproportionately affects smaller and newer organisations, particularly those led by marginalised communities, which may lack extensive financial documentation or historical stability. According to Nare (author interview, 13 March 2023) “this creates barriers” for these groups, putting them at a disadvantage compared to larger, well-resourced entities. Moreover, a narrow focus on financial metrics fails to capture the broader context of an organisation’s effectiveness, including leadership, governance, and community impact (Kabonga, 2016). To rectify this, Boitumelo (author interview, 2 February 2023) recommends that foundations should consider more inclusive and holistic funding approaches, offering capacity strengthening support to less established organisations and evaluating proposals based on innovation and alignment with strategic objectives rather than solely on financial stability (ActionAid, 2023).

The American and European Foundations' practice of evaluating grantees based on their past performance and organisational strength presents significant challenges from an African

feminist perspective. This approach involves reviewing past project outcomes and governance structures and inherently favours established organisations with a proven track record (American Foundation, 2023e; author interviews: Khumo, 3 July 2023; Dankie, 24 May 2023). Such an emphasis on historical success can marginalise emerging organisations and innovative ideas from less established groups, thereby perpetuating existing power imbalances and limiting diversity within the non-profit sector (Black Feminist Fund, 2023). Additionally, this focus may not accurately predict future success in dynamic environments and may disadvantage organisations addressing evolving community needs or employing new practices (Ntombi, author interview, 6 February 2023). Foundations could benefit from adopting more flexible evaluation criteria that recognise the potential and creativity of newer organisations and actively seek out and support initiatives from underrepresented groups (Moyo & Imafidon, 2021; Kabonga, 2016).

The emphasis placed on transparency and accountability by both foundations can, paradoxically, reinforce existing power dynamics and undermine the core missions of grantee organisations. Both foundations require rigorous reporting mechanisms and strong accountability practices (American Foundation, 2023e; author interviews: Khumo, 3 July 2023; Dankie, 24 May 2023), which, while aiming to promote ethical practices, can divert significant resources and attention away from actual programmatic impact. This overemphasis on meeting reporting standards can disproportionately burden smaller organisations that may already struggle with limited resources, potentially leading to their exclusion from funding opportunities despite their impactful work (Goncharenko, 2021; author interviews: Nare, 13 March 2023; Boitumelo, 2 February 2023). To foster more equitable support, foundations should reconsider their reporting requirements and focus on the substantive impact of the organisations' work, rather than merely procedural compliance (Ntombi, author interview, 6 February 2023).

The due diligence process of the American and European Foundations, which focuses on legal and regulatory compliance, can also perpetuate systemic inequalities. The American Foundation ensures that grantees meet IRS eligibility criteria and other legal requirements, while the European Foundation checks for proper registration and public benefit status (American Foundation, 2023a; Khumo, author interview, 3 July 2023). While compliance with these frameworks is necessary for maintaining tax-exempt status, the strict adherence to such criteria may inadvertently marginalise smaller or grassroots organisations that struggle to meet these regulatory demands. This regulatory focus, while important, can exclude vital initiatives led by less resourced or newer organisations, thereby reinforcing existing barriers to accessing funding (Goncharenko, 2021).

Following programme team's discussions, and the due diligence process, the Foundation provides feedback to potential grantees. This feedback sometimes includes suggestions for refining the proposed project, clarifying specific aspects of the application, or requesting further information (author interviews: Khumo, 3 July 2023; Nthabiseng, 13 February 2023). Suggestions for refining projects or requests for additional information by foundations, reflects their authority in shaping the direction of funded initiatives (author interviews: Khumo, 3 July 2023; Nthabiseng, 13 February 2023). Lechterman (2021) has observed that such power to guide and influence the development of projects reinforces the Foundations' position as gatekeepers of both ideas and resources.

5.2.8 Grant agreement

Once the due diligence has been completed, a grant agreement is drafted marking the commencement of the project and the donor-grantee relationship (Khumo, author interview, 3 July 2023; Nthabiseng, author interview, 13 February 2023). These agreements spell the terms and conditions of the funding, project objectives, expected outcomes, reporting requirements, and other relevant details such as respective roles and responsibilities between the foundation and the grantee (author interviews: Khumo, 3 July 2023; Nthabiseng, 13 February 2023).

As financial providers, both foundations hold significant power in setting the terms of the agreement, influencing the trajectory and scope of the funded project (Lechterman, 2021). While the grant agreement serves as a tool for transparency and accountability by providing clarity on roles, responsibilities, and reporting requirements, the negotiation and articulation of these terms demonstrates where power lies (Kgomotso, author interview, 24 March 2023). In view of most grant recipients, the terms and conditions outlined in the agreement "are one-sided, solely serving the interests of the donor" (Amogelang, author interview, 9 February 2023). Drawing attention to the ways in which these conditions can impose external agendas on local organisations, Karabo (author interview, 16 February 2023) referred to these terms as "neo-colonial structural adjustments".

Reflecting on their experience with grant agreements, Nare (author interview, 13 March 2023) indicated that sometimes, out of desperation, their organisation used to accept grant terms they knew were not beneficial. However, with sufficient resources now, they feel relieved to be able to decline donors who do not agree to terms beneficial for their organisation. This situation, as described by Kgomotso (author interview, 24 March 2023) can feel like being a "prisoner of hope" where there is relief from having funds to sustain work but feeling constrained by the grant terms. Such experiences underline the importance of equitable grant making practices that respect and prioritise the needs of grantee organisations. For

organisations with fewer resources, the lack of negotiation power can lead to compromises that undermine their effectiveness and long-term sustainability. This calls for a reimagining of grant agreements, fostering a collaborative approach “where donors and grantees co-create terms that reflect shared goals and mutual respect”, ensuring that funding not only sustains but also empowers grantees to achieve meaningful impact (Boitumelo, author interview, 2 February 2023).

5.2.9 Monitoring, evaluation, and learning

Throughout the grant period, both foundations actively monitor the progress of funded projects. As summarised in Table 5 below, this section seeks to highlight how the monitoring, evaluation and learning for both foundations take place.

Table 5: A comparative analysis of the monitoring, evaluation and learning practices of the American and European Foundation

	American Foundation	**European Foundation**
Data collection method	1. Convenings and Conferences 2. Meetings 3. Reporting	1. Convenings and Conferences 2. Meetings 3. Reporting
Frequency	Annually	Annually and quarterly
Structure	Rigid	Rigid
Orientation	Outcomes and output based	Outcomes and output based

***Source**: Constructed by the author from interviews with Dankie, 24 May 2023; Khumo, 3 July 2023; Nthabiseng, 13 February 2023.*

Both foundations have distinct requirements for their grantees regarding reporting and evaluation. While both foundations mandate financial and narrative reports to assess grantee performance and accountability, the specifics of their processes reveal contrasting approaches to oversight and control. According to Nthabiseng (author interview, 13 February 2023), the American Foundation requires an annual report on expenditure and programme implementation. This process involves submitting a financial and narrative report online using a standardised reporting template provided by the foundation (American Foundation, 2023b; Nthabiseng, author interview, 13 February 2023). In contrast, the European Foundation imposes stricter reporting requirements. As Khumo (author interview, 3 July 2023) explained, “depending on the size of the grant, BMZ requires us to request reports either annually or quarterly”. Similar to the American Foundation, grantee partners of the European Foundation

must submit both financial and narrative reports using a prescribed template (Khumo, author interview, 3 July 2023).

According to Liyaphila (author interview, 23 March 2023), the American Foundation's "reporting requirements are more lenient and flexible" compared to other places she has worked. However, not everyone shares this perspective. Boitumelo (author interview, 2 February 2023), an independent philanthropy consultant, criticised the reporting processes imposed by organisations like the American and European Foundations. As Boitumelo (author interview, 2 February 2023) stated, the current reporting structures "promote a performative culture where institutions are always required to produce results that are measurable", fostering the assumption that "if you can't measure it, you have not done the work". Mokgadi (author interview, 13 March 2023), a grantee of the American Foundation, further added that such reporting structures often overlook the intangible and long-term impacts of social justice work. She emphasised, "not all progress can be captured through metrics or short-term deliverables; advocacy, movement building, and systemic change take time and don't always yield immediate, quantifiable results". Nare (author interview, 13 March 2023) also highlighted the additional administrative burden these processes place on grantees, particularly smaller organisations with limited capacity.

The contrasting reporting requirements of the American and European foundations illustrate diverse philosophies of grant management and trust in partners. The American Foundation's more lenient and flexible approach, as described by Liyaphila (author interview, 23 March 2023), suggests a model that emphasises adaptability and reduced administrative burden. This approach may signal greater trust in grantee partners' ability to deliver results without overly prescriptive oversight. On the other hand, the European Foundation's stricter reporting standards, as outlined by Khumo (author interview, 3 July 2023), point to a more structured and accountability-focused model. By requiring reports quarterly or annually, depending on grant size, the European Foundation demonstrates a preference for close monitoring and measurable outcomes. While this can ensure financial and programmatic transparency, it also aligns with critiques, like those of Boitumelo (author interview, 2 February 2023), about fostering a "performative culture" in which grantees prioritise measurable results over transformative, long-term impact. These differing approaches highlight the broader tensions in philanthropy between fostering trust and ensuring accountability, as well as the varying levels of administrative burden placed on grantees based on these philosophies.

In addition to requiring narrative and financial reports, both the American and European Foundation conduct monitoring and evaluation through scheduled meetings and by attending

grantee partners' events and convenings. According to Dankie (author interview, 24 May 2023) and Nthabiseng (author interview, 13 February 2023) these activities allow the foundations to engage directly with their partners, gain firsthand insights into the progress of funded initiatives, and assess the impact of their support beyond written reports. While to the employees of the Foundation, this approach enables the foundations to "build stronger relationships with their grantees" while also providing opportunities to address challenges, share feedback, and foster collaboration. According to Nare (author interview, 13 March 2023), these additional monitoring activities place significant demands on grantee organisations, often leaving them feeling like "they are being watched all the time". Yinhla (author interview, 17 March 2023), a grantee of the American Foundation, echoed this sentiment, expressing that "they are always watching what you do".

This perception of constant surveillance creates a sense of pressure and mistrust among grantees, potentially impacting their ability to implement projects with autonomy and confidence. As Yinhla (author interview, 17 March 2023) elaborated, "it feels like we're performing for the funders" rather than focusing on the communities we serve. Nare (author interview, 13 March 2023) further added, "there's always this underlying fear that if something goes wrong, or if the results don't match expectations, it could jeopardise future funding." Such sentiments underline the tension between the foundations' desire for accountability and the grantees' need for flexibility and trust. While monitoring and evaluation are critical tools for ensuring transparency and measuring impact, over-emphasising these practices can inadvertently undermine the foundations' broader goals by creating an environment where grantees prioritise compliance over their work. To address this, Boitumelo (author interview, 2 February 2023) suggests that foundations might consider adopting "a more balanced approach", one that maintains rigorous "accountability standards while fostering a supportive and trusting relationship with grantees". This could include incorporating participatory evaluation methods and reducing the frequency of monitoring visits and level of scrutiny.

Based on the above, it is evident that while monitoring and evaluation are essential for accountability and measuring impact, the standardised approaches used by the American and European Foundations have notable drawbacks. These practices often create a sense of surveillance, place significant administrative burdens on grantees, and prioritise measurable outcomes over nuanced, long-term impacts. Smaller organisations with limited capacity may struggle to meet these demands, potentially excluding them from funding opportunities. To address these challenges, foundations should adopt more flexible, adaptive monitoring frameworks that foster trust and collaboration, reduce administrative pressures, and recognise

the unique contexts and contributions of their grantees, ultimately enhancing their ability to achieve meaningful and sustainable social change.

5.3. Conclusion

The analysis of the American and European foundations' grant making practices highlights significant patterns in both who they fund and how funding decisions are made. Both foundations demonstrate a strong preference for established NGOs, particularly in urban and peri-urban areas, such as South Africa's Western Cape and Gauteng provinces. While women-led initiatives receive notable support, there are clear gaps in funding for youth-led and LGBTQI+ programmes. This indicates institutional shortcomings in addressing intersectional issues, particularly when considering the foundations' stated commitment to inclusivity and diversity.

The centralised and hierarchical nature of the budget allocation process further entrenches inequities. Both foundations' decision-making structures limit local offices' financial autonomy, resulting in funding that disproportionately favours regions like the U.S. and Europe. This imbalance perpetuates global inequities and underscores a disconnect between funding strategies and the actual needs on the ground, particularly in marginalised communities. Moreover, the emphasis on financial sustainability, measurable outcomes, and risk aversion favours established, well-resourced organisations, often at the expense of smaller, innovative, or community-based initiatives. The foundations' preference for quantifiable impacts limits their ability to support programmes addressing long-term or complex social issues, leading to a lack of diversity in the types of projects funded and stifling opportunities for innovation.

Lastly, despite efforts to consult with grantees, the foundations' decision-making processes remain top-down, with significant power imbalances between the funders and the recipients. To ensure more equitable and effective grant making, the foundations need to embrace a more participatory approach, critically examining their practices to ensure they are aligned with the realities and priorities of the communities they seek to support.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Introduction

Applying African feminist approaches, this study aimed not only to comprehend the intricacies and nuances of grant making by social justice philanthropies in South Africa but also to offer actionable insights to foster further exploration and progress. In this chapter the report presents a summary of key findings and recommendations, as well as recommendations for future research.

6.2. Summary of key findings

This research applied an African feminist lens in examining grant making approaches and practices of select international social justice philanthropies in South Africa. The study findings reveal that both the American and European Foundations employ distinct approaches to grant making, shaped by their organisational values and historical contexts. The American Foundation is justice-oriented, with a focus on addressing systemic inequalities through initiatives grounded in accountability, collaboration, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Despite having these values, the American Foundation’s grant making practices are characterised by a hierarchical, top-down decision-making structure and processes. As a result, local offices such as the one in South Africa have limited control over budgeting and resource allocation, resulting in a disconnect between the foundation's central office and the specific needs of South African communities. The European Foundation, while similarly structured, places greater emphasis on human rights, democracy, and environmental justice. Despite these differences, both foundations exhibit a North-centric approach that limits their ability to fully adopt local African feminist perspectives.

One of the key findings of the research relates to the extent to which African feminist principles, such as self-determination, economic justice, and intersectionality, are incorporated into the grant making practices of these foundations. Although both foundations claim to prioritise inclusion and collaboration, the study found significant gaps in the implementation of these principles. For instance, while the American Foundation's focus on justice aligns with some feminist values, it falls short in embracing intersectionality—a core tenet of African feminism. This is evident in the foundation's short-term funding cycles, which undermine its ability to support long-term, transformative change. Similarly, the European Foundation, although focused on democracy and environmental justice, underfunds gender justice initiatives, highlighting the limitations of its approach in addressing the specific needs of marginalised women.

The research findings also spotlight several challenges that the American and European Foundations face in incorporating an African feminist approach into their grant making efforts. Both foundations struggle with the disconnect between their centralised decision-makers and the contextual issues of local communities they aim to serve. The hierarchical structures of these organisations limit the influence of local South African stakeholders in shaping funding decisions, making it difficult to fully integrate African feminist principles into their work. Additionally, the narrow focus on specific programmatic areas, such as economic empowerment or environmental sustainability, often overlooks the interconnected challenges that African women face. This siloed approach fails to address broader systemic issues such as patriarchy, racism, and economic inequality, which are central to African feminist discourse.

The research findings also provide deeper insights into the six critical themes of African feminist theory:

- **Lack of intersectionality:** The research found that neither the American nor European Foundations fully incorporate intersectional approaches in their grant making. While both organisations prioritise gender equity to varying degrees, their narrow focus often overlooks the interconnected forms of oppression that marginalised women in South Africa face, particularly the compounded effects of race, poverty, and sexuality. As a result, grant making efforts tend to address women's issues in isolation rather than as part of a broader, systemic analysis of oppression. This limits the effectiveness of their interventions, as they fail to fully engage with the complex realities of South African women and marginalised communities.
- **Neo-coloniality:** The research revealed that the grant making practices of both foundations are still heavily influenced by Eurocentric frameworks, which reinforce neo-colonial power dynamics. These foundations often impose external values and funding priorities that reflect Western ideals of development, which may not align with the needs and aspirations of local communities.
- **Power and privilege:** Power and privilege are key issues within African feminist discourse, particularly in analysing how unequal access to resources and decision making power affects marginalised groups. The research identified significant power imbalances within both foundations, where decision making is concentrated among senior leaders in Europe or the United States, with minimal involvement from South African communities. This centralisation of power not only limits the ability of local actors to influence funding decisions but also perpetuates a form of neo-colonial control over resource distribution. Moreover, the foundations' tendency to fund large, established NGOs rather than grassroots organisations reinforces existing hierarchies and privileges certain voices over others. To address these imbalances, the research

suggests that both foundations adopt more participatory grant making processes that share decision making power with grantees and local communities.

- **Agency and voice:** While African feminist theory places a strong emphasis on the importance of agency and voice, particularly for women and marginalised groups who have historically been silenced, the current research reveals that a disconnect between the claims of support the empowerment of women by these foundations and their current grant making practices. This is because their rhetoric often fails to fully amplify the voices of those they aim to serve. For instance, the foundations' rigid funding structures and reporting requirements constrain the ability of local organisations to exercise autonomy in determining their own priorities and solutions. Furthermore, the lack of meaningful consultation with grantees during the funding process results in strategies that may not reflect South African women's true needs and aspirations.
- **Eurocentrism as opposed to cultural relativism and reclamation:** Cultural relativism and reclamation are crucial in the African feminist framework, emphasising the importance of respecting diverse cultural practices and reclaiming African traditions that have been marginalised or erased by colonialism. The research findings suggest that both foundations fall short in acknowledging and integrating local cultural contexts into their grant making strategies. Instead, their practices often reflect Western or Eurocentric models of development that overlook the rich cultural heritage and knowledge systems of South African communities. This lack of cultural sensitivity alienates local actors and reduce the effectiveness of philanthropic interventions.
- **Limited contributions to social justice and transformative politics:** The research found that while both foundations contribute to social justice causes, their approaches often lack the transformative impact necessary to challenge entrenched systems of oppression. The American Foundation, for instance, focuses on immediate social justice outcomes but fails to address the long-term structural changes needed for sustainable transformation. Similarly, the European Foundation's emphasis on democracy and environmental justice does not fully account for the broader intersectional struggles of marginalised communities.

6.3. Recommendations

Based on the above summarised findings, the following key recommendations to guide international philanthropies toward more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable grant making practices aligned with African feminist theory are proffered.

6.3.1. Decentralising and participatory decision making

One of the key findings of this research is the hierarchical, centralised decision-making processes used by both the American and European Foundations. African feminist thought emphasises the need for local communities to have control over the decisions that impact their lives. To implement an African feminist approach, foundations must decentralise decision making, allowing local actors to have a greater say in the grant making process. Decentralising decision making would involve the creation of local or regional advisory boards, composed of African feminist leaders and community representatives, to shape grant making strategies. This approach fosters greater autonomy for local offices, enabling them to allocate resources based on the specific needs and contexts of the communities they serve. Moreover, decentralisation would empower grantees by transferring decision making power closer to the communities and organisations that the funding is intended to support. In this way, foundations can enhance their effectiveness by fostering a more participatory and contextually responsive grant making process.

6.3.2. Intersectional and long-term funding strategies

The research found that while both the American and European Foundations prioritise gender equity, their strategies often lack a comprehensive intersectional approach. To rectify this, foundations should adopt intersectional and long-term funding strategies that recognise and respond to the multiple dimensions of inequality that African women face. Long-term, flexible funding is necessary to sustain efforts aimed at systemic change, as opposed to the short-term, project-based funding that currently dominates philanthropic practices. By providing consistent support to organisations working across a range of issues, foundations can ensure that their interventions address the full spectrum of challenges faced by marginalised communities. This approach would also involve prioritising grassroots organisations, especially those led by women from historically marginalised backgrounds, to ensure that the most vulnerable populations are empowered to create sustainable change.

6.3.3. Engaging feminist leaders and scholars

An African feminist approach to grant making requires foundations to actively involve African feminist scholars and leaders in shaping their strategies. By engaging local feminist thought leaders, foundations can ensure that their grant making aligns with the specific cultural, social, and political contexts of South Africa. This collaboration would enhance the relevance and effectiveness of philanthropic efforts, as African feminist leaders bring deep knowledge of the unique challenges faced by women in their communities. Such partnerships can be established through consultations, collaborations in designing grant programmes, and the inclusion of African feminists in funding evaluation panels. This would not only bring African

feminist perspectives to the forefront but also foster greater inclusivity in the decision-making process.

6.3.4. Power sharing and redistribution

Understanding dynamics of power and how to dismantle the same, are a central concern in African feminist theory. To implement an African feminist approach, foundations must shift toward more equitable power-sharing practices. This involves moving from a top-down approach to a co-creation model, where grantees and local communities are active participants in designing and managing programmes. Additionally, capacity-strengthening initiatives that strengthen the leadership of grassroots organisations should be prioritised. These initiatives would provide local organisations with the tools and resources they need to fully participate in decision making processes. Through this redistribution of power, foundations can build more equitable relationships with their grantees, empowering marginalised communities to take ownership of their development agendas.

6.3.5. Culturally responsive and decolonial approaches

To align with African feminist principles, foundations must adopt culturally responsive and decolonial approaches to grant making. This involves recognising and integrating local traditions, values, and knowledge systems into funding strategies. Culturally responsive grant making would allow grantees the flexibility to design solutions that resonate with their cultural realities, enhancing the sustainability and impact of their initiatives. Furthermore, foundations should prioritise funding programmes that support the reclamation of African cultural practices, particularly those related to women's empowerment and social justice. By doing so, they can foster a grant making approach that is both culturally respectful and transformative.

6.3.6. Supporting grassroots movements and organisations

The research findings suggest the need for supporting grassroots movements and organisations, particularly those led by women and marginalised communities. Both the American and European Foundations have been criticised for prioritising funding for large, well-established NGOs, often sidelining smaller, grassroots organisations that may be more closely connected to local communities but lack the capacity to meet stringent funding criteria. To implement an African feminist approach, foundations should simplify their application and reporting processes, making funding more accessible to grassroots organisations. Additionally, providing technical assistance and capacity-strengthening resources would help smaller organisations navigate the complexities of grant management. By supporting grassroots movements, foundations can ensure that their funding reaches those most affected by systemic inequalities and empowers them to address the root causes of their marginalisation.

6.3.7. Prioritise listening and learning

Listening and learning are essential to an African feminist approach to grant making. Philanthropic institutions must prioritise listening to the lived experiences of women and marginalised communities to develop more effective, contextually appropriate strategies. Foundations should conduct regular consultations with grantees to gather feedback and incorporate their insights into future funding cycles. Establishing mechanisms for continuous learning would allow foundations to adapt their strategies in response to the evolving needs of local communities. This iterative process of listening, learning, and adapting would ensure that grant making remains dynamic and responsive, fostering more meaningful and sustainable social change.

6.4. Areas for future research

This research suggests that there are three areas within African feminist grant making research that could potentially be further explored. First, an African feminist investigation into how other philanthropies practice grant making in South Africa. This could entail researching beyond social justice philanthropy and international private foundations and investigating how both local and international corporate foundations, social enterprises, and community foundations approach and practice grant making. Investigating their grant making approaches and practices would allow for a deeper understanding of how they engage with and respond to the needs and challenges faced by the local communities they work with. Such research would also provide the needed insight for how these institutions prioritise black women and marginalised communities, as well as, if and how they consider power, privilege, and gender in their grant making. Such research could potentially facilitate collaboration and knowledge exchange between different philanthropic organisations. By examining various grant making strategies, lessons learned, and success stories, both local and international entities can learn from one another's experiences. This exchange of knowledge promotes synergy, reduces duplication of efforts, and maximises the impact of philanthropic investments, ultimately benefiting the communities they aim to serve.

Second, further research on how an African feminist perspective on grant making can be used as a framework for decolonising philanthropy needs to be explored. The research findings for this research make it evident that although social justice philanthropies have made some progress in transforming traditional and colonial giving approaches and practices, international donors' practice of philanthropy in Africa is still heavily influenced by colonial power structures and Eurocentric ideologies. These frameworks and practices in philanthropy continue to perpetuate inequality, reinforce power imbalances, and overlook the needs and perspectives of marginalised communities and groups in Africa. There is an opportunity to challenge these

dominant paradigms by exploring an African feminist perspective to decolonising philanthropy. Such a perspective would seek to investigate how philanthropy can dismantle its colonial legacies and reimagine philanthropic practices that are more inclusive, equitable, and respectful of diverse voices, including those in Africa and the Global South.

Third, as the field and academia explore how to decolonise philanthropy, there is an opportunity to delve deeper into understanding and establishing African models for participatory, trust, and care-based approaches to grant making. African communities have unique social, cultural, and economic contexts that may not align with conventional Western models of grant making. By establishing African models to participatory and trust-based philanthropy, there is an opportunity to understand the specific needs and priorities of local communities firstly better and secondly design grant making approaches that are tailored to their requirements. By investigating African models that have successfully implemented trust-based and participatory approaches, philanthropy can learn how to empower local communities and grant them greater agency in determining their own development goals and strategies. Doing so will promote a sense of ownership, foster community engagement, and strengthen the long-term impact of grant making initiatives.

6.5. Conclusion

The primary objective of this study was to assess, through an African feminist lens, how select social justice philanthropies approach and practice grant making in South Africa. Chapter one laid the groundwork for the research by providing essential introductory information, background context, and a clearly defined problem statement. It also presented the research objectives and questions, establishing a clear direction for the study. Chapter two offered an overview of African feminist theory, highlighting key themes and concepts within it. It also reviewed relevant literature on African feminism, social justice philanthropy, and African feminist grant making. Chapter three detailed the research methodology, outlining the qualitative case study approach used to examine the American and European Foundation. This chapter also covered the population of interest, the sampling process, data collection and analysis methods, and concluded with a discussion on ethical considerations and the researcher's positionality.

Chapter four analysed the grant making approaches of the selected foundations, focusing on their guiding values and philosophies. It also explored the mechanisms and tactics used to decide who and what to fund. Chapter five further examined the grant making practices of the American and European Foundations by analysing who and how these international social justice philanthropies fund. It provided an overview of the beneficiaries, including the sectors and issues that received funding, the types of organisations funded, grant sizes, and the

strategies used to support grantees. Finally, chapter six summarised the key findings, presented recommendations based on the research, and suggested areas for future research.

To conclude, this study highlighted the importance of using an African feminist lens to critically examine how international social justice philanthropies approach grant making in South Africa. By grounding this research within the framework of African feminism, it not only supported the voices and experiences of African women but also challenged traditional philanthropic practices that reinforce inequalities and often overlook the unique needs of their intended beneficiaries. The findings reveal both commendable efforts and areas needing improvement in the practices of the American and European foundations studied. While there is evidence of a genuine commitment to social justice, the research underscores the need for these philanthropies to align more closely with African feminist principles, such as inclusivity, intersectionality, and a focus on building transformative, rather than merely transactional, relationships. Key recommendations include prioritising long-term, flexible funding partnerships with grassroots organisations, centring decision making on the lived realities of South African women and girls and fostering a deeper sense of accountability to the communities they serve. This study also calls for a reimagining of power dynamics within the grant making process. By adopting a participatory approach that actively includes South African women and girls in shaping funding decisions, international philanthropies can ensure their strategies are more equitable. Such a shift aligns with African feminist values and offers a more transformative path towards achieving gender and social justice.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Participant information sheet

Dear Participant,

My name is Lerato Mashianoke, and I am a Master's student at the University of the Witwatersrand's Centre for African Philanthropy and Social Investment (CAPSI). I'm writing to you as a student working on an academic research project. Using an African feminist lens, my research intends to analyse how two international social justice philanthropy institutions in South Africa approach and practice grant making. This study intends to assess the methods used in funding, including how funding priorities are set, funding decisions are made, and funding relationships are organised.

I am writing to you to request that you participate in my research by allowing me to interview you. Due to your experience in the field, I believe that your input and participation in this research is crucial. The interview will be a semi-structed in-depth interview. The interview will take place online and will not exceed 90 minutes. There are no drawbacks or consequences for choosing not to participate in this research because your participation in it will be voluntary. You are free to withdraw from participating at any time or, if you like, avoid answering any questions during the interview. Your name and any other identifying information will not be mentioned during the interview, so it will be private and anonymous. Your information will be kept private and not shared with anyone else. In my final research report, your participation may be referenced by using a pseudonym. During the interview process, we will halt the interview or continue later should you feel uncomfortable or distressed at any stage.

It is important for me to highlight that this research is for academic purposes only and is not linked with the Ford Foundation in any way. I have permission from my employer and the University of the Witwatersrand to carry out this research. I accept full responsibility for doing the study in an ethical manner. To ensure that this research is conducted ethically, it is important for me to take ownership of my identity, not only as an African woman but also as an African feminist. I also recognise that my position at the Foundation places restrictions on the research, such as the possibility that you may not want to take part in it.

If you have any questions before, during, or after the interview, please feel free to get in touch with me using the details provided below. The results of this research will be presented in a research report. I will be pleased to email you a summary of this report if you request one.

I am under the supervision of Prof Jacob Mati, and he can be reached at Jacob.Mati@wits.ac.za

Thank you for considering my request to participate in my research

Yours sincerely,

Lerato Mashianoke
Lerato.mashianoke@hotmail.com | +27 72 424 6469

Appendix B: Consent form

Title of the Project: An African feminist perspective of grant making by selected social justice philanthropies in South Africa

Name of Researcher: Lerato Mashianoke

I _____ consent to taking part in this study. The researcher has explained everything to me, and I understand what my participation entails. I hereby consent to the following by signing this form:

1. I consent to my participation being anonymous.
2. I consent to the researcher's use of fictitious quotes in the research report.
3. I consent to the audio recording of the interview and its storage on a computer with a password.

_____

Signature

_____

Name of Participant

_____

Date

Appendix C: Interview schedule for the employees of the American and European Foundation

1. **Organisational affiliation:**
   a. How long have you been at the foundation and how long have you worked within philanthropy?
   b. What position do you currently hold in the foundation and how would you describe your role in the Foundation?

2. **Understanding the foundation:**
   a. How would you describe your foundation, its work, its vision, and its mission?
   b. What are the principles or philosophies that guide the grant making practices of your foundation? Could you provide examples of how these principles or philosophies are translated into how you do your work?
   c. What are the key principles that guide your work as a Grantmaker? Who or what defines your grant making priorities?
   d. Could you please describe your grant making process? What are the key considerations that your foundation uses to assess grant proposals?
   e. Who or what does your foundation target and how is support provided? Could you provide practical examples?
   f. How are your funding relationships structured? Could you provide practical examples?
   g. How does your foundation engage or collaborate with its grantees, civil society and other philanthropic organisations?
   h. In your opinion, what's positive about how your foundation approaches its work? Are there any gaps in how you approach your work?
   i. What are some of the grant making challenges that your foundation must grapple with?
   j. What are some of the grant making lessons that you have learned during your time at the foundation?

3. **Women and gender**
   a. What women or gender related programmes does your institution have? Could you describe what these programmes seek to achieve?
   b. What are the key principles that guide and inform how you support women and gender related issues? Could you explain how these principles are put into practice?

c. How long have these programmes existed and what informed the adoption of these programmes?

4. Additional questions:

a. What makes you optimistic or pessimistic about the current state of philanthropic efforts towards supporting issues related to women and gender in South Africa?
b. What are some of the innovations and challenges that you have observed or experienced when it comes to supporting issues related to women and gender?
c. What advice would you give to philanthropic organisations that seek to support issues related to women and gender?
d. Do you have any recommendations on how philanthropy in South Africa can improve how it supports issues related to gender and women?
e. Is there anything that you would wish to add?

Appendix D: Interview schedule for grantees of the American and European Foundation

1. **Organisational affiliation:**
   a. Could you please describe the work of your organisation?
   b. What position do you currently hold in your organisation and how would you describe your role in the organisation?

2. **The donor-grantee relationship**
   a. How would you describe your organisation's relationship with the American Foundation or European Foundation?
   b. In your opinion, what do you think informs, guides or shapes how the American Foundation or European Foundation approaches and manages grant making and its grantee relationships?
   c. What support does the American Foundation or European Foundation provide to your organisation? What is the support for and how is the support structured?
   d. How long have you received support from the American Foundation or European Foundation?
   e. In what ways do you feel that the American Foundation or European Foundation has supported or hindered your organisation's work?
   f. How does the American Foundation or European Foundation engage or collaborate with your organisation, other grantees and civil society?
   g. What's positive about the relationship you have with the American Foundation or European Foundation?
   h. What's negative about the relationship you have with the American Foundation or European Foundation?
   i. Are there any gaps in how you think the American Foundation or European Foundation approaches its work or relationships with its grantees?

3. **Additional questions:**
   a. What makes you optimistic or pessimistic about the current state of social justice philanthropy in South Africa?
   b. What advice would you give to international donors that seek to support issues related to gender and women in South Africa?
   c. Do you have any recommendations on how social justice philanthropy in South Africa can improve how it supports issues related to gender and women?
   d. Is there anything that you would wish to add?

Appendix E: Interview schedule for key civil society informants

Social justice philanthropy

1. What do you think informs, guides or shapes how social justice philanthropy makes grant making decisions? Could you provide examples?
2. How do you envision the role of social justice philanthropy in promoting gender equality and centring and empowering marginalised communities and women and girls?

Gender and philanthropy in South Africa

1. How would you describe the current state of philanthropic efforts towards supporting issues related to women and gender in South Africa?
2. In your opinion, what informs how philanthropic institutions in South Africa choose to support issues related to women and gender?
3. Who are the major philanthropic figures in South Africa that promote gender and women's issues? How would you characterise these role actors' approach?
4. What are some of the innovations and difficulties faced by South African philanthropic institutions when it comes to advancing gender- and women's-related causes?

African feminism and social justice philanthropy

1. Can you discuss the role of power and privilege in philanthropy, and if and how it affects grant making approaches and practices?
2. How can social justice philanthropy organisations begin to critically examine their own power dynamics and actively work to challenge and disrupt systems of oppression and marginalisation in their grant making practices?
3. Are there any emblematic cases of social justice philanthropy organisations or civil society organisations that have been successful in adopting African feminist approaches to how they work?
4. What are some of the challenges that you have observed or experienced when it comes to implementing feminist approaches to working and funding? Supporting women and gender related programmes?
5. What advice would you give others seeking to promote similar values and approaches in their work?

Appendix F: Ethics clearance certificate

Graduate School of Business Administration
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

Wits Business School

Wits Business School Ethics Committee
Constituted under the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical)

Ethics Clearance Certificate

Ethics protocol number: WBS/AP788334/785
This certificate is only valid with a legitimate ethics protocol number and signed by the Researcher (below).

This certificate is only valid if accompanied by formal permission from the relevant stakeholder(s).

Project title	An African feminist perspective of grantmaking by selected social justice philanthropies in South Africa
Investigator / Researcher	Ms Lerato Mashianoke
Nature of Project	MM in African Philanthropy
Decision of the Committee	Approved, provided stakeholders and participants are guaranteed confidentialty.
Issue Date of Certificate	2022-12-03
Expiry date	Date of submission of the project / research report
Chairperson	Prof Anthony Stacey ☎ +27 11 717 3587 +27 82 880 4531 anthony.stacey@wits.ac.za

Declaration by Researcher

One copy must be signed by the Researcher and returned to the Chairperson of the Wits Business School Ethics Committee.

I fully understand the conditions under which I am authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee.

L Mashianoke
Signature

January 3, 2023
Date:

Appendix G: Permission to conduct research by the American Foundation

December 19, 2022

Ethics Committee
Graduate School of Business Administration
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

To the Ethics Committee:

This letter is to confirm that Lerato Mashianoke has permission to conduct her personal research related to her Master of Management in African Philosophy at the University of Witwtersrand for a project entitled "An African feminist analysis of funding and grantmaking practices by select social justice philanthropies in South Africa" as follows:

1. [redacted] she has permission to conduct such research in her personal capacity.
2. The [redacted] Foundation gives Ms. Mashianoke permission to interview foundation staff in her personal capacity, subject to the consent of such staff.
3. The [redacted] Foundation gives Ms. Mashianoke permission to use non-confidential foundation documents in her research, including, books, guides, reports, notes, newsletters and other research.
4. The [redacted] Foundation gives Ms. Mashianoke permission to use the foundation's name with respect to citing interviews and documents in her research.

Sincerely,

Appendix H: Permission to conduct research by the European Foundation

21 April 2023

Ethics Committee
Graduate School of Business Administration
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

To the Ethics Committee:

This letter is to confirm that Lerato Mashianoke has permission to conduct her personal research related to her Master of Management in African Philosophy at the University of Witwatersrand for a project entitled "An African feminist perspective of grantmaking by selected social justice philanthropies in South Africa" as follows:

1. Lerato Mashianoke has permission to conduct such research in her personal capacity

2. The [redacted] Foundation gives Lerato permission to interview foundation staff in her personal capacity, subject to the consent of such staff.

3. The [redacted] Foundation gives Lerato permission to use publically available foundation documents in her research, including, books, guides, reports, notes, newsletters, and other research.

4. The [redacted] Foundation does not give Lerato permission to name the Foundation in the report.

5. The [redacted] Foundation gives Lerato permission to refer to the Foundation as a 'European Foundation' with respect to citing interviews and documents in her research.

Sincerely

Appendix I: List of Interviewees

Amogelang. 2023. Author interview. 9 February 2023.

Andile. 2023. Author interview. 28 February 2023.

Boitumelo. 2023. Author interview. 2 February 2023.

Bonolo. 2023. Author interview. 14 February 2023.

Dankie. 2023. Author interview. 24 May 2023.

Karabo. 2023. Author interview. 16 February 2023.

Khumo. 2023. Author interview. 3 July 2023.

Kgomotso. 2023. Author interview. 24 March 2023.

Kgotso. 2023. Author interview. 15 March 2023.

Liyaphila. 2023. Author interview. 23 March 2023.

Mokgadi. 2023. Author interview. 13 March 2023.

Mpumelelo. 2023. Author interview. 22 March 2023.

Nare. 2023. Author interview. 13 March 2023.

Nthabiseng. 2023. Author interview. 13 February 2023.

Ntombi. 2023. Author interview. 6 February 2023.

Tebogo. 2023. Author interview. 23 March 2023.

Yinhla. 2023. Author interview. 17 March 2023.